



Heritage Commission

Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 4:30 PM

2nd floor conference room, City Hall
3 Washington St, Keene, NH 03431

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order** – Roll Call
- II. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
November 9, 2022
January 11, 2023
- III. **Elections** – Chair/Vice Chair
- IV. **Downtown Infrastructure Project Update**
- V. **2021 CLG** – Italian Neighborhood Heritage Project
- VI. **2022 CLG** – Recovering Black History in Keene Project
- VII. **2023 CLG** – New Grant Round
- VIII. **Next Meeting** – March 8, 2023
- IX. **Adjourn**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 HERITAGE COMMISSION
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

4:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

Cauley Powell, Chair
Susan DeGidio, Vice Chair (remote)
Rose Carey
Marilyn Huston
Brian Lee
Molly Ellis
Louise Zerba, Alternate (non-voting)

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician

Members Not Present:

Councilor Gladys Johnsen

8
9 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

10
11 Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM and roll call ensued.

12
13 **2) Minutes of Previous Meeting – October 12, 2022**

14
15 Revision: on line 168, change the word “crow” to “crowd”.

16
17 A motion by Ms. Huston to approve the October 12, 2022 meeting minutes as amended was duly
18 seconded by Ms. Carey and the motion carried unanimously.

19
20 **3) CLG Annual Report**

21
22 Mr. Schoefmann said he needed to file the annual report with the NH Department of Historic Resources
23 (DHR) to indicate whether any new buildings have been added to the Historic Registry; there had not
24 been such activity. He said Planner, Evan Clements, was helping him to complete that form and there
25 was no help Mr. Schoefmann needed from the Commission.

26
27 Mr. Schoefmann mentioned that there would be a future transition to integrate Mr. Clements more with
28 this position. Mr. Schoefmann would carry out the end of the 2021 neighborhood grant, but for the sake
29 of him moving some of his more significant responsibilities forward as the Mapping Technician, Mr.
30 Clements would eventually take over as Staff Liaison. Mr. Schoefmann will miss working with the

31 Commission when the time comes. Everyone agreed that Mr. Schoefmann would be missed. Mr.
32 Clements is also involved with the Historic District Commission. The transition would likely be later in
33 2023.

34

35 **4) 2022 CLG Grant Update**

36

37 Mr. Schoefmann said this was another thing Mr. Clements would start moving forward. Now is the time
38 for Staff to appear before the City Council seeking approval from them for the City Manager to sign the
39 agreement for the grant. That update was sent to DHR. He imagined that by early December that would
40 begin to take shape, with paperwork filed at the State. He recalled that those awards are not funded until
41 the Governor and Council approve them in February or March, or later in some years.

42

43 Mr. Schoefmann had not been in touch with the selected consultant for an update and neither had Chair
44 Powell. Chair Powell asked whether Mari Brunner, Senior Planner, would continue being involved with
45 this grant, or just Mr. Clements. Mr. Schoefmann did not have the full answer yet and would find out.
46 Chair Powell's last contact was the consultant reaching out to Ms. Brunner with a question, and
47 hopefully Ms. Brunner followed-up. Ms. Brunner had thought it would be the spring term for work with
48 students and so hopefully the funding would align. Mr. Schoefmann said to bear in mind that there are
49 three years now to complete these CLG grant projects. Mr. Schoefmann thought DHR got a lot of
50 feedback on their old, shorter timeline. Chair Powell hoped that extra time would be for the consultants
51 and students. Mr. Schoefmann would talk to Ms. Brunner and Mr. Clements about this. Chair Powell
52 could also make the introduction and answer any questions with Mr. Clements. This project is partnered
53 more traditionally with the Historical Society.

54

55 **5) 2021 CLG Neighborhood Heritage Project Update**

56

57 Mr. Schoefmann referred to his tasks since his last meeting. Since then, he scheduled a meeting with Jim
58 Sterling. Ms. Brunner had done some original research on him, but it was lost. However, that is Ms.
59 Brunner's father-in-law and so it was easy to reach him again. He was very amenable to meeting with
60 Mr. Schoefmann and providing some sound bites. Mr. Schoefmann would meet with him later this
61 week. Mr. Schoefmann referred to the Google Drive that Ms. Powell shared. She said she is paying for
62 AI transcriptions that are very poor.

63

64 At present, Chair Powell had film interviews with Vic Dintino and John DiBernardo. The Chair finally
65 spoke successfully with Bob Mallet at the Italian Society, and she interviewed him the past weekend
66 during an awards event she attended with him. At the event, they announced the project and people were
67 very happy and excited, and many signed-up to participate. She thought the next step was to distribute
68 those interviews amongst the Commission members. The Chair said she was struggling with the right
69 way to get photos into the app. Her archival side wanted high-resolution beautiful files, but she
70 recognized the point of the project is crowd sourcing and any way people can get images into the app
71 saves them for posterity.

72

73 Mr. Schoefmann thought it depended on people's comfort levels with the Commission taking their
74 family documents; there was no procedure yet. There is a high-resolution scanner in Mr. Schoefmann's
75 office that was available for the Commission's use. Chair Powell has a flatbed scanner at work too. Mr.
76 Schoefmann said the plan would be to take the documents, if people are comfortable, in a weatherproof
77 case for transport. They could arrange times when Mr. Schoefmann picks them up, scans them, and
78 returns them. He added that most cameras on phones are excellent, and he could take photos of the
79 documents. Ms. Zerba asked if they could digitize them to a higher resolution if taken with a phone. Mr.
80 Schoefmann thought that they would be the quality of the phone's photo. Mr. Lee said it was possible to
81 crop those photos, but they would still be a phone's photo. Chair Powell agreed that for some
82 documents, they might stick to the glass in their frames, and so it would not be prudent to take them out
83 for scanning.

