

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Don Lussier, Public Works Director

Members Not Present:

Catherine I. Workman

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

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

Chair Greenwald stated that the MSFI Committee will take the agenda out of order and begin with item 6.

6) Continued Discussion: Installation of a Peace Pole - Central Square

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the last time this item was in front of the Committee two months ago, the Committee asked staff to put together a couple different options. He continued that he has slides to show those options to the Committee. However, the group (of people wanting the Peace Pole) has met a few times since then and narrowed it down, and they feel that they have a particular option for the Committee tonight.

Mr. Bohannon continued that he will briefly show all the options. Then, he will go back to the one that the group decided was the one they wanted to bring forward, explore further and refine, go out and get the donation for, and come back to the Committee about. Option 1 was to have a Peace Pole in the middle as the fountain. Option 2 was to have the existing fountain with some writing on the granite, in silver, with messages of peace. That would be all around the fountain. He showed images of the existing fountain with a Peace Pole (next to the granite rocks) and the existing fountain with a Peace Pole on top (of the granite rocks), then images of the proposed

new fountain with the Peace Pole in back, and with the standalone Peace Pole. He continued that next is an image of just the standalone pole, for if everything gets scrapped and they say no, they are going forward with the new design, but they still want a Peace Pole. Here, they took the granite that was in the existing fountain and created an area around the pole itself.

Mr. Bohannon continued that the group worked their way through these options. There were a couple different iterations of everything, and they circled back to this (Option 2). The image is from April 21, and there was an April 9 version as well. It was a little bit proportionally out of sync, so they came back and refined this. The concept of the April 9 version had some black lettering on the fountain, which was more distinctive. That was what the group's discussion led to. The existing granite in the fountain now would be removed, replaced with new granite with "Peace" on it, and then the fountain would be low-level. (The water) would not come from the top and come down. Rust has changed the color of the granite. When the fountain was originally installed, the granite was the traditional steel gray color. There is a lot of concrete in the existing fountain because it has been patched over time.

Mr. Bohannon continued that the whole purpose of this initial conversation was the need to replace the infrastructure within the fountain, which was the impetus of all of this. The group is saying they would be willing to donate the granite formation with "Peace" embodied on it, and the City would be responsible for the infrastructure. This is where the group landed. The group members could share their thoughts if the Committee wants. They have also been working with a local artist, who has done some renderings as well. They do not have them tonight (to share) because they were not finalized and there are still some conceptual things that need to happen. The group wanted to find out tonight if the Committee likes this concept with the granite posts in the middle and "Peace" around them. If so, the Committee could accept this as informational, and he and the group could come back in a few months with a final design, costs, and information about what the group would be able to donate.

Chair Greenwald stated that this is Option 2 they are looking at. He asked where the pole is. Mr. Bohannon replied that with this option, there is no pole. He continued that the theme of peace is incorporated into the granite. Zooming in, you can see where "May peace prevail" is written. It is difficult to see because it is in gray, but if it were in black, it would be more pronounced. That is what you would see on the granite around the fountain.

Chair Greenwald asked if the idea of the sitting area being emblazoned with "Peace" was explored. Mr. Bohannon replied that yes, what is on the screen is almost an exact replica of what (exists). The dimensions are very close. Public Works Director Don Lussier has been working with Stantec on this side and measured everything, and this is what it came out to be. This is six-sided. Dedications to Einbeck are on three sides, so three sides would be available for a message of peace.

Chair Greenwald stated that he is absorbing everything and wants it to be clear that he is totally undecided. He continued that he thought they were going in the direction of a fountain and

getting rid of the rocks. Mr. Bohannon replied that that is what Stantec had proposed in February. Chair Greenwald stated that that is Option 3, more or less. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, and if the Committee wants to pursue Option 3, the Peace Pole group would probably say that they are not interested in that style of fountain, but they would like to still install a standalone Peace Pole in that upper quadrant of Central Square.

Chair Greenwald asked if there were any further questions from the Committee. Hearing none, he asked if members of the public had any questions or comments.

Carl Jacobs of 81 Wyman Road stated that Mr. Bohannon summarized the situation well. He continued that he and others came in over a year ago with the idea of donating a freestanding Peace Pole to be on Central Square. At an MSFI Committee meeting, someone had the idea of possibly incorporating it into the fountain, which the Peace Pole group was interested in and said they would work with the City on. They looked at Stantec's ideas. He thinks the group wants a clear statement of peace, whether it is on the fountain or on a freestanding Peace Pole. There were some ideas to incorporate works of art that were beautiful and peaceful, but Peace Poles are rather literal in terms of saying "peace" and "may peace prevail," and the group wants to be aligned with that worldwide effort and symbolism. That is part of why they like the option they chose. He has the April 9 rendering that Stantec did, which changed a little bit from the one that is being shown here. The group's understanding was that the existing stones could be repurposed into a less massive but cleaned-up fountain. The image on the screen pretty much shows the existing fountain. They would repurpose the existing stones to the extent that they could.

Mr. Jacobs continued that, as Mr. Bohannon mentioned, the granite is now orange due to the water. An idea from someone outside of the Peace Pole group was for the water to emerge at a lower level and to not splash down the part of the monument that had the peace message on it. It would create a serene pool around it, and some of the rocks surrounding the fountain now could be rearranged to make a nice surrounding for the peace monument. There is a lot of symbolism that people talked about in that, such as peace rising from rubble and that sort of thing, but a lot of that is in the mind's eye.

Mr. Jacobs continued that the Peace Pole group has been here (before the MSFI Committee) a few times and what they are looking for tonight is to know whether they can go forward with this. They do not have a finalized design, but the idea is for the existing stones to be repurposed and to create a message of peace, and for the fountain to be redesigned so that the water is not splashing over the peace message. Then the group could go forward and come back with drawings that are easier to understand and more representative of what would actually be there. They want to know they are on the same page with the Committee.

Chair Greenwald asked how tall the standalone Peace Pole would be. Mr. Jacobs replied seven or eight feet.

Councilor Filiault stated that his thoughts are the same as before, that they should go forward with a standalone Peace Pole. He continued that anytime someone mentions the fountain, “the City goes nuts,” even if it is just a question of whether to put the fountain in the middle or to the side. If the Peace Pole is incorporated with the fountain, he does not know how long it will take to move forward. He thinks the standalone design looks great. Then, they would not have to be in competition with whatever happens with the fountain. The Committee does not even know. They do not know if they will be repurposing the fountain as it is, or if a new fountain is going in, or what it will be. He thinks the Peace Pole is a great idea and they should go with the path of least resistance, the standalone Peace Pole.

Mr. Jacobs replied that the group started with the idea of a standalone Peace Pole, and it was the City that led them down this path.

Councilor Favolise stated that he has a question about the April 9 design, the cleaned-up blocks. He wants to know what part of this would be funded by the City, in terms of infrastructure, and what part of this would be funded by the Petitioners. Mr. Bohannon replied that the Petitioners would fund the granite piece that would sit inside the fountain. He continued that the base that they see would remain, and the infrastructure for the water, however that might get brought up as part of the fountain piece, would be the City’s responsibility.

