



Heritage Commission

Wednesday, September 13, 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**
August 9, 2023
- III. **2021 CLG** – Italian Neighborhood Heritage Project
- IV. **2022 CLG** – Recovering Black History in Keene Project
- V. **NH Preservation Alliance** – Membership Renewal
- VI. **Staff Updates**
- VII. **New Business**
- VIII. **Next Meeting** – October 11, 2023
- IX. **Adjourn**

1 **City of Keene**
2 **New Hampshire**

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5 **HERITAGE COMMISSION**
6 **MEETING MINUTES**
7

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

4:30 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Cauley Powell, Chair
Molly Ellis, Vice Chair
Marilyn Huston
Rose Carey
Councilor Gladys Johnsen (Arrived at 4:37 PM)
Louise Zerba, Alternate

Staff Present:

Evan Clements, Planner
William Schoefmann, GIS Technician

Members Not Present:

Brian Lee
Susan DeGidio

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9
10 **1) Call to Order – Roll Call**

11
12 Chair Powell called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. She welcomed a guest who is interested in joining
13 the Commission, Julie Emineth.

14
15 **2) Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – June 14, 2023**

16
17 A motion by Ms. Carey to approve the June 14, 2023 minutes with no amendments was duly seconded
18 by Ms. Huston. The motion carried unanimously.

19
20 **3) 2021 CLG – Italian Heritage Neighborhood Project**

21
22 Mr. Schoefmann said the videos that everyone saw in the Historical Society presentation were published
23 to the [City's YouTube page](#). Those videos can be linked to the StoryMap, which is still in production.
24 NH Department of Historical Resources (NHDHR) want proof of payment and request for
25 reimbursement by September 1. Mr. Schoefmann received an invoice from the consultant. Now, he said
26 it was time to try and piece some of these elements together. He recalled that the StoryMap elements
27 were organized in different categories. Chair Powell briefly explained the project—which was funded by
28 a grant 3 years ago—to Ms. Emineth while Mr. Schoefmann displayed the StoryMap. Consultants
29 created a helpful website and the Commission crowdsourced history about the specific neighborhood
30 (Highland Street and Winchester Street). The Commission collected oral histories and videos. The
31 Commission shared some of this work with the neighborhood in December 2022. This final StoryMap

32 website element was still being worked on by the consultants to share the crowdsourced history with the
33 neighborhood.

34 Mr. Schoefmann continued showing the Commission around the website. He recalled the different
35 categories or “buckets”: recreation/nature, families/culture, education/arts, and agriculture/industry/food.
36 Those categories will help to organize the information, videos, and photos. The site was being tested to
37 ensure it would integrate everything properly. Making the videos accessible was the biggest missing
38 piece at this point.

39 Ms. Carey recalled that she was supposed to help with titling the photos and gathering other information.
40 She welcomed guidance on what exactly she was supposed to be doing. Mr. Schoefmann offered to
41 contact Ms. Carey after the meeting on this topic.

42
43 Councilor Johnson arrived.

44
45 Mr. Schoefmann recalled historic map scans that were in the crowdsourcing map. Those were loaded
46 into a base map that could be integrated into the app. He would send links to the Commission as things
47 come together so they can see it before it goes public. He showed examples.

48
49 Chair Powell thought the Commission needed to have a conversation about financing the media storage.
50 Mr. Schoefmann agreed, noting that the raw video files require a considerable amount of space to store
51 them (likely 2 terabytes). He did not think this was insurmountable to ask the City to store them on a
52 network server, but he thought it would probably have to be done using a mass storage hard drive device
53 that ranges in price from \$50–\$125. Chair Powell wondered if something larger than 2 terabytes would
54 be prudent. The Chair thought the Commission could also use its budget to buy the storage device; this
55 could be easier than asking the City. Mr. Schoefmann thought that would make it easier to transfer
56 information to the Historical Society. Chair Powell recalled that she still needed to reach out to Jenna
57 Carroll at the Historical Society to see how they prefer to receive those files.

58
59 A motion by Ms. Huston to approve up to \$200 for a solid-state hard drive for the hosting of the Italian
60 neighborhood project media was duly seconded by Vice Chair Ellis. The motion carried unanimously.

61
62 Chair Powell asked Mr. Schoefmann to display video files in the Google Drive. Mr. Lee worked on
63 cutting some more video files. She thought there were more than 20 video clips.