84
85 Ms. Zerba asked if the families would need to sign a waiver on the documents and photos, especially if
86 the public would be seeing them. Mr. Schoefmann thought the City Attorney would likely say a waiver
87 would be prudent. Ms. Huston agreed and suggested putting the documents in an envelope and to
88 document on the envelope what is inside for an inventory, and set a date of when they would be
89 returned. Chair Powell agreed it would be good to have clear communication. Chair Powell thought
90 about rights and permissions and believed that the act of someone adding their personal photos to the
91 app would be them giving their consent for use in the project. She said it begged the question of how to
92 confirm consent if the Commission or Mr. Schoefmann were the ones uploading the images. She said it
93 was possible that the right action would be to digitize and upload the documents with the participants.

94
95 Mr. Schoefmann noted that he posted a Facebook update with a link to Mr. Lee's work on the Wix site;
96 Mr. Schoefmann would monitor the site for new submissions. Mr. Schoefmann thought that it was
97 mostly a capture tool, and the details were getting those documents and transitioning them into digital to
98 be in the story map. Chair Powell said she was struck that the Dintinos had the actual tickets from the
99 White Star Line that they used to come from Italy, which is remarkable because they are in very good
100 condition. Such items are ones that would be good to take photos of because the Commission does not
101 want to be in custody of such important items.

102
103 Chair Powell said that everyone she spoke with at the Italian Society event was excited and felt they had
104 a lot of stories to share. They did audio recordings at the event with Rita Lundgren (nee Caldarelli), Mae
105 Caldarelli, and John [Mr. Caldarelli], who is particularly enthusiastic and might be the oldest living
106 member of the Italian Community at 95 years old. She said that Tim Carbone would also really like to
107 be involved. The Grossis, the Caldarellis, and Ann Eastman all want to participate. Chair Powell wanted
108 to get some filmed content with women because it was clear that the male and female cultural
109 experiences are very different. Ms. Lundgren [Rita] and her daughters would like to participate and go
110 through old photos.

111
112 The Chair's fear at this point was how little time left there was to do all of this before the presentation at
113 7:00 PM on December 14, which is during the Historic Society's immigration event. Mr. Schoefmann
114 suggested only providing an update at the presentation instead of a formal synopsis of the whole project;
115 something to convince more people to participate. Chair Powell thought a lot of people learned of the

116 project from the Historical Society’s newsletter. People had reached out since asking for more details,
117 such as whether the conversations would be recorded or how they would see it. People did not seem to
118 want to miss what this Commission has to say about the community.

119

120 Ms. Carey and Ms. Ellis had found an abundance of research for the presentation, which they
121 summarized (much of this was printed from the Historic Society’s online archive):

- 122 ▪ An article by Deven Morris on the history of the Italian Neighborhood as a high school project
123 that really summarizes the history.
- 124 ▪ Found “then” photos and Ms. Carey would borrow Mr. Lee’s camera to take “now” photos for
125 the presentation. They could be displayed in the lobby.
- 126 ▪ Made notes of interview topics, like the flooding issue.
- 127 ▪ Found school photos from the Cleveland School and Pearl Street School from the teens and 20s.
128 The goal is to interview some descendants of those school children.
- 129 ▪ Found a lot of farm photos from 363 Winchester Street.
- 130 ▪ Looked-up local businesses, like Pete’s Restaurant, where McDonalds is now. There is a nice
131 photo of it and more research on it would be helpful. Ms. Zerba knows Pete’s daughter.
- 132 ▪ The neighborhood that has baseball names is interesting. Alan Rumrill at the Historical Society
133 provided a pamphlet on baseball in Keene. He had many anecdotes on that. Mr. Rumrill did a
134 series of photos on baseball in that area at the Historical Society. There was a field on Island
135 Street near the Italian Club. Mr. Schoefmann said that still exists as the Wood Street Field. Many
136 people were employed in the mills and factories in that area.
- 137 ▪ Mr. DiBernardo reminisced about fishing at the Mill Pond and up the Ashuelot River.
- 138 ▪ A nice photo from the Dintino’s wedding on their anniversary in the Sentinel.
- 139 ▪ Took photos of the old street directories. They wrote down all street names in the Italian
140 neighborhood for 1916 and 1931 to compare to see if families had lived there for that duration.
141 There could be a sign at the presentation showing the families who did live there for those 24
142 years and see if any participants know those people. In the interviews the Chair had done so far,
143 she did not have such research to base her questions on and this would help develop more
144 targeted questions for future interviews that help stimulate people’s memories.

145

146 Chair Powell questioned the extent to which the information should be uploaded though the app for the
147 grant. Mr. Schoefmann said the ultimate product is the story map and what the Commission does with it.
148 He thought it was important to include some of the outreach the Commission does with people but
149 ultimately it is about outreach to see what is out there that the Commission is unaware of in terms of the
150 initial app.

151

152 Ms. Carey asked if it were possible to invite interested people to a Commission meeting and have them
153 bring their documents; they could digitize them and do interviews. She thought this would allow the
154 project to be completed in a timelier manner. Mr. Schoefmann said there was no issue reserving space at
155 City Hall as long as there are no conflicts; other suggestions were the large room at the old courthouse
156 and the Library. A benefit of the Library is that the Makerspace is there, and they would likely be happy
157 to help. Mr. Schoefmann would email the Library about this option and check their available dates.
158 Chair Powell said her partner is a cinematographer and so they had been filming interviews with his

159 professional equipment and she would have to see their availability for such a meeting. She added that
160 the Commission's meeting room was not the most desirable space for an interview. Chair Powell said
161 that it would be important to not have a quorum at this gathering. Another option is to interview via
162 Zoom and record the meeting, which saves as a film file.