Councilor Favolise asked if that is true of both the option they have in the slide and the change to the physical footprint of the blocks. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, in Option 2, the proportion of the fountain was small, so they asked (Stantec) to proportionally make it correct to the existing fountain, which they did. He mistakenly did not tell them to keep the rock formation in the April 9 design, but you can see the similarities. The black lettering is there; it would be that black lettering or some formation of that. It would not necessarily be the exact same design. There would be a new formation of granite that gets brought forward. As Mr. Jacobs said, there would be some smaller pieces in the bottom that would work related to the water. He asked if that answers Councilor Favolise’s question.

Councilor Favolise replied yes, he was just looking for clarification on what is infrastructure versus what is the design, and that does clear it up.

Councilor Tobin stated that she never had a problem with the rock formations in the beginning, but maybe she is less particular about water features than some people. She continued that she likes the idea of incorporating it into the fountain. She loves the idea of a local artist being brought into that. It is always great to find opportunities to highlight local artists, and it is something to be proud of.

Councilor Tobin stated that she now has a better understanding of what a Peace Pole is traditionally; she did not have a clear understanding of that when this conversation first started. She has a better understanding now of a standalone Peace Pole and can imagine that more in the downtown space. She has heard people mentioning concerns about the orange color of the stone.

She would be curious about what maintenance would be required, and cleaning, if there were something in the fountain, to make sure the words were still visible. She could support either option.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was any further comment. Hearing none, he continued that he thinks the Committee is moving in a direction. Now that he has seen what the Peace Pole looks like as a standalone, he agrees with what Councilor Filiault said – you get it in, you get it done. Otherwise, they could be messing around with this fountain and this pole. His original hope, which he understands will not happen, was for the fountain itself to be a statement of peace and dedicated to peace, so they would not need another structure in Central Square. He does not think that will satisfy the group. He thinks they want more of a statement than just a verbal acknowledgement. He likes the standalone, and does not have a preference for Option 1, 2, 3, or 4. He wants to see the fountain and wants the rocks to not be there. He has never liked them. However, 15 Councilors will be making this decision.

Councilor Filiault stated that he echoes what Chair Greenwald said, and echoes what he said before – keep it simple. Four Committee members are here tonight, but there will be 15 Councilors with opinions on the fountain. He has been down this road a few times with other things, and can only say, keep it simple.

Mr. Jacobs stated that the simplest thing would be for the Committee to accept the group's initial proposal, which was to donate a Peace (Pole) to be installed on Central Square. He continued that he thinks they all still have that proposal in front of them. The group is prepared to do that. It has been interesting to have all this discussion, but a vote to move forward with the initial proposal would make him just as happy as any of these fountain ideas. He does not dislike the fountain idea, but if the preference is for the freestanding Peace Pole, the group already has that ready to go.

Councilor Favolise stated that his preference is for incorporating it into the fountain in some way, because since this first came to the Committee's agenda, he has tried to get a better understanding of the connection the Peace Pole has to Keene, specifically. He continued that he has been thinking about the other features of Central Square, like the soldiers' monument, which is the monument to the soldiers from Keene who died in the Civil War, and the Einbeck Partner City dedication of the fountain. There are some specific ties to Keene that he has tried to get to a place of seeing with this particular installation. He is not outright opposed to a Peace Pole in Keene. If they go in the direction of a standalone Peace Pole, he wonders if Central Square is the right place for that. He would like to see something advance out of Committee at this point with at least some clear direction, but that is his hesitation with the standalone Peace Pole as its own structure in Central Square. At this point, they need to make a decision about the fountain, Peace Pole, or nothing, although he does not think "nothing" is an option.

City Manager Elizabeth Ferland stated that it would be great to have some direction from the Committee tonight that could move forward to Council. She continued that she thinks Mr.

Bohannon and the group have done a great job showing the options and being as creative as possible, and they are now at a good place to hopefully have something from the Committee to move forward to Council.

Joel Faucher stated that he is the artist who has been working with the Peace Pole group. He continued that this is an amazing opportunity here in the center of Keene to incorporate the idea of a Peace Pole in perhaps a non-traditional way. Option 1 is the traditional Peace Pole by itself. Option 2 is the water feature being incorporated. He thinks within the four options shown, the later version of Option 2 shows an option that is cleaned up for both. There is an opportunity where they have a very standard idea of a Peace Pole, which kind of blends in a couple of months, or this opportunity to blend the two together, which makes a statement. It cleans up what people have already said they do not like with the staining, and to maybe rectify those issues with the iron staining in the future, they suggest bringing the water levels lower. He supports the idea that there are discrepancies that could work for Option 1 or 2. He would hate to see the opportunity for something unique to be turned down (in exchange for something that would) blend in.

Councilor Filiault made a motion for the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee to recommend to the City Council that they move forward with a standalone Peace Pole in Central Square. Councilor Tobin seconded the motion.

Councilor Favolise stated that he will vote to advance this out of Committee to the full Council where the 15 Councilors can make the decision, but he still needs to think about how he will vote, when it comes time to make the final decision.

Councilor Tobin stated that she understands where Councilor Favolise is coming from. She continued that she also feels like, having lived here for a while, she has seen so many demonstrations of peace, and it makes sense to her. The design of Central Square has little pockets, and she can imagine (a Peace Pole) working in many different places there.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee voted unanimously to recommend the City Council that they move forward with a standalone Peace Pole in Central Square.

1) Frederick MacMillan – Request to Install a Sculpture at Patricia Russell Park

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the Petitioner.

Frederick MacMillan from Dublin, NH, and Georgia Cassimatis from Gilsum, NH introduced themselves.

Mr. MacMillan stated that he was “bitten by the sculpture bug” three or four years ago at a Rotary conference in Meredith, NH. He continued that they have a sculpture walk along their

waterfront, with an annual display of about a dozen sculptures. They issue a call for all of New England sculptors to submit a piece. He pursued looking into sculpture, and found a sculpture park in Brookline, NH, open to the public. Sculptors from all over the world create and display pieces there. He also spent time in the Tucson Sculpture Park, trying to determine the business model for a sculpture park, and met with the executive director there, who happens to be from Greenfield, NH. The executive director introduced him to Michael Manjarris, whom he invited to visit New England. Mr. Manjarris came for a week to visit Peterborough, Dublin, and Keene, and met with the Selectboard; then-Mayor George Hansel; and Luca Paris, Chair of the Chamber of Commerce, and got a flavor for the area. It was clear that the area does not have three-dimensional art or sculpture. There is two-dimensional art and performing arts, but not three-dimensional art. Thus, Mr. Manjarris embarked on the idea of establishing a cornerstone project that would maybe involve a sculpture trail throughout the Monadnock region.

Mr. MacMillan continued that a few months later, Mr. Manjarris called him from his home in Texas with a proposition. He had a well-known national artist whose widow was willing to lend one of his works on a renewable two-year loan basis. He found a spot in Peterborough with the help of the Peterborough Selectboard. They were anticipating a cornerstone project. They thought they had a high-end work of art that people would respond to. As time went on, the widow, Kim Vaadia, decided she wanted to sell the piece. They did not have \$80,000 to buy it, so the project hit a dead end. They had raised money to transport the sculpture from Brooklyn, NY to Peterborough and install it, but not enough money to buy it. Things were at a standstill for a couple of years until last fall when he attended a symposium at Apple Hill and got to know Georgia Cassimatis and others in the area who were interested in sculpture.