64
65 Ms. Huston asked if the Chair received good feedback after the Historical Society presentation. Mr.
66 Clements said that people had been coming in and trying to contribute. For example, a gentleman called
67 to share a physical artifact he wanted to donate to be displayed and City Staff referred him to the
68 Historical Society because the City did not have the capacity for that.

69
70 Chair Powell referred to the video files that Mr. Schoefmann displayed. The Chair said there was quite a
71 bit of content. She had tried to assign titles to the various clips. She tried to choose videos that would fill
72 holes in the StoryMap. For example, she thought that “chickens and pigs” should be categorized under
73 “Food” versus “Other Conversations.” Chair Powell felt positive about the project overall. Mr.

74 Schoefmann thought that Ray Corson, GIS consultant, was wondering about whether there is enough
75 written narrative. Mr. Schoefmann did not think a lot of narrative was needed because this is more so
76 about visual storytelling.

77

78 In addition to the posters Ms. Carey made, she wanted to do another piece about the schoolhouse that
79 was cut in half to make 2 houses. She thought she could contribute a written narrative on this topic. If
80 further narratives are needed, the Commission could work on that.

81

82 The Commission noted that the StoryMap would continue being editable after closing the project with
83 NHDHR. Mr. Schoefmann thought he needed to make the point to NHDHR in a meeting that this
84 project would be ready and closer to final after September 1 because he could not dedicate 100% of his
85 time to it. Meetings with the consultant mean the StoryMap should not go live until mid-September.
86 Chair Powell asked Mr. Schoefmann to let NHDHR know about the timing of HC meetings. The
87 Commission agreed that it is good to have all eyes on the project for feedback and proofreading. Mr.
88 Schoefmann thought they really wanted to focus on the reimbursement request they filed. He needed to
89 confirm with the project contact: Brandee. The Feds want to ensure the funds were expended
90 appropriately.

91

92 As the project winds down, Chair Powell was curious about how the Commission felt about publicizing
93 the website and StoryMap when they are ready. She wondered whether there should be another event or
94 if the Commission should ask the Italian Society if they want to amplify the project to their own
95 network. Ms. Carey was in favor of another event at the Historical Society; she felt that the first one was
96 highly successful and brought the community members together more than just sharing a link to the
97 website would. Ms. Huston wondered if there was a way to engage the Keene Sentinel to cover the story
98 and share it with the community. Chair Powell thought that was a good idea because the Sentinel story
99 could link to the project website. Ms. Huston said the Sentinel has special write-ups on Saturdays and
100 this could be a focus piece. Chair Powell agreed that having an event could engender more interest.
101 After the first event, the Chair thought the Italian Society was open to hosting another event, and she
102 wondered if that avenue could be more exclusive. Commissioners agreed that presenting this to the
103 Italian Society would be a nice gesture. Mr. Schoefmann thought the only hinderance might be the
104 multimedia portion and he wondered if Keene State College (KSC) would be a better location for this
105 next event, but the Chair noted that the fall term would have just started. There was more time to talk
106 about these details at the September meeting. Mr. Clements thought there was a better turnout at Hannah
107 Grimes, where the Housing Needs Assessment was held, versus Heberton Hall at the Library. Mr.
108 Clements and Mr. Schoefmann would look into a possible location.

109

110 Chair Powell thought the Commission needed to consider the tone of this next presentation. Should it be
111 interactive, with Commissioners stationed with laptops to engage small groups? Mr. Schoefmann
112 suggested having this next presentation in December, 1 year after the first presentation. Vice Chair Ellis
113 thought it would be nice to make it a festive event in the sense of celebrating the old Italian
114 neighborhood and Italian heritage. She wondered if it should be a smaller, interactive event with snacks.
115 There could be a small presentation followed by something interactive to share the crowdsourcing. Ms.
116 Emineth wondered if neighbors who were interviewed for the StoryMap could be invited to the event for

117 a sort of roundtable activity of them sharing their memories. Ms. Huston recalled that there was a full
118 house for the last presentation and everyone who attended was excited; she thought people would be
119 more willing to share stories in that environment. Mr. Clements mentioned having different stations
120 (corresponding to the categories/buckets chosen) that play 5-minute clips of the interviews.
121 Commissioners agreed that they were already overwhelmed with content, and they did not think more
122 was needed. The Chair also thought it would ne good to ask families to bring physical artifacts that
123 represent their culture for people to view. Mr. Schoefmann agreed, stating that this next event could be
124 for families to showcase their history.

125
126 If this is the route the Commission wants to take for the next presentation, Chair Powell thought it was
127 important to engage the Historical Society early to see how they might want to capture some of this
128 work for their own projects in the future. Ms. Emineth agreed with a focus on food waste, and she
129 thought that Italian food could be brought to the event. Ms. Carey said that from past experiences, she
130 knew that trying to have food at an event like this could be cumbersome. Chair Powell thought the
131 Commission would need to lean on its partners, like asking the Historical Society to pull some weight
132 and the Italian Society could provide additional things. A brief discussion ensued about how some of the
133 Italian families might be excited to showcase food.

134
135 Chair Powell tabled further discussion of this event until the next meeting. Commissioners would be
136 available to assist Mr. Schoefmann as he finishes the website.

137
138 In terms of promoting the project, Mr. Clements suggested creating a 30-second or 1-minute “teaser”
139 trailer about the project to share on social media. Chair Powell noted that John DiBernardo has a great
140 voice for that sort of promotion. Chair Powell also thought that Mr. Lee might be able to create such a
141 video. With how excited the Communications & Marketing team was about the Black History project,
142 Mr. Clements thought the Commission could lean on them to promote the launch of this project. Chair
143 Powell recalled that Mr. Lee shared the first presentation on his personal social media and people in the
144 community wanted to learn more. The Chair said it would be great if the City advertised this on their
145 social media accounts. Mr. Clements would talk to the Communications & Marketing Director, Rebecca
146 Landry.

147
148 **4) 2022 CLG – Recovering Black History in Keene Project**

149
150 Mr. Clements did not have any updates. He talked with the Communications & Marketing team and the
151 City Manager’s office, and both were excited to help. The Communications team was looking for
152 interesting photos and quotes to share on social media. If the Commission provides the content, City
153 Staff would get the word out. Mr. Clements had a brief conversation with Ms. Carroll (Education
154 Director at the Historical Society and the lead on the project), who made an important point about not
155 using single photos of Black people in outreach materials that could tokenize the whole project; photos
156 of groups of people would be better. Quotes are welcome as well. A certain level of sensitivity is needed
157 when promoting this.

158

159 Ms. Huston asked about the Commission’s objective in this project; were they just assisting the
160 Historical Society? Chair Powell said the Commission was coming into this project that the Historical
161 Society had underway for some time for Cheshire County (it was unknown whether the project was for
162 Hillsborough County as well, which should be clarified). The Commission would be filling a niche in
163 the Historical Society’s project by doing a sort of case study on Keene specifically. The Historical
164 Society can apply the principles the Commission learns about Keene to other communities. Kabria
165 Baumgartner, Ph.D., the Commission’s consultant is trying to weave stories together from the different
166 primary and secondary resources that her team, the Commission, and the Historical Society have
167 unearthed. Kabria told Mr. Clements to look for warning-out notices and old church records that are not
168 online and harder for her to access.

169
170 As a next step, Chair Powell suggested scheduling a time with Ms. Carroll for training on what language
171 and historical records to look for, so the Commission does not replicate work done already. This was
172 originally a volunteer project and there was a training procedure for everyone. The Historical Society
173 was using Google Suite to house the information gathered. All agreed that this training was a good idea
174 because it would allow tasks to be delegated to Commissioners. Everyone was open to scheduling an
175 additional meeting for this training; people can meet with Ms. Carroll individually as needed too. Mr.
176 Clements would contact Ms. Carroll about scheduling this. The Commission would discuss more at their
177 September meeting. Ms. Zerba suggested having a regular Commission meeting start early for the
178 training; others agreed this was a good idea. Mr. Clements would ask the City Attorney whether there
179 could be quorum issues for the training. Kabria’s students starting their fall term would be assisting on
180 the project.

181
182 Mr. Clements would add a “Staff Updates” section on future agendas so he could share things. For
183 example, he shared that Ms. DeGidio could not be at this meeting but provided an update on the
184 Demolition Review Subcommittee. Ms. DeGidio did sign-off on the demolition of the building at 339
185 Pearl Street. The home was built in 1840 and unfortunately was largely destroyed by a fire in May 2022.
186 If anyone is interested in working on the Demolition Review Subcommittee, they should let the Chair
187 know. Ms. Carey suggested getting a photo of the home in its current state before it is demolished. Ms.
188 Carey was unsure whether she got a photo of the home for the Italian Heritage Project.

