

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

8:30 am

2nd Floor Conference Rm, City Hall

Members Present:

Greg Pregent, Chair
Thom Little
Charles (Chuck) Redfern
Andrew McCarron (arrived at 8:34 AM)
Christopher Brehme

Members Not Present:

Linda Rubin, Vice Chair
James Duffy, Councilor

Staff Present:

William Shoefmann, Planning

Others Present:

Mari Brunner, Southwest Regional
Planning Commission (SWRPC)
Tara Germond, SWRPC
Don Hayes, Monadnock Cycling Club

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Pregent called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. Roll call was conducted.

2. Approval of Minutes – Regular meeting on April 8, 2015, and Master Plan Meeting on March 30, 2015

Mr. Little submitted corrections to the April 8 minutes, in writing, as follows:

Page 2, under **A) Roundhouse T Phase II**, change "...final design papers this work" to "...final design papers this week."

Page 3, change this:

"Discussion continued about the particulars of the project and the BPPAC's role and purview. Chair Pregent stated that they want to ensure they do not have to rely on secondary funding and he sees no problem with looking at constraints that may cause that problem. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will get a copy of the bid documents.

B) Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II

Mr. Little stated that the extra \$500,000 was for engineering work for a change that had to be done because of Eversource Energy (formerly Public Service of New Hampshire) changes that were required. He continued that it was a last minute thing that had to be taken care of. Mr. Blomquist reported that the project is scheduled to start in the next 30 days or so. He continued that that everything is on track. Mr. Little stated that he thought the increase in cost was due to

the timing – it was a 90-day contract to be done at the end of the year and he heard that meant they would have to pay people overtime.”

To the following:

“Discussion continued about the particulars of the project and the BPPAC’s role and purview. Chair Pregent stated that they want to ensure they do not have to rely on secondary funding and he sees no problem with looking at constraints that may cause that problem. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will get a copy of the bid documents.

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Mr. Little made a motion to approve the April 8, 2015 minutes as amended. Mr. Redfern seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 4 to 0.

Mr. Little made a motion to approve the Master Plan minutes of March 30, 2015. Mr. Redfern seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 4 to 0.

3. Education and Outreach

Mr. Redern reported that Pathways for Keene (PFK) and the keenepaths.com entity had an exhibit at the New Hampshire Tourism event and it was very successful. He continued that they educated many people about the trails. They came to realize it is now a multi-million dollar infrastructure.

Mr. McCarron arrived at 8:34 AM.

Mr. Redfern continued that Eversource Energy will be giving a grant of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to the City for the Cheshire Rail Trail Park Avenue Loop. It has not been awarded yet but the people at the local office feel that it has a good chance.

Chair Pregent reported that PFK had a table at the Earth Day event. He continued that Mr. Redfern was there. Mr. Redfern added that City Councilor Janis Manwaring was there, too.

Chair Pregent stated that this is Bike To Work Week. He continued that the Monadnock Region Transportation Management Association (MRTMA) is doing a contest where you can take a photo of yourself riding your bike and win a prize. Ms. Germond replied that it is actually Healthy Monadnock doing that.

Mr. Schoefmann passed around the proclamation Mayor Lane wrote for Bike To Work Week. Chair Pregent encouraged people to bicycle and spoke of how the trails are in good shape.

4. Project Updates

a) Round House T Phase II

Mr. Schoefmann reported that Mr. Blomquist gave him an update: no bids were received for this project during the window, so they will re-advertise. He continued that City Engineer Jim Donison was calling contractors the City knows trying to figure out what they might alter in the next bid specifications. May 29 is the new date for opening of the bids. This is okay with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). Construction would be about July to November if there is an accepted bid.

Discussion ensued as to why there may have been no bids and how to get bids. BPPAC members gave suggestions on how and where to advertise the project. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will talk with Mr. Donsion. Discussion ensued about what happens when a project only receives one bid. Mr. Schoefmann stated that if the one bid received is within budget, responsible, meets the specs, etc., the City tends to accept it. Mr. Little asked questions about that and stated that other government agencies do not award if they only get one bid.

b) Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II

Mr. Schoefmann reported that Mr. Blomquist says construction will start up again sometime this month. It needs brush cleaning and drainage along the sides. Mr. Little stated that he was out there recently and the work done last fall seems very stable. He asked who takes responsibility for the asphalt that has been chewed up by snowmobilers. Mr. Schoefmann replied the City. Mr. Little suggested that the snowmobilers help with funding for that. Discussion ensued. Mr. Redfern stated that when this happens, Public Works re-tars the section instead of doing an elaborate re-surfacing of the entire street.

c) Jonathan Daniels Trail

Mr. Schoefmann reported that there is no status change. He continued that they are looking for funding for the study. They are looking at two different routes now, along Route 12 North and along the Ashuelot River and Tenant Swamp. This month or next they will be getting input from the Conservation Commission regarding the area of Tenant Swamp, to see if they have any concerns regarding sensitive habitats and the potential of a trail there.

Mr. Redfern stated that he learned from Mr. Bohannon that his proposed CIP project of resurfacing the Jonathan Daniels Trail in the Ashuelot River Park area was not approved. He asked why. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he can get more information from Mr. Bohannon about that. Mr. Redfern replied that he wonders if the BPPAC can brainstorm with staff to see how they could attempt this again, or help in some way.

d) Cheshire Rail Trail – Park Ave Loop

Chair Pregent asked about the staff walk. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they found a number of delineating markers for the right-of-way. He continued that it will still require surveying and preliminary engineering, but it looks very feasible. The expected work that they anticipate in the

grant application still remains accurate. Once they receive a letter from NHDOT saying they have approval from the Governor and Council, they will meet with NHDOT and move forward.

e) South Bridge

Chair Pregent stated that he heard from Mr. Blomquist that there are encouraging signs for the bridge in 2016, and that the State might have funds. Discussion ensued. Mr. Redfern spoke of potential competition with other communities for funding for their projects. Mr. Little stated that South Bridge is a court-mandated project that will be funded 100% by NHDOT. He continued that any organization in Keene that thinks the bridge is a good idea should send a letter to NHDOT – that cannot hurt. But the City is not competing with anyone for these funds. Mr. Redfern replied that the court decision says “if funding is available/feasible,” which may be an escape clause for the State. He continued that he personally intends to not broadcast the possible availability of these funds, in case other communities try to compete for them.

f) Bike Racks

Ms. Brunner and Ms. Germond reported that Rack It Up has been going very well and there is lots of interest in the program. They have ordered 31 bike racks so far and are about to order a second batch, once they reach a certain amount to get the bulk purchasing discount. They hope the first round will be delivered towards the end of June or beginning of July. At Chair Pregent’s request, Ms. Brunner and Ms. Germond named some of the local businesses and locations where the bike racks will be. They continued that they are also promoting Bicycle Benefits, the program to incentivize biking to businesses by offering rewards to people for doing so. They explained more about how it works. There are businesses who want to participate.

Chair Pregent asked if they are incorporating Bicycle Benefits at the same time as Rack It Up. Ms. Brunner replied yes, if more bike racks are requested than they can provide, they will use criteria to determine who gets the racks, and offering Bicycle Benefits is one of the criteria. Ms. Germond spoke of the need to raise awareness about the program because many people now do not know about it.

Mr. Redfern stated that the racks from last year’s Rack It Up pilot program do not seem to be up yet. Ms. Brunner replied that some are, some are not. She continued that the program does not cover the cost of installation, which can be \$100 to \$200 per rack, and the companies are responsible for that. Ms. Germond added that they asked all the businesses to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) saying that they will install the racks.

Mr. Brehme asked if the racks are designated somehow as Rack It Up, such as painted a certain color. Ms. Brunner replied that they are all black. She passed around a sticker that they will put on the racks to help with recognition.

g) Planning Projects

Mr. Schoefmann reported that Ms. Brunner, Ms. Germond, and City staff have been meeting about Complete Streets. Ms. Germond replied that they presented to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee and the City Council, and the City Council approved the work of SWRPC and City staff to develop a Complete Streets policy. She continued that tomorrow they meet to finalize the categories of streets and to define standards or

elements to be considered whenever the City is working in the right-of-way (e.g. sidewalk widths, storm water management, or pavement markings). They are working on a guidance document for the City and the public, and a map delineating where the different types of streets are within the City. They are working to finalize a location for a demonstration event in late August or early September. It is a fun opportunity to transform a street for a day so people can see what Complete Streets looks like. Ms. Germond gave more details about the event.

Ms. Brunner stated that they are gathering signatures for a petition in support of Complete Streets. They started gathering signatures at Earth Day and Cool Wheels and are looking for more events. Ms. Germond added that they are meeting with PFK next week.

Mr. Schoefmann reported that the Master Plan subcommittee was unable to meet and they will have to reschedule it. He continued that he has heard that a morning meeting would work better for folks. Discussion ensued. Chair Pregent agreed with trying for a morning. He stated that if that does not work they might have to use BPPAC meeting time. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the plan is to go through and prioritize some strategies and activities they had under each goal.

Mr. Schoefmann reported that in conjunction with the Parks & Recreation Department there have been design concepts happening regarding Carpenter Street Field. He continued that there is an unofficial path from Railroad Street to the park and there are ideas about connections and improvements.

Chair Pregent stated that he learned that Railroad Street was going to be made into a dead end street. Mr. Schoefmann replied that the bridge is being discontinued. Chair Pregent asked if it will still be open to bicycles and pedestrians. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes. Mr. Redfern stated that they also talked about improving connections from Carpenter Street Field to the Cheshire Rail Trail. Chair Pregent asked if the idea is to coordinate the Carpenter Street Field ideas with the construction happening on Railroad Street. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he would say they are separate, but the idea is to be wrapped up with some of the design ideas by next month.

Chair Pregent asked if there is an update about the student housing at the Mills project and the trail connection. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he thinks they are good with the trail connection. He continued that Ms. Germond and Ms. Brunner were interested in finding out if there were bike racks and there seems to be three so he thinks the trail connection will go ahead.

Mr. Little asked when the drop dead date for changes is, sometime in June, for the Roundhouse T Phase II project. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he does not know off the top of his head, but the new schedule was given the go-ahead by NHDOT. He continued that he will find out more details and let Mr. Little know.

5. Maintenance

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he did not get an update from Mr. Bohannon. He asked if anyone has noticed anything. Chair Pregent replied that he saw two people picking up trash by the side of the trail by North Bridge. He stopped and thanked them. Don Hayes replied that they are from the Kiwanis Club.

Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee meeting minutes,
May 13, 2015

Mr. Redfern spoke of potholes in the old “Industrial Heritage Trail” area in the Cheshire Rail Trail. Chair Pregent stated that he noticed a missing bench on the Victoria Street side. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will check it out.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Bohannon will have crews out doing brush clearing and mowing soon. He continued that he will try and find out a schedule, if that is important for folks. Chair Pregent spoke of broken glass on either side of North Bridge. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will mention it to Mr. Bohannon and the Highway Division. Mr. Little asked if there is a trash container on either side of the bridge. He continued that he notices that people pick up trash when they know there is a container. That might help the glass problem as well.

6. Old Business

Ms. Germond asked if there is an update on the Mayor’s Challenge. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, he and Michele Chalice completed the initial assessment and will be getting feedback on engineering, on standards and guides they are using, and send that to the Mayor once they have some feedback. They will see what they can do to start it up and delegate some tasks. Ms. Germond replied that SWRPC might be able to help; it falls under their purview. Mr. Schoefmann replied that would be great.

7. New Business

Mr. Redfern welcomed Don Hayes from the Monadnock Cycling Club and asked if he is interested in being an alternate member. Mr. Hayes replied yes; he will talk to the Mayor. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will talk with the City Clerk, too.

8. Adjournment – Next Meeting Date – June 17, 2015

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker

Additional edits by
Will Schoefmann, Mapping Technician