

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 8, 2017

8:00 AM

2nd floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Linda Rubin, Chair
Christopher Brehme, Vice Chair
Thom Little
Don Hayes
Charles Redfern, via speaker telephone
Sam Hawkes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Will Schoefmann, Planner
Andrew Bohannon, Parks and Rec Director

Guest:

Charles Daloz, member of Agriculture
Commission

Members Not Present:

Emily Coey
Ed Guyot
Dillon Benik, Alternate

1) CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rubin called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM. Roll Call was conducted.

2) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: February 8, 2017

Mr. Little made a motion to accept the minutes with amendments submitted in writing by Mr. Little. It was seconded by Vice Chair Brehme.

Discussion ensued about the procedures that have been used in relation to developing a final version of the minutes. Mr. Little raised questions about the use that is being made of the written modifications to the draft minutes that he submits for each meeting.

In an effort to clarify procedures, Mr. Schoefmann offered to discuss the procedures for handling minutes with Mr. Little after the meeting. Chair Rubin agreed that was a good idea.

On a 5-1 vote, the motion to accept the minutes was approved. Mr. Redfern voted against the motion.

3) PROJECT UPDATES

Cheshire Rail Trail: Mr. Schoefmann reported on a public input meeting that was held on February 13th. The public comment period closed on February 28th. Alternatives and options arising out of public input are being compiled between the city and the consultant on the project. The goal is to present the finalized recommendations to a City Council committee. Mr. Schoefmann said that when he has the finalized recommendations, he will make them available to BPPAC.

NH Pass Signage: Mr. Schoefmann reported that the Monadnock Cycling Club (MCC) had donated some signage for the city to install at some state-approved sites in the rights-of-way along Routes 9, 10 and 12. The state Department of Transportation (DOT) has informed the city that the signs purchased by MCC were deemed to be uncompliant with federal standards. Three spots had been identified within the City of Keene rights-of-way to install two of the smaller signs and one of the larger signs, since federal highways standards don't necessarily apply to the city. The smaller signs will be installed along Maple Avenue, and a larger sign will be placed on upper Washington Street.

In addition, Mr. Schoefmann pointed out that the committee had received in its meeting packet a mock-up of newly approved signage that the state says the city can install. He said he is in contact with folks in Newport, NH, who have produced these signs through the state prison sign shop. He said he hoped to obtain a number of signs for installation at predetermined locations as part of this project. The 12 sites intended for installation are: two on Route 12 North, two on Route 12A, two on Route 9 headed toward Chesterfield and Brattleboro, two on Route 101 towards Marlboro, two on Route 10 North, and two for Route 9 headed toward Concord.

Mr. Schoefmann explained that as part of the agreement with NH DOT, the city will install and maintain signs within state rights-of-way.

The Cheshire Rail Trail Project – further discussion:

In response to a question from Mr. Hawkes about the nature of the public input on the project, Mr. Schoefmann said that he did not hear from anyone expressing outright opposition to the project. He said some people, concerned with improving the Ami Brown stretch of road, have issues with the speed of the mountain bikers on the hill. But he said that others couldn't wait for the Ami Brown to be improved. Overall, he said, there was a pretty balanced set of opinions. He said the results were being compiled; there were 22 responses to the online survey and at least 10 phone or in-person interviews.

Mr. Little said that the strongest position that the public seemed to take was that the original plan was to not have bicycles going under 9, 10, 12. He said he heard very strong statements from people who thought that was a requirement.

Mr. Schoefmann said that the initial project called for improved crossing and inbound and outbound facilities at the overpass of 9,10, 12, but the consultants determined that there was not sufficient space to accomplish those types of improvements, which would entail substantial costs. He said that as part of the scoping of this project, it was decided not to focus on this crossing because it could be a larger project unto itself. He said one individual in particular did urge the city to see what could be done to improve the safety there while also maintaining the intent of making the other improvements. He said that site would be reviewed again to see what if any improvements could be made within the budget.

Mr. Schoefmann said that it is part of West Street, which is one of BPPAC's priorities for the Master Plan.

On the issue of mountain bikers potentially speeding down the Ami Brown road, Vice Chair Brehme questioned whether there could be places that could be painted or signed to indicate a separation between cyclists and pedestrians.

Mr. Schoefmann said he thought the city could sign that segment, adding that he expected to learn more about the design details when he met with the consultants on Friday. He said that it is a fairly tight right-of-way there, so there are not a lot of options other than improving drainage, regrading, resurfacing, brush clearing and ensuring open lines of sight.

He said the next step involves moving forward on submittals, taking the proposed revisions and recommendations from consultants and the steering committee to the City Council for its consideration.

Chair Rubin said that she thought it would be a good idea to slow things down on the Ami Brown stretch of road.

South Bridge:

Mr. Little reported that the concrete deck is completed and most of the construction materials have been removed, except for a little bit of the form still left. He said that what's remaining is the fence, a chain link fence throughout the center section. He said it had been unclear to him why the lip was put on the concrete, but that now it is clear to him that it directs water down toward the drains on both sides, instead of coming down in a waterfall off the edge of the bridge onto Route 101. He said he hadn't seen anyone at the site for the last 2 ½ weeks.

Bridge Dedication:

Mr. Schoefmann said that he has an email out to the project manager at NH DOT to find out when the bridge project will be completed. He noted that the mayor has expressed interest in putting together a dedication ceremony. He said that as soon as he gets a date from NH DOT planning for the ceremony can commence, suggesting that the Mayor is hesitant to move forward with celebration plans until he gets the information from DO T.

In response to a question from Mr. Redfern about the makeup of the committee organizing the bridge dedication, Chair Rubin said she had sent some names – Mr. Little, Dr. Chair Brehme, and Mr. Hayes -- to the Mayor. Mr. Redfern said that he had volunteered to serve on that committee, and Chair Rubin said she would send another email with Mr. Redfern's name to the Mayor's office.

Mr. Little provided the committee with two lists containing names of people who might be interested in coming: the first lists people by last name, the second by group affiliation. Mr. Little invited committee members to email him with any additional names (including mailing address and/or email address) that BPPAC members feel should be added to the list. In addition, he pointed out yellow-highlighted names on the list indicated people for whom he needs contact information. He asked the committee to send additions to him by March 31st and he will incorporate them into the list.

Mr. Schoefmann said that since the month of May seems a likely time for the bridge dedication to occur, there had been thinking that the event might be coordinated with Bike-to-Work Day, on Friday, May 19th.

Master Plan:

Mr. Schoefmann said he expected to have a timeline for the goals of completion of certain sections of the Master Plan Timeline coming out probably on that day. He said his goal was to have the introduction for review next month. His timeline will specify when specific portions of the plan will be out to the committee for its review.

The Committee agreed to add an extra half-hour at the end of the regular business meeting for consideration of a given section of the Master Plan submission from Mr. Schoefmann. The committee agreed to begin that practice at the April meeting with its review of the draft introduction. Mr. Schoefmann said he would get it out to the committee in advance of the April meeting.

4) OLD BUSINESS - Public Outreach and Workshops

Earth Day:

Mr. Redfern mentioned the Earth Day event being planned by the Monadnock Co-op, which will be held near the Co-op, and asked if the committee wanted to have a booth there. He said that Pathways for Keene would have a booth, and that he would be willing to man that booth and one for BPPAC with materials such as the Master Plan in draft form and maps.

Mr. Schoefmann said he volunteered to man a table for Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transport (MAST) at the Earth Day event. He said that he would get the event details out to the committee for the event, which is scheduled to run from noon to 4:00, and then plan for coverage.

League of American Bicyclists Training:

Mr. Hawkes said a subcommittee of MAST is trying to get Keene to the silver level for the League of American Bicyclists. He said one of the important issues was to have someone from Keene undertake League training. The League has a three-day seminar that costs \$350 and provides the training necessary to certify a person to train others in bicycle use.

In response to a question from Mr. Hawkes about using Municipal Transportation Funds (MTF) to cover the cost of training, Mr. Schoefmann said he wasn't sure that it could come from the MTF. He added that if there was interest in the city supplementing the training cost, it would be an idea that could be brought up for discussion. Mr. Hawkes said it would be beneficial to have someone who is a city employee be trained.

Parks and Rec Director Bohannon said that his department doesn't have the money in its budget for this use. He said that if there was a funding source willing to assist, then his department would consider sending someone.

Mr. Hawkes said the Cycling Club is in the process of getting people to donate money for cycling projects, adding that the club might be able to get some businesses to contribute to the training. He said the training cost would include both the \$350 for the seminar plus costs related to travel and three-day stay. Mr. Hawkes said he would find out about upcoming training sessions and report back.

Municipal Transportation Funds:

Mr. Schoefmann said there were questions at a previous BPPAC meeting about how MTF had been allocated. He had a summary of the MTF allocations that he would email to the committee for discussion at the next meeting.

Agricultural Use of Bike and Pedestrian Path corridors – Charles Daloz:

Charles Daloz, member of Agricultural Commission, said he was not necessarily representing the Commission in an official capacity, but was visiting city committees to push the agricultural use of some of the city landscape. He said that the bike paths seem to be places with agricultural and aesthetic potential, where there could plantings, such as blueberries or fruit trees. He wanted the committee to know that there are people who would be interested in assisting BPPAC with establishing agricultural uses for land alongside pathways.

Mr. Schoefmann said that he thought this was an interesting form of amenity. Mr. Daloz said that North Hampton has a fruit tree project along its trail system. Mr. Hayes said he thought it was an idea worth considering. Mr. Schoefmann said that while connecting destinations along rail trails is discussed, having agriculture in the corridors along the trail would make the trails themselves become destinations. Mr. Schoefmann said he would look into documentation on the idea, using North Hampton as a starting point.

Bench Donation – Parks and Rec Director Bohannon:

Parks and Rec Director Bohannon said he had noticed in the minutes of the previous BPPAC meeting that there was discussion of a bench that was being donated to the City of Keene. He said it is not the role of BPPAC to accept donations and determine where the benches are placed, pointing out that those decisions are occurring on a staff level basis, working with the arts community.

Mr. Little said he didn't think the issue was the placement of the benches. He said for a long term bench, it didn't look like it was a long term entity. The immediate question was: Who is going to maintain this thing? It was a question of: Here is a resource that is on the trail – How long is it going to be there and who maintains it?

Mr. Bohannon said maintenance is the responsibility of the Parks and Rec Department.

In response to Mr. Little's observation that the bench looks fragile in the photograph, Mr. Bohannon suggested he go to the Rec Center and sit on it. Mr. Bohannon said the bench was well-crafted, meant to be a piece of art, was ergonomically designed, and was part of the Complete Streets Demonstration in September 2015.

Chair Rubin said she thought it would be a fine addition.

6) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Next meeting date –April 12, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Fleming, Minute-taker