163

164 The Commission continued discussing topics to consider. One was the historic flooding of the Italian
165 neighborhood. Ms. Carey said that the gas tanks at the end of Emerald Street were flooded at one point.
166 Mr. Rumrill had some stories about that. Ms. Zerba suggested wine making by the DiTullios, which the
167 Chair heard was a large community endeavor. The Italian Society still imports grape juice to make wine
168 and they still have old wine presses. Ms. Ellis said that the DiTullios were on her list and that Mr.
169 DiTullio was endowed the MDS Citizen of Honor Award, which was the ceremony the Chair attended.
170 Mr. Schoefmann thought part of the challenge would be to create topics to funnel this information into
171 the story map, which the Chair said is designed for physical space but is moving through time. The
172 Commission continued reviewing an example of a story map and its features. Video can be embedded in
173 story maps. Chair Powell thought the story map concept looked fantastic. The consultant would help
174 create the story map.

175

176 Mr. Schoefmann will share potential dates to invite people in to share documents and stories. He advised
177 updating the expectation of what the presentation at the Historical Society would be. It would be more of
178 a project update and invitation to participate. All agreed that was the smart thing to do. People can come
179 and hear about the project and share their opinions. By the end of summer, there should be collection
180 and narrative pieces inputted into the final project. He asked everyone to keep a log of the hours they are
181 spending on this because it is a part of the soft match of the grant. Ms. Carey would be in touch with Mr.
182 Schoefmann about some large posters for the event. The Community Development Department no
183 longer has a camera to loan.

184

185 The Commission decided on the following main topics for the story map:

186

- Families and Culture

187

- Could use proverbs

188

- The families that were present for many years

189

- Family group photos and houses

190

- Immigration

191

- Specific stories about how and when

192

- Education and Faith

193

- All children went off to St. Joseph's School. Discussion ensued people who were associated with education at the time.

194

- The Dintinos have some photos of students at St. Joseph's School.

195

- Until children went to school, they did not become American because they were being raised so culturally Italian.

196

- Faith and Religion

197

- Many families went to St. Bernard's Church.

198

- Agriculture, Industry, and Food

199

- Includes food

200

201

- 202 ○ Working at the mills
- 203 ○ Pete's Restaurant
- 204 ▪ Pam Raymond is his daughter and Ms. Zerba would try to find her contact and
- 205 send her the link about the project website to her.
- 206 ○ Farming and gardens
- 207 ▪ There was an issue of growing tomatoes and who had the best in town.
- 208 ○ As Butler Court was bought out and the college moved the Caldarelli garden abutted a
- 209 dorm at the college. They gave produce to the students so they would not mess with the
- 210 gardens.
- 211 ▪ Recreation and Nature
- 212 ○ Baseball
- 213 ○ Fishing
- 214 ○ Flooding
- 215 ▪ A house in the area is marked with how high the flood waters got and Ms. Carey
- 216 would try to find it.
- 217

218 Families Then and Now would be a throughline of all four topics. There had not been much research yet
219 on education and faith.

220
221 Chair Powell asked, and Ms. Ellis said she was willing to be an interviewer now that there were targeted
222 questions. She suggested showing photos to people during the interviews to elicit responses; everyone
223 agreed that was a great idea. Ms. Carey and Ms. Ellis would send Mr. Schoefmann the photos and he
224 would make a poster of them for the event.

225
226 Discussion ensued about the digital access to photos. Mr. Schoefmann suggested determining the best
227 way to share media because the typical google drive is running out of space. He will likely try to start
228 another one. Chair Powell thought it was worthy to use a part of the Commission's budget to buy a
229 dedicated shared drive. Mr. Schoefmann is also talking to the GIS project consultant and would ask
230 about that. Discussion ensued about sharing and buying a shared drive. Mr. Schoefmann would
231 investigate.

232
233 Ms. Carey asked where Ann Eastman lives, and discussion ensued. Tim Grossi said he would be a good
234 contributor. Vice Chair DeGidio said her husband was half Italian and this was very reminiscent of those
235 stories. Chair Powell heard that all these families were traveling back and forth between Keene, NH,
236 Quincy, MA and Ludlow, VT.

237
238 There was excitement amongst the Commission about these prospects. Chair Powell noted that Ms.
239 Zerba might have exciting stories to share as well, and discussion ensued. Discussion ensued about a
240 former small grocery store in City Hall run by Ms. Huston's family in City Hall.

- 241
- 242 6) **More Time – Heritage Website Updates**
- 243 7) **Next Meeting – December 14, 2022**
- 244

245 The next meeting is the presentation at 7:00 PM at the Historical Society.

246

247 **8) Adjournment**

248

249 There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:35 PM.

250

251 Respectfully submitted by,

252 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker

253 November 16, 2022

254

255 Reviewed and edited by,

256 Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff

257 January 5, 2023

258

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 HERITAGE COMMISSION
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

4:30 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

Cauley Powell, Chair
Susan DeGidio, Vice Chair
Rose Carey
Marilyn Huston
Louise Zerba, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician
Jesse Rounds, Community Development
Director

Members Not Present:

Councilor Gladys Johnsen
Brian Lee
Molly Ellis

8
9
10 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

11
12 Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:35 PM. She welcomed guests Connie Joyce and
13 Jeananne Farrar

14
15 **2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – November 9 & December 14, 2022**

16
17 Ms. Zerba submitted edits in writing for the November 9, 2022 minutes. Chair Powell tabled
18 adoption of the November 9, 2022 minutes until the February 2023 regular meeting.