Mr. MacMillan continued that he met with the Director of Keene's Parks and Recreation Department, and they talked about the possibility of establishing a cornerstone project in Keene. She named the Patricia Russell Park as being a place that the Parks and Recreation Department would be willing to set aside for sculpture. Now, they had a place, but not a work of art. About a month later, he attended a coffee/chat session with people from Arts Alive and Friends of Public Art. An attendee gave him the name Christopher Curtis, who has a nationwide reputation in the works of sculpture. He emailed Mr. Curtis, who called him back, and volunteered to help him and Friends of Public Art to establish a platform for three-dimensional, outdoor sculptures. A couple of weeks later, he accepted Mr. Curtis's invitation to visit his studios in Stowe and saw some of Mr. Curtis's sculptures. Mr. Curtis then said that if (Friends of Public Art) had the money for installation, he would bring the sculpture down (to Keene) and install it. Now, they have a place to put a sculpture, and a sculpture. That is the background to this proposal. He would like to accept Christopher Curtis's offer to lend (Keene) his work of art, which he has valued at around \$28,000, for a period of about a year.

Mr. MacMillan continued that they need to work out the details, and there are many aspects to it that they do not know the answers to, but they are open to suggestions. They hope this idea will catch fire and that others will come forward, and they can attract some other artists to exhibit their works of art in Keene and the surrounding area.

Chair Greenwald stated that he thinks City staff will need to review the whole situation of public art (such as) how to accept it, where to put it, liabilities, responsibilities, and such. He asked if there is any cost to the City. Mr. MacMillan and Ms. Cassimatis replied no, the money for installation, de-installation, and the insurance policy comes from funds in the Grand Monadnock Rotary Club's Sculpture New Hampshire Project.

Ms. Cassimatis stated that the sculptures located at the Keene Airport followed the City of Keene's Public Art Resolution, which is what Friends of Public Art has modeled in their proposal. They tried to answer every question that was in that document, but if the Committee has more questions, she and Mr. MacMillan are happy to continue the conversation. She has worked with Katie Schwerin on those other projects, which seemed to go smoothly, in terms of installation. Those are permanent, and these would be rotating, so the approach and logistics would be slightly different. (Keene) needs sculpture. Incorporating public art has been part of the Master Plan since 2010. To honor that, she continues to show up for public art. There are plenty of murals now, and it is time to move on to some other medium.

Chair Greenwald asked if consideration was given to Railroad Square or Gilbo Ave. Ms. Cassimatis replied that they wanted to find the lowest hanging fruit, so they asked the Parks and Recreation Director where she thought sculpture would be the easiest to incorporate. She continued that if the Committee thinks they should approach a different department, that would be fine. They would be happy to put the sculpture in a more public place. Parks and downtown are great. The redesign of Main St. will take four years, and they (Friends of Public Art) do not want to wait for that.

Mr. MacMillan stated that the hope is for this to be a cornerstone project. He continued that it would breed additional submissions from other artists. For example, he just found out that the City of Nashua has a sculpture symposium they have been doing for 18 years, involving artists from all over the world, who the public is invited to watch create their sculptures. Nashua now has approximately 60 pieces of sculpture scattered throughout the city.

Councilor Filiault stated that he listened to a radio segment about this particular piece of art, and he likes what he heard about it, that it has four cut-outs and four sides, so you can look at the same sculpture from four different angles and come up with four different opinions. He likes that concept. Regarding Pat Russell Park, he and Chair Greenwald both had the opportunity to sit with Pat Russell as City Councilors and as she became Mayor. Pat Russell was very opinionated. He thought about whether she would approve of this sculpture at the park named after her, and in his opinion, absolutely yes. He thinks she would think it is a good idea, and so does he. He thinks Pat Russell Park is a good location for this sculpture, and since the expenses are being covered, it's a win-win. He is on board with this.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he loves this proposal and would love to see more sculpture art in more of Keene's parks, especially the Ashuelot River Park, and certainly, they made space at Patricia

Russell Park. This is a good idea. He continued that something he has a little bit of concern about is the length of stay of this piece, and some of the things he knows could potentially happen in that location, related to graffiti. He wonders if the sponsor would be taking care of the graffiti on their insurance, and how that would go. In addition, the City would need to know the width of the slats. As someone who has spent a lot of time around playgrounds, something that immediately popped into his head was the possibility of a child sticking his head in and not being able to pull it out. They would want to make sure the width would not require a phone call to the Fire Department to come get someone's stuck head out of this sculpture.

Mr. MacMillan replied that as their letter states, the dimensions are eight feet tall by two feet six inches, which is two and a half feet on each side. That is the width. Mr. Bohannon asked if that is the width of the gaps. Mr. MacMillan replied no, the width of the whole (sculpture). Mr. Bohannon replied that he is talking about the width of the gaps, as shown in the photo. Mr. MacMillan replied that they can find out. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, that is the piece that the City needs to know. Ms. Cassimatis replied that she can see that those specifications are important to consider, as they do for playgrounds.

Councilor Tobin stated that she has a clarification question. She asked how much of this discussion was about the particular sculpture and how much about establishing a platform that would be a rotating space for art. She continued that she feels like those are almost two separate questions. In terms of Pat Russell Park, her gut feeling was that it did not really make sense there, but she went back and read the plans in the history of that park, and the documents actually mentioned preserving a place for sculpture.

Councilor Favolise stated that if this meeting had been even 24 hours ago, he would have been viewing the sculpture totally differently, but now that he is looking again, he kind of gets it and likes it a lot more than he did the first time he saw it. He continued that Pat Russell Park is right on the border of his ward, so he considers it the park in his ward, and he is always happy to see development and vibrancy coming to East Keene. It was interesting to hear Mr. Bohannon mention Ashuelot River Park, because aesthetically, he saw this in his mind in Ashuelot River Park maybe a little more than Pat Russell Park.

Ms. Cassimatis replied that Ashuelot River Park is not accepting art anymore.

Councilor Favolise stated that he thinks the proposal is thorough, in terms of addressing the different points of the City's Public Art Resolution. If the only outstanding question is the width and the safety aspect, he is okay with moving this forward, getting that answered, and going from there.

Ms. Cassimatis stated that she wanted to speak to the question of whether this is the group that decides what art is, and say that Friends of Public Art does not even stand in the way of deciding whether they like this piece of art. It is not politically driven, not representing anything to do with sexuality, not suggestive of anything. It is a nice thing to look at. She knows Nashua has

had problems with an art piece being put up and then obviously looking like something they did not intend for it to look like, and then people want it taken down. They (Friends of Public Art) want to vet that before it gets to that point, so they looked at this project and looked at this sculpture, and her only concern was whether it would be tippable and whether someone could push it over. It is 1,800 pounds, so she does not think it will tip. However, graffiti is an important issue, so they (Friends of Public Art) will make sure to cover that and decide in the insurance policy how that works. There is special spray to repel graffiti, which would make cleaning easy. They could easily treat it with something. Overall, they will all just take this project as it is, but possibly use it as a model for the next one. If this is a 12-month project, that would be great. She thinks the artist is willing to transport, install, and remove the sculpture for a certain fee, and if that is a smooth process for everyone and they find funding again to support that process, she does not see why they could not make it rotational and do this every year. She would probably like to see it a little longer, maybe two years, but there might be another location. Meredith, NH has rotating art and sculpture yearly, and they take care of it, but those pieces are much smaller. This sculpture is a very big piece of art, so it requires a lot more logistical backing.

Ms. Cassimatis continued that she thinks they should be thinking long-term. Do they want people to come here (to Keene) for a variety of reasons? She thinks so, and she thinks art is really important. It is an asset to the community, as they learned from the murals, and they need sculpture. It is a missing aspect for the community.

Mr. MacMillan stated that if one of the objectives of art is to create conversations, they have succeeded in that sense. He continued that regarding insurance; this is not the first public sculpture park or establishment. There are other installations where insurance has been addressed, and plenty of precedent for them to follow.

Chair Greenwald stated that he is not putting the Public Works Director on the spot right now, but someone will have to convince him that the sculpture is not tippable. He continued that it looks quite tippable to him, not from wind, but from people. Mr. MacMillan replied that it has been sitting in an open field, open to the public, so if someone wanted to push it over, they could have.

Ms. Cassimatis stated that there is a steel base around it. She asked if (the Committee wants), if they got the okay from the artist, for it to be installed with footings of some sort. Chair Greenwald replied that whatever the structural engineer says will make that safe (is what he is asking for), because that sculpture is big enough to crush someone. Ms. Cassimatis asked if she and Mr. MacMillan can talk to someone in the City about that.

Mr. Lussier stated that if the Committee is so inclined, the motion should include language about working out the details for installation with staff. He continued that staff can certainly work with Ms. Cassimatis and the artist to make sure that it is safely secured to the ground and not tippable.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he wants to add that he knows Mr. MacMillan spoke with Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and Recreation Director, and she touched base with him about this conversation. He encouraged her to review the application, and as Ms. Cassimatis shared, the application is complete. Staff has reviewed it and determined it is complete, and Friends of Public Art followed the guidelines of what they needed to do to bring this forward to the Committee tonight. He agrees with the Public Works Director about having language about following up on those concerns, contingent upon the additional details related to the width of the gaps, but he does feel that the application has been completed appropriately, and Mr. MacMillan and Friends of Public Art have done what they were supposed to do.

Chair Greenwald asked if there were any further questions.

City Attorney Amanda Palmeira stated that she wants to note that there are many logical questions that staff were hoping to address after this meeting with the Petitioners. She continued that probably the Resolution would contemplate a different type of insurance than they have done with different art installations in the past, given the location, and probably an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). They need to have more conversation about the maintenance, monitoring, removal, and logistics of that before it can be approved in the Resolution. Staff is happy with what they have heard so far, but there is more conversation to be had.

Councilor Favolise stated that he has a question about the wording. He asked if the Committee could make and pass a motion to approve the request contingent on the review being to staff's satisfaction, of outstanding questions. The City Attorney asked if he means that the vote would approve of this from the Committee's perspective and then it would be up to staff to finish it up with the Resolution. Councilor Favolise replied that he is just tired of placing items on more time. The City Attorney replied that she understands, and the Committee can do that, but they need to be aware that the items in the Resolution are things that the City Council has determined it is supposed to monitor and approve. If the Council wants staff to take those over and say it is at their discretion to make sure those are met, they can do that, but she just wants the Committee to be aware of what the process traditionally is.

Chair Greenwald stated that he, too, dislikes placing items on more time, but he thinks there are a lot of questions that could be answered at the next meeting. He continued that at least there is general agreement that this is worthwhile, and they do want to pursue it, which the background notes will show.

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

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee voted unanimously to place the request to install a sculpture at the Patricia Russell Park on more time to allow staff to come back after review of the Public Art Resolution with the Artist and Petitioners to determine if it is appropriate for this space.

Mr. MacMillan asked who he and Ms. Cassimatis should respond to for answering some of these questions. Chair Greenwald replied that there are legal questions, Parks and Recreation questions, and Code Enforcement questions. Ms. Cassimatis stated that they will be coming back for another (MSFI Committee) meeting to have a motion to send it to Council, and this was the Committee's acceptance that they like the project, and they will talk more.

Mr. MacMillan asked when the Pat Russell Park will be completed. Mr. Bohannon replied that all that is left are the lights, which were installed this week, and one had a part missing but he thinks that has been fixed. He continued that the Bocce court will get started next week, and that will be complete. Public Works is working to have the sidewalk completed here in the next couple of weeks for the skate park, and the fencing will go up in about three weeks. The whole thing will be completed before the end of June. Some trees will be installed within the month of June, over the course of the summer.

2) Timken Aerospace – Request for the Installation of a Crosswalk – Tiffin Street

Don Lussier, Public Works Director, stated that he does not believe the requester is here this evening, but the Engineering Division has reviewed it. He continued that in terms of where it is appropriate to put marked crosswalks, the Committee has heard him talk about the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) many times. Unlike things like stop signs or traffic signals that have very specific quantitative criteria for where they are appropriate, marked crosswalks for uncontrolled approaches, also known as midblock crosswalks, do not have specific criteria to use to decide where they are required or not. It is more of a subjective analysis.

Mr. Lussier continued that in this case, the Engineering Division looked at it, and they agree that it makes sense to have a crosswalk at this location, given the parking lot on the north side of Tiffin Street and the employer on the south side of Tiffin Street. Crosswalks and crosswalk signage are not codified the way something like a stop sign is. A stop sign has to be listed in the City Code in order to be enforceable. A crosswalk, however, does not have to be listed in the City Code, which is why many times changes to crosswalks and crosswalk signs are made by City staff. The City Council delegated the authority to install those types of traffic control devices to either the Keene Police Department (KPD) or the Public Works Department (PWD), depending on what the issue is. Thus, many times, these sorts of things get resolved without Council involvement.

Mr. Lussier continued that with that said, he thinks it is appropriate that this request came to the Committee, specifically because it is hard for him to say that this crosswalk serves a public purpose. It goes from a private parking lot on the north side to a private property employer on the south side. No sidewalks connect to this that would serve the public. That is the issue that gives him pause. He supports installing a crosswalk at this location, but his concern is that they are essentially putting in a crosswalk for one private property owner.

Councilor Favolise asked if this is a public road. Mr. Lussier replied yes. Councilor Favolise replied that that makes him feel better. Mr. Lussier stated that the infrastructure that would be installed would all be within the public right-of-way. He continued that they would put in the painted crosswalk as well as pedestrian crossing signs, the yellow diagonal kind.

Councilor Tobin made a motion for the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee to recommend to the City Council that the City Manager be authorized to install a new crosswalk on Tiffin Street near Timken. Councilor Filiault seconded the motion.

Mayor Jay Kahn stated that he wants to point out that this is a private business that employs 250 people currently, and wishing to employ 300. He continued that thus, it is not an ordinary private business, for clarification. They have three shifts. He is sympathetic to their request.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to install a new crosswalk on Tiffin Street near Timken.

3) Ian D. Matheson – Court Street Pedestrian Safety Risks

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the Petitioner.

Ian Matheson stated that he is looking for a sign on the crosswalk, some type of illumination, or something that lets people know there is a crosswalk there and that people will be crossing. He continued that he knows concerns about that section of Court St. have been brought up before by other people. His request is connected to that as well. It is about the cars that park in the street. There are now bigger cars and bigger trucks, and drivers often cannot see smaller people like him, which leaves him stuck in the middle of the street. That is the gist of it, and he is happy to answer questions.

