

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday, July 13, 2016**

**8:00 AM**

**2nd floor Conference Room**

**Members Present:**

Linda Rubin, Chair  
Christopher Brehme, Vice Chair  
Thom Little  
Charles (Chuck) Redfern  
Emily Coey, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, Planning  
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works  
Andrew Bohannon, Parks, Recreation, and  
Facilities (arrived at 8:24 AM)

**Members Not Present:**

Don Hayes  
Ed Guyot

Chair Rubin called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM.

**1) Roll Call**

Roll call was conducted.

**2) Accept Minutes of June 8, 2016**

Mr. Little made a motion to approve the minutes with the following changes, which was seconded by Mr. Redfern.

- Page 2, first paragraph, change “are completed, as long as it is clear that they have been deleted from” to “are completed.”
- Page 5, paragraph 1), change “find locations within the urban compact” to “find locations.”

Mr. Little stated that he could not find a definition for the term “urban compact.” Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will find one and send it to the Minute-taker.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**3) Project Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there are really no updates to the projects, unless Mr. Little has updates regarding South Bridge. Mr. Little stated that he contacted New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) and there was no response this month. He continued that he drives by twice a day and looks at the site. That is what the summary is on his handout. The piles were driven at the south pier location. Now there is a mass of

rebar, about 6 to 8 feet up in the air. He assumes that the foundation has been poured and is holding the rebar up. It is moving forward.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if there were any questions about any of the projects. Chair Rubin thanked him for the link to the Mayor's Challenge report. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it summarizes the BPPAC's findings about the focus areas.

Mr. Little stated that at the previous meeting a BPPAC member pointed out a correction to make in the project updates table: October 28 is the end date, not start date, for South Bridge.

Mr. Little asked for the project updates table to somehow be put in the meeting minutes. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he can send the old and new versions of the table with the agenda packet if he wants.

Chair Rubin suggested they change the order of the agenda to address old and new business first.

#### **4) Old Business**

Mr. Redfern stated that regarding the Victoria St. extension, punching through the railbed, the Public Works Department has no plans for having a bridge to keep the functionality in place. He continued that they want to grade the trail down to an at-grade crossing. The purpose of the Victoria St. extension is to bring trucks that go to Roxbury or Water St., where there are businesses have truck traffic. It is not safe for children to have trucks that way so they want to divert the truck traffic past the rail bed and connect to Laurel St. where the old Kingsbury property is. It is in the CIP. It does not include costs for a bridge. It just includes a de-grading of the trail. Mr. Redfern continued that he is starting to campaign to either derail the Victoria St. extension project altogether or make sure they put a bridge there to maintain safety. A lot of work was put into the trail, with Federal funds, volunteers, and work from the City. They need to protect what they have accomplished as much as they put effort into future projects. He wants the BPPAC to consider this. They should put it on the project status sheets. It is already underway.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that it is in the CIP for FY22. Mr. Redfern replied that there is an effort to move it up. Mr. Schoefmann replied, probably in conjunction with the Marlboro St. redevelopment efforts.

Chair Rubin asked if it is already on the BPPAC's project list. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes. Mr. Redfern stated that he is not just asking for it to be in the priorities or status report. He asked how it is worded in the list. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it is project BE6, and read the description: "Establish a safe crossing at the proposed Victoria St. extension which would connect Victoria St. with Marlboro St., bisecting the existing Cheshire Rail Trail in turn. Options include at grade or overpass at the future crossing."

Mr. Redfern stated that he is asking for a motion to be sent to Public Works Department to identify the cost of creating an above-grade crossing at that location, if it were included

in the project, because right now it has been scoped out without it. He thinks that information was from Mr. Blomquist.

Chair Rubin stated that the BPPAC could talk about it at meetings, since it is on their list and not scheduled until FY22. Mr. Redfern replied no, at tomorrow's Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee meeting they will be discussing moving it to FY17 or FY18. Chair Rubin replied that they can put it on the agenda for the next meeting and get an update from Mr. Blomquist. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it seems important enough to put it on the project updates page. Mr. Redfern asked for Mr. Blomquist to come speak to them. Discussion continued. Mr. Little stated that he thinks this committee should review the plan for the project. Mr. Schoefmann replied that there is no plan yet.

Mr. Little stated that he identified seven projects on the list that would be very helpful to have a map for, including this Victoria St. extension project. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will put a map together and upload it to the Google Drive so the BPPAC can see where these projects are.

Chair Rubin stated that the BPPAC's presentation to the City Council will be September 21, 6:00 PM, at the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee. Mr. Schoefmann gave more information about it. Chair Rubin encouraged as many BPPAC members as possible to attend.

## **5) New Business**

### **a) Meeting Time & Day**

Chair Rubin asked about the August meeting time. Discussion ensued. Mr. Brehme stated that he will be gone until December. Chair Rubin stated that she is not available the second or third week of August, so they would have to appoint an ad hoc chair for any meeting scheduled during that time.

Mr. Bohannon arrived at 8:24 AM.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he will not be able to attend the BPPAC meetings for several months due to a conflict with another meeting he needs to attend. Discussion continued. The BPPAC decided to keep their normal schedule of the second Wednesday at 8:00 AM. Mr. Redfern suggested Ed Guyot be the ad hoc Chair in Chair Rubin's absence. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will check into the Robert's Rules of Order.

### **b) Public Outreach & Workshops**

Chair Rubin stated that they were talking about having some kind of event to get input from the community about which streets should be addressed for Complete Streets. She continued that it could be similar to the forum that was held to gather input for the future of Gilbo Ave., but about Complete Streets in general. Is it time to continue to build the public will for the types of changes they are talking about through the Complete Streets guidelines?

Mr. Redfern replied that there was a charrette put on by the Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) and the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC). He continued that the SWRPC has been dedicated to Complete Streets for the past two years in Keene. He wonders if they would be repeating the SWRPC's public outreach efforts. Or could the BPPAC dovetail with them? Chair Rubin replied that she is thinking more of the product of the Complete Streets guidelines. She continued that the resolution passed and the guidelines were completed. They need to build public will for these kinds of changes, so when projects go to the City Council, there are hopefully not as many people showing up to speak in opposition to items such as bike lanes.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he likes the idea. He continued that in the fall there will be a public forum for the Cheshire Rail Trail Phase III project. They could, at that time, share something in October or November. It would be good to have it in the fall, for the purposes of the CIP, because staff turns in their CIPs at the end of October/early November. So it will conjure up the thought process of what it could look like. Or, the BPPAC could create an announcement. Chair Rubin replied that it would be great to dovetail onto an event like that – maybe the BPPAC could have ten minutes at it.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if they want to gather input on what would be a good Complete Streets construction project. Chair Rubin replied that maybe they would ask the public how they would rate the projects that the BPPAC and staff have both ranked “high.” Mr. Schoefmann replied that there probably is not one solution; it is probably a multi-pronged approach, such as polling on social media, and actually going out and dovetailing on some events. They could have suggestion boxes at events. He wants to think about it more and they can brainstorm.

Mr. Bohannon stated that Greg Pregent, former BPPAC member, does a lot of video work. He continued that he might be able to do some interviews with BPPAC or MAST members and do a 5- to 10-minute video on what Complete Streets is. They could air it on Cheshire TV.

Chair Rubin suggested having “comprehensive public outreach campaign” added to their project list. She continued that she and Mr. Bohannon can talk offline about that September event. Other BPPAC members agreed with having this added to their project list. Mr. Schoefmann asked if it would fall under Complete Streets implementation as a specific action item. Chair Rubin replied yes.

#### **6) BPPAC Master Plan**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the next project for the BPPAC to rank is BE5 – CRT NH 101 Overpass/Stone Arch Bridge. He continued that this connects the Cheshire Rail Trail to the old Stone Arch Bridge. Chair Rubin asked whether BPPAC members rank it low, medium, or high.

Mr. Little stated that he ranks it “low” because of the volume it would be carrying. It would be one of the lightest-used structures they have. The question is what is on the other side, away from Keene. If it was tied into another community it would drive the

usage, and priority, up. But now it sort of duplicates what South Bridge is doing. Mr. Redfern replied that they are different trails. Mr. Little stated that if there was a way to go east from that location, and they have not really come up with a solution on how to do that, it would drive the usage up and, in his opinion, the priority.