189
190 **5) Downtown Infrastructure Project Update**

191
192 Chair Powell recalled that the Commission submitted a letter to the City Council on this project.
193 Councilor Johnsen provided an update. In July, the City Council voted 14–1 in favor of a specific
194 concept design for the downtown including 2 lanes of traffic in each direction on Main Street, bike lanes
195 at sidewalk level (which many constituents asked the Councilor to support), and no expansion of Central
196 Square to the north. Councilor Johnsen thought the Commission’s letter was important. Mr. Clements
197 would ask the City Clerk to send the recommended design to the Commission and copy the Mayor on
198 the communication. While some trees would be removed because of the bike lane, Councilor Johnsen
199 was confident the trees to be removed for the work would be replaced, just not necessarily in the same
200 location; 15 trees were removed due to disease. If there are opportunities in the future for the HC to
201 comment on this project, Councilor Johnsen would alert the Commission. The Councilor agreed that it is

202 good to remind the Council of input from the many City committees. Councilor Johnsen recalled how
203 much community input there was on this project. The primary goal is to replace the outdated utilities
204 below Main Street. She did not think the downtown should be kept the same as it was in the 1800s. She
205 said the City needed to think about the young people who would be the future of Keene, as many had
206 commented on the project, but some older Councilors did not agree. Chair Powell would remove this
207 from the agenda moving forward until Councilor Johnsen alerts her of an issue to comment on.
208

209 **6) New Business**

210
211 Chair Powell wanted to know what everyone thought about the new roundabout work at
212 Winchester/Pearl/Island Streets. She wondered if the Commission should do something with the City
213 and the Italian community to commemorate the historical neighborhood. She thought that considering
214 this during construction might be a better opportunity to do something. Ms. Carey recalled that the
215 Kiwanis garden was removed, and she was unsure whether something could be done in the middle of the
216 new roundabout or whether it would be accessible to pedestrians. Ms. Carey was unsure what would
217 happen between the roadway and the river, which she thought was public land. Ms. Huston recalled that
218 there used to be a plaque on the Island Street bridge honoring 2 young men during WWII combat. Ms.
219 Huston thought it was important to replace that plaque for the neighborhood and said she would talk
220 with John DiBernardo about it.
221

222 Chair Powell suggested doing something to honor the Italian community's history. She recalled visiting
223 Newton, NH, recently, where the center traffic line in the Italian neighborhood is painted red, green, and
224 white to honor the Italian flag. She was unsure whether that was the right thing for Keene, but she
225 wondered if there was the possibility to do something like that around the edge of the roundabout or on
226 the new bridge. Chair Powell would like the Commission to think about this over the coming months.
227

228 Ms. Carey wanted to understand what land was public and private in that area to determine where the
229 Commission could implement something; Mr. Clements agreed to look into it. Chair Powell said the
230 park could be an opportunity. She added that historically, Butler Court closer to KSC was more of the
231 heart of the Italian neighborhood and the next generation moved toward Island/Pearl Streets. Mr.
232 Schoefmann and Mr. Clements agreed that it would be nice to do something in the middle of the
233 roundabout. Mr. Schoefmann was unsure where the City initiative stood that allowed community groups
234 to do things in the centers of roundabouts. The head of the Highway Department and the Parks and
235 Recreation Director were unsure about this option. There was mention of the new roundabout at Key
236 Road, but Mr. Schoefmann was unsure where that stood. Chair Powell noted the possibility of the HC
237 creating something that the Italian Society could upkeep long-term. Mr. Schoefmann suggested talking
238 with the Italian Society about that and then taking their support to the City Staff in charge, which could
239 help.
240

241 Discussion ensued about other options for the Winchester/Island/Pearl Streets roundabout. Ms. Carey
242 liked the idea of colored road lines. Mr. Schoefmann was unsure where the Highway Department stood
243 on that because the project was funded federally. Commissioners wondered whether the colored stripes
244 would be more possible along the outer edge of the roundabout and not within the traffic. Ms. Carey

245 noted that even something like a flower garden would need a plaque explaining it; there was a question
246 of who would be reading a plaque in the center of a roundabout. Chair Powell thought a plaque might
247 make more sense in a pedestrian area like the park or bridge. Chair Powell asked everyone to bring ideas
248 to the next meeting. She thought it would be great to announce something like this at the next event with
249 the Italian neighborhood. Mr. Clements would explore the idea of colored road stripes with the Public
250 Works Director.

251
252 The Commission discussed membership expiration dates. There was a guest at the June meeting
253 interested in being a member, but Mr. Schoefmann did not have their contact information and Mr.
254 Clements had not heard from that guest since the last meeting. Mr. Schoefmann suggested determining
255 whether Ms. DeGidio and Ms. Carey want to continue beyond their second terms and if so, they could
256 be changed to “alternate” members. Then, Ms. Zerba (if she wants) and Ms. Emineth could become a
257 full-time members. Everyone was comfortable with these changes. Mr. Clements would email these
258 details to the Mayor to initiate the changes. Mr. Clements would also check with the City Clerk about
259 whether alternates are exempt from the two-term appointment. Vice Chair Ellis would also reach out to
260 Teresa—a recent college graduate and John DiBernardo’s niece—who was interested in joining as well.
261 Councilor Johnsen noted that she was not running for City Council again and thus, there would be a new
262 City Councilor serving on the Commission in 2024.

263

264 7) **Next Meeting – September 13, 2023**

265

266 Mr. Clements would ask Ms. Carroll about a training before this meeting. Ms. Emineth would not be at
267 the September meeting, but was willing to set up private training with Ms. Carroll.

268

269 8) **Adjournment**

270

271 There being no further business, Chair Powell adjourned the meeting at 5:33 PM.

272

273 Respectfully submitted by,
274 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
275 August 15, 2023

276

277 Reviewed and edited by,
278 Evan J. Clements, AICP - Planner

September 05, 2023

Evan Clements
Staff Liaison
Heritage Commission
3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

RE: REQUEST FOR COMMENT – KEENE 41590; ROUTE 101 IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT, KEENE, NH

Dear Mr. Evan Clements:

Comprehensive Environmental Inc. (CEI) is currently assisting the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) with proposed roadway improvements in Keene, NH. The Route 101 project begins east of Optical Avenue and continues approximately one mile to Branch Road (see attached location map).

The goal of the project is to provide better pedestrians and bicycle facilities, improve the Route 101 roadway structure, improve the condition of the bridge over the Branch River, and improve the safety at the intersection of Swanzey Factory Road. Route 101 upgrades may require rehabilitation/widening or replacing the existing bridge over the Branch River. According to 1933 as-built plans, the roadway base includes a 20-foot wide reinforced concrete pavement. Much of the corridor parallels, or is in the proximity of, the Branch River, and the Otter and Minnewawa Brooks.

The corridor serves as one of the gateways into the City of Keene, and the abutting properties reflect the diverse zoning along Route 101, which includes the City's industrial, commerce, high density, and rural zones. One of the primary design considerations is to improve the intersection sight distance deficiencies at the intersection of Swanzey Factory Road and Route 101. The design development will include an alternative evaluation of improving the intersection's safety and may include relocating the intersection. Swanzey Factory Road is also dedicated as a "Bicycle Street" in the City's complete streets guidelines and this project may be a means to improving bicycle operations in the area. Various alternatives for the corridor will be evaluated and will undergo a thorough review and analysis of their impact to traffic flow, right-of-way, and environmental resources.

The purpose of this letter is to solicit your initial input on the aforementioned proposed project. For your information, a Public Informational Meeting will be scheduled in the future, and you will be notified of the date, time and location. Responses are welcome prior to and/or following the Public Informational Meeting. Additional project information will be provided at the Meeting.

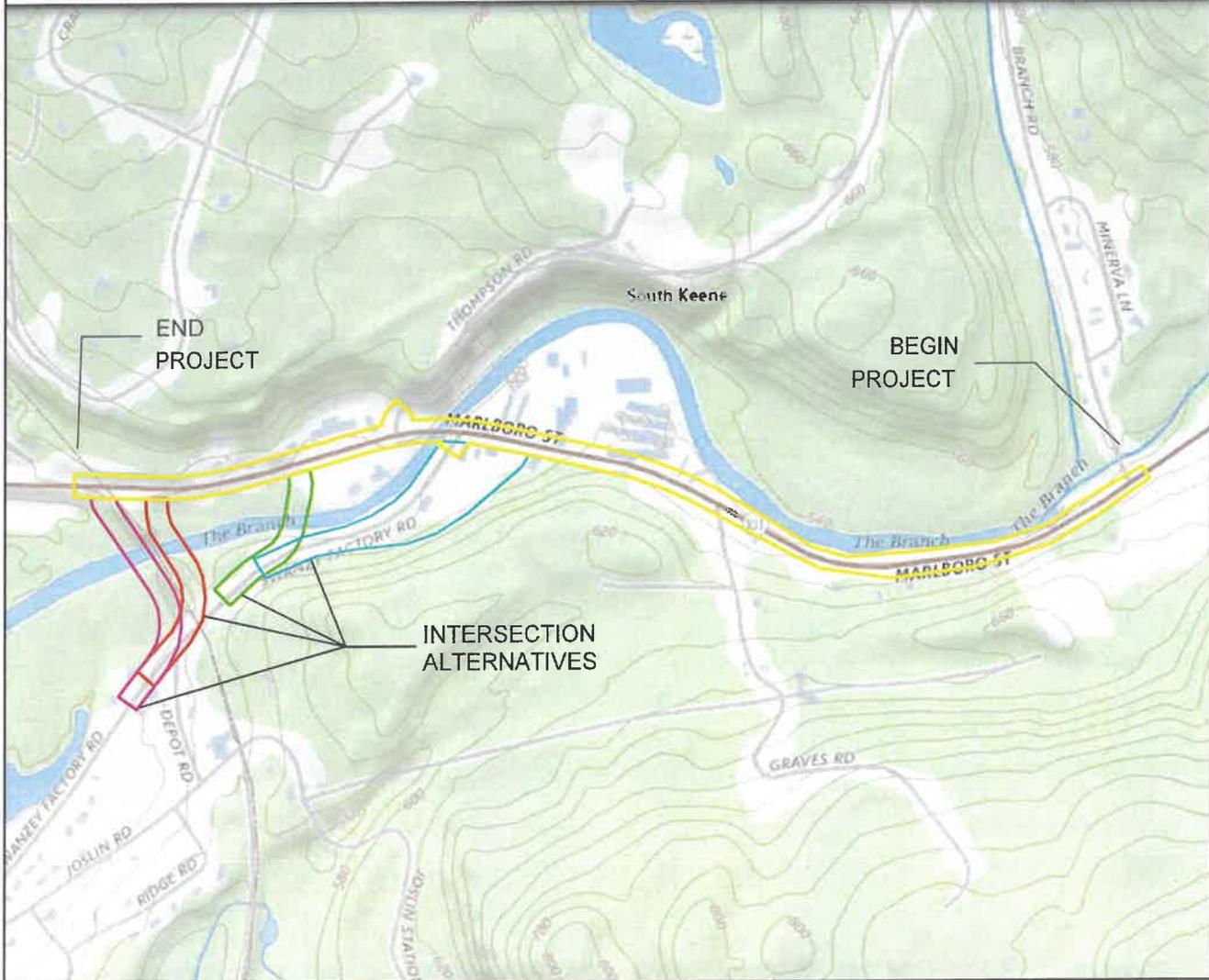
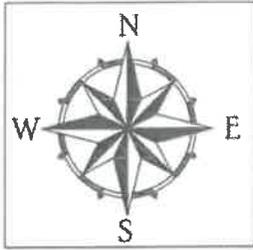
We would greatly appreciate your responding to this request and providing any comments related to the proposed rehabilitation project. We ask that you clearly identify your comments relative to each portion of the project. Please contact me if you have questions or require additional information at 603-424-8444 ext. 305.

Sincerely,
COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL INC

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew Lundsted". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew Lundsted, P.E.
Principal, Project Manager

Enclosure



750 0 750 1500

SCALE 1" = 750'

GENERAL NOTES

1. Locus map based on USGS 7.5x7.5 Grid US Topo Map of Keene, NH from the USGS map webstore: <http://www.store.usgs.gov>
2. Map scale is relative to printed size

Figure 1
USGS Locus Map
NHDOT PROJECT NO. 41590
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS
& BRIDGE REHABILITATION,
ROUTE 101, KEENE, NH



COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL INCORPORATED

21 Depot Street
 Merrimack, NH 03054