Mr. Lussier stated that he thanks Mr. Matheson for bringing this to the Committee's attention. He continued that he is embarrassed to say this, but he has driven Court St. thousands of times and was surprised that none of the crosswalks Mr. Matheson mentioned had pedestrian signs at this point. It had never occurred to him as he was driving the corridor that that was the case. Thus, staff looked at the corridor, and Washington St. Specifically for mid-block crossings, staff's practice has been to try and have some element of enhancement, such as additional signage or yield bars in the roadway. For a high-volume roadway like Main St., they would do flashing beacons. He went and looked at all these different crosswalks to see what sort of visibility enhancements exist today. He has a chart showing that Vernon St., Mechanic St., Cross St., High St., and Ingles St. have no pedestrian signs today, but all of them have the crosswalk markings as well as yield bars. The exception is Starling Rd., the entrance into the Tanglewood facility.

Mr. Lussier continued that he also looked at streetlights. All of them except Vernon St., Starling Rd., and the Stone Arch Village entrance have streetlights either directly above or in close

proximity to the crosswalk. For lighting, they are in good condition. However, he thinks that almost all of those “missing checkmarks” are ones it makes a lot of sense to add, with the exception of the Dunkin’/Stone Arch Village entrance drive. He does not think it would be reasonably possible to add a light at that location, but for the other locations starred on the chart, he recommends they do some enhancements to the visibility of the crosswalks.

Mr. Lussier continued that earlier tonight, he mentioned that the Council delegated the authority to install signs to the KPD and PWD, and he mentioned that specifically because they have already installed these signs. He hopes the Committee does not object, but the pedestrian crossing signs have already been installed on Court St. They have not yet marked the additional yield bar, and of course, the streetlights will take some coordination with Eversource. If the Committee feels otherwise, staff would like to hear that. There is a similar situation on Washington St. They found six crosswalks that did not have those pedestrian signs, and he recommends they add those signs. It has already been done. Yield bars will be added at the Walnut Cottage intersection.

Mr. Lussier continued that regarding lighting, they would like to add a streetlight to Citizens Way. He put a question mark for Gilsum St., because he does not think it will be possible to add a streetlight there, given the configuration of the two roads coming together. Those are the recommendations staff has done to date, and he hopes the Committee does not object.

Councilor Filiault stated that he is glad to see staff has already jumped on this. He continued that he has a couple of questions. First, they had a problem years ago, and still do even downtown, with the crosswalks. One remedy they came up with was to put some inexpensive pin lighting directed down at the crosswalks. Mr. Lussier does not have to answer tonight, but he would like to know what the cost would be for that, for example, upper Washington St. near Citizens Way or some of the heavily used crosswalks. Especially in the evening, if that little pin lighting goes on the crosswalk, not only do the pedestrians see it, but the drivers see the pedestrians in the crosswalk better. His question is what the cost would be to install that pin lighting, realizing that there has to be someplace nearby to install them. His other question is about the cost of flashing beacons. They put one on West St. Everyone was a little apprehensive about it, but that crosswalk has worked amazingly well, as do those beacons. He has gone there multiple times and can say that (the crosswalk) stands out, and people get across, and there are none of the predicted traffic jams; drivers just slow down and let pedestrians get across. He wonders if they could add beacons like that to some of the heavily-used crosswalks, and wonders what the cost would be. He appreciates the work Mr. Lussier and his team are doing so far.

Mr. Lussier stated that the pin lights they did downtown worked and were very cost-effective, because they are mounted on existing streetlights. He continued that they just tapped into the electricity that was already there on that pole. To do that in other locations, he would need to do more research and thinking. It would depend, as has been pointed out already, on whether there is a pole attached to it and how they would get the power to it. There might be solar options that

would be cost-effective and still robust enough for public infrastructure, but he would have to think about it.

Mr. Lussier continued that regarding his other question about the flashing beacons, on West St. they were able to save a bit of money because they repurposed some of the components they had from other installations. The beacons themselves were harvested from Winchester St, where the contractor had installed them facing both directions of traffic, so you had them facing the rear of your vehicle as you are driving away, which did not make sense. They took those out and reused them on West St., thus, that was a little bit cheaper. They are generally about \$15,000 per crosswalk, for those systems. Typically, they do them as a solar-powered installation, which avoids having to dig trenching, have meters somewhere, and that sort of thing.

Councilor Filiault stated that he appreciates the harvesting part. He continued that he hopes they can harvest a few more.

Councilor Tobin asked if they have looked at visibility in general. She asked if, once they take these steps, vehicles will be able to see when pedestrians are waiting to cross, and if pedestrians will be able to see when cars are coming. She is also curious about the painting of the lines and the patterns. The large lines going in the direction of traffic, where the tires go, get erased. You end up having a lane of traffic with a crosswalk, and no lines in the lane. The only lines are kind of on the edges and in the middle. She is thus curious about the painting, and in general, if they are looking at the visibility and that all together.

Mr. Lussier replied that in terms of visibility, not unrelated to other items on the agenda tonight, no parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk is already a City Code requirement. He continued that you see at those crosswalk locations that the parking stalls are further away. That is specifically for that line-of-sight visibility. Councilor Tobin put her finger on the number one issue with visibility in the crosswalks, especially in low light conditions – the condition of the pavement markings themselves. Right now, the condition of the pavement markings is awful. Every spring, the PWD repaints all the pavement markings, and every winter they erase them with the plow blades. Right now, they are in rough shape. They expect the painting contractor to start that work the first or second week of June. It is highly weather-dependent work, so with the wet spring we have had, he does not know what the contractor's exact schedule will be.

Councilor Tobin stated that she has a follow-up, regarding what Mr. Lussier said about not parking within 20 feet of a crosswalk. For a vehicle to stop for a pedestrian, they need to be able to see the pedestrian waiting to cross, presumably, not just (see them) mid-cross. She asked how far, based on the speed, they need to see that pedestrian waiting to cross, in order to stop their vehicle. She asked what other obstructions might exist, such as utility poles, trees, vegetation, or the angle of the road. If there is a bend in the road, the 20 feet might not actually be the problem, with vehicles parked. It might be something else. She is curious about whether they are looking at all those pieces together.

Mr. Lussier replied that the short answer is yes. He continued that regarding the distance that is required, a little hint of this is in the City Code related to driveway visibility and location. In Standards for Driveways in the City Code, it says you must have “all weather sight distance of 200 feet.” Throughout the City, the speed in almost every location is 30 mph. The safe stopping distance, if you look at the engineering design manuals, at 30 mph, is a little less than 200 feet. That 20 feet between the crosswalk and the first parked car does not mean that the driver does not see it until they get to 20 feet. It is basically geometry. They create triangles between the person standing on the side of the road and a line of sight that goes diagonally from that point on the side of the road to the driver’s eye, a few feet down the road. That is where that 20 feet comes from.

Mr. Lussier continued that how far you can see down the road depends on many variables, such as horizontal and vertical geometry, vegetation on the sides of the roadways, parked cars, and more. It is difficult to say how much sight distance you have at every crosswalk, but the rule of thumb is you want to have that 200 feet of sight distance. And honestly, they will not have that everywhere. If we were in Indiana, with nice, straight, 90-degree angles at every intersection, that might be possible, but that is not where we are.

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

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to install additional signage, pavement markings, and lighting to enhance the safety of crosswalks on Court Street between Vernon Street and Starling Street, and on Washington Street between Taylor Street and Citizens Way.

4) Stephen Bragdon and Cheryl Belair – Safety Issues Associated with the Driveway at 82 Court Street

Chair Greenwald stated that Mr. Bragdon and Ms. Belair are not present this evening, but the Committee has heard this item a couple of times, and it would be great to move forward with something to give them an answer for this year. He continued that he has a question for the City Attorney. The Committee has three potential options. He wants to know if it would be possible, if the Committee were to, say, direct the City Manager to draft an Ordinance to prohibit parking within some number of feet of a driveway, if the driveway were servicing a commercial office, by request of the property owner. In other words, they would not just be eliminating or changing *all* the parking spaces. If 82 Court St. wants it and 55 Court St. does not care, they would just address 82 Court St.

The City Attorney replied that her advice so far, which she will be consistent with, is that the City’s responsibility and liability is going to be dependent on the City being consistent and making decisions about roads and safety based on objective data. That is not going to be contingent on who the property owner is at the time. It should be based on the type of data that the PWD and engineers use to look at traffic, dimensions of the road, and such, rather than the

requests of particular property owners or who might care or not care, because that is not necessarily going to be safety driven from an objective, legal perspective.

Chair Greenwald replied that it sounds like the answer is no. He asked to hear from the Public Works Director.

Mr. Lussier stated that tonight he has the graphics that were prepared last year when this topic was discussed, in terms of parking impact between current policy and different setback options. He continued that to tag onto what the City Attorney said, something discussed in a previous meeting was basing it on zoning districts, and having residential zones treated with one offset distance and commercial and industrial zones treated with another. He thinks that would probably meet the City Attorney's concerns. Having it parcel by parcel is the real concern.

Mr. Lussier continued that the first graphic shows the current conditions. What they have been using as a policy came from approximately the fall of 2023 when they originally talked about this and came up with this policy about how and where they would mark individual parking stalls. Today, the City Code says you cannot park in front of or in close proximity to a private driveway if it would interfere with the use of that driveway. Staff has interpreted that to mean five feet from the edge of the driveway. With that five-foot setback today, between Central Square and School St. they can mark out 70 individual parking stalls. If they were to increase that buffer between the driveways and the parking stalls to 10 feet, they would lose seven of those parking stalls and have 63. Bumping it up to 20 feet, they would have 55 parking stalls, so they would lose an additional eight stalls. The original request from Mr. Bragdon was for a 30-foot parking buffer adjacent to his driveway. If they did that, it would eliminate 25 of the 70 stalls, bringing it down to (45) within that area.

Mr. Lussier continued that last time they looked at this, they also talked about Washington St. being a similar kind of condition. As the Committee knows, they received a similar request related to Washington St., which is what originally drove them to develop the policy. (He has the) numbers for Washington St. With the existing policy, there are 73 parking stalls. At 10 feet, it would drop to 66 parking stalls. A 20-foot buffer would reduce it to 54 stalls, and a 30-foot buffer would reduce it to 44 stalls. Those conditions are very similar (to Court St.'s).

Mr. Lussier continued that lastly, Mr. Bragdon and Ms. Belair had also discussed at previous meetings and in their letter that they thought speed was a real concern at this location and particularly that southbound speed was exorbitantly fast because drivers are descending the hill. Staff collected (speed) data from April 29th to May 7th with the display off, not giving drivers feedback (about their speeds). As he has talked about, the 85th percentile speed is what a reasonable and prudent driver would be expected to do in a certain situation. The 85th percentile speed for southbound traffic was 31.9 mph, which is coming down the hill. For northbound traffic, going up the hill, the 85th percentile speed was a little faster, at 36.1 mph. Then, staff turned the panels on and re-ran the count from May 8th until May 19th. Giving drivers that feedback and flashing their speeds back at them did improve drivers' behavior a little bit.

Southbound speed dropped about one mile per hour to 30.8, and northbound speed dropped about one and a half miles per hour to 34.7. The bottom line is that those types of speeds, 30 to 36 mph, are not something that staff would typically say was a major speed concern for a 30 mph zone. Yes, some people are driving over the speed limit, and the data collection did observe some people driving extraordinarily fast, but it is a diminishingly small number. There was one driver at 3:00 AM driving 58 mph, but that is truly an outlier. As he has said before, there is not an engineering solution to human behavior. People who want to drive like jerks are unfortunately going to do it. This data does not suggest that speed is an overarching problem at this location.

Chair Greenwald asked if they could (change the) signs to 25 mph. He asked if they can legally do that. Mr. Lussier replied that State law allows them to drop the speed limit on local roads to 25 mph. He continued that it should be supported by an engineering analysis that justifies why that location requires a lower speed limit. Off the top of his head, he would be hard pressed to find one. You are highly discouraged from just reducing the speed limit as a method of trying to reduce the speeds. The Committee has seen him give presentations on this in other locations. The 85th percentile speed is used by engineers as the planning guide, not because they think it makes sense or sounds nice, but because, as he said earlier, it is what a reasonable and prudent driver is going to do for a specific road condition. He can show the Committee data from Eastern Ave., where they lowered the speed limit from 30 to 25 mph. The observed speeds of traffic on that road actually went up, the next time staff measured them. A sign by itself, without changes to the road condition, will not change driver behavior if people feel perfectly comfortable driving at 31 or 32 mph.

Councilor Favolise stated that in reviewing the minutes of the last MSFI Committee meeting, he saw conversation from not the Petitioner, but a supporting member of the public who owns or operates a business across the street, around the accident history in this location. He continued that he does not see that included as part of the packet here, and he does not know if that is readily available for the Committee, but that would influence his thinking about some specific conditions that might exist at this location that would make it okay for them to move forward with some Ordinance changes.

Mr. Lussier stated that Mr. Bragdon did mention in his letter that there has been a history of accidents in this location. He continued that he mentioned in his original request that there had been a couple of accidents, and this most recent letter mentioned another accident. It was not clear to him from Mr. Bragdon's letter whether those were accidents that were reported to the KPD and responded to. He (Mr. Lussier) discussed it with the KPD. Unfortunately, the records do not always provide as much information as they would like, in a way that they can query it easily to accidents at that specific driveway. The records will say that the nearest cross street, for example, was School St., but that does not necessarily tell them where that is, unless they were able to pull all those individual accident reports that came up for that query and have someone manually read through those accident reports to find out which ones were applicable. Staff has not done that.

Councilor Favolise stated that his comments fall into a couple of different categories here. He continued that first, regarding speed, he appreciates Mr. Lussier's comment that just because they see the 85th percentile data, which shows that most drivers are driving appropriately, it does not mean that everyone is. Even if it is only a few drivers (who are speeding excessively), sometimes that is all that it takes. Second, something came up that the Committee did not have much discussion about, which was a suggestion for a potential compromise here. He does not know how the City Attorney would feel about it or what it would look like in terms of updating the City Code related to signage and being able to have the KPD enforcing different pieces, but if this spot next to the driveway that is in question had a sign installed saying "compact cars only," (that could help). He hears from the Petitioners that the challenge is trying to get into or out of the driveway and seeing around larger vehicles. He does not know if that would be an option here that meets somewhere in the middle. He would like to at least hear staff's perspective on this, because he does hear the City Attorney's concerns about how if they do (something) here, they would have to do it in other places. He does not know that he is fully there in this particular case, but if there is a way to remove some of that liability and still address what he thinks is a real safety concern that the Petitioners have, he would be open to that.

The City Attorney stated that it is more of an engineering question, in her mind. She continued that it falls a little bit short of her concern of doing a larger, kind of custom work, and doing that maybe is a happy medium, but if that is a big engineering feat, that is a different story.

Mr. Lussier stated that this question came up the last time they talked about it. He did a quick review to try and find if there were any laws or rules (about what) they could do. He could not find anything saying that the City could not put up a sign saying "compact cars only," nor could he find anything saying that the City *could* put up such a sign. If the City put up a sign like that, he does not know if it would be enforceable. That would be his big question. He thinks they could put up a "compact cars only" sign and then have no way of writing a ticket to enforce that.

The Mayor stated that for the record, there is a 25 mph sign on Court St., he believes to the north side of School St. at that intersection.

Councilor Tobin stated that she went and talked with one of the building owners after the last meeting, and she looked from both driveways multiple times. She continued that each driveway has different visibility problems. If they want to remove a (parking) space, okay, but you still cannot see vehicles coming. She does not know exactly what the answer is, but right now, she would be more inclined to look at the entire area and the number of things that come up related to visibility. For example, they hear about pedestrians running out into the road, or vehicles not stopping, but often, it is all related to visibility. She thinks looking at visibility is what they need to do. From this driveway, there is a small incline, and she kept thinking about all the conversations they have about raised crosswalks. The driveway is lower, there is a slight incline, and then there are vehicles in the way. There are also trees. She thinks they need to look at visibility as a whole.

Chair Greenwald stated that they are hearing a lot of “We can’t do an awful lot.”

Councilor Filiault replied no, they cannot do an awful lot, and they will not be able to make it perfect, but he thinks a 10-foot buffer zone is better than nothing. He continued that they will not be able to make it perfect for the Petitioner or for anyone. They would only lose a handful of parking spaces (with a 10-foot buffer), and he does not think people will even notice that. If they do, they can park on a side street. The 10-foot buffer is not perfect, but it doubles the amount of space to be seen. He thinks it would help, which is what the Petitioner wanted. It would help without hindering; it would not be like eliminating 50% of the parking spaces. It would only mean losing seven spaces, which he doubts anyone would even notice. That is the motion he will make at some point. The Committee told the Petitioner they would do something, and this has been on the agenda three times now. He thinks this is a reasonable thing to do.

Councilor Filiault continued that he has a question. Something he has seen in other communities in areas with speeding problems are signs that display the speed you are driving, with the number flashing in red if you are driving over the speed limit. Those are eye-catching, and a driver’s foot automatically comes off the gas pedal. He asked how much those signs cost.

Mr. Lussier replied that it has been several years since he looked at the prices for those, and he thinks the prices have reduced quite a bit because they are being used a lot more. He continued that he can look into this for next month. Councilor Filiault replied that he thinks it would be an inexpensive way to slow some cars down. Mr. Lussier replied that the technology in that device is the same as the panels the PWD are using; it is just newer and better versions of what the PWD has. Councilor Filiault replied that he appreciates Mr. Lussier looking into it. Maybe they could get a deal on a quantity of these signs to use temporarily in the troubled areas in town. But that is a separate issue. As he said, his recommendation for this item would be a 10-foot buffer for driveways. He wants to hear from other Committee members.

Chair Greenwald stated that he was going to say the same thing.

Councilor Favolise asked if this would affect any other locations in the city besides Court St. and Washington St. Mr. Lussier replied that when they looked at this policy and where it was applicable, they were looking for areas with dedicated, on-street parking stalls, meaning not just where people are parking on the side of the road and making people drive around them, but a clear parking lane. (They look at) mixed-use or commercial areas, not residential neighborhoods, and higher-volume areas where there was a lot of use of the parking. That came down to Court St., Washington St., Marlboro St., and West St., but West St. does not really have any room for parking. Last year, the PWD started marking individual parking stalls on Court St. and Washington St., but they refrained from doing it on Marlboro St. because of the impending construction that will obliterate all of that.

Councilor Filiault made a motion for the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee to recommend the City Manager be directed to draft an ordinance to prohibit parking within 10 feet of a driveway. Chair Greenwald seconded the motion.

Mr. Lussier asked if the intention is for that Ordinance to be applicable throughout the City, or just in certain zones. Councilor Filiault replied that he would say in certain zones, because Washington St. and Court St. are different due to their proximity to Central Square. Mr. Lussier asked if he means “commercial or industrial zones,” or rather, “non-residential zones.” Councilor Filiault replied yes.

On a vote of 3-1, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be directed to draft an ordinance to prohibit parking within 10 feet of a driveway. Councilor Tobin voted in opposition.

5) Adam Toepfer – Request to Add Audio and Data Cables as Part of Downtown Infrastructure Project

Mr. Lussier stated that the request in front of the Committee was to include audio and data cables throughout the downtown project. He continued that staff discussed this with the consultant and IT Director Andrew Mueller. For the data side of things, staff’s recommendation is to not include data cables at all. Mr. Mueller explained to him that having a data cable between two points by itself is rather useless, unless one of the ends of those cables is plugged into a network with connection to the internet. There is “absolutely no way, over his dead body” will he allow a public data port to be connected to the City’s network, for security reasons. It would have to be its own, separate, isolated network. Creating an internet network for a standalone system and hosting that is an order of magnitude more complicated than the Petitioner was looking for. It would be incumbent on the event sponsors to then provide all the networking equipment necessary to actually use those data cables. Mr. Mueller explained to him that the wireless technology today is so ubiquitous and easy to use that that is really the way to go. Mr. Mueller’s recommendation was that they should not be putting in network data cables without having it plugged in somewhere, and it definitely should not be plugged into the City’s network.

Councilor Filiault stated that he knows that wireless is the way to go, but he has a question. He continued that with previous projects, they have regretted not putting enough conduits in. He asked if it would make sense to put in a couple of extra conduits while the street is opened up, for future use. Mr. Lussier replied that that has been an ongoing discussion among City staff, whether it would make sense to include empty cables for future use. He continued that he lacks expertise and does not know how to move forward, and his concern is that putting in a piece of plastic pipe under the sidewalk is very simple, but he questions where the pipe goes, how frequently they need to have access to it, how big the access has to be, and whether they need a concrete vault to hold future equipment or just a two by two little handhold. He has not been able to answer those questions.

Councilor Filiault replied that he thinks it is something good to look into, because he knows when they did Winchester St. and Marlboro St., they had the question back then (about whether to include extra conduits) and the Council voted “no” and then regretted it later. He continued that the cost is opening up the ground, and they do not want to have to do that again.

Mr. Lussier stated that he believes that when they did the Main St./Winchester St./Marlboro St. roundabout, they actually did put the conduit in the ground. Councilor Filiault replied that he cannot remember all of it, but he remembers there was some that they did not do and later regretted. He continued that he is just saying that this is something to look into, because the cost would be inexpensive when the ground is already open. Even if they do not know (the answers to all the questions), they would know there is a conduit down there, for someone to use in the future if they need to. If no one ends up using it and the conduit just sits there, it is only the cost of the conduit.

Councilor Favolise asked if anyone on City staff has connected with the Petitioner, because he has questions about what the funding might look like for this. Mr. Lussier replied that he reached out to Mr. Toepfer via email, trying to home in on what he was looking for. He continued that he thinks the piece Mr. Toepfer had in mind even more than the data cables was the audio. The purpose would be to have the ability to broadcast throughout the event space when there was an event. How to make that happen is something he (Mr. Lussier) can wrap his mind around a little bit better than networking. He was shocked by Stantec’s cost estimates. Stantec explained that to pre-wire an area for sound, such as Central Square or Railroad Square, it would cost between \$10,000 and \$25,000. That would not include speakers or the actual amplification/DJ equipment, the cabling and access ports to plug your speakers into and whatnot. To do the entirety of the downtown they estimated between low and mid six figures. There are so many variables that they cannot give a number, but they said it would be in that range.

Chair Greenwald asked if Mr. Lussier could investigate Councilor Filiault’s idea about the pipes. Mr. Lussier replied yes. Chair Greenwald replied, same thing for the audio. He continued that there will come a point where they have to say, “That would be nice, but we can’t,” for all kinds of things, to make it fit the budget.

Mr. Bohannon asked if they know how many events would utilize this technology if it were in place. Mr. Lussier replied no. He continued that he thinks there are about 11 different community-funded events that occur that would have the scale to do something like that.

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

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee accepted the communication as informational.

7) Verbal Update: Downtown Infrastructure Project - Public Works Director

Mr. Lussier stated that his update will be brief, as there is not much to report this month. He continued that regarding the Safe Streets for All program that they adopted last winter, that grant funding opportunity has opened again for implementation grants. Staff are working on an implementation grant application now that will be submitted in June. It will propose several pedestrian safety improvements, specifically looking at crosswalks and intersections. The minimum targeted grant they are hoping to see is 2.5 million dollars. To put together a project that is at that scale, staff will propose crosswalk and intersection improvements at several different locations. There is no one project that would meet it. They will include downtown crosswalk and intersection safety improvements as a subset. It would not cover all of the downtown project, obviously, but if they were able to get that funding, it would cover a portion of the project for things like flashing beacons, raised crosswalks, and better lighting.

Mr. Lussier continued that in other news, the samples of colored and textured concrete were recently completed. They are at the PWD now. Unfortunately, the BBQ for tomorrow has been called off due to the weather. It will be a week from tomorrow instead and he hopes everyone can still come, and check out the different patterns, colors, and textures. That said, he wants to plant a seed in their thought process. While creating those samples, it came to their attention that for whatever reason, creating green concrete is unbelievably expensive, and much more expensive than creating other colors. He does not know why. They are trying to see if it is a particular manufacturer of colorant that is cost prohibitive or if there are any other more cost-effective options. A month from now, he might suggest the bike trails have a charcoal grey concrete to distinguish them, with green symbols, instead of all being green, due to the cost. The cost of the colorant was more than the cost of the concrete.

Chair Greenwald replied that it does not matter to him, personally, whether it is green or grey. He continued that he would rather think about a different texture or pattern and just leave it natural concrete.

Councilor Filiault stated that he is not in favor of the bike lanes anyhow, but that said, he wonders if it would be more cost effective to leave it as regular concrete and then have, every 10 feet or so, a painted image of a bicycle. Mr. Lussier replied that there will be pavement markings on it regardless. He continued that he still recommends there be a different color to differentiate it from the pedestrian space. If it is identical to the sidewalk, his fear is that it will be identical to the sidewalk for the pedestrians as well. They want to differentiate it so pedestrians know where the bike path is and bicyclists know where they are supposed to be.

Councilor Favolise stated that he continues to be confused about what the texture for the bike lanes should be, because he remembers a consensus coming out of one of the Council Workshops for dyed concrete. Mr. Lussier replied that is correct. Councilor Favolise continued that they did not decide on a color, though. He continued that he went and looked, and the green

looked better in person than it looked in the photos. However, if the cost is exorbitant, he is fine with charcoal grey.

Councilor Favolise stated that he has asked at a couple of meetings and does not need the specific answer tonight, but soon he would like some more specific answers about the ombudsman position for the summer and the pre-construction phase. He is still interested in learning more about what those duties will look like in terms of building relationships with downtown businesses, downtown residents, and other affected entities in the city. One of the benefits of having delayed the project for a year was to allow for time for the ombudsman to be onboarded and have those relationships start being built to make sure they were addressing any preconstruction concerns and that nothing or as little as possible was falling through the cracks. He would like an update on that, if not tonight, then at the next meeting.

Mr. Lussier replied that he had hoped to have the person they have selected for the position present for the Committee's June meeting, but unfortunately, he had a pre-planned vacation that week and thus will not be here. But that position has been selected, and the individual is going through the criminal background check and all of that stuff right now, so it is not officially official and he is hesitant to make an announcement until it is. The intention is for the person to start around June 1, doing exactly the work Councilor Favolise is talking about, introducing themselves to the businesses downtown, attending these monthly update meetings and chiming in where appropriate, basically getting to know the project and all the players. He does not expect the person to be working 20 to 25 hours per week immediately. That level of effort will not be needed for a while, until they get into the bid phase and right before the construction starts, but they intend to have the person under contract and have them start working on the project in a more limited capacity in the next month or so.

Chair Greenwald spoke about how he and others rode a bike on the sidewalk to see what it was like, and it was interesting and challenging. He continued that all the rules have been worked out and communicated and it is just a matter of training the public. Mr. Lussier replied yes, that was probably the most important part of that conversation last week; it reiterated for staff that training the public in how to use the bike lanes, how to cross the bike lanes, and all of those things they talked about in the City Manager's Committee will be crucial to the success of these things. Chair Greenwald replied that it worries him, if people need signs to remind them to look left before crossing the street, which is supposed to be something they learned as young children.

Councilor Favolise stated that when he was very new to Council, about a year ago, a motion came out of this Committee to direct the City Manager to draft an Ordinance around bike lanes. He does not think they have seen that Ordinance come back.

The City Manager replied that she and the Mayor put together a committee which drafted policy recommendations around the bike lanes and the use of bike lanes. She continued that that was presented to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee. Councilor Favolise replied

that he is happy to review emails and confirm this with the City Manager, because he might be wrong, but hearing that these rules have already been put together is not what he recalls.

Chair Greenwald replied that Rebecca (Landry) was more saying that other towns have worked out rules of the road and the training materials are out there but the challenge is going to be that people today have (ear buds) in their ears, are holding phones and cups of coffee and cigarettes, while they cross the street, and it will be a challenge.

Councilor Filiault stated that he thinks Councilor Favolise is correct. He continued that he is thinking back, and he remembers having that conversation with the City Manager at that meeting and saying “Good luck with that Ordinance, I’ll be interested to see it when it comes back.” Councilor Favolise replied that he thinks at the subsequent Council meeting, Councilor Filiault held up an image of two bikes and asked people to guess which was the higher horsepower electric bike. The City Manager replied yes, she remembers that. She continued that she will go back and look to see if it was in fact an Ordinance. She continued that for some reason, she was thinking it was just a policy.

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

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the update about the Downtown Infrastructure Project as informational.

8) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Greenwald adjourned the meeting at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk