

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

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

**Wednesday, May 27, 2026**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Mitchell H. Greenwald, Chair  
Catherine I. Workman, Vice Chair  
Jacob R. Favolise  
Laura E. Tobin  
Molly V. Ellis

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager  
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney  
Brandon Latham, Deputy City Attorney  
Don Lussier, Public Works Director  
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer  
Steve Stewart, Police Chief  
Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works Director/  
Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager  
Andrew Keyser, Laboratory Manager  
George Downing, Project Ombudsman

**Members Not Present:**

*All Present*

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

**1. Terri O’Rorke – Request to Address Nuisance Dog Barking During Daytime Hours**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from Terri O’Rorke.

Ms. O’Rorke of 34 Hillside Ave. stated that she got a copy of the RSA about nuisance, vicious dogs. She continued that she noticed that it does not say much about nuisance dogs during the daytime. At night, something can be done. She is curious about what it would take to bring fines into an ordinance. As she said to the Animal Control Officer, she is sure Hillside Ave. is not the only neighborhood in Keene that has an issue with nuisance, barking dogs during the daytime. Officer Grimes agreed it likely happens across neighborhoods. Ms. O’Rorke continued that she would like to hear from the Committee about what can be done to address this.

Police Chief Steve Stewart stated that it is not completely accurate to say that nothing can be done during the day. He continued that there is a standard that requires 30 minutes of constant barking to trigger the KPD’s ability to issue tickets. That provision is in line with State law. It is sometimes difficult to achieve 30 minutes of continuous barking. It is a lot.

Chair Greenwald stated that it sounds similar to the noise ordinance, in that it is difficult to measure, monitor, and act on. He asked if Ms. O’Rorke has spoken with the dogs’ owner. Ms. O’Rorke replied no, she has been documenting it for over a year and has given the documentation to Officer Grimes. She continued that there are many times in her documentation

where the barking reaches 30 minutes or more. Sometimes the barking has been on and off repeatedly for an hour or more. That is what has been reported. As far as she knows, the dogs' owner has been told about this and given warnings. She wonders what kind of teeth can be brought into an ordinance.

City Attorney Amanda Palmeira stated that as they have discussed in the past regarding other ordinances involving dogs, the City is directly tied to what State statute says they can do or cannot do. She continued that the language in the City's ordinance is word for word what the statute provides. The City does not have the authority to differ from State statute.

Councilor Favolise stated that he is dealing with a similar situation with a constituent. He continued that the Edgewood neighborhood has an ongoing challenge with a barking dog. He asked Ms. O'Rorke if the documentation she has given to the KPD has involved any video of the 30 minutes of barking, because filming the 30 minutes of barking is the advice he received to pass along to constituents. Ms. O'Rorke replied no, it is just her documenting what she sees, what sets the dogs off, the time, and how long they bark.

Councilor Favolise asked Chief Stewart if it is correct that the KPD does not have the staff to send a cruiser out to a neighborhood to sit and listen for 30 minutes to see if the dog continues to bark. Chief Stewart replied that he is correct and that it is probably not a wise use of Police resources, considering that the dog might bark for seven minutes, stop for two minutes, then start barking again 15 minutes later for one minute, and so on. He continued that the Animal Control Officer works only 25 hours a week.

Councilor Favolise asked if it would be helpful if there was an ability through a security camera or a similar recording to document an episode of 30 minutes of barking. He continued that he does not know what else to tell his constituent to do. Chief Stewart replied yes, he thinks that would be helpful, if the KPD could verify the recording and it is timestamped and dated. He continued that that would be sufficient.

Chair Greenwald asked if it would be sufficient, if the Police Officer was not there. Chief Stewart replied that the KPD would receive the video from whoever had the complaint. Chair Greenwald replied that he is relating this to the noise ordinance. Chief Stewart replied that the noise ordinance is not difficult at night, because there are clear standards. He continued that during the day they run into some trouble, wanting to apply the City's noise ordinance to what could be normal behavior throughout the day. He thinks the State was very careful in the way they crafted their law on barking dogs. This is a dog-friendly country and a dog-friendly state. People understand that dogs bark because the mail delivery came or something like that. The State left a lot of leeway in there for the animal owner, so people do not get into these reprisal situations regarding barking, the way they could if there were a much lower standard.

Councilor Workman asked if there are any limitations to the types of videos the KPD will accept. She asked if it can be video from a personal cell phone, or if it has to be from something like a Ring camera. Chief Stewart replied that any video is fine as long as it can be verified. He continued that he has seen some attempts at it. Currently, there are approximately three dogs perceived as problems, in three different neighborhoods. He has seen video from one, with

barking that was reported to be much longer than it actually was when it was condensed and the KPD started looking at it.

Chair Greenwald stated that he does not think there will be an answer from the KPD, the City Attorney, or the Committee, but he is thinking of Dan Mitchell's radio show, which sometimes includes Denise Mazzola, a dog trainer. He continued that he will ask Ms. Mazzola if she can suggest something to dog owners to stop the barking. Perhaps someone from the KPD could then go talk with the dog owners with her suggestions.

Chief Stewart stated that the Animal Control Officer has spoken with the owner of the dogs that Ms. O'Rorke is talking about, and the dog in another house that was a problem before that. He continued that the Animal Control Officer has made suggestions to the dog owners, such as drawing the shades or somehow redesigning the house for when the dogs are home alone. That is when the dogs get excited by things they see out the window. Officer Grimes has spent a decent amount of time with the house in question, and he thinks she is working on some things, but there is no imminent or absolute solution.

Councilor Tobin stated that she is looking for clarification on the RSA, which says, "*if a dog barks for sustained periods of more than half an hour, or during the night hours.*" She asked if it is correct that 30 minutes of barking would violate this RSA, and if so, what someone can do if that happens. She had this problem with a former neighbor, whose dog once barked for over 30 minutes when she really needed to sleep, so she can relate to Ms. O'Rorke. She asked what would have happened had she called the KPD and reported that a dog had been barking for more than 30 minutes. She would have been saying it without evidence.

Chief Stewart replied that the answer of what happens is, as with everything the KPD does, "it depends." He continued that it depends on what is going on, the time of day, and what it is like when an Officer arrives. The nighttime one is somewhat easier. You still have to factor discretion in there and how much barking actually happened. Someone hearing a single bark at 9:00 or 10:00 PM might not be worth a summons, but if it is nighttime and you call the KPD, they would send an Officer. If a dog was barking, they could speak to the owner or issue a summons. If the Officer cannot hear anything, cause permitting, they would probably hang around a little while and/or make contact with the owner of the alleged offending dog. It depends on the circumstances each time.