Mr. Redfern stated that they are two separate trail systems –the Ashuelot River Trail that heads towards Swanzey and the Cheshire Rail Trail heading towards Troy. He does not see how heading east would occur. He understands that people want to see something go to Marlborough and beyond but those rail trails are chopped up due to private property. It is high priority to reclaim the trail by Eastern Ave where people are putting sheds, etc. He thinks this is a fairly high priority. Chair Rubin stated that she is not sure if what he is describing is what this project is. Mr. Little stated that the trail he just described is on the other side of Rt. 101 and they could get there without ever building a bridge. He continued that if there was any way to work in a high volume he thinks they could justify it. But this particular project is to build a bridge to go across Rt. 101 at that location and there is nothing he can see that is not already being serviced by South Bridge.

Mr. Brehme stated that he is leaning towards low priority due to cost and volume. He continued that if there is some way to connect the Cheshire Rail Trail to the Ashuelot Rail Trail south of Rt. 101, he sees big cost savings there. Mr. Bohannon stated that they have had multiple conversations with the snowmobile club – connecting the two trails is a major priority for them. The two trails go in similar locations but not exactly. They cannot find a way to connect them. He has also talked with the Town of Swanzey about this project and Swanzey Factory Rd. The Town wanted to apply for a TAP grant for this. The City said, not this year, because they are putting in an application for something else. If this project rises to a higher level and they want to explore the bridge connection, he thinks the Town would partner and that would be good for the application process.

Mr. Brehme asked about the bridge. Mr. Bohannon replied that the Town is looking to improve their side of the trail and they want the City to improve Keene's side. If this project is going to get done they will need two bridges, to make the whole thing successful. That is pretty significant. There could be a bridge from another town that the City could re-use for pedestrian purposes. If this was prioritized and the BPPAC wanted an ally, connecting the snowmobile club into the picture would work well.

Mr. Little stated that it would be nice to have two bridges but he does not see a requirement for two. The location crossing Rt. 101 is very narrow. South Bridge and North Bridge have a 200-foot span, which is not available at this location. South Bridge is the solution to bring snowmobiles to the other side of Rt. 101. Mr. Bohannon replied that the point the snowmobilers are trying to make is they cannot connect the Ashuelot Rail Trail to the Cheshire Rail Trail. That is the problem.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that they are talking about prioritizing a connection, whether it is at grade, a bridge, or a combination. He continued that he suggests they not get into the details now of what it would be. A bridge probably makes more sense, at least over Rt. 101, but he would not get too hung up right now on what it would be.

Chair Rubin stated that knowing that the Town supports this bumps the priority up for her. She continued that she might go to “medium” from “low.” Mr. Redfern stated that he will go to “medium.” He continued that if there is a funding source that pops up for a specific project, the project could get bumped up in priority. Ms. Coey voted “medium.” Mr. Brehme stated that he will bring his “low” up to “medium.”

Mr. Little asked where snowmobiles would be on the Keene side. He asked if the priority is going up because of snowmobile use. Mr. Bohannon replied that he heard that the priority is rising based on the potential for collaboration with Swanzey. Chair Rubin agreed and stated that to her it is about Swanzey’s partnership, not so much snowmobilers. Discussion continued. Chair Rubin asked what Mr. Little votes. Mr. Little replied he will change to “medium” if that is what everyone else wants.

Mr. Schoefmann read the description for the next project up for the BPPAC to rank - CRT Victoria St. Extension. Mr. Little stated that he requested a map of this so they know what they are actually talking about. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it is right near the old Kingsbury property lot. Mr. Little suggested deferring the vote on this. Chair Rubin agreed to skip over this and stated that she would appreciate seeing the map, too. Mr. Redfern asked if they can have that map for the next meeting. He continued that he is willing to wait for that if that is what the committee wants but he would vote “(extremely) high” today.

Mr. Little stated that “Victoria Street Extension” is not what Google Maps says it is. Mr. Schoefmann went to the white board and drew a map to show what the Victoria Street Extension is. He stated that he can do the map for next time if people need that. Chair Rubin asked if people are comfortable voting today. Ms. Coey stated that she understands the map on the board now, but she thinks if they are going to be discussing it so much next month, it makes sense to save the vote until then. Mr. Brehme agreed but stated that he thinks it would be “high” priority. Discussion continued, and Chair Rubin stated that she could vote today. She continued that she thinks they are beginning to discuss the “how,” whereas the “what” is having a safe crossing. The “how” is beyond whether the BPPAC sees this as highly important or not. She thinks they should vote on it. Ms. Coey replied that she already feels that it is “high,” so yes, they can vote. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they could always vote today and revisit it at the next meeting if necessary.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if it is for Victoria St. to continue on, or an extension of the Victoria St. Extension. Either way it will bisect the trail. Mr. Bohannon stated that he thought they would take Victoria St. and cut it right straight over. Mr. Schoefmann stated that this is a priority for redirecting the truck traffic in and out of an area that could use some help and maybe become a new production hub. He does not know if they have chosen one route or another but that is the area and the general vicinity of where the cut-through would take place.

Discussion continued about clarifying the location. Mr. Brehme stated that it is a semantics issue – this would be an extension of Victoria St., not an extension of the Victoria St. Extension.

Chair Rubin stated that from an economic development standpoint, this could be a new road, and what an amazing opportunity to make the road a Complete Street. To her this would be a high priority, if and when the funding is there. Mr. Redfern agreed. Mr. Redfern, Chair Rubin, Ms. Coey, and Mr. Brehme all voted “high.” Mr. Little asked if the words can be changed. He stated that he votes “high” if they are talking about Victoria St., and not Victoria St. Extension. Mr. Bohannon replied that if the words are going to be changed it has to go through Public Works Department, because this is a Public Works project that is in the CIP. Chair Rubin stated that it is an extension of Victoria St., nothing to do with the Victoria St. Extension, and she thinks it is fine as is. She asked how Mr. Little feels regardless of the name. Mr. Little voted “high.” He stated that he understands that Public Works Department is in charge of naming the project, but the project description is under Mr. Schoefmann’s control.

Mr. Schoefmann read the description for the next project – BE8, Marlboro Trail Line: “Project entails staff resources to examine feasibility and propose a project scope to likely include drainage, brush clearing, tree-cutting, grading, stone dust resurfacing, and possible property acquisition.” He described the location. It heads to and crosses Otter Brook. It would partially be in Roxbury. He does not know about property and is trying to map it so see about getting this recreational trail. It may be feasible, or not – no one really knows yet. It ends off at abutments where there is no longer a bridge that crosses Otter Brook. He could include this in the map for next time.

Chair Rubin stated that she would understand this better with a map. Mr. Redfern stated that this would be a project involving two towns. Citizens have asked for this, from Marlborough. He agrees with waiting for a map. He asked what staff rated it. Chair Rubin replied “low.” She continued that if they voted right now she would probably vote “low,” too, based on the BPPAC’s criteria. Mr. Redfern asked if he has the BPPAC’s permission to contact Marlborough Selectmen to see if they would support this project. Mr. Brehme replied that that sounds like a good next step, to see what their thinking is. Chair Rubin agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the Jonathan Daniels Trail II, BE9, would be sort of an extension off of the Appel Way Trail and it is probably worth mapping. He continued that it would involve, like the others, brush clearing, drainage, stone dust resurfacing, etc. It is sort of a single track woods trail that goes along Ashuelot River, from Appel Way.

Per Mr. Little’s request, Mr. Schoefmann explained the location more. Discussion ensued. Chair Rubin stated that she would rank this “low” if it does not connect to something significant. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it would be more of a recreational loop. Chair Rubin replied that if the only purpose is recreation she considers it low. Mr. Redfern agreed. Mr. Brehme asked if this could connect to the middle school. Mr. Schoefmann replied no. He continued that the Conservation Commission was not

amenable to a trail going through the swamp in that area. Discussion continued. Mr. Schoefmann stated that it is more of a concept of improving a river walk. Mr. Brehme and Ms. Coey voted “low.” Mr. Little asked clarifying questions about what project they are talking about. Chair Rubin described it as “improving a goat path to nowhere.”

Mr. Little asked how this relates to the Jonathan Daniels Phase II project that the City Council said no to. Mr. Schoefmann replied that this is what it has evolved to. Mr. Little stated that in the past they were told the study of options was needed in order to support the grant. Mr. Schoefmann replied that then they got funding for one of the options, and it whittled it down to Court St. or this. Mr. Little expressed confusion about the project changes. Chair Rubin asked if he votes “low” or needs more information. Mr. Schoefmann asked if he needs the map. Mr. Little replied yes. Chair Rubin stated that she thinks it would be good to reach out to the land owners for their thoughts. She continued that they are talking about improving a trail, to take them from point A to point B, so being more specific about that in the project description seems to be what Mr. Little is saying.

Mr. Little stated that BE16, 24, and 25, and 26 are the others he is having trouble visualizing. Chair Rubin asked if Mr. Little can review those offline with Mr. Schoefmann. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he is planning on mapping all of them.

Chair Rubin asked if they want to discuss this project more right now or hold off. Consensus was to hold off.

Mr. Schoefmann read the description for a new addition to the list, the development of a Trail Maintenance Plan. Chair Rubin stated that she votes “high.” Mr. Brehme agreed, as did Ms. Coey, Mr. Redfern, and Mr. Little.

Mr. Schoefmann read the project description for BE10, Connections and Access: “Inventory of existing and potential access points to the trail system. The resulting inventory will help guide and increase access to the system.” He stated that he envisions an analysis project with a summary report. Chair Rubin stated that it would help them all with the connectivity issue.

Mr. Little asked if the product is a report. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes. Mr. Little asked if this is what Jay Kahn was talking about a few meetings back. Mr. Schoefmann replied sort of, but he was more concerned about getting a sidewalk in a specific place. Mr. Little suggested it be augmented slightly to make some points there. Mr. Schoefmann asked if he means specifically referring to the sidewalk system. Mr. Little replied yes. He continued that maybe it could be an annual report, not just a single report. He asked if that would be in keeping with what Mr. Kahn was suggesting. Chair Rubin replied that she does not think it would change that much in just a year. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that BE12, Baseline Data Collection, is a more comprehensive analysis project that would seek to map and inventory all of the sidewalks and the entire trail system. That might be more of a living, breathing report, whereas the access points might be more static. Mr. Brehme suggested that BE11 would be a good student project. The second one would be



more intensive but students could probably work on that, too. Mr. Little stated that he votes “low-medium” for both.

Chair Rubin stated that she is trying to figure out what the BPPAC would do with the information. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it is a stepping off point for things like wayfinding. They could see if there are low-developed access points that need to be more formalized, for example. He continued that it is more of a planning tool. Mr. Redfern and Mr. Brehme spoke of the benefits of it as well. Mr. Redfern stated that he thinks it is not just Mr. Kahn wanting to emphasize accessibility of the trail system; he thinks staff was thinking about that, too. Chair Rubin stated that rather than an “inventory,” she would like to see recommendations on access points based on gaps in accessibility to the trail, for example. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it is chicken vs. egg – it is hard to make those determinations without having the data first. Chair Rubin asked if he means there is inherent analysis in this inventory. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes.

Mr. Redfern stated that Mr. Brehme has offered to have his students help with this and he thinks that is a great opportunity to jump on. He continued that he ranks this “high.” Mr. Schoefmann agreed with Mr. Redfern that it is sort of low-hanging fruit. Chair Rubin asked if they can add to the description that it is inventorying existing access points and making recommendations for potential access points, so there is more meat to the project. If so, she would rate it “high.” Ms. Coey rated “high” and Mr. Brehme agreed to raise his vote from “low” to “high.” Chair Rubin stated that it would be identifying gaps and improving the system. Ms. Coey replied that it is all in line with the wayfinding signs, which is why she ranks it “high.” Mr. Schoefmann replied that that is how he conceptualized it – utilizing it to help make recommendations. Chair Rubin asked if he can add to the description. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes. Chair Rubin asked for Mr. Little’s vote. Mr. Little agreed to vote “high.”

#### **7) Adjournment**

Chair Rubin adjourned the meeting at 9:36 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker