



City Council Meeting  
**Minutes**  
**November 26, 2012**  
City Council Chambers  
7:00 p.m.

1. The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call. Councilors Blanchard, Bouchard, Mayor Bouley, Councilors Coen, Grady-Sexton, Keach, McClure, Nyhan, St. Hilaire, Shurtleff and Werner were present. Councilors Bennett, Kretovic and Patten were excused. Councilor DelloIacono was late.
4. Agenda overview by the Mayor.
5. **November 26, 2012 Public Hearing**
  - A. Report from the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project Advisory Committee. (10-29) (*Public testimony submitted by Mary Hewitt – Time for Change Embroidery, LLC, Allan Herschlag, Shirley Chadwick and Phyllis Skafidas and Dick Lemieux*)

**Action:** Steve Duprey, committee chair, thanked Council, city staff and everyone that was involved in this process. He pointed out that the adoption of this report, by the committee, was unanimous and that the committee is convinced that the city should move forward with this project aggressively; that it will have a transformational impact on downtown; that it will help the retail community and increase livability. He indicated that they explored the timeline and the fact of the matter is that if they do not move forward on the timeline set, they will forfeit this grant. After looking at a number of options, he stated that the committee came up with a recommendation for the traffic layout concluding that the modified super two-lane configuration was the best at achieving all of the goals of the complete streets program; two super wide lanes of fifteen feet and a traversable median of four to six of which would accommodate bicycles, an improved traffic flow and will dramatically improve the capability for pedestrian safety. Mr. Duprey indicated that they have an aspirational goal to not only meet the requirements of the ADA but that the city become a model for the northeast. He noted that, among all the different stakeholders, there was virtual unanimity and support for heated sidewalks and, if at all possible, heated Main Street. He stated that of all the

single changes that people could identify that would make the biggest difference is the ability to be snow free and ice free during the winter season. He added that the committee feels that the city is also going to have to take some fairly substantial and dramatic steps prior to the start of construction to improve the signage into the garage. He added that they also feel that it's vitally important that there be an advertising and marketing campaign that makes it very clear that downtown is open and functioning during construction. He further added that the committee felt very strongly, that to support the merchants, there needed to be a project person downtown, full time, on Main Street. Mr. Duprey indicated that they recommended that the project be constructed primarily during overnight hours, particularly in the corridor from Centre Street to Pleasant Street explaining that they were told that there would be sufficient funding to do 80 percent of that work during evening hours. With respect to funding, the committee strongly recommends that the city partner with the Chamber of Commerce primarily because of the Chamber's expertise in applying for CDFA tax credits. In addition, the committee recommends that the city seek out other grants, donations and a CDBG grant. Mr. Duprey explained that the committee's thinking was that even if the city doesn't receive a large CDFA grant or receive a lot of donations, they felt comfortable with the creation of a special assessment district for funding up to \$850,000 of the approximately \$1.7 million needed in private investments. He indicated that the committee believes that it was fair to make the district bigger than just Main Street but that the apportionment of benefits should diminish as you moved away from Main Street. Mr. Duprey thanked TPAC for their help and very helpful input. He pointed out that there is no way to create a complete safe street with a four-lane configuration noting that the parking lanes are three feet too short so larger vehicles stick out into part of a lane. He stated that they looked at three-lanes with a dedicated center lane but this produced a lot of wasted space. They looked at just two-lanes and that seemed not to work because if someone is stacked up to turn, an emergency vehicle cannot get by. He indicated that the best design is what they call a super two wide lane; fifteen feet wide with a four foot median that gives plenty of room for bike sharing and improves circulation. He noted that the committee did give a lot of consideration to the idea of a one-way street: the merchants didn't like this because if someone drove by a store they would not loop around to go back; one-way would push intersection congestion problems a block off Main Street.

Will Delker, committee member, stated that it's important to understand that, in order to accomplish the complete streets redesign of Main Street, the committee realized that they had only a limited amount of space to deal with to accommodate all of the various uses and needs of Main Street. He noted that it's important to understand that the committee heard extensive testimony about the design and engineering standards that are necessary to insure a smooth flow of traffic down the Main Street and also heard about the amount of space that was necessary on the sidewalks to accomplish sidewalk cafes and other streetscape designs that would dramatically improve the look and feel of Main Street. He stated that, in order to meet the ADA and other design and roadway safety standards, there was a certain amount of space requirement for each of these components that had to fit within the 98 feet of Main Street. He noted that to accomplish this goal of accommodating all these interests, they ultimately agreed that, if they imposed inflexible standards on the design engineers and inflexible recommendations, they wouldn't be able to accomplish this positive, transformative Main Street. Mr. Delker stated that at the

same time, the committee agreed that limits on that flexibility needed to be put into place as well in order to ensure that a beautiful design of Main Street didn't come at the sacrifice of the health and vitality of the businesses. He added that they heard a lot of testimony in regards to parking on Main Street and in the end, the strong consensus was that it would be a very unwise decision to dramatically alter the amount of parking on Main Street. He indicated that fourteen of the seventeen members agreed that no more than five spaces should be lost within the core area of Centre to Pleasant Street beyond the parking that will be lost as a result of the roadway improvements that are necessary to meet design standard. He noted that most of the committee felt that a small concession on this issue would result in a dramatic improvement to Main Street and would benefit everyone and, in the end, this approach could provide the engineers the flexibility to design a complete Main Street that would be the centerpiece for New Hampshire's Capital City that not only Concord could be proud of but also the State.

Mr. Duprey added that the design standard for angled parking is eighteen feet and they are currently fifteen feet. He noted that the engineering team felt that they could go from eighteen feet down to seventeen feet. He indicated that if they do angled parking on both sides with the 34 feet of travel lane, this would bring it up to 68 feet leaving 30 feet or roughly 15 feet on each side. He pointed out that the sidewalks are currently twelve feet and the committee didn't feel that was nearly enough. He stated that the idea was to give the flexibility to consider parallel parking if they didn't lose more than five spaces, dropping a 17 foot long stall to eight feet, picking up 9 feet; at 39 feet, roughly 19 feet and they were told that 18 feet was the minimum necessary to create the kind of streetscape they want.

Mr. Delker pointed out that Main Street varies in width and portions of Main Street are actually wider than 98 feet and in those portions the engineers felt that it might be possible to keep the angled parking on both sides and still have transformative sidewalks.

Kerrie Diers, committee member, indicated that another thing that they needed to look at besides parking was the look and feel of Main Street. She noted that the committee feels strongly that the streetscape components result in a positive dramatic transformation and their recommendation is to think big and act boldly. She listed the streetscape elements including: the sidewalks, lighting, tree and plantings, places to sit, planters, bike racks, boxes for newspapers, trash containers, signs. She indicated that the committee recommended that this committee continue to work with the design team to channel all of the input that the committee has heard into the design. She stated that communication was important and that it was a good idea to have an on-site liaison for employees and merchants in downtown to contact if anything comes up. She added that it was also important to have a strategic marketing and promotions campaign for downtown during construction and after.

In regards to the streetscape, Mr. Duprey added that in order to accomplish much of these improvements the sidewalks needs to be a certain width. He stated that ideally, eighteen feet at a minimum, is the width that sidewalks needed to be in order to accommodate various upgrades and improvements such as street plantings or pocket parks.

Councilor Blanchard asked what a special assessment district is and whether it would be assessing the merchants as opposed to the landlords, which are not always the same people. Mr. Duprey explained that a special assessment district property is based on a property and can be either done on street frontage or proximity to a location. He noted that the assessment is against the property and some landlords may pass this on.

In regard to the project, Councilor Nyhan indicated that he participated in at least one sub-committee meeting where the prospect of moving the bicycle travel lanes off Main Street to State Street or Depot Street was considered. He stated that one of the questions that was posed was whether this would be consistent with the requirements of the project and wondered whether this could be commented on as to whether this was considered or if it wasn't, what the defining elements were. Mr. Duprey responded that they did indicating that they looked at several examples and what they found was that in order to do the super wide two lanes, the minimum required design standard is fifteen feet. He stated that if you have the fifteen feet there is room to put what is called the "sharrow", the emblem that shows the bike and the arrow, as part of that lane so there was no need to move them off. He added that, in terms of project standards, having them on Main Street made it more of a complete street than not.

In regards to the project area, Councilor McClure indicated that the recommendation about parking was just between Centre Street and Pleasant Street. She asked if the other recommendations for proposed widths and the streetscapes will go Storrs to Storrs. Mr. Duprey responded that it will vary by design and that they want to give great flexibility. He stated that they are not willing to lose five more spaces in that core area. He added that he feels that the city design team is going to add spaces to downtown parking in the total project area of Storrs to Storrs.

Councilor Bouchard inquired as to how many parking spaces there are in the core area. Mr. Duprey responded that there are 130 spaces. Councilor Bouchard asked, out of that 130, whether a possible 25 will be removed. Mr. Duprey replied that they have heard estimates that it could be 16 spaces and are hopeful that they don't lose 16 spaces. He stated that not one merchant is happy about losing any parking spaces but everybody said that if they had to and it makes that much of a difference, they could lose five. He noted that they tried to give that flexibility but put an outside limit as to what they thought the property owners and retailers could sustain.

Mayor Bouley opened the public hearing.

### **Public Testimony**

Gerry Carrier, Concord merchant, joined by Laurie Miller, Concord resident and merchant, Andrew Hatch, Concord merchant, to represent the downtown merchants. Mr. Carrier indicated that as merchants, they are located in the Central Business Performance District an area intended primarily for commerce and residential living. He stated, as such, they rely on easy access by many visitors on a daily basis to conduct various duties, business transactions, etc. He indicated that a majority of their visitors travel from outside the immediate downtown area arriving in cars and parking is required for those

types of activities to continue and thrive. He noted that over the last two months many merchants have met each week to review the complete streets hearings and while not unanimous, the vast majority of the merchants agree that the special committee has done a very good job at addressing the numerous issues that all groups face daily downtown. He stated that the merchants are supportive of the proposal as written and sees this as an opportunity to resolve many issues that exists in the downtown area. Mr. Carrier added that many concerns including economic impact, delays, noise, unsightly streets under construction, traffic congestion, parking access for physically challenged visitors, and communication as construction begins still linger but concept and general direction of the proposal as a guide in the final design have addressed many of the concerns. The majority of merchants see the following as critical items in the proposal: safety for all pedestrians, cyclists and motorists; ample parking in the downtown core area with minimal losses from the existing capacity with replacement of any lost parking spaces; maximize angled parking wherever possible while also widening sidewalks; signage and creation of destination sites that reflect Concord's history, architecture, art and gathering spots; evaluation of travel roads requested as the final design develops; request that the Council keep the committee intact during the design stages to allow explanation of the intent within recommendations in the proposals; encourage the inclusion of heated sidewalks and streets in the design; nighttime construction; encourage Council to initiate a parking study; support the immediate recreation of 60 low cost parking spaces on the south end of Storrs Street for downtown workers. Mr. Carrier explained that the general consensus of the downtown merchants is that they support the proposal as presented by the committee and encourage the Council to accept the proposal as presented as a guide in final designs for a new and vibrant downtown district. (Full testimony is on file in the City Clerk's Office)

Councilor Nyhan inquired as to how many businesses they represented. Mr. Carrier responded that the number is roughly 85.

Joshua Robinson, Concord Young Professionals Chair, indicated that his purpose this evening was to give Council the results of a survey that the group gave in which 98 responded to and only 3 indicated that parking was an issue.

In regards to the young professionals demographics, Councilor Nyhan asked if there was any evidence or stories in which parking isn't a concern. Mr. Robinson responded that more often than not what he is hearing from others is to take a look at other communities such as Portsmouth and Portland, Maine. He stated that the expectation of parking next to a place that you want to go is not something that the young professional demographics assumes. He indicated that he understands and appreciates that some people have this parking issue as a showstopper and noted that it frustrates him to hear concepts such as no net loss in parking when they are talking about a transformative revisioning of the downtown. He stated that the assumption to move forward with the thought that they are going to have a net zero lost seems like a disservice just to drop any consideration for any redesign that might have less parking directly on Main Street.