Councilor Tobin asked the City Attorney for more clarity on the wording. She asked if something like numerous five-minute periods of barking over the course of an hour would count as "disturbing the peace," compared to 30 minutes of sustained barking. The City Attorney replied that she can give her read of this, from an objective, legal perspective, but just as with every statute or Code that the KPD enforces, they will have a more precise answer and they will always have discretion in how it is enforced. She continued that there have been times when she has read and interpreted ordinances and the KPD has corrected her understanding, so the Committee should take this with a grain of salt, but she would read "*sustained periods of more than a half hour*" to mean barking reasonably consistently for at least 30 minutes. It would not be something like listening for eight hours and adding up the barking periods to be 30 minutes total.

Councilor Tobin asked about the nighttime barking. The City Attorney replied that a dog barking at night could be considered a nuisance even if it barks for less than 30 minutes.

Ms. O'Rorke stated that in response to the Chief's comments, she wants to say that she knows dogs bark, and many times, one of these dogs would bark and she would not document it. She continued that she only documents when the dogs bark "on and on and on." She does not hear the other half dozen dogs in her neighborhood barking, even when there are children biking by, joggers, and delivery trucks. It is just the two dogs in question. She hears an occasional bark from another dog, but nothing like the barking from these two dogs. She definitely could document a stretch of half an hour or longer. She wants to know what can possibly be done, further, maybe something that has teeth in it. However, she hears the City Attorney saying they are working within the confines of the RSA.

Chair Greenwald asked Chief Stewart if it is correct that if Ms. O'Rorke gives the KPD a recording of the dogs barking for 30 or more minutes, they can issue a citation or something. Chief Stewart replied yes, if the KPD can verify it.

Councilor Ellis stated that maybe this is up to the discretion of the KPD's interpretation, but she was wondering what would happen if a dog was barking, say, five minutes on and five minutes off, for an hour or two. She asked if that counts as "*sustained barking*," and how they determine that. Chief Stewart replied that that is sort of up for interpretation, regarding the language in the statute, which says "*continuously for more than half an hour*." Councilor Ellis asked if intermittent pauses within the half hour could still be considered "*continuously*." Chief Stewart replied probably, but there are so many possible scenarios to try and sort out, and he wants to stay away from commenting on Ms. O'Rorke's specific situation and instead talk about the concept.

The City Attorney stated that to Councilor Ellis's point, the way the codes and statutes are written will always have a little bit of gray, and that is why officer discretion is always involved in how they are enforced. She continued that that is a solid legal concept in how all of the laws function.

Councilor Workman stated that what she hears is that when in doubt, video or audio record, and keep documentation that way, versus written documentation. She continued that it sounds like in most of these situations, the barking dogs have owners who are away at work, and the dogs are probably bored. The City has a fabulous Animal Control Officer, but as stated, they are part-time. She asked if the Humane Society has been involved and brought into this conversation at all. Chief Stewart replied that he does not believe so, and he does not have any reason to suspect there is neglect or anything like that.

Councilor Tobin stated that she has another question for the City Attorney. She continued that if the recommendation is to record via video or audio, she wonders if people need to get permission to record other people's dogs and property. The City Attorney replied that she does not want to be overly broad here on what is legal and not legal with recording, but generally, if you are in a public space like a sidewalk, or in your own yard or property, you can record.

Chair Greenwald stated that Ms. O’Rorke has his sympathy. He continued that he would consult with a dog expert and see if there is any wisdom there. It might not help, but maybe Ms. O’Rorke could speak with the dogs’ owner.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was any further comment from the public. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Ellis was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the communication Request to Address Nuisance Dog Barking During Daytime Hours as informational.

2. **Report Out – Concerns Relating to Cars Congesting Royal Avenue During School Pick-Up**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff. Police Chief Stewart stated that this topic came up a couple of meetings ago. He continued that City staff and SAU staff met and identified some potential solutions, such as closer monitoring from Keene High School staff. The issue is that some parents find it more convenient to pick up their children there at the end of the school day. It is a 10-minute window, about 185 times a year. The SAU was receptive to ideas about monitoring and potentially having a gate or fence to prohibit pedestrian traffic. They are not sure if that would work, given the Fire Code, but they are willing to try. As always, the KPD will respond to complaints in the area if things get out of hand. The ultimate solution the group came up with was that if the situation did not improve next year, considering this school year is almost over, they could pursue a more targeted prohibition to standing on that street, in a more reasonable time frame.

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the Petitioner.

Brittany Williams of Royal Ave. stated that she agrees with what Chief Stewart is saying, but she has not seen much change. She continued that two weeks ago, she bumped someone’s car with hers, because she could not get out of her driveway. She cannot squeeze her car in between cars, which is one of the reasons why this is such a problem. Luckily, there was no damage to either car, because leaving her driveway she was moving very slowly. Last Tuesday, two children were almost run over by a car, because not only are parents blocking the roads, but after they pick up their children, they zoom off. Also last Tuesday, her daughter came to visit her and was told by some parents and a school bus driver that she (Ms. Williams’s daughter) could not park at her (Ms. Williams’s house). She (Ms. Williams) replied, “*She sure can, because I live here.*” This is still an ongoing issue. She understands it is the end of the school year, but she would like to see a huge change for next year. It is not okay for people to tell her she cannot park at her own home, nor is it okay for her to have collisions while exiting her driveway. She hopes that the SAU staff follow through with what they said they would do. She will continue to pursue changes.

Chair Greenwald replied yes, she should continue to pursue changes. He continued that he hopes the school staff will be able to train the students and parents next year, from the beginning, about

how to behave and what not to do. He hopes it will make a difference. Chief Stewart replied that it is not always the case in other neighborhoods in the City.

Councilor Tobin stated that she hopes the MSFI Committee can get an update or check back in at the beginning of the school year, so that this does not fall off the radar until halfway through the school year. Chair Greenwald agreed.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the Report Out on Concerns Relating to Cars Congesting Royal Avenue During School Pick-Up as informational.

**3. NHDOT Reconstruction of Rt. 101 – Project Update - Public Works Director**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff.

Public Works Director Don Lussier stated that Dave Smith is here from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT). He continued that he is the Project Manager on what the NHDOT calls the “Keene 41590 Project.” The City of Keene would call it the Reconstruction of Rt. 101. Mr. Smith and his team will talk about where the project is at and its schedule. They will also be presenting tomorrow night at Heberton Hall. Although the NHDOT is managing and running this project, the City is involved with the work to date for a couple of reasons. City infrastructure, water and sewer mains, will be affected by the work; and they are talking about relocating Swanzey Factory Rd. The last time the team gave the MSFI Committee an update about this project was two or three years ago. After tonight’s update, the Committee will hear from the team again in the coming months and years, regarding a layout of a new section of Swanzey Factory Rd. and a discontinuation of the existing roadway.

