

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

March 27, 2000

5:00 PM

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen O'Neil, Wihby, Cashin, Lopez

Absent: Alderman Clancy

Messrs: Aldermen Shea, Vaillancourt, Gatsas, Hirschmann, Thibault,
F. Thomas, C. Murray, J. Broheart, G. Rogers, R. Johnson,
R. MacKenzie

Chairman O'Neil addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Continuing discussions and review of FY2001 Resolution:

"Amending A Resolution Approving the Community Improvement Program for 2001, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefor and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program."

- (a) Request for funding in the amount of \$15,000.00 for parallel parking on the Southside of Merrimack Street from Elm to Chestnut Streets submitted by Alderman Levasseur.
(Note: Also to be considered by the Traffic Committee at its next meeting.)
- (b) Request by Nick and Nancy Daskal that Dunbarton Road be paved and have yellow lines down the middle.

Mr. Thomas stated at the request of the CIP Committee, I invited the State to come down and give the Committee a presentation and answer any questions that the Committee may have on the Granite Street Interchange project. If you remember, the State did come down or at least those on the Board who were here prior to this last election, the State did come down and make a detailed presentation to the full Board. This will be a follow-up. Carol Murray has come down. She is the Deputy Commissioner of the State D.O.T. and she has brought her team with her.

With that, I will turn it over to Carol and be glad to have them give you a brief presentation and then we will open it up to questions.

Ms. Murray stated thank you for this opportunity. This is an important project and Jeff was joking before we got started that I am probably going to have to do the presentation because I am the only one that can reach the plan. He is over 6' tall. Having said that, I would like to ask Jeff to walk through the plans I do apologize to you. We had to use a spot that was available.

Mr. Broheart stated very quickly just to orient you on these plans, this is a 50 scale plan of I-293. North is that way and South is that way. Granite Street is right here in gray. Essentially what we are proposing to do is replace the bridge that carries I-293 over Granite Street in poor condition. As part of doing that work, we want to set-up the bridge so that eventually Granite Street can be widened so that we can also widen I-293 in the future to be three lanes in each direction. Also, we want to add ramps. A ramp as you are heading southbound to get off onto Granite Street and if you are heading northbound to get onto I-293 from Granite Street. The project does require a number of retaining walls. We need to stay out of the river. That is of primary importance. We also need to minimize impacts to the school property and we are proposing to do that. We are impacting a little bit of the new parking area and we have a plan to replace those parking spaces. The impacts associated with the project are fairly severe. On the north side of the interchange, we would impact existing Allard Drive and have to relocate Allard Drive. We do impact Ray the Mover's operation and depending on some choices that need to be made, we could impact the Vermont Salvage or we could impact both of Ray the Mover's buildings. There are two designs shown for relocating Allard Drive and we have them both here tonight. In fact, we sent a letter to the City trying to get some feedback as to which alternative should be carried forward. This plan shows Allard Drive being located further to the west. It impacts the Vermont Salvage building right here and it leaves this Ray the Mover building. The second alternative right here, just very quickly, keeps Allard Drive more or less on the existing alignment. It does impact both Ray the Mover's buildings but it leaves the Vermont Salvage building. This alternative has somewhat less right-of-way cost involved. It also takes the traffic that currently passes in front of the Alphabet school there and takes that traffic so that it can go behind that school and there is less impact to that school. On the south side...

Chairman O'Neil interjected do either one of those alternatives affect the budget at all or is it approximately the same cost.

Mr. Broheart replied this alternative would be approximately \$600,000 less than the right-of-way cost.

Chairman O'Neil asked do you reference that A, B or alternative 1, 2.

Mr. Broheart answered we reference this as moving Allard Drive further to the west. Relocating it completely.

Chairman O'Neil asked when you say \$600,000 less, that is on the State's portion correct.

Mr. Broheart answered it is all State money.

Chairman O'Neil stated but there is City money with regards to Granite Street.

Mr. Broheart replied we are not proposing to do any work on Granite Street with this project.

Ms. Murray stated what Jeff is going to take you through is the State's funded portion.

Chairman O'Neil responded I just wanted to make sure that we are clear on that. What we are trying to wrestle with is our portion of whether or not we move forward with widening of the Granite Street Bridge and widening of Granite Street. Thank you.

Mr. Broheart stated in the area of Granite Street, we are going to tie in the new ramps to Granite Street, we are going to bridge over Granite Street with a much longer bridge, and any work proposed on Granite Street will have to be done by the City. This plan does show and it is probably hard to see, but we have outlined right here where the widening of Granite Street would be to the north and essentially along that line you would see Granite Street being widened in that envelope and some of these buildings up in this area would be impacted. I am not sure what would be impacted on the East Side of the river. The other choice, just to finish off here, with this scheme, Turner Street because of the reconfiguration of the interchange Turner Street would be impacted and relocated with this scheme and it is relocated in such a manner that it makes a full connection all the way over. It impacts 11 buildings and about 30 families would be impacted. It does provide, perhaps, the best safety access for people in this area and certainly full access to all of the remaining property. The second alternative that we are talking about is this. With this scheme, we wouldn't rebuild Turner Street in total, we would build sections coming off of Second Street so that you could get access down to these properties that are close to the highway, but we wouldn't have a full connection of Turner Street. In doing this, we impact two buildings and approximately 11 families. Obviously, the price tag is less for this alternative than the other one. The concern with impacting a number of families is, I think, a very

real concern and it makes that alternative very difficult to support. Again, we are looking to the City for some feedback. Hopefully we can get that soon so we can get on with this project. The schedule right now...we had hoped to go to a public hearing in June. It is probably going to be a little bit later in the summer than that, August or July. Assuming we get to a public hearing and it is successful, we would hope to have construction begin early in 2003.

Alderman Wihby asked if you go back to this side here, you said it was \$600,000 cheaper this way. When you come down to Granite Street, is there an additional cost that the City is going to have to do by picking one or the other?

Mr. Broheart answered no. The relocation of Turner Street or Allard Drive does not affect the City's cost. This project, the layout and the colored area is all funded by the State.

Alderman Wihby stated and where it ends up is the same on both proposals.

Mr. Broheart replied that is right.

Alderman Wihby stated and if you go back to the other proposal where you are taking two houses, aren't those houses then going to be so close to the highway that there is going to be a lot of noise.

Mr. Broheart replied in either case, you are going to have houses close to the highway. I don't know if it is going to be...I am not sure how much different it is going to be for the people who live there.

Ms. Murray stated it is important before we leave that those two questions that you raised...we will as this process unfolds be looking for the City's input. We want to do this in partnership. We don't want it to be a State decision.

Chairman O'Neil replied that is what I was trying to get at. Even though there are separate funding sources and one is a City project and one is a State project, we think of it as a partnership and we are all working together on this.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked could you tell me the exact distance between this exit and the Amoskeag Bridge exit.

Mr. Broheart answered I don't know that off the top of my head.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated the reason I asked the question is because I was under the understanding that the State was making an effort to absolutely avoid having exits that are so close to each other. In fact, I refer to the exit in Concord. Can you tell me why you are going ahead and doing this when apparently we are thinking of closing one of the exits in Concord that is too close to a neighboring exit?

Ms. Murray replied let me clarify the Concord situation if I might. There is a wild rumor, and I do say rumor, in Concord that somewhere in the Department probably in Gil's desk drawer there is a plan for the elimination of Exit 14.

Alderman Vaillancourt responded I have heard that wild rumor.

Ms. Murray stated I am sure you have being in Concord as much as you are. There is no such plan. We are beginning an initiative with the City of Concord, with them taking the lead actually, called Concord 2020 and what it is is an examination of what does Concord want to be when the year 2020 arrives. As part of that, we will begin the traffic work necessary for an alternative study of Interstate 93, which is part of the current 10-year plan, through the City of Concord and that is clearly a study. There are no preconceived notions going into it. Certainly, if you travel through Exit 14 when the State office buildings are letting out, you would say there is a major congestion point in the City, but the State has made no such determination.

Alderman Vaillancourt replied I don't mean to get into a discussion about Concord. Maybe you can disabuse us of the fact, then, that there is no State plan not to have two exits so close to each other.

Ms. Murray responded that is correct. Gil Rogers, who is the Assistant Director of Project Development sitting next to me can talk about what we use for guidelines. Manchester has nice access to the north and nice access to the south, but nothing to the heart of your City and for a long time I think we all envisioned that some day the need for servicing the heart of your City would arrive. We feel the time is now.

Mr. Rogers stated I would like to assure you that technically putting in the two northbound ramps, on and off, will work. There is enough room between this interchange and the Amoskeag to fit. As a guideline, in an urban situation we try real hard not to have interchanges any closer than ½ mile. One mile is desirable and in this particular case here, I believe that we are approaching the mile distance before you get up there. You have to go around the S curve to get up to where the ramp takes off, but at any rate we feel very comfortable that technically this works.

Ms. Murray stated the concern with interchanges too close are the weaving motions and that sets-up potential conflicts. I think it is fair to say, as Gil has said, that we have done enough of a look at this to feel confident that we are not creating that situation.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked so you say it is close to a mile.

Ms. Murray answered yes.

Mr. Rogers stated that is my recollection. I really couldn't tell you exactly, but I know that the influence of that interchange does not come back into the picture that Jeff described briefly.

Alderman Lopez stated I am curious about the underpass and maybe Mr. Thomas can help me out with this. With the ramp coming off, is there going to be a need to cut into the existing structure and make it wider, the street wider and if it was a possibility that that would have to occur in order to accomplish what we want to accomplish, is that something that the State would assist us in?

Mr. Thomas replied the existing bridge that is over Granite Street will be completely replaced and that span is going to be widened significantly. In order for the final configuration of this interchange to work, Granite Street in this area has to be widened out to seven lanes to permit all of the turning movement.

Alderman Lopez asked are there any funds from the State to assist us in that particular area.

Ms. Murray answered no; that would be a City responsibility. What Frank is saying is correct. We are going to be able to efficiently get people off of the turnpike and deliver them to the City at that point.

Alderman Lopez stated I was asking because it is a State highway. Do you understand what I am asking?

Ms. Murray replied I think you are asking is what we are proposing to do with this project going to affect Granite Street and cause some necessary work as a result. Is that your question?

Alderman Lopez responded no because we understand we are going to take care of Granite Street, but in the construction of the overpass because of that we are pushed upon to have more lanes and the overpass is a construction State highway. Has any calculation of dollars been talked about to assist the City?

Chairman O'Neil stated I think that is one of the issues that we are interested in. Maybe not an exact dollar, but there is a need for coordination on design with regards to the State portion and the City portion. Maybe not actual construction dollars and I think that is the intent of the meeting tonight. The importance on why we have to come up with the design money to work hand in hand with the State through 2001 and 2002. Will it go into 2002 to design?

Ms. Murray replied yes. We are not planning on advertising for construction until late Fall of 2002. It is important that this project be coordinated. You currently as a City experience issues related to back-up at the partial interchange at this point. If we deliver folks efficiently off of the State highway down to a street network that has been clogged, we are transferring the problem and certainly the anger of those folks who use that facility on a daily basis. The other point I would make is to have a truly successful construction effort, you don't want to have us working in this area for three plus years then a follow-up of the City doing something for another three plus years. That is a major impact to the citizens who live, work and travel through this area. I would be very concerned if we are not carefully coordinated that we would, in fact, not end up with a very good public improvement project in the long run.

Mr. Rogers stated I just wanted to address Alderman Lopez's questions a little bit more. What would we be doing for the City that would be of benefit? Between the ramp terminals that Jeff pointed out before we are going to be doing all the design between the terminals to make sure that eventually when the ramps are widened and all hooked up together in what we call an urban interchange or a single point diamond etching, that is a technical term for something we are building right now at Exit 13 in Concord and it is well underway and hopefully you will all be driving it soon. Between those ramp terminals, we have to make sure that we dot all of the I's and cross all of the T's because when the City comes, whenever that is and hopefully in conjunction with our project as Ms. Murray just said, when you come to do the work perhaps to the West and particularly the work on the bridge, that will all mesh perfectly and that is key to happening. Let's get all of the design together as best we can and make sure that doesn't happen. We will be prepared and our project, if I remember correctly, we are going to be pushing \$20 million. That is a heck of an investment and we certainly want to make everything work so we are going to be taking care of everything between the ramps. All of the turning movements and we will be coordinating the signals for the future and things of that nature. We will have to do the drainage under here and that design and the City will be coming with the extremities hopefully as a partner so that we can finish the project all at once and make things a little more pleasant for managing traffic through the City as we are under construction. I think there is some benefit there that we will automatically have to do as part of our design that the City will benefit from.

Ms. Murray stated I think Gil described it very well. Think between the ramps because that is clearly an impact that the State will have on that portion.

Mr. Thomas stated I agree. Between the ramps the State will be assuming those costs both in design and construction. If the City is not prepared to go ahead with its work, it will be a two-phased approach. What will be constructed first will be your typical diamond interchange where the ramps come out as shown on here. If the construction was to coincide and say the Granite Street widening project was underway so that it was scheduled to be completed at the same time instead of the ramps coming out like that, they would be making a swing toward the end.

Alderman Thibault stated, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for inviting some of the Aldermen on the West Side to express their opinion and one thing that has come up here right now I wonder if all of you Aldermen on this Committee realize that the whole turnpike will be pushed over to the West Side by two lanes. This is the reason for all of the Turner Street taking of property. I am not sure if all of you understand that and that is the problem that I had the other night that I brought before the board. I think we are looking at a possible three-year nightmare of construction there that could be extended to six years if, in fact, the City is not in synch with the State as to what is happening here on Granite Street. I certainly appreciate the State coming over here and bringing their case to us so that we can all understand exactly what needs to happen here and when it needs to happen. The other thing is that like Ms. Murray said, the City of Manchester has never had a real in town egress and ingress to the highway. Here is our shot and our chance to do that and the State is willing to do that. I think that it would behoove the City to make sure that it is in synch with the State as they do that because when you work in tandem you always save money and money should be the biggest thing we are looking at here. If we go according to like what Mr. Thomas just referred to that it could be a two-stage project well let's face it, the State is going to stop where it has to stop and the City is going to start where they stop. If we do it in conjunction, I am sure that a lot of money can be saved there. This is what I was trying to bring up to the Board last week. I think this is a project that needs to be engineered properly immediately so that the State knows exactly what we are willing to do as they do this thing. There is just one more thing that I would like to bring up. The importance of enlarging the Granite Street Bridge at this point when we, as a Board of Mayor and Aldermen, have already agreed that the civic center will be built and the Riverwalk is in process and some of the other things that the City is doing such as the possibility of a train from Boston to Manchester and a parking garage, guys I would really want you to look at what...you know serving on the Southern NH Planning Commission and listening to all of these things that are coming down the pike and maybe some of you haven't been privy to that, I think all of this coincides together and I hope that

you take the time to look at this as a very crucial problem and it is right in my ward and I am concerned.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I would recommend that you amend the appropriation for design to work in conjunction with the State if you can.

Alderman Wihby asked if we are going to allocate some money and I know that the Mayor in his CIP budget put in \$175,000, what is the number that...what do we have to do in order to coordinate it.

Mr. Thomas answered our request to the CIP was for \$1.1 million for the design of that entire corridor from Main Street up to Elm Street. The \$175,000 was evidently to do some type of study, however, we did request \$1.1 million.

Alderman Wihby asked so that number is what you need in order to coordinate it with the State.

Mr. Thomas answered that is as good a number as we have.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Frank, that takes care of coordination from what point to what point or design from what point to what point.

Mr. Thomas answered it would include the design of the Granite Street widening from Main Street all the way up to Elm Street, including the design of the bridge across the Merrimack River.

Chairman O'Neil asked and would you plan on following the same time schedule with regards to design as the State would be.

Mr. Thomas answered we would attempt to, yes.

Alderman Gatsas asked could you show me where West Memorial Field is on that map.

Mr. Thomas pointed it out. This is the new parking lot that they recently built.

Alderman Gatsas asked could you show me where the existing Raphael Club is.

Mr. Thomas pointed it out.

Alderman Gatsas stated from what I remember, the Raphael Club is maybe 100 feet from home plate of the West Memorial Field. Is that a pretty good guess? So I want to see if we are spending \$1.3 million in costs for West Memorial I want to make sure that this thing doesn't impact what we are doing for work. If we go with Phase 2 with that building that almost abuts it there, Phase 2 is going to come close to impacting that field.

Mr. Rogers replied we would build a retaining wall to save the field. We don't want to have to replace the field.

Alderman Gatsas responded I understand that, but where is it in conjunction to what work is being done there now. We are proposing to do \$1.3 million worth of work there aren't we?

Alderman Wihby stated I don't think it touches the field.

Alderman Gatsas replied it would be right on it.

Alderman Cashin stated it is close, but it doesn't impact the field at all. There is no impact on the field. None.

Alderman Gatsas replied I think there is.

Chairman O'Neil asked Ron Johnson from Parks & Recreation to come to a microphone and try to clarify this.

Mr. Johnson stated I think we provided the plans to NH D.O.T. Our consultant has provided computer copies. This is the corner...we did see on our plan and I think if you had seen some of the initial drawings for the project over the years we initially had a building proposed on that corner. The new fieldhouse. When we heard the discussions from the State with the new plans coming through, we put the new building down on the far corner so they have taken that into consideration. We just put in a temporary granite wall there, it is not a permanent wall, with the anticipation that some of the structures would have to come through.

Alderman Gatsas asked has the configuration of the baseball field changed.

Mr. Johnson answered right now, with the new plans there will be no baseball field. There used to be a softball field but right now it is just a track with a football field, soccer field, multi-use field in the middle. The old backstop has been taken down in that corner. This area will also serve as the event area for high jump and some of the other events.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Mr. Johnson, are you comfortable that there has been coordination with your department, City Highway and the State D.O.T. that everything is okay over there.

Mr. Johnson answered yes. We provided the plans as I mentioned earlier.

Mr. Thomas stated just to add, I know that these two alignments are still up in the air. Right now, City staff is supporting this alignment here because of the savings and because of the minimal impact.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I would just like to follow-up on Alderman Thibault's comments and try to get at the truth a little bit. I do have some impeachment evidence. I spoke with Commissioner Kennison quite awhile ago so I will ask the question and get your answer and see if it is in synch with the answer that I got from him at the time.

Chairman O'Neil stated we are not here tonight to start putting people on the spot.

Alderman Vaillancourt replied I want to get to the bottom...

Chairman O'Neil interjected does it have to do with this project.

Alderman Vaillancourt replied yes it does most specifically and I want to get to the bottom of whether or not this project is being speeded up because of the civic center and the Riverwalk. Of course there is nothing more that I would like to do than verify what Alderman Thibault is suggesting by saying that, in fact, that is adding an extra X number of million dollars because of this. The question is, is this in fact being speeded up because of the civic center and the Riverwalk. Is it or is it not?

Ms. Murray responded no, it is not.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked could you give us the specifics on that then.

Chairman O'Neil stated hold on. Let me ask a question and correct me if I am wrong. What has changed the timeframe on this particular project is during some investigation of the overpass you found that it deteriorated more than you originally thought. Is that correct?

Ms. Murray answered that is definitely a component.

Chairman O'Neil asked and that is what moved the project up on the 10-year plan.

Ms. Murray answered it is definitely a component because to go in and repair a structure and try to hang it by the thread of its teeth until you come back doesn't make sense.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked would this project be done regardless. If the civic center had been voted down completely and the Riverwalk had been voted down completely, would this still be in the same priority spot?

Ms. Murray answered yes, it would.

Chairman O'Neil stated we are not going to get into a debate on the civic center and the Riverwalk.

Alderman Thibault stated I have one more thing to say. Mr. Broheart showed me a scenario for Turner Street and I want the State to know and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to know that I am very, very concerned about that because of the impact on the tax rate in the City. I think your scenario in Phase 2 is very adaptable and possible and certainly would save the tax base of the city of Manchester by as I look at it \$1 million plus. I would certainly urge you to look at that. The City also has to learn to pay for these things. That \$1 million would impact us.

Mr. Thomas replied the State is leaving the final decision of the alignment of Turner Street up to the City of Manchester. That is why I butted in and noted that pretty much what is shown up there for Turner Street to the south is most likely what we would be recommending and this upper alignment. We just have to get together with the Planning Department and put our heads together and write a letter to that effect. The decision is up to the City, not the State.

Alderman Shea asked the cost of this project is borne by the State but does the City assume 20% of the cost.

Ms. Murray answered no.

Mr. Thomas stated 100% of the Granite Street widening portion is the City's. The interchange and what is happening out on the Everett Turnpike is 100% State project, but Granite Street beyond where the ramps are located is 100% City.

Alderman Lopez asked besides the design work do we have any estimated costs.

Mr. Thomas answered the estimate that we have which is real preliminary is around \$14 million for the widening of Granite Street.

Chairman O'Neil stated the State has indicated that there part of the construction will take a couple of years if not three years. That would be the same for us?

Mr. Thomas replied I am not sure if we would require that amount of time, but certainly in the range of two years.

Alderman Wihby asked could you work at the same time.

Ms. Murray answered ideally because then you would have one contract or two contract and the contractors would be under the same thumb. That would be ideal. At the very least, if the City were able to proceed with the design then we would be sure that what we go out there and ultimately build fits with what is needed on Granite Street.

Chairman O'Neil stated the impact on the public would be best if we were working hand in hand with them during the construction phase.

Alderman Cashin asked, Mr. Thomas, the worst of all worlds, how long is this going to be closed down to traffic.

Mr. Thomas answered in the worst situation that would be if the State went in and did their construction, which would have a significant impact and it was mentioned three years and if the City for whatever reason wasn't able to get in there until say after the State finished the majority of their work, we are talking another two years on the part of the City.

Alderman Cashin asked for a total of five.

Mr. Thomas answered potentially.

Alderman Cashin asked if we do it together, what are we looking at.

Mr. Thomas answered approximately three years and hopefully a little less.

Chairman O'Neil thanked Ms. Murray, Mr. Broheart and Mr. Rogers for coming. I know that Bob Cashin is here and would appreciate it if you had time to speak with him. There is a little concern...we all met about a year ago and talked about this with some of the stakeholders on Granite Street but I think and update to some of them with regards to the timeline of when you believe the State will be proceeding with some of the property issues and that would be okay and if you don't have a chance to meet with them maybe you can set-up an appointment to meet with them at a later date. Again, on behalf of the City, I appreciate you folks coming down.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I just want to make sure of the timeline here because we have been talking about this Airport Access Road and it is years and years and years behind schedule, but you are guaranteeing us that this will be done on schedule.

Ms. Murray replied I could never guarantee that. We are looking at this project in a couple of innovative ways. Mr. Broheart has tried to be creative to keep us on schedule because truly we believe that you have a traffic problem there, especially in the peak periods trying to get off of those ramps. We don't like to see that traffic back up on the turnpike.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated Bob Barry tells me about all of these environmental impact studies, the Army Corps of Engineers, the eagles and everything. You have gone through all of that and that is not going to delay you?

Ms. Murray replied we have not gone through all of that. Mr. Broheart do you want to go through the schedule from this point.

Mr. Broheart stated right now we are awaiting word from the City as to what the solutions are to Allard Drive and Turner Street and I guess I am getting a pretty good idea of where we are headed, which is good to know. We need to finish the environmental document, which is a whole lot less of a document then you would have for the Airport Access, which is a new location and has other substantial impacts. Staying out of the river saves us a great deal of grief in terms of dealing with that issue. The other thing is minimizing impact to the high school property. That is another key element in this thing. Minimizing the impact to property owners and hopefully getting consensus with them is very helpful as well. We are not dealing with the Federal government on this project, which helps a lot.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked do you need to get the Army Corps of Engineers' approval.

Mr. Broheart answered they have indicated to us that they don't know if they need to give us approval or not. We are out of the river and our hope would be that we are out of their jurisdiction as well but that is their call. I don't really know what impact we have to wetlands or natural resources per say. I don't think we have any of any substance and for that reason I am hopeful that we can get through a lot of the environmental issues very quickly as opposed to what is happening with the Airport Access Road and a number of other projects.

Ms. Murray stated one of the biggest differences is the alternatives analysis that we had to go through with the Airport Access road. Do you cross the river here? Do you cross it there? How do you tie everything together? We are not faced with that here. The alternative analysis is that we don't do anything or we build a completed interchange. That makes a big difference.

Alderman Gatsas asked what are some of the big concerns about going into the river.

Mr. Broheart answered it is an important natural resource and the agencies will...it will be very difficult to go into the river. They have made it very clear that we will be into a whole other level of studies if we go into the river.

Chairman O'Neil stated we are talking specifically the West Side of the Merrimack River and not the East Side.

Alderman Gatsas replied that is a different side of the river because of the Riverwalk. Is that what you are telling me?

Chairman O'Neil responded I think that Mr. Thomas and his staff are well aware of the issues that need to be resolved and they are somewhat similar. I have all of the faith in the world that they will resolve them.

Alderman Cashin asked how long have you been waiting for the City to get back to you on this.

Mr. Broheart answered we sent the letter in the beginning of February.

Chairman O'Neil asked just to clarify, Mr. Broheart this is your project and any questions should be addressed to you on any issue.

Mr. Broheart replied that would be helpful.

Chairman O'Neil asked would it be easier to go through Mr. Thomas to get those questions to you. Mr. Thomas may have those answers and it could save a phone call.

Mr. Broheart answered either way. I answer phone calls directly from abutters and other officials and I certainly talk to Frank.

Alderman Wihby asked are we looking to take a vote today to send this to the full Board at the next meeting on which scenario to take.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Mr. Thomas, that is not before us tonight, correct.

Mr. Thomas answered quite frankly, if the CIP and the Aldermen that are here tonight are willing to give us a consensus of what alignment would be beneficial...

Alderman Cashin interjected what is your recommendation.

Mr. Thomas answered our recommendation is to go with the more westerly scheme from Foundary Street out to Granite Street. Again, it is the cheapest and it minimizes some of the impact and on the south side of Granite Street it would be this scheme, which minimizes the amount of property takings that would have to occur. In addition, one of the gentleman who owns a lot of the property over here did make contact with me and basically say that he would like us to try and minimize the acquisition over there.

Alderman Cashin asked when you are coming into Foundary Street is that right below Catholic Medical Center parking lot.

Mr. Thomas answered that is correct. I believe that Catholic Medical Center's parking lot is the gray area here. This is the daycare facility. This would be up behind the daycare facility.

Alderman Cashin stated that is a vacant space that is behind there.

Mr. Thomas replied that is correct.

Chairman O'Neil asked Mr. MacKenzie do you have any comments about this.

Mr. MacKenzie answered generally we would discuss this with the State, but in this case I concur with what Frank was saying. I think the alignment would solve several problems that were identified earlier and the State came through with an alternative that I thought was pretty good.

Chairman O'Neil asked so are you on the same page as Frank.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes, this is consistent. There was a meeting with the property owners. Several good ideas came out and this particular plan was kind of the result of that and I was comfortable with that.

Chairman O'Neil stated so City staff is on the same page and it would help get the process moving if there was a recommendation to the full Board.

Mr. Thomas replied yes. Again, if you give me a consensus I can follow it up with a letter.

Chairman O'Neil asked is there any opposition to that.

Alderman Thibault stated I have one more thing to bring up. I think what Mr. Thomas is saying and Mr. MacKenzie is agreeing to here is going to be much of a lesser impact to affordable housing in this area. You have to remember that this is an area that in the last six or seven years has come back, if you will, as good rental properties but they are in the lower and middle range and I would hate to see us lose too many of those. We need them in our area and I would like this Committee to look at that very carefully. Thank you.

Chairman O'Neil stated the motion I would like to have someone make tonight is that we ask the CIP staff and I know that based on the public hearing Mr. MacKenzie has been working on ways that we can possibly come up with to resolve some of the outstanding issues with regards to CIP, request staff to prepare for a meeting tomorrow night on how we can take care of some of these outstanding projects with the Granite Street project being the most significant one.

Alderman Wihby moved to ask the CIP staff to prepare information for the meeting tomorrow night on how we can take care of some of these outstanding projects, especially the Granite Street project. Alderman Lopez duly seconded the motion.

Chairman O'Neil called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Cashin abstaining.

Chairman O'Neil stated my recommendation would be that we recess the meeting at this point. I don't want to take up any other business until we resolve this Granite Street portion and hopefully we can resolve the CIP budget maybe as early as tomorrow night and get it to the full Board for a vote next week and the departments can get on their way. There was a letter from Intown. Mr. Davis, we are not going to take it up tonight. Our immediate business is to resolve this budget so that we can get on with business in the City.

Deputy Clerk Johnson asked the Chairman to clarify that he is recessing the meeting until tomorrow night.

Chairman O'Neil stated we are recessing the meeting until tomorrow night following the Civic Center meeting when we will take up the CIP budget, the resolution, try to address any of the outstanding concerns from the public hearing and hopefully resolve it tomorrow night where we can refer it to the full Board for next week.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated I would like to note that the meeting will be held in the Walter Stiles Conference Room because the Chamber is being used for a Senate Hearing tomorrow night.

Chairman O'Neil recessed the meeting.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee