

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

**AD HOC DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, November 15, 2022**

**3:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Mayor George S. Hansel, Chair  
Councilor Randy Filiault  
Councilor Mitchell Greenwald (Arrived Late)  
Councilor Andrew Madison  
Dillon Benik  
Alex Faulkner  
Alec Doyle  
Mark Rebillard  
Brandie Wells  
Nathalie Houder

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager  
Kürt Blomquist, Director of Public Works/  
ACM/Emergency Management Director  
Don Lussier, City Engineer

**Members Not Present:**

Cheryl Belair  
Robert Patton-Spruill

**1) Call to Order/Welcome**

Mayor Hansel called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.

**2) Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 16, 2022 & September 28, 2022**

A motion by Councilor Filiault to approve the August 16, 2022 and September 28, 2022 meeting minutes was duly seconded by Councilor Madison and the motion carried unanimously.

**3) Communications**

- A) Monadnock Alliance for Transportation, Letter dated November 9, 2022**
- B) City of Keene Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Memorandum dated November 11, 2022**
- C) City of Keene Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Todd Horner Vice Chair Letter dated October 13, 2022**

Mr. Blomquist noted that the Committee received these communications. All were forwarded to the Committee and were available in the agenda packet. All three were encouraging

bicycle/pedestrian/multimodal facilities in the downtown redesign. Mayor Hansel filed the communications as informational.

**4) Project Update – Stantec**  
**A) Schedule Update**

Mayor Hansel welcomed the consultants from Stantec, Ed Roberge, Bob Corning, and Dave McNamara. Mr. Roberge said the consultants met with the Technical Review Committee of City Staff on October 11 and the Committee remains active. This was the sixth meeting of this Committee, which would meet again on January 17, 2023.

The project timeline had been updated to be clearer for the community. The schedule is available on the project webpage. Mr. Roberge reviewed the timeline:

- Fall 2022 – Preliminary Alternatives
  - Outreach & Design
- Fall/Winter 2022/2023 – Final Concept
  - Final Preliminary Design
  - Cost Estimates
  - Phasing
  - Plan Rollout & Feedback
- 2023–2024 – Phase 1 – Utility Infrastructure Improvements
  - Public Outreach
- 2024–2025 – Phase 2 – Main Street Improvements, Part 1
  - Public Outreach
- 2025–2026 – Phase 3 – Main Street Improvements, Part 2
  - Public Outreach

**B) Public Comment Update**

Mr. Roberge said the second in-person public workshop at the Colonial Showroom in October was well attended with approximately 100 participants; 42 preference worksheets were returned by participants. The online workshop had approximately 50 visitors in October; 44 preference/comments were received from the participants. Mr. Roberge understood that this was a small sample size but said it represented a good cross section of the community. The webpage has the interactive design concept for preference ranking and comments as well as the October 6 public meeting presentation. Comments are continuously invited via the webpage. As of November 11, there had been 6,706 visits to the webpage. Mr. Roberge continued recalling that there had been two day-long public workshops with more than 200 participants. There had also been two workshops with downtown businesses and the Chamber of Commerce, which were attended well virtually and in person. Downtown property utility assessments had been underway—led by Mr. McNamara—with approximately 50% of downtown properties. Consultants had met once with the Energy and Climate Committee and twice with the Bicycle

and Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee. They had also met with Arts Alive and the Keene Rotary. The consultants continue trying to get the word out as much as possible.