Dave Smith stated that the team is here tonight to present the Keene 41590 Project, the NH Rt. 101 improvements that start on the west end, about 2,000 feet to the east of the Optical Ave. intersection of Rt. 101, and continues about a mile further to the east, just past Branch Rd. He continued that it includes the intersection of Swanzey Factory Rd. and the bridge over the Branch River. The team will give a slide presentation with a project overview, the status of their efforts to date, information about upcoming meetings and public hearings, costs, and construction timeframe. He introduced Ellen Moshier and John Parrelli from CHA Consulting. They are the consultant team supporting the project and doing the heavy lifting of the design and efforts such as environmental permitting. The team has collaborated with the City relative to the project.

Ellen Moshier stated that Rt. 101 is a major gateway into Keene, and because of this, the project is needed to improve poor pavement conditions. She continued that a concrete slab under the asphalt today needs to be removed. They want to address drainage and lack of stormwater treatment along the corridor; address the structural needs of the Branch River bridge, which is currently on the State’s Red List; and address safety at the intersection of Swanzey Factory Rd. There have been 39 crashes recorded over a 10-year period, and there have probably been many near-misses that were not recorded.

Ms. Moshier continued that the purpose of the project is to rehabilitate the pavement. They will remove the concrete slab, improve the drainage along the corridor, widen the shoulders to accommodate all users, and address the structural issues at the Branch River bridge. They will improve the Swanzey Factory Rd. intersection. The project team has had several meetings in the area to discuss the project. They started by establishing a project working group, which included staff from the City of Keene, the Town of Swanzey, and the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC). The project working group had several meetings, and the project team was before the MSFI Committee in September 2023 to first present the project. They had two public information meetings, one in 2024 and one last December. They have had numerous meetings with abutters.

Ms. Moshier continued that as part of the design process, they vetted several alternatives for the project, including keeping the roadway as it is today, which would eventually fail. They vetted rehabilitating or replacing the bridge over the Branch River, and looked at several alternatives for improving the intersection of Swanzey Factory Rd. They looked at providing a roundabout, which is the proposed solution. They looked at keeping it unsignalized, and they looked at installing a traffic signal. Rt. 101 is one lane in each direction today. The lanes are 12 feet wide with varied shoulder widths. With the reconstruction they will maintain 12-foot lanes but formalize 5-foot shoulders on each side. There will be some slope impacts as a result of the widening.

Ms. Moshier continued that the team spent a lot of time looking at the intersection of Swanzey Factory Rd. Alternative #1 is the existing Swanzey Factory Rd. intersection. They looked at keeping it where it is today. However, because of geometric deficiencies, they cannot fix the intersection in its current location and keep it unsignalized. There is inadequate sight distance. They looked at installing a traffic signal at the intersection, which would work well. However, they would need to widen the road to add turn lanes, and there would be right-of-way impacts to abutters at the intersection. There was also concern that installing a signal along Rt. 101 could increase rear-end collisions. They looked at realigning Swanzey Factory Rd. to the west and having a new bridge crossing the Branch River, which is shown as Alternative #3, Alternative #4A, and Alternative #4B. However, there were concerns that a new bridge would increase the City's maintenance funding as well as impact the historic Stone Arch Bridge. Alternative #2, which is shown in three different forms, was selected. Alternative #2 realigns Swanzey Factory Rd. to the east and keeps the road at grade. They vetted three different alternatives here, Alternative #2A, Alternative #2B, and Alternative #2C. With the owner of the fastener mill it was determined that Alternative #2C was the least impactful for his property. It also follows the old rail spur line through the area up on the hillside. Thus, that is the preferred alternative. It will match up with Rt. 101 at a proposed roundabout, which the team heard from the community was highly favored over a signal at this location.

Ms. Moshier continued that the Branch River Bridge is on the State's Red List. It was built in 1933 and is eligible for the National Register. CHA inspected the structure in 2023 and determined that it was generally sound; however, there was some visual deterioration under the bridge. They took concrete cores and sent them to the lab, and the results showed it has ASR, or Alkali Silica Reaction, an expansive gel in the concrete that causes the concrete to crack and

deteriorate over time. There is no rehabilitating that bridge structure, so the team is calling for a full bridge replacement as part of the project.

Ms. Moshier continued that the team completed an architectural survey plan in the area to identify any properties that retain historic integrity. The Stone Arch Bridge is in the study area and is on the National Register. They determined the project will have no adverse impact to that structure. The Branch River Bridge is eligible for the National Register, and the project will have an impact by removing that structure. Through looking at archeological surveys, they found some sensitivities in the area. Most are in areas where they will not have construction, due to the selection of Alternative #2C. They found some potentially old structural remains at the intersection location. They did some ground penetrating radar in that area. During construction, they will do some monitoring to ensure that any artifacts they find are catalogued and protected.

Ms. Moshier continued that the project will have some minor impacts to the floodplains. These will be “sliver” impacts, approximately .4 acres along the banks. These impacts will be offset due to the lengthening of the bridge. The project will incorporate stormwater treatment. Currently, they propose two wet extended detention basins and three treatment swales. Last summer or the summer before, they completed a bat survey. They identified the Northern Long-Eared Bat and the Tri-Colored Bat in the project area, so during construction, they will have limitations on when they can clear trees. A management plan will be required to ensure that invasive species are not spread during construction, and they determined that there are no exceedances or adverse impacts to air quality or noise pollution as a result of the project.

John Parrelli of CHA Consulting stated that the next three slides are what will be displayed tomorrow night at the hearing. He continued that they have two plan views. They run west to east, so as you move left to right, Optical Ave. and Main St. are off to the left of the plan and the Town of Marlborough is off to the right. Yellow represents the paved travel lanes, brown represents paved shoulders, purple represents proposed sidewalks, orange represents driveways and access points, light green represents limits of earth work, dark green represents existing tree lines, and red represents existing homes and businesses. As they continue to the eastern end of the project near Branch Rd. there are cross culverts along this stretch that will be replaced. A long water line along Rt. 101 will be replaced and a new water line will be installed on the relocated Swanzey Factory Rd.

Mr. Parrelli continued that the next slide shows the profiles for Swanzey Factory Rd. and for the other side roads and driveways within the project limits. He will go over some key aspects, starting at the west end of the project. The project begins just west of the Stone Arch Bridge near the end of Marlboro St. The proposed Rt. 101 roadway section will consist of 12-foot lanes and 5-foot shoulders. Just north of the beginning of the project they show a location for a potential stormwater treatment area, currently shown as a vegetated treatment swale. Heading east is a future crossing of the Transportation Heritage Trail over Rt. 101, utilizing the Proust Bridge that the City purchased from the State. The Keene 41590 Project will not preclude the City from completing that.

Mr. Parrelli stated that continuing east is the Branch River and its floodplain to the south of Rt. 101 and an existing residence to the hillside to the north. Due to the widening, they propose

shifting the horizontal alignment three to four feet to the south to help reduce impacts to the properties to the north. A new Rt. 101 bridge is proposed over the Branch River. A sidewalk exists on the north side of the existing bridge. The proposed bridge will have a sidewalk on the south side. The new bridge will be shifted to the south, about 12 feet, to allow for stage construction while maintaining alternating two-way traffic during the first phase of construction, and then over the winter, two-way traffic will be installed. The second phase of the project will continue to have two-way traffic over the bridge.

Mr. Parrelli continued that the preliminary design proposes closing Swanzey Factory Rd. at its existing location and relocating the intersection to the east. The roundabout is proposed at the new intersection of Swanzey Factory Rd. The roundabout shown is 130-foot diameter, similar to the roundabout at the other end of Swanzey Factory Rd. at the Rt. 12 intersection. The roundabout will be single-lane and will result in slower speeds and traffic calming through this area. Due to relocation of Swanzey Factory Rd. and the design of the roundabout, some of the Monadnock Housing parking will need to be relocated. The proposed plan will need to remove the building that was formerly the Mighty Moose Mart and the existing garage structure at 675 Marlboro Rd. The southeastern quadrant of the roundabout is currently within the right-of-way and will be impacted by the project footprint. The team has had discussions with these owners about these impacts.

He continued that continuing east from the roundabout, the alignment shifts slightly to the south, which will require additional tree clearing. During the public information meeting there were some comments about how clearing this area would be helpful to get more sunlight in the winter to help with the snow and ice issues. A potential stormwater treatment area between Rt. 101 and the river across from Graves Rd. is being proposed as a vegetated treatment swale. Four retaining walls are proposed on the south side of Rt. 101 to help minimize impacts to the residences that sit up on the hillside. The walls range from four to seven feet in height. The bottom left of the slide shows a section of the first retaining wall at 691 Marlboro Rd. These walls will have a fence or railing at the top for fall protection.

Mr. Parrelli stated that continuing east to the next plan, this is a challenging area as they are looking to minimize impacts to the Branch River to the north side of Rt. 101, while also minimizing impacts to the properties on the south side, which sit up on the hill. The left side of the slide shows a section of the retaining wall in front of 717 and 721 Marlboro Rd. and a driveway section for the property at 717 Marlboro Rd., at Station 139+00. The driveway is currently proposed to be at 2%. Continuing east, the slide shows a section of driveway at 721 Marlboro Rd. at Station 4120. This drive comes off Rt. 101 at 2% and then matches into the existing drive slope of 7.8%. The slide also shows a section at driveway 723 Marlboro Rd., Station 14142. The drive comes off Rt. 101 at 2% and matches into the existing drive at 11.8%. These driveways remain similar to the conditions that exist today. Continuing east, the left of the slide shows a retaining wall section in front of 723 and 725 Marlboro Rd. at Station 14250. It also shows a section at driveway 725 Marlboro Rd. at Station 143. The driveway comes off at 2% and matches into the existing drive at 11.8%. Finally, continuing east, the left side of the slide shows a section at 737 Marlboro Rd. at Station 14350. The drive comes off Rt. 101 at 2% and matches into a very steep existing drive at 19.3%. This slide also shows retaining walls at a section in front of 737 Marlboro Rd. at 144+50.

Mr. Parrelli continued that approaching Branch Rd., the team proposes adding an eastbound left turn lane. The existing condition is a wide shoulder that vehicles use to pass a car that is turning left. It is a rather dangerous situation, so this will help. There will be a clearing adjacent to the intersection in the northwest quadrant to improve the intersection sight distance. They will realign Branch Rd. slightly. The southbound approach is proposed to be squared up. There will be improved driver visibility, and it will allow a right-turning vehicle to pass a stopped, left-turning vehicle. The project ends just east of Branch Rd. after the road tapers back to the addition of the turn lane on the north side of Rt. 10. At the project limits they are showing a location for another potential stormwater treatment area, which is a vegetated treatment swale.

Mr. Parrelli stated that next is the Swanzey Factory Rd. realignment. The proposed Swanzey Factory Rd. alignment shifts east of the area of an old, abandoned railroad spur right-of-way behind the fastener mill building. The relocated Swanzey Factory Rd. will have 11-foot lanes and 5-foot shoulders. Access from the fastener mill will be preserved through a new driveway off the relocated Swanzey Factory Rd. A large area of earthwork is shown on the right side of Swanzey Factory Rd. The current design shows 2-to-1 slopes, which is two feet horizontal for every foot vertical. A bench will be provided halfway up the slope. There is potential to reduce impacts by utilizing 1.5-to-1 slopes based on geotechnical findings. There is potential for stormwater treatment locations in the area of the existing Swanzey Factory Rd. in the fastener mill property. These treatment locations are currently proposed to be wet extended detention basins. The existing portion of Swanzey Factory Rd. by Rt. 101 will be discontinued. Half of the right-of-way will be transferred to the appropriate abutting property owners.

Mr. Smith stated that regarding next steps, the team has been diligent in progressing this project, as well as meeting with abutters, and engaging the public relative to the improvements at the public informational meetings. Tomorrow evening is a public hearing. It is a formal meeting, a milestone meeting for the team. The NHDOT will provide a presentation that is very similar to or the same as this one. A commission of three people will oversee the hearing tomorrow. The commission was identified and approved by the Governor and Council. It will be the determining group for the necessity or not for the project. Subsequent to tomorrow's hearing is a 10-day comment period, during which the public can send in comments, thoughts, and insights on the project, to the NHDOT and to the commission. That closes June 8. Then, the team will work to develop a Report of the Commissioner of the NHDOT, which will respond to all of the testimony they hear from the public tomorrow. The public will have an opportunity to provide insight, whether they support or oppose the project, and to bring up topics to discuss, like driveway matches, environment aspects, or anything else. Each bit of testimony heard tomorrow will warrant a response in the Report of the Commissioner. Once that report is complete, they will have a Finding of Occasion meeting. Typically, that is six to eight months after the hearing, but they will hold it sooner if they are able to. At that meeting, the commission will be reconvened, and they will revisit the project, and revisit all of the testimony and the NHDOT's response to it. With that, if the commission finds that the NHDOT has responded or plans to respond appropriately to all the testimony heard, the project will be considered by the commission for approval. If the commission approves the project and it has occasion to be moved forward, it will move forward. Subsequent to that, they will commission the final design efforts. If the commission finds there is not a finding of occasion for necessity of the project, they will need to

revisit the overall design, improvements, and scope of the project and progress back through another public outreach effort and back for another hearing.

Mr. Smith continued that if the project is supported, they will progress through the final design effort and complete the development of the construction plans. It will be utilized by the contractor to build the improvements. The NHDOT will procure the environmental permits, which is a second phase of their early-on environmental efforts. They will also develop right-of-way plans to procure the right-of-way for about 34 properties along the corridor that will have impacts, and work through those processes to get to construction. The target for construction is the spring of 2029. They anticipate at least a three-season construction timeframe, and it will likely be completed in the fall of 2031.

Mr. Smith continued that the construction cost is about \$21.6 million. The Ten-Year Plan, which this project is a component of, has full funding for this project. At this point, there is no concern relative to limited funding or lack of funding. The Ten-Year Plan is fiscally constrained, so many projects have either been removed from the Ten-Year Plan or had reduced funding. Fortunately, this project, which they feel has significant merit, still is fully funded. By “merit,” he means the pavement improvements, the bridge replacement, and the relocation of Swanzey Factory Rd. addressing the 39 accidents that Ms. Moshier mentioned. It has support from the Executive Councilor as well as the City, based on the team’s coordination with the City Engineer and the Public Works Director as they progressed with this project’s development.

Mr. Smith stated that to conclude the presentation, the NHDOT’s mission is to serve and connect New Hampshire through transportation, and their vision is a safe, reliable, connected, and multimodal transportation system.

Chair Greenwald thanked the team for the thorough presentation. He continued that he is one of the three commissioners representing the City. He continued that Terry Clark is the Chair of the Commissioners. This is an amazing process, and it just boggles his mind how this interstate highway system was ever constructed, with all the steps, all the hearings, and all the diligence that is done; everything from archeologists, botanists, and so much more than just road building. He applauds the team’s diligence. One thing he did communicate is that the residents along this have expressed concern to him regarding the retaining wall and the steep pitch and the runoff. He imagines the team will hear that at the informational session tomorrow.

Councilor Tobin asked for clarification on the slope impacts the five-foot shoulders would have. Ms. Moshier replied yes, she had mentioned that with the widening, there will be some slope impacts. She continued that right now at the edge of the road, they are essentially dropping down into the Branch River. They will have some fill in some areas so they can provide that additional width. Mr. Smith stated that the existing shoulders are one to two feet wide, which is not sufficient for any alternative user, such as a biker or pedestrian, or an errant vehicle for recovery. Thus, they propose a five-foot shoulder along the corridor on both sides. It will provide relief for errant vehicles, bikers, and pedestrians. They have had discussions about and acknowledge that there is a pedestrian presence out here. Unfortunately, a pedestrian was killed about a year and a half ago along the same corridor, just west of the project limits. They discussed sidewalks along this section of Rt. 101, in the improvement section, specifically. However, with no abutting

infrastructure, they could not justify that, in conjunction with the impacts that would bring along with it. The team felt it was prudent to maintain the five-foot shoulders. Five-foot shoulders would be required in the future for any sidewalks that would be implemented. Thus, they are setting themselves up for the future as well along this corridor. They are aware of the Transportation Heritage Trail and that connectivity. That allows a pedestrian to get off Rt. 101 to some degree. There was some discussion about the bridge that will be built in the future by the City. That will not be precluded. In fact, the team is working to make sure they can accommodate that with this project's improvements along the corridor. They are trying to support bikers and pedestrians along the corridor as much as they can, while balancing right-of-way impacts, too.

Councilor Tobin regarding the safety, said she was curious about how the three designs proposed compare in terms of pedestrian and biker safety. Ms. Moshier asked if she was asking about the intersection, along the corridor, or just in general. Councilor Tobin replied in general. Ms. Moshier replied that if they kept the road as it is today, which is one of the alternatives, there are no shoulders or accommodations for pedestrians and bikers. She continued that they looked at providing sidewalks, which is something the community asked for. The sidewalks would not connect to anywhere, and come at a very large cost for the area. They would potentially be precluding bicycles from the road by putting in a sidewalk. The best alternative was to provide five-foot shoulders, which could be a shared space for the users that are out there today.

Vicky Morton of Water St. asked about the water treatment proposal for the area at the end of Marlboro St. She asked if it then connects to the pond that is right there. She asked if it severs off Marlboro St., because if so, a lot of traffic goes to the end of Marlboro St. onto Rt. 101 at that sandy patch. She asked what then happens to that sandy patch area.

Mr. Parrelli replied that the vegetated treatment swale does outlet into that pond wetland area to the west. He continued that on the slide you can see an "arm" up off of Rt. 101. That is an access road. He imagines that in the future conditions they can connect that access road to the connection to Marlboro St. Ms. Morton replied that a lot of bike and pedestrian traffic comes off Marlboro St., and she heard in the presentation that with the vegetation, that access would be cut off. Mr. Parrelli replied no, the vegetation is to the west of the current location of that Marlboro St. connection across to Rt. 101. He continued that they will make sure it stays open.

Mr. Smith stated that he replied to Mr. Underwood relative to this same question about access through there, specifically to Marlboro St. and/or the Transportation Heritage Trail that extends to the east of Marlboro St. and into the City proper. He continued that the NHDOT will work to maintain that access. It would be readily accommodated, as Mr. Parrelli mentioned. Through that access road, they can make sure there is a connector there to perpetuate that access. They would want to make sure that it does not attract other users. For example, they do not want vehicles to have the capacity to get off Rt. 101 and onto Marlboro St., so they would put some control there, like bollards or a fence. In his email, Mr. Underwood also talked about accommodating some connection up to the Transportation Heritage Trail in the future. The team will work on those aspects as they progress. It is mostly State of NH property there, so they have a lot of real estate to work with as they work to implement, improve, move, and enhance that Transportation Heritage Trail corridor through there.

Chair Greenwald stated that he wants to recognize that Commissioner Clark is here, and he is welcome to share any thoughts he has.

In response to something inaudible that Commissioner Clark said off-mic, Mr. Smith stated that regarding the NHDOT's outreach, they sent mailers to a large part of the City, alerting them to the public hearing tomorrow night. He continued that those are going right to the mailboxes of about 75% of the City. All that kept the NHDOT from sending the mailers to whole City was the cost. They also had outreach to all of the environmental groups and the SWRPC. They certainly did their diligence relative to awareness for the meeting. They hope to have a good turnout. It is instrumental to the process the team has gone through. It is lengthy, with many aspects to progress through, such as environmental and public outreach. The NHDOT thanks CHA for doing a fantastic job.

Councilor Haas stated that he is curious about the cost estimate of \$21.4 million. He asked if that is today's dollars or 2030 dollars. Mr. Smith replied that that is escalated dollars. He continued that the NHDOT takes into account 4.4% inflation rate, which is consistent with the rate they have in the Ten-Year Plan. He should also mention that it is 80% Federally funded and 20% State funded. For the roadway construction and bridge construction, there is no City share. To be explicit, the water line improvements would be a cost borne by the City. The NHDOT will work with the City relative to those improvements as they progress. He believes the plan is to incorporate them into the construction of the project, and in doing so, the City would gain some efficiencies, having the NHDOT's contractor complete the work while they are doing the roadway work. That would help from a cost perspective and sequencing perspective, so they are coordinating with the City in that regard.

Councilor Workman asked if Mr. Lussier could speak to that part a little more, for clarity and context. Mr. Lussier stated that a couple of years ago, staff went to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee and got authorization for a sole source contract with CHA for design of that water main replacement. He continued that that was already in the City's CIP. With CHA being selected by the NHDOT to do the roadway work, it made sense to also have CHA do the water line replacement design. Under a contract with the City, CHA is now designing the replacement of the water main. The water main is very old and at the end of its service life. They look forward to having it replaced. Regarding the construction, that has not been executed yet, but once they get to construction, this is a non-participating cost. If the City is managing a project and utility work is part of it, the Federal government does not pay for 80% of that work unless the City can demonstrate it is required by the Federal government's work. The City has been budgeting for this water main replacement. It is part of the CIP. The expectation is that they will execute a "force account agreement" with NHDOT once the construction is ready. The City will reimburse NHDOT for the cost of the utility work.

Councilor Tobin asked where on the City's website people can find information about this. Mr. Smith replied that the NHDOT is working to add these plans and the slide show to the NHDOT's project website. He continued that they can provide the materials to the City for the City to post on its website, if they would like. Councilor Tobin replied that it would probably be helpful for people to have access to the information, and to have that linked from the City's website, even

though it is not a City project. Mr. Smith replied that the team would appreciate that, because more awareness is helpful for everyone.

Chair Greenwald encouraged people to attend the presentation tomorrow night at Heberton Hall at 6:00 PM. Mr. Smith replied that doors open at 5:30 PM, and there will be time for informal discussion for anyone with an interest to ask the design team questions about any aspect of the project.

The following motion by Councilor Workman was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the report from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) as informational.

**4. Court Street Water Main Replacement Project - Project Easements - City Engineer**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from City Engineer Bryan Ruoff.

Mr. Ruoff stated that the City Engineering Division, in conjunction with their consultant engineer, Weston and Sampson, have been working on the design of the replacement of the Court St. water main that extends from West Surry Rd. to East Surry Rd. He continued that the project has two main objectives, one being the replacement of 1930s cast iron ductal main in poor and brittle condition, the other being the reinstatement of the two dead end lines of this water main at the crossing of the river. The existing water main is broken at the river crossing, and this project will reinstate that water main. With the redesign, they are moving away from the current water main alignment, which means they will not incur the costs associated with provided temporary water. They can install this new water main while the existing water main is in service and then transfer over. Also, the conditions were much more favorable to do the river crossing by horizontal directional drill at a location closer to Court St. There is a lot more fill and better material to bore through. They are in good conditions. They have a path to cross under the river and not extend that far away from Court St. Under current conditions there is not great accessibility for the existing water main, so as part of the project, they wanted to relocate that water main.

Mr. Ruoff continued that the result of what that requires is two things. They need two easements for this water main and the limits of the project that are off of the Court St. right-of-way, and they need temporary easements where the new water main is going and reinstating the existing water services where the new water main is moved. Looking at the plan, the upper northern portion is the existing water main. They are extending services for these properties as part of the project to reinstate those services. They will need a temporary access agreement to do that. They do not need a permanent easement for that work. They can do it as part of a temporary agreement to reinstate those services that then become property of the homeowners. The other part is the City's water distribution main, which they have located along Court St. This is for a couple of reasons. One, it is right off Court St., so it is easy for the City to access. Two, it does not reduce the buildable footprint of that lot. It is within the lot's building setback. Thus, it is strategically placed along Court St., not *in* Court St., because it would be too hard to drill in that location and

dig up the road. They would have to close Court St. for a couple of weeks, which would not be ideal.

Mr. Ruoff continued that given that, staff has had preliminary conversations with these residents for these agreements, and they have draft agreements ready to execute with them. Potentially, with the NHDOT's approval, the City can bid this project for fall construction if everything lines up correctly. The only step they have left other than approval, which they anticipate early next week, is the execution of these easements for the construction of the water main. He is happy to answer questions.

Chair Greenwald asked if there were any questions from the Committee. Hearing none, he asked if members of the public had any questions. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Tobin was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute temporary access agreements and permanent easements with the affected property owners necessary for construction and future maintenance of the Court Street River Crossing Water Main Replacement Project.

**5. Staff Report – Chemical Detections in Groundwater – Assistant Public Works Director and Laboratory Manager**

Chair Greenwald stated that next is a staff report on chemical detections in groundwater.

Mr. Lussier stated that he wants to preface Public Works staff's report by saying that the title of this agenda item is probably scarier than it needs to be. He continued that they are here tonight to inform the Committee and Council about what is happening and answer questions, but he will say from the outset that this is not a cause for concern. Staff will explain what they found and what they are doing in response. What Public Works is doing in response to the testing is way above and beyond anything that would be required by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) or even the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). They are being overly cautious and being transparent. The bottom line is that the City's water supply is safe, has been safe, and will continue to be safe. It is in good hands.

Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works Director and Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, introduced Andrew Keyser, Laboratory Manager. Mr. Costa continued that to begin with some background, the City supplies its customers with approximately two million gallons of water every day. The City has three separate water supplies, two surface water reservoirs in the town of Roxbury, three groundwater wells off Court St., and a groundwater well off West St. Tonight's presentation focuses on the groundwater supplies. Each wellfield has multiple monitoring wells surrounding the production wells. The monitoring system's intent is to identify potential concerns early and allow staff to respond. The Laboratory Division samples these monitoring wells for various contaminants. In October 2025, staff detected low levels, well below the human health benchmark, of a compound called Iprodione, a fungicide and nematicide, in Production

Well 3 located off Court St. He and Mr. Keyser are here to present their findings to the Committee as well as the steps they have taken and their plan moving forward.

Mr. Keyser stated that he will begin with a slide that gives a rundown of the results and detections of pesticides found in the monitoring wells and the groundwater in those areas. He continued that the next slide is the West Street Wellfield. One production well is near West St., with two monitoring wells between the wellfield and the Keene Country Club, West St. 1 and West St. 2. Also in this area, they monitor wells WB1, WB2, and WB3. That is because there is a proposed well for the future in the Bent Court field that they hope to put in at some point, so they are making sure that area stays clear. Other wells visible on the slide are ones the City does not own and does not test; it is just the five he mentioned. The next slide shows the Court Street Wellfield. The City has production wells 1, 2, and 3. They have monitoring wells between these wells and the Brentwood Golf Course along the river, and around the Green Wagon Farm. More wells are further north in the middle of the golf course. Staff tests and monitors these areas.