Councilor St. Hilaire asked what the number one most important issue for that demographic. Mr. Robinson responded that 24 percent was changing the perception that the sidewalks roll up at 5 p.m.; 20 percent was entertaining in general.

Councilor Grady-Sexton noted that she thinks that it's great that young professionals aren't looking to park immediately in front of shops leaving spaces open for people that are disabled, elderly or have children in tow.

Councilor Keach inquired in regards to the demographics. Mr. Robinson responded that the age is 21 to 45.

Jim Baer, Concord resident, noted his opposition to this project from its inception. He stated his concerns with the impact on property taxpayers in the city. He feels that more time should have been allowed for the public to discuss such a large and expensive project feeling that it was rushed through with fear of losing the grant dollars. He indicated that he wants Concord to have a healthy and vibrant Main Street but differs in the way in which he feels it should be done. He commended the committee members for the hours they devoted to this project. Mr. Baer noted that among the several concerns that he still has, one is the influences of special interest groups who have championed this project. He expressed his concerns with the impact that the construction will have on the businesses on Main Street during the process and feels that there is no unanimity among the merchants on Main Street about the benefits of this project. He noted that parking has been a major component of this project and questioned why would they vote for a project that promises fewer parking spaces than what is currently there. He asked that Council consider tabling this project and to revisit at a later date. (Mr. Baer's full testimony is on file in the City Clerk's Office)

Tim Sink, Chamber of Commerce, spoke in strong support of the report before the Council. He stated that, from the perspective of the Chamber, the recommendations make good sense and have a degree of merit. Referencing recommendation 13, he noted that the Chamber feels strongly about this recommendation and sees tremendous opportunity to increase visitor spending. He pointed out that another recommendation is that the Chamber would support and work with the city in terms of securing CDFR grants and wanted to reiterate this to this Council.

Councilor Blanchard asked how much is the Chamber doing to promote Concord as a destination from the point of view of being equal distance from lakes, the ocean, Boston and mountains. Mr. Sink responded that traditionally they had played a role in promoting this region as a visitor destination. He stated that in the past three years they have shifted the emphasis towards promoting the creative economy in this area. He added that there are tremendous cultural resources that are unrivaled by any other part of the state so they are uniquely situated to promote as a visitor destination. He explained that they have a very robust website and publish 65,000 map and guides that are distributed in and out of state.

James McConaha, resident, stated that the one thing that has been emphasized over and over is parking and was glad to hear Mr. Duprey mention the problems with the existing

parking. He noted concerns with the costs of the project and stated if the federal government grant was taken away, he feels that the reality is that Council would approach the needs of Main Street and the way they would spend money to address those needs much more differently; a more practical fashion. He stated that the Council has already accepted the fact that they are going to spend \$3 million of the city taxpayers and business owners money. He indicated that Mr. Duprey has said that this proposal will ensure the economic viability of Main Street for decades to come. Mr. McConaha stated that it may be the opposite because nobody knows the answer to this. He indicated that he feels that the prudent course of action is to reject the federal dollars, at least under the scenario presented giving the city time and design flexibility which can be maximized absent the one size fits all federal standards. He noted that the most valuable resource for commerce, culture, tourism, and landmark status is Concord's Main Street and today it awaits their vision and plan and its future should not depend on or be driven by the take it or leave it transient offer of federal dollars. (Written testimony on file at the City Clerk's Office)

Councilor Bouchard asked whether it was the city that applied for the grant and were awarded the grant. City Manager Tom Aspell responded that to be correct.

Brent Todd, resident, noted that he feels that this is an opportunity that the city should take advantage of and stated that he liked Ms. Diers statement of think big and think bold noting he feels that these are the key phrases of this project. He noted his agreement with Mr. Carrier's statement for the need of a comprehensive parking plan. He indicated that this is something that the city should undertake. He stated that the one thing that he hasn't heard about downtown is that it is perfect exactly like it is and don't touch it. He noted that he feels that it's safe to say that a transformational change plan will do a lot to solve a lot of the current problems facing the downtown.

Allan Herschlag, resident, indicated that he although he considers himself a realist, it doesn't mean that he is comfortable with the recommendations in the November 16<sup>th</sup> final report, or in moving forward with this project at this time. He has addressed his specific concerns regarding the Complete Streets project in emails to the Council and a copy to the City Clerk. He indicated that he would like to deal with an item from the last time he spoke before the Council on August 13<sup>th</sup>. At the time he had made reference to Kim Murdoch and a survey she conducted of the downtown merchants. He indicated that Ms. Murdoch, speaking to Council after his testimony, said that at no time did she conduct a survey. He presented a copy of the cover page from Ms. Murdoch's report from the survey she conducted with downtown merchants. He pointed out that the word survey appears 9 times and that the survey can be found in the supplement to the Rethinking Main Street report. He asked the Council to accept this copy to correct the record. He stated that the reason he is bringing this up now, is that he is aware of a number of occasions where misinformation relating to the Complete Streets project has been documented as fact. He indicated that the grant application states that the City Council approved the Rethinking Main Street proposal after a public hearing. Mr. Herschlag noted that is a misstatement. He noted that they have been told by the Mayor that there would be no loss of parking on Main Street, but now know that to mean that within the entire boundaries of the project there will be no loss of parking. He has

watched the chairman direct the committee towards accepting a parking solution that incorporates parallel parking on North Main Street, and indicated that the chairman has stated publicly that he hopes the final design will have angled parking in front of his buildings on South Main Street. He indicated that the Mayor has stated that nothing will happen without every opportunity for members of the community to share their thoughts yet Mr. Herschlag feels that the process is rushed to meet timelines set by the Complete Streets grant that there really isn't time to review options by trying them out. He indicated that Council has already approved funding for this project in advance of any recommendations from the Complete Streets Advisory Committee and this public hearing. He noted that the chairman of the Complete Streets project has requested that the committee not be disbanded until after they have an opportunity to comment on the final streetscape design elements, why?, he noted that according to the chairman, they should not trust the final outcome of this project to engineers and planners without outside oversight. He is very concerned that as the specifics of the design are revealed there won't be another opportunity for public comment; that they will be stuck with a project that the public will not have the ability to comment on in its final design, before the start of construction. While the design has to be finalized for bids by the end of June, he urged Council to consider an approach that leaves as many options as possible open. He urged Council to look for ways to create a flexible design that can be adjusted over the 50 years this project is expected to impact our downtown. He challenged the City Planner to show why the design elements cannot be incorporated into 15 foot wide sidewalks because 18 - 22 foot wide sidewalks precludes any flexibility related to traffic lanes and parking. He suggested that parking patterns not be changed and suggested that over time if those who shop, work, reside and visit downtown are comfortable with new parking options that they can be incorporated at a future date. He stated to not incorporate design elements that will lock us into a one design plan for the next 50 years. He urged Council to include a snow melt system for the roadway noting that he finds very little in this project that points to a positive economic impact for our downtown; heated sidewalks is one, but the companion project to this is heated streets. He believes these two elements can be game changers for downtown, if downtown merchants survive the construction period. He has mentioned in his note to Council that communications and promotions surrounding this project cannot wait until the start of construction and that it is crucial to start communications and promotions planning for this project well in advance of the construction start date and to work on developing a plan for communications and promotions should start tonight and the plan should be rolled out no later than January 1<sup>st</sup>. This is truly a once in a lifetime project for many and he wants to ensure that Council gets it right. He feels that this project shouldn't be an experiment that will look good on resumes, while killing off our downtown merchants; this is a project that will have an economic impact on the entire city and they should make sure it is a positive impact. He added that the success of this project will be measured first by improved economic vitality for downtown and the city and, second, if it becomes a focal point of pride for our community. He feels that the parking a parking management study should be done before any final design is incorporated. In regards to economic elements, he doesn't feel that the evidence is there to suggest that this project and the streetscape changes that were discussed tonight will increase any building assessments and feels that the one element that can improve the economic situation for the merchants is heated

streets and sidewalks and would bring many more people downtown during the winter months. The original timetable showed that construction would end in December 2014 but because of not wanting to impede on the holidays sales for the merchants it looks like they will lose three months of construction. He asked whether this would push this project into 2015.

Bob Carey, Chamber of Commerce, indicated that he was appointed to a task force to provide some aesthetic recommendations as part of this process. He highlighted some of their recommendations that were included within the committee's report: improved signage for parking and to get people to the merchants; heated sidewalks and streets; the design and look of the streetscape. He stated that there needs to be a change and the one thing that helps the merchants is to make a place attractive.

Sheila Zakre, resident, indicated that in following the developments of the committee, who have worked incredibly hard, she feels that the interests and needs of those that don't drive because of a disability really have not been represented. She brought up some points that she feels are important for consideration: lengthening the amount of time for the walk light at Main and Pleasant Streets for pedestrian safety; concern for bikers stopping at pedestrian crossings; concerns with putting items such as planters in the middle of the sidewalk; heated sidewalks would be a positive thing in regards to ADA and accessibility.

Ursula Maldonado, resident, submitted a handout of a chart in regards to parking spaces on Main Street. She noted that she feels that the proposal of a comprehensive parking study is one of the strongest outcomes of this report. She stated that if parking was the most contentious issue, a comprehensive study is the kindest and fairest response to the merchants who are fielding concerns from customers.

Referencing the lower chart, Councilor McClure asked if there were days in which they counted every block as outlined. Ms. Maldonado responded no. Councilor McClure questioned whether the top chart is the average of the chart below. Ms. Maldonado responded yes.

Tonya Rochette, Intown Concord, noted their support in the acceptance of this proposal as written. She added that communication is critical before, throughout and after the project. She noted that they are excited about supporting this project which they feel will enhance the downtown making it a destination accessible to all.

Roy Schweiker, resident, asked that Council accept the report of the committee. He noted that he is in favor of the two lanes with a center median. He expressed his concerns with the cost of heated sidewalks. He asked whether heated sidewalks and roads work and can they be afforded because this is what would change downtown and is what will make it work. He stated that another issue some felt was that the economic impact of downtown was being overemphasized and he feels that to make an economic impact out of this they are going to have to double valuation and he doesn't feel that there is any way to double this downtown by putting in fancy trash cans and lights. He feels

that it's important to do this with heated sidewalks because this is the only way he sees that it will work. In regards to communicating that businesses are open during construction, he feels that this is something that Intown Concord is there for noting that the taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for this.

Kevin Curdie, resident, noted that he can't speak for or against the project because there are parts that he feels are useful and others that he wonders about. He stated that he hasn't heard anything about doing anything to make downtown more attractive other than wider sidewalks and plenty of parking and suggested doing something to make the buildings more attractive. He noted his concerns with the speed that vehicles drive on Main Street and is not sure whether having two lanes would reduce the speeds and wonders if placing rumble strips in the area of crosswalks would reduce the speeds of vehicles. He stated that he does like the idea of heated sidewalks and streets but is not sure the city can afford this.

Kim Murdoch, resident, urged Council to accept the committee's report. She stated that she is grateful for all the time and energy the committee put into this report. She urged Council to continue the advisory committee because there are still so many unanswered questions and so many design elements that will have to be determined and the committee can represent the spirit of the voices that they have heard.

Althea Barton, resident and member of the Friends of Downtown, declared this project a success and has unleashed an amazing amount of energy and enthusiasm among residents, merchants, property owners, thinkers and planners. She indicated that the Friends of Downtown has committed to harnessing that energy and aim to partner with Intown Concord and other groups to help promote and support the downtown businesses before, during and after construction. She urged Council to accept the report before them this evening.

Robert Baker, resident, referenced that he has been doing research on the old railroad station that was torn down and what he discovered in his search is that parking was the primary issue 52 years ago. He stated that at one of the committee meetings, the City Planner put up a diagram of the parking downtown and what shocked him was that the amount of parking real estate in the downtown area dedicated to storing a vehicle is enormous. He indicated that he is pleased that the committee wants a comprehensive parking plan done to make the parking work. He urged Council to accept the report but also urged them to really focus on the livability and the complete streets.

Richard Cohen, Disabilities Rights Center, noted that they feel that this is a unique opportunity for the city. He commended the committee for an outstanding job and accommodating all the various interests. Referencing the recommendation in regards to accessibility, he stated that the recommendation is that the city becomes a model for the state and the region. He indicated that this is based on testimony given by himself, his organization, several people with disabilities, and from other organizations. He noted that he feels that it is important going forward to have strong input in design from people with disabilities. He stated that the testimonies regarding accessibility was not all about

legal requirements but it was also consistent with the needs to enhance the goals of complete streets which is livability, safety and aesthetics. He pointed out the elements that were discussed: making sure that the street itself is accessible; sufficient accessible parking; the street to sidewalk areas are accessible through different types of curb cuts; removing the double sidewalk on the west side of the street; there is a requirement that when a public entity or public accommodation undertakes renovations that they can't make a place less accessible; the sidewalk itself is accessible with clear paths of travel; benches should be accessible; making sure there is accessibility from the sidewalk into the store entrances.

Mike Reynolds, resident, noted that he doesn't feel that the project, as proposed, is going to be, by itself, transformative. He feels that when entertaining a project such as this they should be, simultaneously, changing the zoning so that people can live downtown which he believes will create a transformative change. He noted his frustration with the parking kiosks in the downtown area. Referencing one-way streets, he stated that these are destructive turning roads into speedways and is opposed to this concept.

Nik Coates, Central NH Planning Commission, distributed handouts from the American Planning Association for Award Winning Great Streets in America. (Handout on file at the City Clerk's Office)

Jeff Bart, Warren Street merchant, indicated he does support the project. He referenced the proposed special assessment district that is going to incorporate properties that don't front Main Street stating that he feels that this is completely out of place. In reference to costs, he noted that the city isn't going to want to move forward and commit to spending dollars without knowing where the maintenance cost is coming from. He stated that Council will have to make a decision here in accepting this report of how they are going to pay to maintain it.

Councilor Keach understands his objections but asked whether Mr. Bart's business would benefit from these improvements when completed. Mr. Bart responded no stating that the number one benefit will be heated sidewalks and the bulk of the retail business is in the winter months. He doesn't feel that the project will directly benefit his business.

Richard Kelly, Concord Barber Shop, noted his concern with the loss of business for merchants. He indicated that during the construction on North State Street, his business has suffered during the two months that construction was occurring in front of his business.

There being no further public testimony, the Mayor closed the hearing.

### **November 26, 2012 Public Hearing Action**

6. Report from the Downtown Complete Streets Improvement Project Advisory Committee. (10-29)

**Action:** Councilor Grady-Sexton moved to accept the report. The motion was duly seconded.

In regards to heated sidewalks, Councilor Nyhan asked whether there was an estimated maintenance cost associated with this.

Mayor Bouley stated that the way he reviews this report is that this sets up guidelines, a template, for the engineers and the engineering team who is going to go forth and design this project. He noted that one of the advantages that this report puts forth is that it does provide some flexibility to parking, streetscapes, etc. He indicated that there is not a cost available at this time but this is exactly what is going to occur during the design phase with the engineering firm. He stated that in the spring they will be back here and suspects that the engineering firm is going to bring back a number of possibilities with the costs of each of these. Mayor Bouley noted that one of the things in this report, although they would be accepting, that he doesn't believe they made any decisions about by accepting it, is the whole funding the 20 percent from the private sector.

Councilor Nyhan noted that this clarifies it; that they will have an opportunity to ask more financial type based questions. This report is just really setting the ground work for taking that next step which is putting some dollar estimates next to these recommendations so that Council can make a better and informed decision.

Councilor Coen asked if it was feasible to receive a timeline of the phases that they are about to get involved in. He asked what would be the next step in accepting this report. Mayor Bouley indicated that it is his understanding that the design team will take this report and move forth to design downtown, to look at road lanes, come back with recommendations on parking, come back with information on sidewalks, etc. City Manager Aspell added that they need to get moving as quickly as possible to start the design so they can come up with some of these answers and to bring Council alternatives but there is a whole series of approvals and permitting processes with working with the federal government. He indicated that it's very important to continue to work with the committee. He stated that they don't do city projects, they do community projects reaching out to every neighborhood group when they do a project in the city.

City Engineer Ed Roberge explained that he can prepare a high level schedule for submittal at the December meeting for the Council to consider. He stated that they are looking at several key dates; one in March and one within the May timeframe. He indicated that he expects that they could be back as early as March and back as quickly as May with more detailed design information or fully substantiated designs or fully built designs for Council's final consideration. He noted that in the meantime, they will be meeting with stakeholder groups or with the general public. He indicated that part of the decision process that Council is involved in now is to whether or not they keep the committee together or whether to look at a cross section of merchants or just open public meetings to vet some of the design alternatives.

Councilor Blanchard noted that one of her main concerns is that she feels that this process has been hurried. She stated that she revisited the Rethinking Main Street and the application for the grant and it indicated that it is supposed to be ready for construction by April 1, 2013. She asked when they adjusted the date. Mr. Roberge responded that the application was predicated upon an award by July 2012. He added that the grant agreement wasn't in place until November 2<sup>nd</sup> and that delivery of April is now part of the grant agreement which says that it's June 28<sup>th</sup>. Referencing heated sidewalks, Councilor Blanchard inquired as to where the city is in regards to Concord Steam and the feasibility of this. Mr. Aspell responded that this is something that the city cannot control of whether or not they are going to construct their \$85 million plant so therefore as part of this plan, the city has to come up with an alternative which they have contemplated. Councilor Blanchard commended the committee for the job they have done and for coming up with this report. She stated that she will be voting to accept the report.

Councilor St. Hilaire indicated that the committee had the benefit of having an updated schedule timeline and asked whether this could be included in the next Council packet as part of the report. He indicated that the committee talked about everything and wants the Council to be assured that Mr. Roberge was sitting there the whole time listening and assuring them that he was digesting the information. He added that some of the people that will be doing the design attended many of the meetings and feels that they have a sense of what the community wants out of this project.

Councilor DelloIacono indicated that one of the suggestions was to hire a parking management consultant and questioned whether the consultant they have chosen has that resource at their firm, whether the city will be looking at another vendor or will they do it internally to solve this. Mr. Roberge explained that part of the scope of work that this consultant team will include in this review are parking elements and review of previous parking studies. Mr. Roberge noted that the city has a Parking Committee and that it's going to be important that it becomes a larger study than just what's embodied within the scope of the downtown streetscape project work. He indicated that they probably don't have funding in the program, as laid out today, to do this full cross sectional study of all the aspects of all of the downtown parking because it exceeds the project area. He feels that the information that they bring together, what they have heard and what the expertise of McFarland Johnson has with their team is that they bring this as part of a larger strategy with the Parking Committee and with staff to look at parking management strategies. From there they can make a determination on whether a more advanced study is required. Councilor DelloIacono wondered where this would fit into the timeframe.

Mayor Bouley noted that there is a short term need and a long term need. He indicated that they have to be vigilant in dealing with parking and how they can minimize the impact upon the downtown businesses. He stated that what he read from the committee is that there has to be a long term strategy of how they deal with parking in the downtown.

Councilor Nyhan asked, in regards to the design consultant and what they are going to be asked to do for the city relative to pricing, what the directive was. Is it to come back with project that's going to make the financial limits of what they are going to have to spend or is

the design consultant going to come back with an a la carte pricing. He questioned how it's going to look to Council when they are going to make a decision. Mr. Roberge responded that the biggest challenge is how to balance big and bold with fiscal responsibility. He stated that they have a fixed budget and they now will begin to develop alternatives in which they think is appropriate to meet all the criteria; delivering alternatives with costs attached to them and performance reports. He noted that he expects that when they come back to Council they will have alternatives that say: here is what we think we can afford; here is where we think our limitations are based on costs; and here is what we think the direction was that they heard as part of the whole advisory committee.

Councilor Keach spoke in favor of moving forward with the project.

Referencing a possible long term parking study, Councilor Blanchard requested that attendant parking in the Capital Commons Garage be considered.

The motion to accept the report passed with no dissenting votes.

### **Comments, Requests by Mayor, City Councilors**

Councilor Shurtleff announced that the Penacook tree lighting will take place on Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

The time being 10:47 p.m., Councilor St. Hilaire moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was duly seconded and passed with no dissenting votes.

*A true copy; I attest:*

*Michelle Mulholland  
Deputy City Clerk*