

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, December 4, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chamber,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Mitchell H. Greenwald, Chair  
Randy L. Filiault, Vice Chair  
Catherine I. Workman  
Laura E. Tobin  
Jacob R. Favolise

**Members Not Present:**

*All Present*

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager  
Don Lussier, Public Works Director  
Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and Recreation  
Director  
Thomas Mullins, City Attorney  
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer  
Andrew Bohannon, Deputy City Manager  
Chelsea North, Parking Operations Manager  
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager

Chair Greenwald called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting. Roll call was conducted.

**1) Petition – Reduction of Speed Limit – Upper Roxbury Street**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the Petitioner.

Alan Huston of 362 Roxbury St. stated that he put a petition in to lower the speed from Water St. to Lincoln St. He continued that he interviewed all of the people on the list he gave the MSFI Committee, and they all agreed to petition the Council. The speed is unbelievable on that street. People come down the hill at 40 mph, no matter the season. Many pedestrians are on the street, including students from the school on South Lincoln St. Children might run into the road. It is lucky that nothing has happened to them yet. The sidewalk goes about halfway up the hill, and then pedestrians must walk on the road to continue up to Water St.

Mr. Huston continued that many of the people he talked to have had near misses when backing out of their driveways, because there is limited vision in some places. He had an incident himself last January. A snowplow was going down the hill at about 40 mph and missed hitting him by about a foot. The vision for backing out is insufficient for many people.

Chair Greenwald asked what the speed limit is in this area. Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, replied 30 mph.

Chair Greenwald asked for public comment.

Bobby Williams of 66 North Lincoln St. stated that he lives around the corner, and agrees that cars speed here. He continued that when they come around the corner, what should be a four-way stop is a two-way stop, and cars go right through. Lowering the speed limit is an option, but he does not think it would slow people down without a lot of enforcement. He thinks there needs to be some engineering of the road to encourage drivers to go slower.

Mr. Ruoff stated that the request was to change the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph. He continued that the current State RSA 265:62, Establishment of Speed Zones, allows alterations in speed zones, but not less than 25 mph. From an engineering standpoint, they only have one example of comparing (conditions) before and after reducing speed, on North Lincoln St. The City has data of cars' speeds from before and after the speed limit was reduced on North Lincoln St. In this instance, the reduction did not slow down cars, like what Councilor Williams indicated. In fact, the speeds increased after the signs and speed limit were changed. That was part of the east side traffic-calming project.

Chair Greenwald stated that Councilor Filiault used to live in that area, and he himself drives it every day. He asked if it would fit the State standards to make it a four-way stop. Mr. Ruoff replied that he has not reviewed that, but he can. He continued that they could also get traffic data from that location to see what speeds people are going. They did that on Sullivan Rd. as part of a project.

Don Lussier, Public Works Director, stated that shortly before Mr. Ruoff started with the City, staff did the east side traffic study as a result of a neighborhood petition. He continued that as part of that, staff looked at various locations in the neighborhood, including assessing three locations for potential locations for all-way stop conditions. They ended up recommending an all-way stop at Grove/Community/Water St. The intersection of North Lincoln/South Lincoln/Roxbury St. was one of the locations staff evaluated, and at that point, they found that it did not meet the criteria or threshold for a multi-way stop sign. He does not have the numbers off the top of his head, but staff looks at criteria based on the volumes of traffic between the major and minor streets, the accident history for that intersection in the past year and five years, and speed data.

Chair Greenwald stated that he has heard you cannot use a stop sign as a traffic-calming device. Mr. Lussier replied that is correct.

Vicky Morton of 275 Water St. stated that while the traffic study for the intersection of South Lincoln St. and Roxbury St. might not meet the criteria for a four-way stop, she wishes the Council would honor the residents' request, considering they are afraid to back out (of their driveways) due to their experiences. She continued that that should play a major role in the decision of whether to add stop signs. The traffic study showed 85% of the traffic was going at speed. That remaining 15% is a critical number, to the people who are in the way of the people

speeding. The four-way stop at Water St. has mitigated some of the speed on Water St., but in some ways, it has also increased it because people hit that stop sign and then take off (fast). She travels regularly in the 25 mph speed zone on Eastern Ave and tries to stay at 25 mph but is always passed by drivers going the other direction at higher speeds, and a driver is always at her bumper, trying to make her drive faster. If a group of residents approach the City with a request, even if it does not meet the criteria, it is important to listen.

Chair Greenwald stated that he thinks the other issue is enforcement. He continued that the conversation, through the minutes, has been heard by the City Manager and he suspects the Police Department will be requested to pay more attention.

Councilor Filiault stated that he can certainly vouch for the speeds that come through there. He continued that he thinks staff's studies will find that this street has speeds more excessive than the ones found on the side streets, mainly due to the steep hill which people gain a lot of speed on. Sometimes that is intentional, sometimes not. A family member of his on Eastern Ave. says that he thinks the speed limit reduction has slowed traffic a little bit. He thinks they should reduce the speed to 25 mph. At Robin Hood Park on any given day, there are many students from the charter school. It would only take a second for a child not paying attention to be in the road. He thinks that for many reasons, they should expedite looking at this area. Regarding the four-way stop, it is almost a secondary situation, because it is down a little way around the corner. Years ago, the Council tried to have a four-way stop there, but the idea was shot down because of State restrictions. He thinks 25 mph would be a compromise here, but obviously, they must go through the proper procedures. He is in favor of trying to slow down traffic in this part of the city.

Councilor Favolise stated that in the past, they talked about the engineering design of the intersection at Water and Grove St., and staff explained why that area was not an engineering concern. Thinking about the hill and the intersection after it from a Public Works/Engineering perspective, he wonders if there is a problematic road design here.

Mr. Lussier replied that off the top of his head, he does not think so. He continued that he heard the Petitioner's comments about sight distance, which he himself has not looked at or measured. If the Committee recommends sending this back to staff with a request to evaluate and return with a recommendation, staff will look at that carefully. That factor would be considered as a reason for lowering the speed from the prima facie speed in the statute of 30 mph.

Councilor Workman stated that she will support having the staff take a closer look. She continued that she wants to see more detailed data on this specific area. She wants to remind folks that speeding is an issue throughout the city. It is incredibly difficult to burden the understaffed Keene Police Department with maintaining enforcement on all the roads. She has brought this up before, and unfortunately, the City has minimal tools at its disposal to change driver behavior. She would like to see them have the ability to do camera enforcement. She encourages folks to reach out to their State representatives to encourage the ability to use camera

speed checks and enforcement. That would help the City's ability to actually enforce the speed limits throughout the city. She hopes they can figure out something in the meantime, but that is really the avenue she can see. Their hands are tied with the tools they can use, but the technology is there. She has been to other states in which (speeding drivers) just get a ticket in the mail, because of cameras. She would like to see the City of Keene have that ability.

Councilor Tobin stated that she is interested in having staff look at what the visibility is and how that can be improved, because it sounds like part of the issue is backing out of private driveways. She continued that if students are going to and from the school from other areas, she is interested to know whether there are peak hours and if a crossing guard would be an option. Maybe this could involve looking at the crosswalk locations in this area, too, because it is a little treacherous.

Councilor Favolise made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends placing the item on more time and that the City Manager be directed to evaluate potential solutions to reduce speed and improve safety on Roxbury St.

## **2) Continued Discussion – Route 9 – Old Sullivan Road Intersection**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff.

Mr. Ruoff stated that the agenda packet has a revised plan, shown on the screen as well. He continued that staff conducted an on-site investigation, looking at sight distances and gathering traffic numbers for either side of Sullivan Rd. The objective was to see what they were looking at for each hour and what the peak traffic was. They coordinated what they thought was a good solution, in turning the passing lane into a dedicated turning lane. The NHDOT did not like that idea and thought a hatched lane would be better, discouraging motorists from trying to pass while motorists are also trying to turn left onto Sullivan Rd. NHDOT agreed to the solution and said they did not have resources to implement that, so City staff found a vendor to do this work. They had everything lined up and ready to go, and were planning to do it before this meeting and tell the Committee how great it came out, but there was freezing rain the day it was scheduled for. The issue now is weather, which is not appropriate for this type of modifications to the road. It is not safe for someone to do the striping right now.

Mr. Ruoff continued that they have a solution that creates a safer intersection for the short term, and the long-term plan is to put this on NHDOT's Ten Year Plan to get the intersection reconstructed, incorporating all the feedback they received from the public. If the weather was still sunny and nice, they would be out there doing the work.

Chair Greenwald stated that he is thrilled that the solution came about. He continued that he does not think he has ever seen government move this quickly. They heard, they designed, and

they were ready to do the work. The City Manager moved it along, as did Engineering, and even NHDOT. He understands they cannot paint when the weather is cold, but he wonders if they can do it if there is a warm spell. Mr. Ruoff replied yes, they have everything lined up to do it, if there are a couple of warm days. Chair Greenwald asked how warm it has to be. Mr. Ruoff replied that ideally, the asphalt should be 45 degrees and rising, which is considerably warmer than the current temperature.

Chair Greenwald stated that the recommended motion is for the Committee to accept this as informational. He asked the City Manager if she would be more comfortable with the Committee saying something more positive about the plan. Thomas Mullins, City Attorney, replied that it sounds to him like the motion would be to direct the City Manager to carry out the recommendations of the City Engineer as discussed at the meeting.

Ed Haas asked Mr. Ruoff what the costs are. Mr. Ruoff replied that off the top of his head, he thinks the striping and flagging costs were about the same, about \$5,000 total.

Vicky Morton of 275 Water St. asked what Plan B is. She asked if striping this would be the solution to the issues the intersection had, or if there is a next step.

Mr. Ruoff replied that striping is more of an immediate action; there are definitely next steps. He continued that all the accidents occurred when there were left turns across the highway. This eliminates cars passing and trying to slow down and turn at the same time. In conjunction, staff is coordinating with NHDOT to put this on the Ten-Year Plan and reconstruct this intersection so it is safer, has better sight distances, and essentially addresses all of the concerns people have brought forward so far. They cannot do that quickly; it is a long process with NHDOT. However, the Ten-Year Plan does not necessarily mean ten years. If it was prioritized with NHDOT, it could be bumped up and potentially the intersection could be reconstructed in five years.

Ms. Morton stated that at the last MSFI Committee meeting when this was presented and discussed, there was the issue of people crossing a lane of traffic, which caused many of the accidents. However, a number of people who use the intersection also complained that when they come from the Keene side and go to turn onto Rt. 9, the visibility is severely impaired. Part of it is due to the deep valley prior to getting up to Rt. 9. She asked if there is any consideration for filling that and raising Sullivan Rd. to come up to the height of Rt. 9. It comes up on both sides, but it is a more severe incline from the Keene side than the Sullivan side.

Mr. Ruoff replied yes, that is something they are looking at now. He continued that he thinks there are two parts to that low visibility. One, the guardrail obstructs people's vision; it is right in your line of sight as you are looking out that way on Sullivan Rd. Two, it does drop off rather substantially. This conversation is not over with NHDOT; it has just started. Staff is putting forth what they can do immediately and then working on what they can do following that.

Councilor Filiault stated that he applauds City staff for their work on this. He continued that he has been around long enough to know what “Ten Year Plan” really means. It would be nice if it were five years, but typically, it ends up being longer, especially for projects in this part of the state. He will not hold his breath for the State coming up with anything for this. Come January 1, he thinks the Ten-Year Plan will back up quite a bit, based on what he hears coming out of Concord. He does not think much money will come Keene’s way for anything. However, kudos to City staff for working on the situation. It might not be a perfect fix, but it is much better than it is now.

Councilor Workman made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be directed to carry out the recommendations identified by the City Engineer.

**3) Presentation – Red Pine Scale – Parks and Recreation Director**

Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that they are here tonight to talk about the invasive pest impacting red pines in NH, the red pine scale. She continued that it has been evidenced as close as Swanzey. She indicated the photo on the screen, and continued that the pest lives under the white, wax-like substance. It pierces through the bark, into the trees, and sucks the life out. It starts at the bottom of the crown and goes to the top, moving very quickly.

The Chair represented other speakers who would be presenting. They identified themselves as Bill Davidson, a forest health specialist with the NH Forest Health program and Jo Russavage with the UNH Cooperative Extension, Urban Forestry and Ecology.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that they met about a month ago to talk about red pine scale’s potential impact on community parks. She continued that the photo on the screen is of the devastation after the hurricane of 1938. Red pines were planted in 1939 and 1940 to reforest the area. It was a nationwide program to build back after significant damage. These are non-native species of red pine, nearing the end of their natural life of 85 to 95 years. This year is year 85. There is a red pine monoculture in some of Keene’s parks. The dangers of that include root rot and invasive pests like the red pine scale, which decimates the monoculture. Forests that have been infected with invasive pests have never survived the infection.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey continued that red pine scale has been evidenced throughout many parts of the State, most recently in the Yale Forest in Swanzey. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey shared a summer photo of this location, noting that the red pine scale has already infected this forest, which is very close to Keene. From 2012 through 2014, Bear Brook State Forest in Allenstown, NH went through a giant red pine harvesting because of the red pine scale infection. The invasive pest has moved westward. Mr. Davidson has brought a live example so people can see, feel, and look at it. It does not look damaging in the picture, but the pest gets underneath, creates that flocculent to insulate itself, pierces the tree, and kills it.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey continued that there are park watch lists to be aware of: Wheelock Park, Dinsmore Woods on both sides of Maple Ave., Ladies Wildwood Park, and Robin Hood Park. Wheelock Park and Dinsmore Woods are the most heavily populated with red pine. In addition to their meeting in November, she and the forestry experts toured all the parks to see if they should be concerned right now and to get a feel for what was in the area. The forestry experts were impressed by the significant undergrowth in Dinsmore Woods. Other tree species are already growing there, which is a definite benefit. They noticed concerning branches, which they will revisit as soon as they can. The trees are nearing the end of their natural life span. They are as tall as they are going to get. They also need to pay attention to Wheelock Park, and they are proactively going after this, to make sure the community is informed. They can provide the education people need to understand that this danger of red pine scale will not go away, and while it might not be here right this minute, it is imminent. The idea for Wheelock Park is to harvest one tract of red pine, between the drive out to the ball fields and the backside of O'Neal Field next to Wheelock Pool, as an educational pilot. They could engage the community in making sure they remove that tract of red pine. Ms. Russavage brought forward the idea of a demonstration of a forest mulcher machine, which she can talk about further. It gets through the roots and prepares the soil for what comes next. They can also incorporate and engage local artists to make sure they can create something beautiful and functional.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey continued that she has talked with the UNH Cooperative Extension and the NH Division of Forests and Lands about workshop opportunities in January and March, so they can get as much information to the public as possible. Wonderful news is that \$35,000 is already in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for a forestry assessment for FY 26. Knowing the real negative impact monoculture can have on our parks, the plan is to create a sustainable forestry program.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey noted that a couple of different methods can be used while they harvest the red pine. Ms. Russavage brought up the idea of Hügelkultur. She asked Ms. Russavage to speak about it. Ms. Russavage stated that Hügelkultur is a way of making use of waste wood product. She continued that for example, the City could decide to timber the trees prior to them becoming fully infected and dying so they could recapture the economic value of the trees in place versus paying for them once they are deceased. They will only take a certain portion, generally the tops. That leaves a lot of material. You layer that material and create planting areas, and berms and swales to capture water to help with stormwater management. A portable mill, through the Department of Forests and Lands, will timber the wood and create benches or tables. There are many uses for that material, using it in place to improve soil and help with biodiversity in the park areas where they will be doing most of this work.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that Ms. Russavage also brought forward the idea of creating a pocket forest. She asked her to speak to that.

Ms. Russavage stated that pocket forests have become common, almost trendy, in intensive urban areas where they all recognize that green infrastructure helps tremendously in managing hot spots. It helps with health and wellbeing in urban areas. Pocket forests take advantage of smaller spaces, with dense plantings of mixed varieties, mostly native to the region. They essentially push each other to come up more quickly than if you did a standard forested process. Ultimately, there would be a more diverse, more natural habitat like what was here prior to the hurricane damage and all the red pine becoming so prominent in Keene's landscape.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that the intention of tonight's presentation is informational. She continued that they have presented to the Conservation Commission very loosely, just identifying this as something they will have to deal with eventually. They do not know when it will happen, but they know that it will happen, and that no forest has survived it. The forestry specialists they worked with in the middle of November are all on board to help Keene as they move through this process, with the workshops in January and March and over the next foreseeable future.

Chair Greenwald asked if there were any questions from the Committee. Hearing none, he asked if there were questions from the public.

In response to a question from an unidentified member of the public, Mr. Davidson stated the red pine scale is native to Japan and other countries in eastern Asia, and thus can live on some of the pine trees that are native to that area, but in NH, it cannot attack any trees other than red pine.

Councilor Favolise asked what the disease progression timeline is once red pine scale gets into a tree. He continued that in thinking of the timeline for removing these, he does not want to leave any possibility that a partial infection very quickly becomes a full infection.

Mr. Davidson replied that that is a tough question to answer, but they positively identified red pine scale in the Yale Forest, which is about two miles from Wheelock Park. He continued that it can easily spread here, dispersed by animals and wind. It can move two miles in about a year. From the time you start noticing the first symptoms to the time when you have widespread tree mortality could be as little as two or three years.

Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager, stated that he would like to congratulate Ms. Fisk-Hennessey on her first presentation to the MSFI Committee. He continued that in 2014, he and then-Director of Public Works, Kürt Blomquist, talked about how this red pine scale would come to Keene eventually and they would have to do something. They were fortunate to put the funding forward in the CIP, thinking that they still had time to do an assessment of what they had, and put that back in the CIP for a project in six or seven years. About two years ago when they had a meeting with Steve Robarge, who is (one of the Forest Specialists Ms. Fisk-Hennessey spoke of), they visited Wheelock Park and talked about how they still had a little bit of time. Now, with help from Mr. Davidson and Ms. Russavage, they have discovered that it is moving faster than they had anticipated. That gives them great concern. He knows some of the



things they are planning, and he thinks they will do a great job educating the public about what is coming. He knows that Wheelock Park has been forested in the past, in the 1990s. They removed many trees related to the bike park and removed many trees as a result of walking through with the foresters, trying to thin things out as they go. Ladies Wildwood Park has a section they have already almost removed, but the undergrowth is now coming in, which is very positive. He gives kudos to Ms. Fisk-Hennessey and the team she has brought on to address this in a more immediate fashion, which is what they need to do.

Councilor Tobin stated that she appreciates them taking the time to investigate this and be proactive. She continued that recently, she recorded what she thought was elm city ash borer, and the response she received was basically, “Just don’t plant ash anymore.” It is unfortunate to think that with less biodiversity it means there are fewer options for things that they can plant. Without that, as the monoculture develops, there is less biodiversity, and it can be very isolating. When you have a disease that only impacts one species it sounds like it is not a big deal, but when that species is all that you were able to plant at that point, it wipes out a forest. She is not looking forward to seeing the loss of the trees, as is true for many people.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the Red Pine Scale presentation as informational.

**4) Proposed Changes to Winchester Street, between Wilson and Main Streets – Public Works Director**

Mr. Lussier stated that in 2007, the City did the reconstruction of the Main St., Marlboro St., and Winchester St. intersection. He continued that as part of that, they extended the work down Winchester St. and did crosswalk improvements in conjunction with the college. Today there are two raised crosswalks with pedestrian-activated signals. The intention was to make safer crosswalks for the high volume of pedestrian traffic going from the dormitories on the north side to the south side of campus. In 2023, those two dormitories were demolished, and the traffic that had justified those more intensive crosswalks does not exist anymore. In 2024, that section of Winchester St. was programmed to be repaved. Staff elected to postpone that for a year due to discussion of potential redevelopment of the former dormitories. Based on recent conversations with Keene State College (KSC), it does not look like that is moving forward, at least not in the near term. Thus, staff plans to repave Winchester St. as part of the 2025 paving program.

Mr. Lussier continued that he started a conversation with KSC about how they had done these crosswalks for a specific purpose that seems to no longer exist, and asked how KSC would feel about removing one of the mid-block crosswalks and making the crosswalk that remains just a standard crosswalk. KSC had no objection, because the traffic that had been justifying those more intensive crosswalks no longer exists. The agenda packet includes a sketch of what staff proposes. On the left/western side is the intersection with Wilson St. Staff proposes that

crosswalk stay in place, but as a standard, at-street-grade crosswalk. They would build curb ramps on both sides to assist people with mobility impairments. They propose removing the crosswalk to the right/east. The distance between the two is a little over 200 feet, which is not a significant enough distance to warrant having a mid-block crossing there.

Mr. Lussier continued that staff suggests keeping the decorative lighting in the median islands on Winchester St. There are three of those, one at the roundabout, one where the crosswalk will be removed, and another where the crosswalk will remain. The graphic shows three overhead lights to remove. KSC installed and pays for those and has no need or desire to continue their existence, so those are already scheduled to be removed by Eversource. Once that happens, the poles can come down, as the lights are the only reason those three poles are there. That will make the area look a little nicer.

Mr. Lussier stated that there is a cobra head streetlight at Wilson St. City Code says to have streetlights at intersections. For some reason, the cobra head at that intersection was on KSC's ledger. Streetlights do not have a meter associated with them. The utility figures out how many hours that light will be on, based on the number of hours of daylight, and charges the City for that number of hours of electrical consumption for each light. That streetlight, for some reason, was on KSC's ledger but really should be on the City's. The City asked Eversource to replace that with an LED light, and that will become part of the City's regular streetlight program.

Mr. Lussier stated that staff is not asking the Committee for any particular recommendation, motion, or authorization. He continued that everything he has described is within staff's authority. There is nowhere in the City Code where these crosswalks are indicated to be placed. If the Committee has any objection to the plan he has talked about, he wants to hear that, but if not, they can accept his report as informational and staff will move forward.

Chair Greenwald stated that he does not object, but he does not think there is any harm in keeping the crosswalk there, and if anything, it calms the traffic on Winchester St.

Mr. Lussier replied that the ongoing maintenance is an undue cost to the City. He continued that there was in-street lighting, which are the little lights in the roadway, but those have not functioned for many years. Those systems work well when you do not have to plow or salt, but do not hold up in Keene's environment. The electrician was out there several times a year trying to fix them. Staff gave up on the in-street lighting some years ago. The beacons themselves, the signs with the lights, are pedestrian-activated. Posts on either side of the crosswalk and an optical sensor cause the lights start flashing when if a pedestrian walks through. Those systems have been unreliable and were damaged several times. The City spends a fair amount of money every year either fixing or replacing those systems.

Chair Greenwald asked why not just get rid of those systems but still leave the speed humps. He continued that he is thinking of the expense of removing them. He wonders if there is another reason why staff wants to remove them.

Mr. Lussier replied that the other reason is the drawbacks of speed tables in general. He continued that they cause wear and tear on the snowplows and firetrucks. Yes, they are a great traffic calming measure. While a stop sign is not used to control speed, a speed table is effective at controlling speed.

Councilor Filiault stated that he has a couple concerns. He continued that Mr. Lussier mentioned the three lights to be eliminated, owned by KSC. That concerns him, because even if there are no buildings there, there will still be a heavily used parking lot. He does not recommend less lighting. He does not think eliminating the crosswalk makes sense, because given the parking lot's location, college students will not walk down Winchester St. to cross a crosswalk and come back up Winchester St. They will cross Winchester St. right where they get out of their vehicles in the parking lot, which is where City staff wants to eliminate a crosswalk. Right now, at least motorists know there is a crosswalk there. Whether they are raised or at street level, it makes sense to leave both crosswalks there. Leaving them there for safety does not cost anything. Staff can refer his comment about lighting to the college if they want. If there were no parking lot there and it was just green space it would be fine, but they could potentially have about a hundred students and faculty members parking in that parking lot and crossing the street, so he thinks they should leave the crosswalk.

Councilor Tobin stated that Councilor Filiault answered one of her questions, which was what that area was going to be. She continued that if it will be a parking lot, it does not seem like the need has changed, in terms of students crossing back and forth. She asked if that is correct.

Mr. Lussier replied that he does not know what the plan is for that parking lot. He continued that originally, that area was turned into a grass field. Just this summer, the turf was removed, gravel was brought in, and now it is a parking area. He does not know if it is planned for commuter use or something else.

The City Manager stated that when that parking went in, it was planned for temporary only. She continued that she does not know if temporary will turn into permanent, but the City has expressed concern about creating a parking lot in that area.

Councilor Tobin stated that regarding the lighting, she heard a number of people talk about college students crossing in that area, crossing everywhere, and people being unable to see them. It suggests a need for lighting. She is not sure whether it is frequent crosswalks or something else, but there needs to be visibility there, especially since there will be college students downtown at night. That would be a concern.

Councilor Favolise stated that this is in his ward and close to where he lives. He continued that he has received more emails about this issue than he has about anything recently, from constituents who are students living off campus. He understands that the Facilities staff at KSC were in support of this. He received an email from a constituent who is a Student Affairs

Administrator who raised some concerns about this and was surprised that this conversation had taken place. He would have liked to see additional consultation with students. He recognizes that it is more of an internal conversation with the college, and Public Works went through the right channels. However, he echoes many of the concerns his constituents raised around speeding on Winchester St. and those crosswalks as traffic-calming measures. If they eliminate the eastern-most raised crosswalk and bring the other one down to street grade, to him that not only has a safety impact on those crosswalks but is potentially a speed concern for some of the street-level crosswalks further down Winchester St. as people are speeding out of the roundabout. They have talked at length tonight about speeding challenges across the city.

Councilor Favolise continued that he does not think the parking lot is planned to be exclusive commuter use, so he thinks there would be some residential use of that for students crossing back and forth. He is trying to find a balance here between the Public Works cost needs, thinking of the damage to firetrucks and plows, with the need for pedestrian safety. That part of Winchester St. is a high-traffic pedestrian area. Because they have been without fully functional crossing lights beacons for a while, he does not think that getting rid of those would be a major change. He really does not want to see the first crosswalk eliminated, and he does not want to see these become street-grade. He recognizes that the Committee does not necessarily have authority over this, but he thinks they are united in their concern for pedestrian safety. He appreciates Mr. Lussier bringing this conversation to them.

Mr. Lussier stated that to clarify, when he said that staff did not need the Council's authority, he did not mean to suggest the Council cannot tell staff not to do this. He continued that he meant that the Council does not need to take an action for staff to do this. If the Committee and Council tell staff this is not what they want, staff will not do it.

Chair Greenwald stated that to take it one step further, the college does not need to come to the City for approval to do anything. He continued that however, going back to the days of the Vice President for Finance and Planning, who is now our Mayor, the college did come, submitted their plans to the Planning Board, and informed the City what was going on. Maybe the College listened to what the City suggested. The Committee does not know anything about this parking lot, such as whether it is dirt or paved, has lighting or greenery, or is temporary or not. It is expensive to pave a parking lot, and spending half a million to do so would not be "temporary." He would request that the college come to the Planning Board or some other body to tell the City what is going on there.

The City Manager replied that she would need to confirm, but she thinks they did. She continued that they the college attempted to go to the Planning Board most recently for their master plan update, which talked about all these parcels, but that is scheduled for another night. She remembers a conversation at the Planning Board level about this parking lot and their concern about it becoming permanent. That is where they the City got the information about how it was going to be temporary. She will have to confirm if that was at the Planning Board level, but she knows they the college have been attempting to come and get feedback.

Chair Greenwald stated that he knows the college's president would rather see buildings there than a parking lot, but among the other questions and possibilities is a fence to try to direct people where to cross and crosswalks. This needs a bit more discussion.

Chair Greenwald asked Mr. Lussier if it is correct that staff would not be doing this work this season. Mr. Lussier replied that it would be part of the 2025 paving program.

Chair Greenwald asked about a recommended motion. The City Manager replied that the Committee could accept it as informational, and they could continue to have conversations about this, and staff would come back with an additional update.

Ken Stewart of 11 Algonquin Dr. stated that he objects to this plan almost in its entirety. He continued that this road was redesigned years ago to slow the traffic down and make the crossings safer, and he thinks the direction being proposed is counter to making the streets safer for pedestrians. He thinks it makes it more dangerous. From a broader policy standpoint, he is surprised, given that investments have been made to make the crossings around the corner on Main St. in front of the college safer. Investments have been made further south on Winchester St. to make those crosswalks and the flashing signs you can activate more visible. This seems to be going in the opposite direction. From a policy standpoint, it does not make sense to him. Looking at what generates pedestrians crossing, and strictly limiting it to that parcel, which is had empty dorms for years, there still seem to be people crossing back and forth. Now there will be a parking lot there. It will have a more active use than what he has seen on that side of the street and on that parcel for several years, to say nothing about other buildings around there that would cause people to be moving back and forth across the street. The volume of pedestrians is not solely related to that parcel, and he thinks the parcel will see higher use with the parking lot, whether it is there for two or three years or for the rest of our lifetimes. He thinks this should be re-thought and done in a different way.

Mr. Stewart continued that they heard tonight about rampant speeding around town. He thinks the raised crosswalks help prevent that. There is nothing better to slow someone down than having them hit their head on the roof of their vehicle the one time they decide to speed through a raised crosswalk. He has observed that drivers accelerate on Winchester St. on the way to the rail trail crosswalk, and by the time they get there, they are driving 35 to 50 mph. (The City) could preserve what is there. He understands not trying to keep lights buried in the pavement in this climate, but they could have some kind of activated lighting system. If the current one does not work, replace it with something that does work. From what he could tell today, the one they propose keeping does not work, at the corner of Wilson St. The mid-block one, which he walked through today, does work.

Mr. Stewart stated that his final comment is that there is a newly paved walkway from the unpaved area of that parking lot right to this point in the street where Public Works proposes

removing a crosswalk. It seems to him that there is a disconnect. That would be an unsafe move, not coordinated with whatever it is Keene State is doing. They should get that clarified.

Councilor Favolise asked the Public Works Director if St. Joe's has an opinion on this. They were talking about the charter school on Lincoln St. and the traffic. Mr. Lussier replied that he did not reach out to St. Joe's. Chair Greenwald replied that he does not think many of their students walk. He continued that regardless, this obviously needs a lot more discussion.

Councilor Tobin made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the report on the proposed changes on Winchester St. be accepted as informational with the expectation that Public Works will provide updates on the progress in the proposal.

Councilor Favolise thanked the Public Works Director for coming and allowing them to have this conversation, getting closer to a resolution. Mr. Lussier replied that the feedback was helpful.

**5) Relating to Designated Loading Zones and Bus Loading Zones  
Ordinance O-2024-16**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the Public Works Director.

Mr. Lussier stated that this effort started with a request a couple years ago from residents at the Central Square Terrace housing development. He continued that several years ago, a crosswalk started directly in front of the Central Square Terrace breezeway and went diagonally across the street into the Hannah Grimes parking lot entrance. The residents requested improvements to that to make it safer. Staff looked, agreed that it was a problem, and recommended upgrading the crosswalk at one location and eliminating the crosswalk at another location. The Council approved. The ramp on the north side was removed and at the location to the east where the MoCo Arts driveway exits, staff installed pedestrian-activated beacons and made that a more prominent crosswalk.

Mr. Lussier continued that more recently, residents at the housing complex asked for some sort of ramp that would allow them to get into the spaces to access vehicles, for folks who have mobility impairment. Staff spoke with Keene Housing management and with folks at HCS, the bus company, and Keene first responders who pick people up at Central Square Terrace. The bus company said no, they do not need that, because the bus pulls right up to the curb, and if someone with a wheelchair needs help loading, the ramp goes down to the sidewalk surface. They do not need to get down to the roadway surface. Keene Fire said no, they do not need a ramp; their gurney can negotiate over the curb. Keene Housing said they have a designated, accessible parking space in the garage they want residents to use, if someone comes to pick them up.

Mr. Lussier continued that after continuing this conversation and hearing more from different folks, staff determined the underlying cause of this (request). Many times, people park their vehicles in the loading zone for longer than the allowed 15 minutes, leaving no place for the bus to pull up to the curb or for the ambulance to pull off to the side of the road. Staff suggests the creation of something new within the City Ordinance – a designated bus loading zone. The entire space today is in the Code as a loading zone and you are allowed to park anywhere in that zone for 15 minutes. They would designate the eastern, right half of that area as the 15-minute loading zone, and the left half would be “bus only” parking. The Code allows for public transit as well as emergency vehicles, so ambulances and fire trucks could still park there if needed.

Mr. Lussier continued that during the City Attorney’s review, he asked where else this is an issue in the city, which was a good question. Staff pulled back and decided to look at it holistically. They referenced the HCS routes they are using now and found that a similar condition exists in two other locations. One is the area in front of the Transportation Center on Gilbo Ave. Folks at HCS said that occasionally there is an issue with (the bus) pulling up and finding someone (else) there. It is designated as a loading zone, but it is not exclusively for buses. Staff recommends, for the sake of consistency, that this also be designated as “bus only.” This (zone) is a little bit longer, because it is used for the Greyhound bus as well as the HCS bus. Thus, it is a bigger area, but it is the same concept. It would be designated just for buses or emergency vehicles. On West St. is a bus stop for the public library. In the current City Code, all of West St. in this section is “no parking.” Thus, it is not technically needed, but for the sake of consistency and clarity, they would designate it as a bus loading zone and put up signs to that effect.

Chair Greenwald stated that it is not a problem on Gilbo Ave., and it is needed as a loading zone for trucks. He continued that he is fine with what staff wants to do with the other two locations, but not (Gilbo Ave.) where it is not a problem, because it would create a problem. He suggests removing Gilbo Ave. from the discussion. Mr. Lussier replied that then they would be looking at an A version (of the Ordinance), which strikes subparagraph 2.

Councilor Tobin stated that she is concerned about limiting the modes of transportation, by saying it needs to be a bus. She continued that having lived near that area and having talked with the residents, she does not know what the limitations are with the loading zone, but knows there is a steady stream of cars picking people up at certain times. She would be concerned if that was not allowed to happen there. Yes, they could do that at the other end of the sidewalk, but given the residents’ mobility challenges, that is a long way to walk.

Mr. Lussier replied that they discussed this with Keene Housing management and they prefer residents’ loved ones pick them up inside the garage at the designated handicapped space. He continued that it is actually closer to the building. Councilor Tobin asked why that is not happening already. She asked what the barrier is. Mr. Lussier replied that he does not know.

Councilor Workman stated that she thinks keeping the proposed changes as they are now, with all three spots designated, would make the most sense. She continued that if people are not parking there now, then reserving it just for buses should not be a problem. She supports keeping all three as bus loading zones.

Chair Greenwald made a motion to amend the Ordinance by deleting the reference to Gilbo Avenue. Councilor Filiault seconded the motion.

Chair Greenwald stated that as he said before, bus stops are not a problem on Gilbo Ave., but absolutely, there are big trucks that need to come and go for deliveries, and there is no other place for them to stop. He wonders if this is really a problem on Roxbury St., because again, a loading zone is for deliveries, and not for parking.

Councilor Filiault stated that he would think that since this is not urgent, they could put it on more time while some of these issues are resolved behind the scenes. Whenever something comes out of committee in a confusing way, it gets more confusing at the Council level. They both (Mr. Lussier and Chair Greenwald) have legitimate concerns, and he thinks the issue needs to be looked at a little more in depth.

The City Manager stated she thinks it truly comes down to knowing where the Committee wants to see bus stops, and where they want the loading zones to be. Currently, people park in loading zones all over downtown, for 15 minutes while they run into a store to pick something up, get a cup of coffee, or pick up a loved one at Central Square Terrace. This conversation started when a resident at Central Square Terrace reached out to a Keene Housing board member, who then reached out to a Councilor who asked the City to address it. The reason for that is, when the bus comes to pick people up on Roxbury Street, there are cars parked there. If the bus cannot get close enough to the curb it is difficult to pick up residents with mobility issues. Staff have had many conversations with Keene Housing and the bus companies. She thinks with Roxbury St., this would solve a problem that currently exists. There is no problem in front of the Library, and they do not necessarily have a problem at Gilbo Ave. right now because it is such a long spot. However, when they brought just the Roxbury St. location forward, the City Attorney suggested they look at all the locations and treat them all the same. That is how they came here tonight. She hopes they can get clear direction from the Committee about, for example, whether they want one bus stop, a loading zone, or nothing.

Chair Greenwald stated that there are also loading zones on Cypress St. and Railroad St. He asked if they are not in the discussion because they are not bus stops. Mr. Lussier replied right, this started with the HCS transit routes. He continued that they looked for places where the HCS bus stopped in parking areas, whether designated as loading zones or just parking spaces. They found that condition in these three locations, and a couple locations just north of here, like the Community Kitchen, where (the bus) parks in actual parking spaces. If those spaces are filled, the bus stops in the road and loads there. Staff and HCS discussed whether that was a problem and decided that they do not think it is a big enough issue or causing enough problems that they



would recommend the loss of two or three parking spaces at those locations, which is why they are not included in tonight's list.

Councilor Favolise stated that he has a question for the City Attorney. He continued that given the discussions here around the specific conditions at the Roxbury St. loading zone, he wants to know what the legal guidance is if they have to do all three of these. The City Attorney replied that he suggested doing all three for reasons of enforcement. He continued that it gets confusing otherwise, especially if the Police Department needs to ticket or remove people. People could question why enforcement is happening in one location but not another. It was a question of consistency. Councilor Favolise asked if there is any legal liability to the City if they take Gilbo Ave. out. The City Attorney replied no, there is no legal liability with any of these. It is in the public right-of-way and the City has some protections in the right-of-way. It is a policy decision at this point. The Council can do what they want.

Councilor Workman stated that she wants to argue the point again, a little more articulately, that they are encouraging folks to use public transportation, and the folks who use public transportation do so because they do not usually have many other means for transportation. She continued that she does not see why they would limit it, and make it more difficult for folks who already have such limited means. It defeats their purpose of being a multimodal transportation hub. Having more bus stops/loading zones would promote that overall goal for the city.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was anything further. He continued that they are discussing his amendment to drop out Gilbo Ave. from the Ordinance, which would create an A version.

Hearing no further comment, Chair Greenwald called for a vote. The amendment failed with a vote of 2-3. Chair Greenwald and Councilor Filiault were in favor.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was further discussion on the Ordinance in total.

Councilor Tobin stated that after she heard that there was a problem in this area, she talked with the residents for about an hour. She continued that the proposed Ordinance is not addressing what they described to her. They said there are two different busses stopping in two different places, which is one issue. The other issue is that they are not crossing in the crosswalk, because they are crossing where they come out of their homes. It would be difficult to walk the stretch of the building, cross the street, then turn around and go back. She has watched people try to get into vehicles in that area before, and while she thinks public transit is great, until it is more frequent, it cannot get everyone to every doctor's appointment, so these residents need that access. The problem they described to her is that what used to be a loading zone was being used as parking for people who were going into the stores there, and they were in there longer than 15 minutes.

Chair Greenwald stated that he has another idea. Maybe they could mark about 20 feet of the large loading zone at Gilbo Ave. as designated for buses only. Mr. Lussier replied that he thinks

it would have to be more than 20 feet, for the transit bus to be able to swerve in and out. He continued that it would have to be about 30 or 35 feet, which is about half of the length. It would not address the need of the Greyhound that parks there. Chair Greenwald replied that he still maintains that this is not a problem. Mr. Lussier replied that when they talked with HCS about this, they said they rarely had a problem parking here.

The City Attorney stated that having driven a bus over 40 feet long, he thinks that if they designate part of this as a loading zone for that purpose, Public Works needs to look at the space and make sure there is enough space to do what they need to do, instead of trying to guess 20 feet, 30 feet, 35 feet. He continued that that is his suggestion, especially for enforcement purposes.

Councilor Filiault made a motion to place the item on more time. Councilor Tobin seconded the motion.

The City Manager stated that she gets the City Attorney's point, but it does not do much good to send the Public Works Director and the City Engineer out there to measure a bus zone for X number of feet if the Committee is not interested in having one there or elsewhere. She asks that the Committee please just tell staff, tonight, if they are even interested in having a bus zone in any of these locations. It takes a lot of effort for staff to do these things and then come back, thinking they have done it right. She asked if the Committee could come to an informal consensus.

Councilor Filiault stated that his motion is to place the item on more time. He continued that personally, he is neutral about all of it. This conversation is not going anywhere tonight. He continued that he moves the question.

On a vote of 5 – 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommended that Ordinance O-2024-16 be placed on more time.

**6) Relating to Maintenance Parking Restrictions  
Ordinance O-2024-21**

Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager, stated that she is here tonight with Chelsea North, Parking Operations Manager. She continued that this came before the Council on November 7. In October, the Council adopted Ordinance O-2024-14, which shifted parking restrictions from a continuous snow maintenance period that previously was November through April to a new winter weather parking ban approach to how the City makes sure they have the streets available and clear for when they need to do snow removal and winter options. With Council approval, the entire Section 94-95(a) language was removed at that time and replaced with new language.

She continued that the next step is to review and update the second section of Sec. 94-95, which is paragraph (b). They needed to do that for consistency and clarity in the language. Ordinance

O-2024-14 updated half of that section, and the Ordinance before the Committee would finish updating that section. Thus, there is new wording for both sections. Sec. 94-95(a) and Sec. 94-95(b) were formally titled “Winter Maintenance Period,” November to April, and “Summer Maintenance Period,” May to October. The recommended scheduled maintenance wording they have before the Committee tonight will shift from the former nightly street closures from May through October to providing the Public Works Director the authority to declare a parking ban as needed for maintenance purposes. Before, they could do things like street sweeping between 2:00 AM and 6:00 AM, because the street parking was always closed then. Now this opens up overnight parking when there is no maintenance ban in place, if the Ordinance is passed. This includes a three-day advance public notice requirement, and the public parking lots will remain available for overnight parking when there is a maintenance ban.

Ms. Landry continued that she wants to make it clear that there are some consequences to be aware of when they consider making these changes. Ms. North has done a great job looking at the parking fund balance and how it has trended over the past four or five years. Staff also looked at what other communities are doing, such as what they are charging and how they are notifying people. She has looked at the revenue that the City of Keene receives from issuing tickets and how these bans will impact that. In addition to making sure the Public Works team will have access to roads as necessary to perform street maintenance, both scheduled and emergency, the expanded access to public parking without nightly or overnight restrictions expands parking availability and convenience for Keene residents. That was the goal of the changes. However, it will likely create competition for downtown parking spaces between residents who use the spaces for overnight parking and downtown business customers who use the spaces between the hours of 3:00 PM and 10:00 AM. For example, a person can pay a meter at 3:00 PM, hit the two-hour limit and stay, since parking is no longer enforced after 5:00 PM, then pay the meter at 8:00 AM and stay until 10:00 AM, the end of the two-hour limit.

Ms. Landry continued that they expect a reduction in parking fund revenue, resulting from reduced demand for reserved parking. Now, people pay for permits to park in reserved spaces in the lots, and this is already reducing quite a bit, due to the opportunity to park on the street. There will also be reduced ticketing of vehicles in violation of former on-street parking rules overnight. They just heard from the Public Works Director that they may start ticketing vehicles that are not complying with the winter weather parking bans, but it will be a reduction because of the reduced frequency. They expect the reduction in revenue to be somewhere between \$20,000 to \$45,000 per year. That is using a conservative estimate for how many people will likely shift from reserved parking to on-street parking. The estimate is such a broad range because they do not know what the ticketing revenue impact will be.

Ms. Landry continued that as they can see on tonight’s agenda items, there is already a business impacted by a lack of available parking early in the morning. For breakfast customers, they need an update to the ordinance to add overnight parking restrictions on the downtown street because their breakfast customers right now cannot find parking in front of the business. Residents using the spaces as overnight parking are occupying those spaces.

Ms. Landry stated that she and Ms. North can answer questions and provide information about streets they think are affected by this competition for parking. Opening streets for overnight parking year-round is consistent with the City's housing goals, particularly in residential neighborhoods all around Keene, not just downtown. For example, years ago she had out-of-state family members visit for the holidays, in west Keene. They had to park overnight, so they parked in the street until whatever the time limit was, and then before going to bed they would jam all of their cars into the tiny driveway so they would not get ticketed or towed. They no longer need to do that, which is great. If there is no snowstorm or freezing rain, they can stay parked on the cul-de-sac. That is an example of how this benefits housing goals and neighborhood parking goals. However, the consequences downtown are different. There are pros and cons to allowing overnight parking downtown, because of the business impacts.

Ms. Landry continued that to go over Ordinance O-2024-21, the title of Sec. 94-95 will change to "Maintenance Parking Restrictions." That allows for winter weather maintenance and any other scheduled maintenance. Sec. 95-95(a)(2) has an update, where it allows for ticketing and towing as provided for in Sec. 94-154. That is to be consistent between sections (a) and (b). They want to make sure they have the authority to do that as needed. She wants to emphasize that staff does not *want* to give tickets and does not *want* to tow vehicles. They would rather see people get the information they need in order to move their vehicles and have places to move them to. That is what they hope to see happen. Although, Ms. North's research shows that communities with similar winter weather parking bans all struggle with the same issue – there are a number of vehicles that just do not get moved during winter storms, and staff has to issue tickets and tow vehicles. Section (b) is changing from "summer maintenance" to "scheduled maintenance." It will change from closing the streets between 2:00 AM and 6:00 AM to only closing them during a scheduled maintenance period, and the window of notification will be at least three days. It removes the streets where it previously applied.

Chair Greenwald asked for questions or comment from the Committee. Hearing none, he stated that Ms. Landry and Ms. North did a very good job. He asked for public comment. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Councilor Favolise made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2024-21.

**7) Relating to Gilbo Avenue Parking Restrictions  
Ordinance O-2024-22**

Chair Greenwald stated that he is involved in this to some extent as an abutter, and the matter arises due to actions of residents in his apartment building, which he cannot control. He asked to

he recused from the discussion due to conflict of interest. Hearing no objection, he turned the facilitation over to Vice Chair Filiault. Vice Chair Filiault asked to hear from staff.

Ms. Landry stated that what is before the Committee is adding a restriction to the Gilbo Ave. parking rules. She continued that in 1994-1995 there was a list of streets that did not apply to the parking restrictions. Another section of Code covers parking restrictions on specifically named streets. That is where this belongs, not in Sec. 94-95. Ordinance O-2024-22 is “Gilbo Ave. Parking Restrictions.” The changes they made for winter weather parking bans removed the 2:00 to 6:00 AM parking restriction that was previously in place every night of the week. That opens up overnight parking on Gilbo Ave. as well as other streets downtown where the parking enforcement hours begin at 8:00 AM. Because of the two-hour parking limit, a vehicle owner could park overnight, pay for parking at 8:00 AM, and legally occupy a parking space until 10:00 AM. Recently, she coincidentally had to drive down Gilbo Ave. between 1:00 and 2:00 AM, and saw every parking space in front of Lindy’s Diner occupied. This is problematic for businesses such as Lindy’s that open before 10:00 AM and need parking spaces for their customers.

Ms. Landry continued that the fundamental purpose of downtown parking regulations, including enforcement, is to ensure availability and turnover of parking spaces for customers of downtown businesses during business hours. This supports economic activity and positive experiences for visitors. Residents obviously prefer to park as close to their domicile as possible and are using the on-street parking options available due to changes to the winter parking rules. This Ordinance provides a parking restriction from 2:00 to 6:00 AM. Thus, people will still have the opportunity to park there to frequent businesses downtown but will not be likely to park overnight or to be there at 6:00 AM, on the north side of Gilbo Ave., in order to ensure parking spaces are available to support that business purpose. The nearby Gilbo East parking lot provides ample overnight parking options, which have been used for this purpose in the past and can be reserved for this purpose.

Councilor Filiault asked if it is correct that the restriction is because they are trying to save the few spaces in front of Lindy’s Diner for Lindy’s customers. Ms. Landry replied yes. Councilor Filiault replied that normally he would be fine with that, but they have a whole parking lot right next to their business. He continued that he could understand if there was no parking nearby and the only spaces were right there, but people can park in front and be 10 or 15 feet away from the door, or if the spaces are all occupied, people can be just around the corner and be 25 feet away from the door. There are more parking spaces directly across the street. He does not see the need for this restriction.

Ms. Landry replied that (Lindy’s) was specifically concerned about not having parking directly in front of their business. She continued that many of their early-morning customers are elderly and not as likely or able to walk that distance. Lindy’s feels that this has a direct impact on their business. Councilor Filiault replied that he disagrees. He continued that he does not see the distance being that different, whether someone is parking in front of or alongside the building.

Councilor Favolise stated that he does not feel strongly about the need for this change, but he would be more concerned about the change if there were no other parking available for downtown residents. He continued that his concern is that if they do this, there could be a knock-on effect from other places in Keene requesting parking spaces in other locations (be restricted). He is not saying they (the Council) should or should not approve a given proposal that comes to them, but for parts of the city there is not parking that can be reserved right across the street for residents. He thinks the Council has made a commitment to the residents by passing the change to the winter parking ban. They have sent the message that they are doing this. He is a little less concerned about this (specific request) than he is about what it might portend for the future.

Ms. Landry stated that staff talked about that, and there is a concern that they moved from having a general parking ban to support parking for downtown businesses to now having this first request for a special exception. The question is which is better. The question is whether it is better to have a downtown-wide restriction to prevent this competition for parking, or to just keep it standard and not make individual exceptions, saying, "Sorry, the rule is the rule and we will play it out and see how it goes."

Councilor Workman asked if it would be possible to make those parking spaces handicapped spaces. Ms. North replied that if a person has a walking disability pass, they can park for free in any space. She continued that she thinks there is one accessible space in that area. Councilor Workman replied that she was thinking more about reducing the likelihood of able-bodied people parking there overnight.

The City Manager stated that unfortunately, Lindy's owners are on vacation right now and could not be at this meeting. She continued that there is a concern about other businesses potentially coming with requests for similar restrictions. However, she thinks this one is a bit different, due to the parking lots available for residents in that area. Many of people's concerns about the downtown were about having available parking nearby and having to move their cars to those lots when it snowed. Here, the issue is that the people who live in the area are choosing to park (in front of Lindy's Diner) instead of in the parking lot, and the parking lot is very close. It seemed like this request was different, for that reason.

Councilor Tobin stated that her general preference would be to look at this as a whole, in terms of the downtown. She continued that she is thinking about how if the Council does this for one business, and then they move, there is the question of whether the parking restriction applies to the next business there, or whether parking always moves with businesses. She can imagine a number of options. She would be curious to hear how other communities handle it, if staff has researched that.

Ms. Landry stated that she thinks the scheduled maintenance parking bans *are* the consideration as a whole. She continued that these are the Ordinances put before the Council, per the

Council's request. The opportunity to stop the overnight ban in general on all parking in the downtown and across the city. That is what this is doing.

Councilor Filiault stated that he thinks what they are doing is good, overall, and long overdue. He continued that the problem is they are getting a little too specific here. He is concerned, because it is hard to guess what will happen in the future, but he could see a new restaurant coming in and asking for parking spaces in front of their business, maybe not having a parking lot right next door. Again, the advantage here at Lindy's is there is parking all around, so he does not see the hindrance. Yes, it could be inconvenient if all the spaces are taken, but a couple are accessible. It is not as if a severely handicapped person would have to walk a quarter mile. It would be an extra 10-15 feet. In realistic terms, he does not see the issue here.

Councilor Workman stated that Councilor Filiault does not see a problem because he is able-bodied and walks often, so he does not see the extra few feet as a big deal. She continued that it is incredibly inconvenient for people with a walking disability. In her social services job, she has had to pick people up and drop people off for the last 20 years here in Keene. She has frequented many locations where she has had to either put her hazard lights on or pay to park, as a working person on the clock. The City is giving residents the option to park on Main St. overnight, and they have the option of the lot, and Gilbo Ave. parking spaces on the side. This is a perfect example of a special exception. They need to look at things on a case-by-case basis and make a determination. Most businesses open later in the morning and this is not an issue for them. Lindy's opens early. She thinks this is a simple ask, and she will support it.

Mr. Lussier stated that he looked up the information while this discussion was happening and can confirm that the spaces in front of Lindy's Diner are not currently accessible ones. He continued that two accessible spaces are just to the east, in the City parking lot. The closest two to Lindy's are accessible. The City cannot just mark them as accessible spaces. They would have to actually be accessible, with curb ramps, which would require some construction.

Councilor Filiault stated that they cannot be overly concerned about what could happen in the future, but in this particular case, he can see what could happen. Lindy's is not the only breakfast place in town. Other places open early for breakfast, and they pay attention to these things. He can see those owners saying they want the same favor, and asking why they legally cannot have the same benefit a competing restaurant has. If he were a competing restaurant owner and saw that his competitor was given designated parking in front of their restaurant, he would be coming to the City to ask for the same thing. That is the danger. He does not disagree that there are people who are not as able-bodied, but his point is, there are spaces right next door to Lindy's that allow those people to park.

Councilor Filiault asked if there was any further comment. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Councilor Workman made a motion to recommend adoption of Ordinance O-2024-22. Councilor Filiault seconded the motion, which failed with a vote of 1-3. Councilor Workman voted in favor.

**8) Relating to Juneteenth Exception to Parking Regulations  
Ordinance O-2024-23**

Chair Greenwald rejoined the meeting and asked staff to speak to Ordinance O-2024-23.

Ms. Landry stated that people get very upset when they cannot park for free on Juneteenth. She continued that this Ordinance does two things. One, some housekeeping. Previously, the time limits did not apply on a section of Court St. where the Senior Center used to be, which was specifically for the Senior Center, so they have stricken that because the Senior Center has moved. Two, since Juneteenth has become a federal holiday, many people have assumed it is a free parking day. However, Juneteenth is not a *City* holiday. It has caused significant confusion. Over the years, parking staff have used more of an educational approach than an enforcement approach, with a few exceptions, and now, Ms. North and the team are installing new labels for clarity. They have a new telephone attendant so that when no one is available to answer the phone in Parking, people can learn about when there is and is not a free parking day. Still, the public continues to strongly press for Juneteenth to be a free parking day.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends adoption of Ordinance O-2024-23.

Chair Greenwald asked about free parking for the holiday season. Ms. North replied that it is the seven days preceding Christmas, December 18 to 25. She continued that she wants to add that free parking days have a slight revenue impact. The estimation she came up with for a holiday, including Juneteenth, is about \$5,700 in meter revenue, and probably an additional \$500 to \$700 in ticket revenue. Chair Greenwald asked if it is correct that the two-hour limit is still in effect. Ms. North replied yes. Ms. Landry stated that they will be doing a holistic review of the impacts to revenue when they do the next budget.

**9) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Greenwald adjourned the meeting at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,  
Terri M. Hood, Deputy City Clerk