**i) *Main Street Preferences***

There were 85 total responses about Main Street preferences, 41 in-person and 44 online. The preferences were displayed on a PowerPoint for the following options:

1. Minimal (multi-lane each direction)
- 2.A. Multimodal with bike lanes at road grade (multi-lane each direction)
- 2.B. Multimodal with bike lanes at sidewalk grade (multi-lane each direction)
- 2.C. Multimodal with bike lane/shared use path in center median (multi-lane each direction)
3. Single lane and multimodal

**ii) *Central Square Preferences***

There were 85 total responses about Central Square preferences, 41 in-person and 44 online. The preferences were displayed on a PowerPoint for the following options:

1. Smaller circular intersection, as it operates today
2. North expansion at the top of the Square, with the roadway adjacent to the church in Central Square discontinued; Main Street two lanes with traffic signal
3. North expansion, with the roadway adjacent to the church in Central Square discontinued; Main Street single lane with a traffic signal
4. Mini roundabout with Central Square expansion; Main Street single lane

**iii) *Gilbo/Railroad Square Preferences***

There were 85 total responses about Gilbo Avenue/Railroad Square preferences, 41 in-person and 44 online. The preferences were displayed on a PowerPoint for the following options:

1. Two-way permanent plaza and reduced parking
- 2.A. One way on Gilbo away from Main Street and multi-use open space to Railroad Square
- 2.B. One way on Gilbo away from Main Street and raised intersection to Railroad Square to bring the two spaces together

**C) *Preliminary Design Alternatives – Continued Discussion***

Alternative concepts for the Steering Committee to consider in the following discussion included (all maintain angled parking; all parking options were considered):

- Key Takeaways:
  - Main Street Design Alternatives
    - Angled parking, a clear preference of this Committee and the community
    - Traffic Analysis/Level of Service

- Single- or Multi-Lane Operation
- Intersection Operations
- Main Street Multimodal Corridor
  - Shared street
  - Bike lanes
- Central Square North Expansion
- Gilbo/Railroad Square Design Approach
  - Two-way
  - One-way
  - Raised intersection

One goal of this meeting was to start reducing these key takeaways as the project continues moving forward.

**i) *Main Street Alternatives***

Mr. Roberge reminded the Committee of the options:

- 1.** Minimal (multi-lane each direction) – maintains nearly what is there today with the exception of parking in the center median
- 2.A.** Multimodal with bike lanes on road grade (multi-lane each direction; fixed and protected bike facilities)
- 2.B.** Multimodal with bike lanes at sidewalk grade (multi-lane each direction; fixed and protected bike facilities)
- 2.C.** Multimodal with bike lane/shared use path in center median (multi-lane each direction; fixed and protected bike facilities)
- 3.** Single wider lane and multimodal (fixed and protected bike facilities at sidewalk grade)

Councilor Greenwald asked whether there was a model that maintains parking in the center median. Mr. Roberge said no, but with the Minimal two-lane option, the Committee could choose that modification. Councilor Greenwald hoped that would stay in the considerations. Mr. McNamara said the median width is less than it is today in the Minimal option with the goal of expanding the sidewalk dimensions on both sides, stating that this was the trade-off. He said they could certainly rebuild the current downtown, which Councilor Greenwald said worked for him. Mr. Roberge said the Technical Review Committee discussed that each option presented is interchangeable. There are many options, and the consultants and Committee are trying to focus on the common themes the public and Committee have been looking at.

Mr. Roberge continued discussing the downtown traffic analysis. He showed the existing conditions and the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile queue, which represents a slight delay at peak hours. He also showed the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, stating that was the worst-case scenario peak hour. He said the existing conditions were modeled as a two-lane roadway. Mr. Roberge showed the conditions of morning queues at West Street (from Main Street looking easterly). He said the model showed a

struggle with right-of-way at that queue in the evening during peak hours, with traffic backed-up to Eagle Court, predominantly in one lane. The model shows that the northbound Main Street position queues as far back as Church Street during the worst quartile of the peak hours. He said these situations are hard to model when a two-lane road is behaving as a one-way road. The consultants think this is attributable to the lane confusion in advance of the intersection, and lanes across the way on Washington Street not being clearly defined. It was important to note this interesting and unique dynamic occurring during most peak hours.

The consultants compared the existing intersection conditions to the possible intersection options. He showed the first option for Central Square as a five-leg, signalized, and multi-lane intersection leading to a two-way Main Street. If the roadway at the top of Central Square were eliminated, traffic would come into the intersection from Court and Washington Streets. There was no comparison to the existing condition of Washington Street, so there would be a new traffic movement in that area. Mr. Roberge continued that even though this would be a larger intersection, there would be additional delays on West Street and Roxbury Street, which was important to note. He said that on the Roxbury Street leg going westbound, one would have to turn right and go all the way around Central Square to make the right turn onto West Street. This option would have some more delay in terms of wait time and queuing, but the overall trip time would be reduced because one could go straight through the intersection.

Mr. Roberge continued describing the same five-leg intersection but with single-lane operation. He said there would be more queues but within a reasonable timeline, behaving as expected. He said from a lane capacity standpoint, the model tried to optimize all the legs but recognized that the heavy traffic on Main Street would require more green light time. Mr. Roberge said from a processing and level of service standpoint, the intersection would still operate fairly well.

Next, Mr. Roberge described the mini roundabout option. He said that it would be a five-leg approach, much like the traffic signal option, and the five legs would enter and move through the roundabout quite efficiently and well. The mini roundabout would perform better than existing conditions and the signalized options presented.

Ms. Houser asked whether the mini roundabout would be single lane with Central Square shut down. Mr. Roberge said was modeled to be single lane with the top of the Square closed, but still maintaining five legs into the roundabout. There still need to be two lanes approaching the roundabout from Main Street.

Councilor Madison asked if all these alternatives consider Roxbury Street as two ways and Mr. Roberge replied in the affirmative.

**ii) *Bike Facilities***

Mr. Roberge continued discussing the multimodal corridor, which he called small in nature. He showed the options for a multi- and single-lane roadway. The width of Main Street is fixed, and the goal is to balance all the components. In the first configuration, bike lanes would be supported within the corridor between Central Square and Water Street. The roadway would be multi-lane with a two-lane (12' wide lanes) Main Street in each direction. Angled parking would

be maintained. The consultants thought it was important to expand the parking bay from 15' to 18' to make parking more comfortable for larger vehicles that might typically stick out into the roadway. Bike lanes would be situated at the head of the parking bay, between the parking and sidewalk. There were two sub-options, with one keeping the bike lanes at road grade and the other at sidewalk grade depending on the final layout. He said there are give and takes. For example, the biggest challenge for this change is between Emerald/Eagle/Gilbo, where the buildings are more constrained moving south, with impacts to the sidewalks. In that area, there would be a one-to-two-foot impact on sidewalk widths. There would be an appreciable gain to the sidewalks north of Gilbo Avenue, depending on what happens to the center median.

Mr. Roberge continued discussing the multimodal options for a single-lane Main Street, with 18' wide lanes. He said there would be concern about people coming and going into angled parking spaces and the double loading that occurs. This would provide enough space to get by someone accessing a parking space if truly necessary. This balances well on the sidewalks because space is gained by converting a 22' two-lane roadway to an 18' one lane roadway. He demonstrated that the corridor could support multimodal transportation if desired.

Mr. Roberge provided better detail on the five-leg intersection. He showed the multi-lane Main Street configuration with the top of the square closed. He showed that the existing 17,000 square foot grass area in Central Square today would expand to approximately 30,000 square feet of usable space. The angled parking would be maintained along both sides of Main Street in a multimodal situation, but not in the median.

If there were a mini roundabout in the multimodal scenario, Mr. Roberge said there would be multiple lanes and two-way operation on all streets. They were asked to look at how the roundabout could operate as a single lane and convert back easily to a multi-lane Main Street. Because of the constraints at the northwest corner of the intersection, there can only be one lane departing the roundabout southbound. Once through the deflection built into the roundabout to control speeds at 20 mph or less, it would return to multi-lane southbound before Gilbo Avenue.

Mayor Hansel asked how the bikes get back into traffic surrounding the mini roundabout. Mr. Roberge said they would want to study that more if this became a viable alternative. At present, from the southbound perspective, bikes would be within the column of traffic, or they could get off their bikes to cross at a pedestrian crosswalk. Currently the plan showed that bike lanes from Washington and Court Streets would enter the traffic stream and re-enter the bike lane at the northwest corner of the intersection. If heading northbound, bikes would enter traffic at the northeast corner of the roundabout, with sharrows present. They would look at alternatives for a shared path along the perimeter, but it depends on the space available. This could be a hybrid use where bikes enter traffic or exit to use crosswalks. He said this was a good question for study.

Ms. Wells asked how pedestrians would cross the street with the mini roundabout option. Mr. Roberge replied that the Technical Review Committee discussed that a lot. He continued that there are warning signs. Crosswalk locations are always located behind the first vehicle that would stack at the queue for the shortest crossing. There are rapid rectangular flashing beacons

with pushbuttons that warn drivers and could be installed at the crosswalks. He said this is becoming a popular solution for roundabouts with a lot of pedestrian traffic.

**iii) *Central Square***

Mr. Corning continued describing alternatives for the Central Square character area, which is described as a civic and formal village center. He said one thing the consultants were asked to look at was the discontinuation of the northern edge of Central Square, with two-way circulation on both Washington and Court Streets. They did turning studies to ensure that all emergency vehicles and school busses could turn and navigate through that intersection. They also looked at what the opportunities would be for Central Square if the northern portion were discontinued to traffic. This would be an addition of approximately 14,000 square feet. To replace some of the parking that would be lost in front of existing buildings, there would be small wells of angled parking on the sides of Central Square at Washington and Court Streets. This option creates the opportunity for a nice plaza in front of the church, wider sidewalks, and a multi-use zone for dining and gathering areas, in addition to emergency access. The Technical Review Committee and consultants believe it is a nice opportunity to expand Central Square northward and an opportunity to address feedback that it is difficult and sometimes dangerous to access Central Square by foot today. The consultants also hear that there is little space around the gazebo and this option presents the opportunity to move the gazebo to a wider open space. If the Committee wanted to pursue this option, the consultants would do a much deeper dive into programming and design with this Committee and the Technical Review Committee. In a five-leg roundabout versus signalized option, the southern nose would of the Square's curb line would be clipped some to facilitate the turning motion, but there would be no impact to the statue.

Mr. Lussier asked if the additional 14,000 square feet in Central Square would include the plaza/multi-use space and Mr. Corning said yes. Mayor Hansel wanted to know more about the proposed plaza/multi-use space. Mr. Corning imagined a different paving material but all flush at the same grade. This was an idea to give the church a more prominent front door. The multi-use space could facilitate emergency access to the front of those buildings. Mayor Hansel asked if multi-use space were open, would it still be considered a road. Mr. Blomquist said no, the road would be discontinued, and it would become potentially part of the common area. Also, fixed objects would be prohibited in the multi-use space so emergency access would not be prohibited. Mayor Hansel asked whether that space could be used for small festivals and Mr. Blomquist said yes, without any road closures. There would likely be mountable curbs at either end for emergency vehicles that are not meant for everyday traffic.

**iv) *Gilbo/Railroad Connections***

Mr. Corning continued describing the opportunity for a connection between Gilbo Avenue and Railroad Square to be much more artistic, festive, and flexible, while maintaining the historic character. Right now, Gilbo Avenue is two ways and Railroad Street is one-way eastbound.

Mr. Corning described option one. He said one idea is to create a covered structure over the perpendicular parking along Gilbo Avenue to facilitate the Farmer's Market and more. This idea takes that concept one step further to create a much wider sidewalk at that location to facilitate a multi-use zone, including the angled parking on the south side and the parallel parking on the north side of Gilbo Avenue. They propose to keep the angled parking in front of the Diner. On Railroad Square, similarly, the pedestrian/plaza space could be expanded both visually and physically to the other side of Gilbo Avenue.

Option 2.A. goes a step further to convert Gilbo Avenue to one-way westbound, making it the same elevation as the sidewalk so it can easily be closed to create a much larger multi-use activity zone both on the Gilbo and Railroad sides. A lot of usable space would be gained.

Option 2.B. Goes further to extend that plaza space across Main Street into Railroad Square with a strong visual and physical connection that would all be tabled at the same sidewalk elevation. Mr. Blomquist reminded that when talking about one way on Gilbo Avenue, it would only extend to St. James Street, where it would return to two lanes, allowing all traffic to exit around the block to West Street to re-access Main Street. The parking in front of Lindy's would be maintained and the three parallel parking spaces in front of the Sentinel building and five angled spaces in front of the transportation center would be eliminated. Mr. Blomquist said those spaces are not highly used right now and eliminating them would add a great deal of square feet for activities suggested for the area. The approximate number of parking spaces in that area would be maintained.

## 5) Committee Discussion

Councilor Filiault asked, for the next meeting, that the consultants add the net number of parking spaces that would be lost for each of these options presented. He is concerned about losing parking where it is already congested downtown on the weekends. While there was talk of a parking garage in the future, in the meantime, the Councilor said we needed to make up for any lost spaces elsewhere. He hates to lose any spaces.

A Committee member said her only concern with one-way on Gilbo Avenue is that people have a routine already with accessing those businesses. She wondered if that would deter anyone from wanting to go to those businesses because they must use a more confusing way to get back onto Main Street. Mr. Blomquist said they could talk more about that but said the volume of traffic coming from Main Street onto Gilbo Avenue is much more substantial than traffic exiting Gilbo Avenue onto Main Street. It was something to consider but that had not come up in discussion. He said additional signage could help in that situation.

Mayor Hansel asked if the connection between Gilbo Avenue and Emerald Street by the former skate park would be straightened at all. Mr. Blomquist replied that as part of future planning, there is a goal to bring Wilson Street up to Gilbo Avenue, but that depends upon what occurs on the MGM lot, and it would not be in the immediate future. He expected that connection within the next 10 years. The idea of this project is to make the Gilbo Avenue space more attractive for



things to start occurring on the other side of Wilson Street. He said that the Colonial had already helped to start filling that gap with their Showroom.

Mr. Doyle asked whether trucks coming eastbound on Gilbo Avenue could still access the parking lot and the Colonial with one-way westbound to St. James Street and Mr. Blomquist said yes.

Mr. Benik asked if St. James Street was one way because it is too narrow or because of the queueing on West Street for the current traffic light; would the mini roundabout allow St. James to become two ways to shorten the loop to return to Main Street from Gilbo Avenue? Mr. Blomquist said that parking would need to be eliminated on St. James Street to facilitate two lanes. Also, the Sentinel's business during part of the day prohibits two-way traffic. Still, Mr. Blomquist said none of this work prohibited St. James Street from returning to a two-way configuration in the future, but a lot would depend on the Sentinel traffic.

Councilor Greenwald owns the Sentinel block and was very opposed to losing the parallel parking spots next to his building and the angled parking across the street, both for his clients, the residents, and shoppers. He said he would fight against the removal of any parking space, and he does not see what is wrong with what is there now. Mr. Blomquist reminded that those are public parking spaces with no overnight parking. Mr. Blomquist said these were all tradeoffs. Councilor Greenwald understood that the prevailing opinion favored pedestrian traffic over vehicle traffic and parking, but he would continue to support the latter.

Ms. Wells owns businesses on Main Street and losing those eight parking spots would impact her business too. She said those spaces are full most of the time at present, especially on a Saturday. Mr. Blomquist thought this was something to process through and at the end of the day these are all trade-offs—if parking is maintained there would be less wide space for activities. Ms. Wells responded asking if anyone was looking at solutions for more parking, she did not see that as a part of the process. Mr. Blomquist said at the end of the day they were talking about total numbers and there are 167 spaces in this area. The solutions might not be right in front of businesses but in the Commercial Street parking lot, and a challenge for this Committee is deciding whether that is an acceptable solution.

Mayor Hansel was unsure the tradeoff was worth it at Gilbo Avenue. He thought there was enough space set aside for a small festival at Central Square if it were expanded north. Mr. Blomquist said that was an interesting question and there had been a lot of discussion of whether there is ability to have spaces other than Central Square for activities, when things are happening on Central Square that inhibit other activities. Looking forward, Mr. Blomquist said that if encouraging more growth in the Gilbo Avenue area, there should probably be a space that someone can visualize using in the future. Part of this project was to create encouragement for future uses. Mayor Hansel thought about downtown as a conference center and this rebuild as an opportunity to create new spaces that people could be interested in using, but he was unsure if multiple spaces of the same size were needed.

Councilor Filiault said that most auto manufacturers would move to electric by 2030 and he asked whether there was consideration for electric access at these parking spaces. Mr. Blomquist said that would be a discussion in the more detailed design. There was a separate discussion on more of this access in the City, with most of the surface lots being the first locations for this infrastructure. The utilities would be in place for such infrastructure, so it is not prohibited in the future after the downtown is rebuilt.

Mr. Doyle said that if tearing up everything downtown and something is not done in the process to set-up Gilbo Avenue to be successful in the future, it would be a mistake. Gilbo Avenue is broken right now and he supports setting it up for success in the future.

Mr. Rebillard echoed Mr. Doyle and said this was about a once in a multigenerational opportunity and he had heard many debates about parking in Keene. He thought about towns like Portsmouth, where people are willing to park in one central place and walk to their destinations, suggesting that Keene could be similar. He also thought about pedestrian traffic and how there was more on one side of the street than the other. He said there was more traffic on the Railroad Square side of the street because there is more multimodal space there. He thought that in the future, the pressure to create parking would occur if the City built better spaces to be in. He said that if we think only from our current business and parking needs, there is the risk of building a strip mall instead of a community space, which he thought the Committee was really here to speak about.

Ms. Houder agreed that building for where we are today is short sighted versus looking toward where we want to be. She said centralized parking seems to work all over the nation. Making Keene more pedestrian friendly will allow people to walk to their destination and access more stores and businesses in the process, versus parking in front of and only accessing one store. This is an opportunity to experience more of Main Street.

Councilor Madison echoed Mr. Rebillard, stating that the goal is a defined character for the downtown and that character is not a parking lot or strip mall. He said we clearly need parking downtown, but it does not have to be in the center of town. Various surveys about the downtown have shown how pedestrian and bicycle friendly the downtown is and how people can go, shop, and walk around. He thinks the charm of the downtown is walking from getting groceries, to buying a gift, to eating dinner, and to seeing a show all by foot. He said people want to come to our downtown because it is not a strip mall.

Mayor Hansel thought it would be great to get consensus on the center of Main Street to have a better sense of how much pedestrian space would actually be created. Perhaps creating other spaces on Main Street would negate the need for that space on Gilbo Avenue. Mr. Blomquist said that the consultants and Staff were seeking those sorts of decisions from the Committee as soon as possible.

Mayor Hansel liked the idea of the mini roundabout, while maintaining as much parking as possible, and making central square as usable as possible. Mayor Hansel was also in favor of eliminating parking in the median of Main Street. He was 50/50 on the need for the bike lanes taking as much space as they were, and he was 50/50 on whether Gilbo Avenue was worth it or would work.

Councilor Greenwald disagreed. He argued against the Central Square expansion and removing parking from the center median. He wants to end the project with more parking. He was in favor of expanding Gilbo Avenue as an activity space. The Councilor said there was a certain degree of history that should be respected.

Ms. Houser also liked the idea of the roundabout and expanding Central Square. She did not think there needed to be space for activities in every corner of the City because rarely are multiple occurring at the same time; it could lead to a lot of open spaces without plans for them. She suggested something like an event committee would be needed. She liked the idea of the bike lane but thought they should shift back to putting it in the center instead of leaving the median as useless space that could have had parking, which would leave more pedestrian space on the sides.

The City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, asked the Committee to start narrowing down some of these alternatives because the consultants are only available for a certain amount of time, and they need to focus on what the Committee supports the most. She hoped for consensus on the mini roundabout and expanding Central Square. Eight Committee members expressed being in favor of this option.

Councilor Filiault said the Committee was just presented with all of this information and needed more time to review the options before stating their definitive choices. He asked for another meeting in two weeks to allow members to review these plans. Mayor Hansel said part of the goal was to give consultants directions so they can continue adding details. Councilor Filiault was not prepared to make decisions at this meeting, he wanted time to consider all the points presented. Councilor Madison thought the Committee had access to these plans for some time already. Mayor Hansel agreed but said there were a lot of considerations. Councilor Filiault said the Committee deserved time to consider all the new questions posed at this meeting before making decisions.

Mr. Benik asked those who opposed the Central Square expansion why they were not in favor. Councilor Filiault said he did not know yet. Councilor Greenwald said that he did not like it. Mayor Hansel was convinced of this option because the consultants said it would reduce the queue times. Councilor Greenwald said he was opposed on behalf of the owner of the Central Square business, and on behalf of the public who think this is ridiculous. Councilor Greenwald was asked again what he opposed about the roundabout option. Councilor Greenwald stated that he did not really care, but that the closing off of Central Square was not favorable to the people

he was hearing from, in addition to the substantial loss of parking; he said he does not like the change. A lively discussion ensued about why exactly Councilor Greenwald opposed this option.

Councilor Filiault said there needed to be greater community input than at present. He hoped these options would be in the Sentinel, which is our main source of media coverage, to start getting more responses to the online survey. Mayor Hansel said that people who have not heard the information presented to this committee would say they want no changes to the downtown because they have not seen these opportunities to judge them properly, which he said was why all the Committee members were present to represent the public. Councilor Filiault said he held his constituents in higher regard than that and thought they have more intelligence than that to make a rational decision without someone on a Committee telling them what to do. In that case, Mayor Hansel suggested that Councilor Filiault go out and ask for his constituents' opinions. Councilor Filiault said this was why he wanted to see the survey better advertised in the media. A lively discussion ensued.

The Committee agreed to have an added meeting on December 13 to generate consensus on the roundabout, Central Square expansion, bike lanes, parking in the median, and one-way on Gilbo Avenue. The City Manager said this was essential to ensure work on this project continues moving forward at the appropriate pace. Mayor Hansel had not heard anyone asking for more information from the consultants besides the net loss of parking for all alternatives.

Mr. Rebillard said that in thinking about using open space, festivals always come to mind, which is a great idea. Still, he thought it was more than that, as an opportunity for commerce and other things we cannot yet foresee. He hoped people would consider that.

Mayor Hansel opened the floor to public comment and recognized Chuck Redfern of 9 Colby Street. Mr. Colby said that he is not anti-vehicle but looking into the future we need to realize that the youth of today are using more bike/pedestrian facilities as much as they do cars, as cities become more congested. He thought that trend would continue with the advent of the e-bike. He thanked the Mayor, consultants, and members of the Steering Committee for their time. He said the Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC) had questions about how they would integrate the bike lanes into Central Square and moving south. He added that he was in favor of having this Committee, which is in charge of providing guidance, input, information, and data to the City Council per City Code. It was within the BPPAC's purview to give input to the Committee. He liked Options 2.B. and 3. regarding the roadway at sidewalk level. He believed the consultants had done well reaching out to the public.

Drew Breynton of 31 Nelson Street is the Chair of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee and he spoke about the letter the BPPAC submitted on this issue. He asked the Committee to review the letter, which expressed favor for protected bike lanes at sidewalk grade, increased sidewalk widths, single-lane vehicle traffic to make it easier and safe for pedestrians crossing, to expand Central Square, and to raise the intersection at Gilbo/Main/Railroad.

6) **Adjournment – Next Meeting: December 13, 2022**

There being no further business, Chair Hansel adjourned the meeting at 4:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker  
November 22, 2022