19
20 A motion by Ms. Carey to approve the December 14, 2022 minutes as presented was duly
21 seconded by Ms. Huston and the motion carried unanimously.

22
23 **3) Elections – Chair/Vice Chair**

24
25 Chair Powell postponed the election until the February 2023 regular meeting.

26
27 **4) Section 106 Review – Winchester Street, US Cellular**

28
29 Mr. Schoefmann notified the Commission about a new installation on an existing
30 telecommunications pole. The location is on Winchester Street, near Blake Street, and in
31 proximity of Keene State College. He said this communication was about adding an array to an

32 existing structure. He displayed the location on a map. He said the pole currently has a large
33 silver box. Chair Powell said an array already exists on that pole and they are adding an
34 additional array, which Mr. Schoefmann said was his understanding.

35
36 Ms. Farrar asked if the new installation was 4G or 5G. Community Development Director, Jesse
37 Rounds, replied with his understanding that it would be 4G, but he said he was not positive as the
38 City has no jurisdiction. Mr. Schoefmann was unsure why the communication listed a proposed
39 location given that the pole is existing already.

40
41 Ms. Huston asked how this related to the Heritage Commission's (HC) work. Chair Powell noted
42 that the HC is one of many City committees that review this work. Mr. Rounds explained that it
43 is an unusual situation, in which the HC must review these per Section 106. However, the federal
44 Telecommunications Act basically states that as long as the telecommunications company is
45 meeting some very broad criteria, the City has no right to say no. He continued that the provision
46 of telecommunications is mandated federally. So, Section 106 is the one area that the
47 Commission might have some criteria, but because it is an addition to an existing pole, it is not
48 affecting any resources. He said it is an issue that gets a lot of attention but one that local
49 authorities have almost no power to address. Mr. Schoefmann said the HC's input was sought
50 about whether the installation impacts any historical or cultural resources. Mr. Schoefmann
51 added that the installation is in the City's right-of-way. Ms. Huston said the installation is just
52 before Blake Street and Mr. Schoefmann agreed. Chair Powell said it looked like it was between
53 Blake Street and Madison Street.

54
55 Ms. Houston asked if the proposal was to place an additional box atop the current one on the
56 pole. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it seemed they were just adding to the current one. Chair
57 Powell said that often in the past for these sorts of structures, the HC has asked for visual
58 masking/screening, so as to not take away from whatever structure the array is mounted on.
59 However, she said that because this is an existing pole, it could not be masked to look like brick
60 or greenery.

61
62 Ms. Zerba asked what is on the pole currently. Mr. Schoefmann replied that there is a silver box
63 with a pole coming out of it. Ms. Huston and Mr. Schoefmann agreed that it is near to KSC's
64 new computer building.

65
66 Ms. Farrar said she had many comments on this issue. She said her neighbor had done a lot of
67 research on small cell wireless facilities (SWF). She had not done research herself. Ms. Farrar
68 continued that her neighbor said that the radio frequencies cause health problems. She stated that
69 SWFs are being installed in residential neighborhoods, which she said is not supposed to happen.
70 She cited the example of a SWF on the corner of Middle Street and Summer Street; big trucks
71 have a hard time turning at that corner and must go over the curb. Ms. Farrar continued that 4G,
72 5G, and the impending 6G, are dangerous to those who live nearby, those passing by like
73 students, children in general, and those with health devices, like a pacemaker. She said many
74 nearby families are unhappy about this. She said some cities have pushed back against this, but

75 that Keene’s Director of Public Works, Kürt Blomquist said there is nothing the City can do
76 about it. It was annoying and upsetting to Ms. Farrar that there was no local control or voice on
77 this issue. Chair Powell thanked Ms. Farrar for her comments. The Chair noted that most of Ms.
78 Farrar’s concerns were health related, and Chair Powell wondered whether there was a more
79 appropriate City Committee to hear those concerns.
80

81 Mr. Schoefmann agreed with the Chair and said the Section 106 process really means the
82 Commission can provide input on the historical or cultural impacts. Mr. Rounds agreed. Mr.
83 Schoefmann said the City Council had already heard about these issues from the public, and he
84 wondered whether there was a Council Standing Committee that would hear these concerns
85 again. Chair Powell recommended asking Councilor Johnson for suggestions at a future HC
86 meeting.
87

88 Chair Powell asked Staff if any actions were needed from the HC at this time. Mr. Schoefmann
89 said the Committee could indicate that they have no feedback on the location, though some
90 health concerns were expressed by a member of the public.
91

92 Chair Powell made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Ms. Zerba: For the
93 Section 106 review–Winchester Street–U.S. Cellular, the Keene Heritage Commission had no
94 comment but acknowledged the voicing of health concerns. The motion carried unanimously.
95

96 **5) Downtown Infrastructure Project Update**
97

98 Chair Powell thought this topic would occupy the rest of the meeting and she apologized if all
99 agenda items were not discussed at this meeting. The Chair’s hope for this agenda item was to
100 hear primarily from the two members of the public who were present for this topic. She noted
101 that the Commission could then discuss collectively at a future meeting, as needed.
102

103 First, Chair Powell requested an overview of the downtown infrastructure project from the
104 Community Development Director, Jesse Rounds. Mr. Rounds explained that the City had just
105 released a frequently asked questions (FAQ) information sheet about the project. The City would
106 continue releasing new FAQ flyers each week for a number of weeks. This was all leading to the
107 two public workshops on January 30 at Heberton Hall and February 21 at the Keene High School
108 auditorium; Mr. Rounds did not state the times of these workshops. The City Council would be
109 present at these workshops to hear public comments.
110

111 Mr. Rounds continued explaining the project as it is conceived currently. This started as an
112 infrastructure improvement project because the pipes and lines that run under Main Street are
113 over 100 years old, are at risk of failing, and need to be replaced. This work would be from
114 building front to building front on Main Street. While this would be a disruptive project, it would
115 be more disruptive if any of that infrastructure failed catastrophically. Mr. Rounds said this is the
116 second time the City has tried to do this. The goal is to systematically remove the offending
117 systems and install new, up to date infrastructure. This includes utilities for water, sewer,

118 stormwater, fiber optic cables, electrical system upgrades, and some gas lines to be replaced.
119 Through this project, the entire Main Street will be dug up, from building front to building front,
120 down to dirt. Because Main Street must be disrupted for this infrastructure work, Mr. Rounds
121 said the City Council realized it was an opportunity to address overall inefficiencies in the entire
122 corridor, like narrow sidewalks, lack of bike access, and circulation issues. He noted problems
123 with both drivers and walkers not paying attention at times, stating that circulation downtown
124 could be improved. Upon the City Council’s request, the Director of Public Works worked to
125 hire consultants to produce conceptual designs.

126
127 Mr. Rounds said this is a long-term project that appeared originally in the Capital Improvement
128 Program seven years ago. Last year, the conceptual design phase began as a first step to think
129 about what was being torn-up downtown and what should be protected. One important thing to
130 protect is Central Square, which is valued by everyone. The Central Square and buildings around
131 Central Square have won two awards—American Planning Association (a private organization
132 that recognizes good planning) and Preserve America—recognizing the Square’s important
133 contributions to the fabric of the downtown. There was no funding associated with either of those
134 awards and the awards do not preclude any changes to Central Square. Mr. Rounds said Central
135 Square had changed a lot since it was conceived originally, and it exists as a great public space
136 today.

137
138 Next, Mr. Rounds described the project timeline. Last year, the City Council approved funding to
139 start the conceptual design phase as a first step to think about what funding could be found,
140 whether federal, state, or bond. Once a conceptual design is approved by the City Council, he
141 said more determinations could be made that make a huge difference in protecting the things
142 people care about. If this project moves forward as scheduled, construction will occur during the
143 2024, 2025, and 2026 construction seasons. Mr. Rounds said this would be a long and likely
144 difficult process, with restricted access to businesses and the pathways people use to get where
145 they need to go. Mr. Rounds said planning for those construction phases is still to come and will
146 include focus on how to ensure businesses stay open and that people have access to them. He
147 said that would be an ongoing discussion with businesses, but that discussion cannot begin until
148 a conceptual design is chosen. Last year, Mayor Hansel and the City Council appointed an Ad
149 Hoc Steering Committee of local stakeholders to begin a public process concurrently with the
150 Technical Review Committee of City Staff. Over many months, the Steering Committee
151 reviewed and discussed many design alternatives with the help of consultants from Stantec and
152 heard public comments. In December 2022, the Steering Committee recommended their
153 preferences to City Council. All minutes from those meetings are public on the [City website](#).
154 Next, Mayor Hansel has proposed a Committee of the Whole of City Council for the two
155 aforementioned workshops. Mr. Rounds said that at the workshops, there will be multiple
156 stations where the consultants, public, City Council, and City Staff can discuss where, what, and
157 how it would all work. The goal is for everyone to be clear about and familiar with what is
158 proposed and not proposed.

159

160 Mr. Rounds explained that there are major changes being proposed for Main Street south of
161 Central Square. No changes are proposed to the buildings along Main Street or to the overall
162 working of the street. He explained that as proposed, Main Street would maintain two lanes of
163 traffic in both directions, with angled nose-in parking on both sides, in addition to wider
164 sidewalks and new bike lanes. Mr. Rounds was clear that none of these conceptual designs are
165 final. Mr. Rounds continued explaining that some Main Street trees are unhealthy and will be
166 removed. Other trees need to be removed because they are growing over pipes that need to be
167 replaced. Still, the project goal is to keep as many trees as possible south of Central Square.

168
169 Next, Mr. Rounds described the changes proposed to the lighted intersection and Central Square.
170 The Steering Committee recommended a mini roundabout at the south end of the Square instead
171 of the traffic lights. Ms. Farrar asked how that would be done. Mr. Rounds showed images of the
172 existing conditions and proposed mini roundabout. He said there would be two lanes into and out
173 of this traffic circle, similar to roundabout at Winchester/Marlboro Streets. Vehicles coming
174 north or south on Washington and Court Streets would use the circle. Mr. Rounds explained an
175 added proposal for Central Square to close the current northern end of the roadway for added
176 activity space. The space would still be accessible to emergency vehicles. This expansion of
177 Central Square would mean that any of the special events on Central Square would no longer
178 require road closure.

179
180 Ms. Farrar asked where people would park. Mr. Rounds replied that the current proposed
181 conceptual design would result in a net loss of 15 parking spaces across the entire project area,
182 which Mr. Schoefmann said is from Emerald Street to the top of Central Square; Chair Powell
183 said from Ted's Shoe & Sport to the United Church of Christ on Central Square. Mr. Rounds did
184 note that City Staff committed to trying to find locations to replace those 15 lost parking spaces.
185 Mr. Rounds added that in the Sentinel article that went out the morning of this meeting, Mayor
186 Hansel stated his commitment to finding more opportunities for parking on Main, Court, and
187 Washington Streets. Mr. Schoefmann shared his understanding that the ultimate goal is a net gain
188 in parking.

189
190 Mr. Rounds concluded his presentation noting that currently, the only impact to Central Square
191 would be to some electrical lines along with some sprinkler system changes. Mr. Schoefmann
192 added that no trenching was proposed for Central Square. For example, some infrastructure
193 under Central Square would be abandoned to keep from disturbing the important area. Ms. Farrar
194 asked if the plan was to install fiber-optic cables, which she called safer and better than small cell
195 wireless facilities. Mr. Schoefmann said yes, that is the plan. Mr. Schoefmann said he would
196 email the information about both upcoming public workshops to the Commissioners.

197
198 Vice Chair DeGidio asked Mr. Rounds about the image of the proposed changes to Central
199 Square. She referred to tan lines on the image and asked if that was the proposed expanded
200 sidewalk area. Mr. Rounds said yes, that is the current conceptual plan. The Vice Chair also
201 asked about the green lines on the image, which Mr. Rounds said was the current center median
202 greenspace that would be extended to the intersection of Roxbury and West Streets.

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Ms. Joyce said she heard originally that this work would begin in 2023. Mr. Rounds said there are no plans to do any construction this year. Mr. Schoefmann thought it was intended to begin during construction season of fiscal year 2024 but he would follow-up to get clarification for the Commission. Ms. Farrar cited the newspaper, which said the project would occur in three phases over three years. Mr. Rounds and Mr. Schoefmann agreed. Ms. Farrar said that is a lot of disruption. Mr. Schoefmann noted that the goal is three phases but that there could be lessons learned from the Roxbury Street project. Ms. Farrar continued, suggesting that space on Gilbo Avenue could be used by Main Street businesses while the street is disrupted. Chair Powell thought the topic of helping businesses might be best suited for one of the upcoming public workshops. Today, the Chair wanted to focus on proposed changes that impact historical and cultural aspects of Main Street and Central Square.

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Ms. Farrar questioned whether anyone from the Heritage Commission (HC) or Historic District Commission (HDC) was a part of the Steering Committee process. She continued explaining that the Preserve America award was a result of Keene being chosen as one of 12 distinctive destinations in the country; she said the CLG funding comes from that. She said that if a City does not have a HC or HDC, they are not eligible for funding. Chair Powell said those were good questions and asked what the HC can do or might be asked to contribute in the future. Mr. Rounds said that review is limited by the scopes of both the HC's and HDC's authority, which is why there had been minimal outreach to both groups to date. Currently, the conceptual design does not impact things that the HDC oversees, which are private properties and buildings; the HDC does not have oversight of the right-of-way so they can comment on the project but they have no review authority. Mr. Rounds said the situation is similar for the HC, noting that this Commission cannot vote on the conceptual design. He thought it was still important that the HC provide comments if there are things the Commissioners believe are important and need to be protected. He cited examples like needing to respect the heritage and quality of resources on Central Square to still have access to CLG grants. Those are the type of things that would be valuable to put in writing to the City Council. Ms. Farrar said she understood that the HC is an advisory group to other parts of the City government. Mr. Rounds agreed. Ms. Farrar continued stating her understanding that the HDC is more of a regulatory body that is bounded by legal rights from the State of NH. Thus, she said that if things are proposed that violate those regulations for the Historic District, there would be controversy. Mr. Rounds said that was absolutely correct. Mr. Schoefmann said that perhaps for the February meeting, everyone could consider the essential features to preserve, like the fountain or bandstand, to maintain the character of Main Street.

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Ms. Joyce is a part of the group called Save the Square and she has spent a lot of time standing on Central Square. She explained that this was a more than \$5.5 million design that was approved by the City Council. She encouraged everyone to read the newspaper the evening of this meeting, which would indicate potential controversy over whether they [City staff and City Council] followed protocol. She stated that it did not seem as though [City Staff and the City Council] did. Ms. Joyce attended and spoke at the December 13 Steering Committee meeting.

246 She said she came to this HC meeting because she had often wondered whether anyone from the
247 HC or Historical Society was contacted during this conceptual design process or whether they
248 [City Staff] just did what they want, as usual. Ms. Joyce stated that she was appalled at the
249 amount of money spent. She continued indicating that similar projects in Nashua and Laconia
250 had not improved the cities and that some businesses did not survive multiple years of
251 construction. She feared the same thing would happen in Keene. Ms. Joyce wants to see the
252 infrastructure changes happen and for Main Street to be rebuilt as it is today, which is how it has
253 been since she came here more than 50 years ago. For example, she told a stranger in Maine
254 where she lived and they complimented Keene's beauty. Ms. Joyce was worried about this
255 transition having a negative impact on what we have and how we function as a community. She
256 said that Ms. Farrar was correct that the HC should have been included in this process.

257
258 Ms. Joyce asked when the HC first became aware of this project. Chair Powell replied that she
259 learned about the project originally from the awareness mailers that were sent out to homes in the
260 City. Ms. Joyce said that mailer had no valuable information on it and she asked who paid for it.
261 Mr. Rounds said the City paid for it. Ms. Joyce continued saying that there was no date for the
262 public meeting on the mailer. Mr. Rounds said the mailer was sent before that meeting date was
263 set in an effort to get public comments on the online public survey. Ms. Joyce noted that not
264 everyone has access to the internet or uses complicated websites that way, particularly older
265 members of the community. Mr. Rounds and Mr. Schoefmann agreed. Mr. Schoefmann said that
266 at the December HC meeting, the Commission discussed having this as an agenda item for this
267 meeting, and Ms. Farrar had contacted Mr. Schoefmann with some concerns. Chair Powell
268 agreed that the project came to the HC's attention in December 2022, when the Commission was
269 finishing another big project. Ms. Joyce said this has been in the works since 2017. Mr.
270 Schoefmann said it had only been in the works to the extent that it had been budgeted in the
271 Capital Improvement Program since 2017. With the conceptual design preceding the engineering
272 design, Mr. Schoefmann stated the process was on track to be bringing these concepts to the
273 public for input at this moment. Now that the Steering Committee (made up of City Councilors,
274 Main Street merchants, and other stakeholders) had made a recommendation, the City Council
275 needed to review the concepts, hear public comments, and make a decision. Ms. Joyce cited the
276 controversy and whether "that preliminary group that was supposed to be aware and be informed
277 of this project were skipped over." Mr. Schoefmann did not think they were skipped over. He
278 said with the conceptual work fulfilled by the Steering Committee that now it is the time to
279 publicize the possibilities for Main Street. This is why the January 30 and February 21 public
280 workshops were scheduled.

281
282 Chair Powell asked the guests what they thought were the important historical and heritage-
283 based elements they want to see protected, which the HC would include in their letter to City
284 Council. Ms. Joyce shared the Sentinel article that alerted her to the project that said, "Now is
285 your time to speak, use your voices." Ms. Joyce did just that at the December 13 meeting and
286 hoped her comments would be included in the Letters to the Editor of The Sentinel. She
287 mentioned other Letters to the Editor from Nancy Sporberg and Steven Seracheck on why this
288 proposal should not go forward. Ms. Joyce said she and others want to know what hurry is. She

289 said this is not a good time to disrupt the community in this manner, noting that the community
290 is still dealing with Covid-19. She continued that she did not see anything downtown that was
291 failing and she was not convinced there was a problem that needed to be addressed now.
292

293 Ms. Farrar said the City is in a valley and sits on water that would be found when they dig down
294 to the infrastructure. Chair Powell agreed that the valley and surrounding hills are an interesting
295 part of Keene's history, heritage, and how the City manages flooding. The Chair cited the
296 hurricane and great floods from the 1920s and 1930s, noting that the dam in Surry, NH, was
297 constructed to combat flooding. Chair Powell was interested in the history and honoring the past,
298 as well as understanding what the City is doing now that would be the legacy for the future.
299

300 Ms. Carey said this proposal would disrupt the sense of place that generations of people have
301 found in Keene. She had a major concern about how people feel in this place. She added that the
302 proposed changes for larger gatherings downtown was disturbing for some people.
303

304 Ms. Zerba said she had several thoughts. Although the buildings would not be touched, she cited
305 concerns for aesthetic appearance as people go up Main Street. She prefers the image of Central
306 Square as it exists currently. Ms. Zerba wondered whether there would be an extensive traffic
307 study. Mr. Rounds replied that a traffic study had occurred already, which was included on the
308 project's website. Ms. Joyce also questioned whether there had been a bicycle study. Mr.
309 Schoefmann stated that the Bicycle & Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee conducted numerous
310 counts throughout the corridor over the years, including pedestrian and cyclist counts specifically
311 on Main Street. The data exists. Mr. Schoefmann displayed a diagram with some of the traffic
312 data.
313

314 Chair Powell thought the Commission would have time at the next meeting to develop a letter
315 before the City Council decision. She hoped everyone would bring comments to the next
316 meetings.
317

318 Ms. Huston referred to the diagram and where separation would be lost between Central Square
319 and the buildings at the top of the Square. She said there is an increased homeless population in
320 the area. She thinks that not having that divide between Central Square and the buildings would
321 leave the area wide open for the homeless to squat there. Ms. Huston said this would take away
322 from the whole beauty of downtown. She said sometimes it is not very nice, like when there are
323 many homeless at Railroad Square. She thought the whole of Central Square and the adjacent
324 buildings would be vulnerable. Ms. Huston concluded that the small piece of roadway between
325 the buildings and Central Square saves the Square from overflow of inappropriate actions.
326

327 Vice Chair DeGidio said one of her concerns was for the trees. She understood that some were
328 diseased but she was otherwise in favor of saving the large, beautiful trees that downtown has
329 already. Chair Powell agreed that the trees are a part of the heritage and history of the City.
330

331 Chair Powell said she would hold off on sharing her thoughts but she hoped her interest in
332 maintaining and protecting the heritage and history of the town was clear. She recognized that
333 Central Square was a big part of that. Chair Powell thanked Mr. Rounds for his contribution.
334

335 **6) 2021 CLG – Italian Neighborhood Heritage Project**
336

337 Chair Powell noted that 76 people attended the presentation at the Historical Society of Cheshire
338 County, which she called a phenomenal turnout. She hoped the Commissioners were proud of
339 the work they put into making the presentation a reality. She thanked Ms. Carey for creating the
340 posters that people raved about. Mr. Schoefmann said he created an automated Google slideshow
341 with the videos. He said that when Mr. Lee loaded that slideshow onto the HC's Wix site, the
342 videos were missing. Since then, Mr. Schoefmann published it in a different way that now allows
343 going through it more like a video, and he will work with Mr. Lee to get it onto the Wix site. Mr.
344 Schoefmann also shared it with the Historical Society, which will keep it on file, has sent it out
345 to anybody that had interest, and posted it on their website.
346

347 Ms. Huston said the presentation was fantastic. Ms. Zerba added praise for Chair Powell's and
348 Mr. Schoefmann's contributions. Chair Powell said the whole point was to get the community
349 involved and to have public engagement with the history. The Chair was so grateful that it was a
350 success, which she thought was in large part due to the community it was focused on and their
351 involvement. It gave her hope for future neighborhoods and communities. Mr. Schoefmann
352 agreed that now the HC has a great template for moving forward with other neighborhoods.
353

354 Chair Powell noted that the work was not complete and that there were still some upcoming
355 interviews. The second half of this grant-funded project also remains, which is the story map.
356 Still, there were no action items at this time. Mr. Schoefmann wondered if they should
357 preliminarily set a limit on how many more interviews to do. He noted that the interviews
358 completed to date were filmed very professionally by Chair Powell's partner, who is a
359 videographer. Mr. Schoefmann said this gives the project more credibility. Chair Powell recalled
360 that Ms. Huston spoke with Anne Eastman, who told a story about a woman in a boat, which
361 another interviewee talked about. Additionally, Mr. Calderelli spoke about seeing the moment
362 out of a window as a woman giving birth during a flood was being towed in a rowboat to the
363 hospital. Chair Powell said it is one thing to have the pictures, but that verbal confirmation
364 makes the HC's work exciting. Ms. Huston asked if Ms. Eastman agreed to participate. Chair
365 Powell said she thought we [the Commission] wanted to keep making that effort. Ms. Huston
366 said that her son was at the event and said he would try. Ms. Huston also suggested that Ms.
367 Joyce could. Mr. Schoefmann said a focus area would be on getting some of the women's voices
368 and stories. Chair Powell cited concern that the Commission had not received more female
369 perspectives. Thus, she was reluctant to end this data collection but recognized the need to wrap-
370 up the project. Chair Powell encouraged everyone to spread the word. Ms. Zerba mentioned
371 Anne Derry as a possibility. Ms. Huston mentioned a couple who attended the presentation, but
372 she could not remember their names; she said the husband is a lector at church. Ms. Huston said
373 she would talk to Ms. Zerba about it after the meeting. Mr. Schoefmann added that someone

374 should communicate with the Historical Society as some people had contacted them with
375 interest. Ms. Zerba suggested that Ms. Farrar could be a speaker.

376
377 For February, Chair Powell thought the focus could be on finishing the collecting phase. She
378 hoped that Mr. Schoefmann would come to the February meeting with information on what the
379 Commission needs to provide to the consultant. Mr. Schoefmann had shared some of the video
380 clips with the consultant, who was impressed. Mr. Schoefmann would contact the consultant and
381 provide more information in February.

382

383 **7) 2022 CLG – Recovering Black History in Keene Project**

384

385 This grant begins this year. Mr. Schoefmann said he had been in touch with the Division of
386 Historical Resources (DHR). He said the grant approval and acceptance motion would appear
387 before Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee on January 12. City Planner, Evan
388 Clements, would be handling that process. Mr. Schoefmann said that ideally, it would be
389 approved by City Council at their January 19 meeting. Then the City Manager would sign-off,
390 and it would go back to the State in time for the Governor and Council to approve the budgeting
391 necessary for the grants being awarded. He continued that Mari Brunner, Senior Planner, reached
392 out to Cabria Baumgartner, the proposed consultant for this and everything seemed in order. Mr.
393 Schoefmann said he also touched base with the State about whether there needed to be a bid
394 process. He had also communicated with the City’s Purchasing Department and everything was
395 in order to go “single source” based on the specificity and amount of the grant. Chair Powell said
396 that was perfect and thanked Mr. Schoefmann for following-up on all of that. Mr. Schoefmann
397 said everything should be good to go. City Staff was just waiting for return communication from
398 Ms. Baumgartner about potential dates for a Zoom meeting; Mr. Schoefmann would share those
399 details with Chair Powell so she can be involved.

400

401 Chair Powell thought the next step would be to invite Jenna Carroll from the Cheshire County
402 Historical Society to meet with the Commission to discuss where the project stands right now
403 and how the Commission would help. The Chair was aiming to invite Ms. Carroll to the March
404 meeting.

405

406 Chair Powell was also curious about the new CLG granting cycle. Did the Commission need to
407 be applying for next year right now? Mr. Schoefmann thought the information was released in
408 the summer for an application due at the end of summer. Chair Powell remembered working on
409 it in March and April 2022. She knew the Commission would want to apply again to sustain
410 these ongoing cycles of projects. The Chair asked everyone to think about what types of projects
411 they are interested in pursuing starting in 2025.

412

413 **8) Next Meeting – February 8, 2023**

414

415 Because not everyone was present today, Chair Powell thought it would be necessary to recap
416 the infrastructure project discussion at the beginning of the February meeting, when the project
417 will be the primary focus.

418
419 Ms. Carey asked whether the Commission would be meeting monthly. Chair Powell said they
420 would plan to meet every month and cancel meetings if not needed

421
422 Ms. Farrar shared parting words. She said in 1980, things were in very bad shape on Main Street
423 and that was part of the reason commissions like this one were appointed to protect and preserve
424 our Main Street. She said it was like trying to reinvent the wheel, when Keene already has the
425 most beautiful Main Street in New England, with multiple awards. She noted the thousands of
426 volunteer hours spent protecting these resources. She said it was sad that it would all be torn-up.
427 She grew up in this City and agreed that sense of place is important. Some things cannot be
428 replaced to accommodate things like bicycles. Ms. Farrar said the ratio of bicycles to vehicles
429 was not in sync. She said there are plenty of opportunities for cyclists, citing all the money spent
430 on the trails program. She said to leave the Main Street for our people. Chair Powell thanked
431 both guests for sharing.

432

433 **9) Adjournment**

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435 There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:40 PM.

436

437 Respectfully submitted by,
438 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
439 January 19, 2023

440

441 Reviewed and edited by,
442 Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff
443 February 2, 2023