Mr. Keyser continued that to give a summary of the kinds of detections they have had in these areas, in the West St. Well area, they have been testing for pesticides and found detections of a few different pesticides in the monitoring wells in West St. 1. Clothianidin and Chlorantraniliprole are insecticides, and Trinexpac-ethyl is a synthetic plant growth regulator. Sulfentrazone is an herbicide, and Iprodione is a fungicide. "ND" means "not detected." In 2018, they never detected anything. In 2019, they started seeing detections. This was mainly due to the testing lab that they send samples to. The testing lab's detection limits and methods changed. The detection limits got lower by 10 times or more for some of these chemicals. Thus, staff cannot say whether these chemicals were present before or not, but now that they are able to be detected at such a low limit, they started seeing them. In 2025, there was no detection of Chlorantraniliprole. The testing lab also discontinued some of its methods and is no longer analyzing Chlorantraniliprole, so City staff do not know if it is present or not. For that, "not detected" might be a bit misleading. In 2017 and 2018, staff did not test Well 1 for pesticides. That being said, the pesticides they are testing for are not regulated by the EPA. The ones he is discussing in this presentation are not regulated for drinking water by the EPA, and the City is not required to test for them. Every year, they do test at Well 1 as part of their chemical monitoring program. It is at least once a year. Within that chemical monitoring, they are testing for priority pollutants and priority pesticides as well as petrochemicals, and some years, things like metals, PFAS, and nitrate. Thus, these wells *are* being tested, even though it is shown here as "not tested." They just are not tested for this large slew of specific pesticides that are not regulated currently.

Mr. Keyser continued that regarding the Court St. results, the City has had several detections again starting in 2019 with the changes in the testing lab methods. Here are some of the similar ones they saw before, like Trinexpac-ethyl and Iprodione, but they also saw Imidacloprid throughout the system, which is an insecticide and neonicotinoid. Brentwood Golf Course has been known to use Imidacloprid, although they discontinued that two years ago. It is no longer being used and they did not see it last year, and they hope they stop seeing it in the monitoring wells. Triadimenol is a fungicide, and interestingly, neither Brentwood nor Green Wagon Farm has ever said that they have applied this pesticide, so the City does not have any guesses where that is coming from. Because Brentwood and Green Wagon use pesticides, they must report to

the State anything that they apply, which is how the City has the information about what is being applied in the area. Pirimiphos-ethyl has never been approved for use in the US, so there are no health benchmarks for it. It is questionable. He does not know how something that cannot be used in the US would show up there, but it showed up once, randomly, in 2019 and has never been seen again. He cannot really speak to that.

Mr. Keyser continued that regarding the City's production wells, Well-2, Well-3, and Well-4, they have tested Well-4 quite a bit but have not tested Well-2 or Well-3 for almost a decade. They are being tested as part of the chemical monitoring, but as far as this expanded testing for pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides, they were not testing, because Well-4 historically is the best producing well and is the one that they run. They were never running Well-2 or Well-3 for any extended period, so it was not a priority for testing. The testing is extremely expensive. Last year, he made an effort. He wanted to test these wells because it had been so long, but in order to do that, they were unable to test some of the wells they typically test, like the monitoring wells 2, 3, 4, and 5. It was a tradeoff. He felt it was worth testing the wells that had not been tested for so long even if it meant not testing the monitoring wells. And yes, they found Iprodione in Well-3. It was the first year they have ever found Iprodione, and it showed up in two different sites. It is a fungicide known to be used by both golf courses and somewhat high quantities, so he is not very surprised that it could be showing up. Iprodione is also a nematicide, meaning it kills nematodes. According to the EPA, there is no acute toxicity, which means there is no maximum contaminant level. This means there is no requirement by finding such a low concentration, because below any health benchmark, there is no requirement for the City to treat or notify the public or do anything like that. The water is safe to drink. Yes, Iprodione is in it, but it is below any level that poses a health risk. However, staff feels it is important to be transparent and say that this is something they found, though it should not show any health effects.

Mr. Keyser continued that the graph explains that Iprodione does have a carcinogen risk, about a one in a million chance of an increased risk of developing cancer over a lifetime of consumption at a level of .674 parts per billion. The City detected it at .2 parts per billion. The chronic health benchmark for a pesticide means that as long as it is below that level, even if you consume it at that level for your entire life, no health effect should happen outside of cancer. Again, the level detected in Keene is over a thousand times lower. It is well below any health risk as stated by the EPA.

Mr. Keyser continued that the next slide shows the chronic health benchmarks for other pesticides they found in the monitoring wells. The levels are well below, not even visible on the scale for what the EPA would consider a health concern. Triadimenol is the only one that even shows up, and that one is not actually applied by any of the users in the area. It is something that seems to be in one specific location in the monitoring wellfield, not in the wells. Some of these have acute health risks for specific populations, such as children, but they are all generally at these same levels or above these, for those specific populations.

Mr. Keyser stated that when staff found this information about the pesticide in Well-3, they immediately decided to not use Well-3. They typically do not use it anyway. In fact, it had already been turned off by the time the results came in. They still have not used it. They purged it and retested and are awaiting results. They plan to test it again at least one more time before

they even consider turning it on. At the moment, they luckily do not need that well because there are other drinking water sources, so they do not plan on using Well-3 until they are very confident that there are no pesticides in it. They have talked with the NHDES and the Bureau of Pesticide Control, who said it is safe to drink and that the City does not need to do a public notification. That said, the NHDES and the Bureau were concerned about the City's regular detections within the monitoring well and are in the process of developing a Pesticide Management Area around the Court St. wells with a Pesticide Management Plan. It should be coming out relatively soon. Without designating this area, as long as you are a licensed pesticide applicator and you are doing things the right way, you can apply pesticides more or less where you want and how you want. The NHDES and Bureau developed this management area now, meaning you have to get special applications to apply pesticides in a specific way, and of specific types, the best he can tell from the statute. Staff does not know exactly what that management plan from the NHDES and the Bureau will look like and how it will affect Bretwood and Green Wagon. They will have to apply for permits, so there will be more transparency about what is going down and when.

Mr. Keyser continued that the City will be expanding the monitoring program significantly. They have been given technical assistance from the NHDES about how to best expand it and what groundwater flow modeling they can do to better understand the pesticide flow in the area. The sampling plan for the summer is that instead of doing one round of 12 samples, which has been typical and what their funding has provided, they will do three rounds of pesticide sampling, in spring, summer, and fall. All three will prioritize 17 locations, nine monitoring wells, and all four production wells. They will even test the raw water from the drinking water reservoir. There has never been an issue before, but they might as well keep an eye on it. They will also be testing the Ashuelot River upstream, midstream, and downstream of Brentwood, just to make sure there is nothing transporting through the river back that way. In the summer they have an extensive plan to test all 25 monitoring wells as well as what he already mentioned, so they do not have these multi-year gaps in what they have been testing and knowing. This comes with challenges, such as the price. It will be expensive. Each sample or site that they test costs between \$1,375 and \$1,700 just to send the sample to the lab and get results. Even with that price, there are at least 30 compounds they know have been used by these different applicators in the area, which they do not test for, and he cannot find anyone else who can test for them, so there will still be unknowns. They found a lab that can do more of these pesticides, but they have very high detection limits, whereas everything the City has been seeing is low. They plan to do both, so they get more coverage and the low detection rates, but obviously, that is more expense.

Mr. Keyser continued that increasing this sampling program takes a lot of time, and it is very meticulous work, making sure you collect the samples properly, label them properly, and quickly ship them to the lab in a narrow timeframe, making sure they get to the lab without breaking. It will be a large undertaking for the City's lab. Two interns are starting soon, and they will have more of the drinking water and operations get involved in the sampling, and they will need to be trained. This will be an undertaking, but this is the plan for this year and into the future. If they find more detections, it will only expand further.

Chair Greenwald stated that he feels like the City is in really good hands with Mr. Costa, Mr. Keyser, and their team, given all their knowledge and all the testing. He continued that he is very

impressed. He asked if they actually test the water in the pipes. Mr. Keyser replied for the pesticides, no, but the operations crew collects samples from the distribution system and brings them to the City's lab. He continued that they run e. coli and bacteria samples in house, pH, and other things, and send samples out to test for other things that the City lab is not accredited to test for.

Councilor Favolise stated that Mr. Keyser said this would be a more expensive round of testing than in the past. He asked what the existing budget looks like in terms of their ability to do that. Mr. Costa and Mr. Keyser replied that they put in a \$75,000 supplemental in this year's operating budget for that work, so the Council will see that as part of the budget review, plus additional for a second set of equipment, because this is time-consuming. It can take up to three weeks to get to all 25 sites, depending on weather and availability of people. They hope to be able to send out two crews, and if their equipment fails, they do not want that to stop the sampling, so they will get a second set of sampling equipment.

Councilor Tobin stated that that was a great presentation. She continued that she really appreciated all of the information and the way they brought the information down to a lay person's level in a way that she could understand it.

The following motion by Councilor Ellis was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the Report Relative to Chemical Detections in Groundwater as informational.

#### **6. Downtown Infrastructure Project Update - Public Works Director**

Mr. Lussier stated that he has a brief update tonight on the Downtown Infrastructure Project. He continued that they spoke about it just a couple of weeks ago, so the Committee knows where they are at. Since the Council's vote last week, staff have put in process the chain of events that will lead to a contract. Paperwork is flying back and forth between City Hall and Public Works, and contractors are getting notices of award, and that process has begun.

Mr. Lussier continued that Project Ombudsman George Downing is here tonight and can answer questions. Mr. Downing has been working on an informational binder to hand out to business owners. It will have a lot of information staff thinks will be helpful for businesses as customers come in and want to know what is happening. As the project goes along and the team gets more information, such as detailed schedules and updates, they can give business owners information to add to the binders. Mr. Downing plans to start distributing them next week. In addition, the team will begin a series of meetings they plan to hold every month, affectionately named "Coffee and Hard Hats." It will be once a month but offset with the MSFI Committee updates. June 10, 2026, 10:00 AM is the planned time. It will be a more informal informational update. The contractor probably will not be there for the June 10, 2026 meeting, but City staff will be there to answer people's questions and give updates. Moving forward, as construction begins, the contractor will have a representative there, and Mr. Downing will be there to answer questions. The intent is that every two weeks, people will have the opportunity to get an update, hear more information, and ask questions. In addition, they can always call the office or call Mr. Downing,

if they have something pressing. Coffee and Hard Hats will be at the Transportation Center on Gilbo Ave. That will be the project headquarters for the next three years, thanks to the City's clever Purchasing Agent, who acquired some donated furnishings for that office. As they get into construction, the project team will have their weekly project meetings there, and the monthly Coffee and Hard Hats meetings will be there. If the weather's nice, the Coffee and Hard Hats meetings might be outside in a pop-up tent so people can look at what is happening while they talk about it.

Chair Greenwald stated that the question asked most often is, "*When do we break ground?*" Mr. Lussier replied that he does not have a hard date for them right now. He continued that it is still early, as the contractor has not even signed a contract yet. Over the next few weeks is when they will start nailing down start dates, mobilization dates, and all of those things. A month from now, they will definitely be able to say exactly when the groundbreaking will be. Chair Greenwald asked if early July would be a rough guess. Mr. Lussier replied that a rough guess would be mid-July 2026.

Councilor Workman stated that she knows there has been a lot of concern about the project, so she wants to reassure business owners who might be listening that she has been thinking outside the box for ways to promote businesses and promote this awesome City and downtown during this project. She continued that she is excited to report that several social media influencers who do a lot of highlighting of big cities have already responded to her and expressed interest in collaborating and highlighting Keene. She wants to reassure business owners that Councilors are mindful of the need to think outside of the box to help highlight Keene's services and this beautiful City.

Councilor Tobin stated that the plan, obviously, was for the project to have started a little earlier. She asked if they have a sense of how the later start will impact the overall timeline. Mr. Lussier replied that the expectation is that this year it will be a bit of a shortened season. He continued that they originally planned the first phase to go down Main St. to the Church St./Lamson St. area. Most likely, the first phase will only go to approximately the flagpole. The intent is still that by the end of this construction season, Central Square will be all new and finished. He and Mr. Ruoff have talked about potentially allowing the contractor to do just the first course of pavement so that in the second and third year of construction as traffic is driving over that pavement, the finished pavement does not get damaged. They are still debating the pros and cons of that. From the public's perspective, Central Square should be complete by the end of November 2026.

Councilor Favolise stated that he wants to thank Councilor Workman for her comments and her efforts. He continued that he has unfortunately heard some people say that when construction is happening, they are not going downtown. People need to have the opposite attitude. Downtown will need us more than ever through this, so he hopes that people will join them in leaning in and supporting the downtown just as much as ever, if not more. He is curious to see what the binder Mr. Lussier was talking about looks like, and he is not suggesting they print 15 copies of it for the Council, but it would be helpful if there was something like a display copy in the City Clerk's Office or somewhere accessible to the Council and the public. Mr. Lussier replied that staff could bring one to next month's MSFI Committee meeting.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the Downtown Infrastructure Project Update as informational.

**7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Greenwald adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Terri Hood, City Clerk and Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk