

ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday November 10, 2015 8:00 AM City Hall, Second Floor Conference Room

Members Present

Thom Little
Andy McCarron
Charles Redfern
Don Hayes (Arrived at 8:15)
Christopher Brehme

Staff Present

Tara Germond, Planner

Members Not Present

Greg Pregent, Chair
Linda Rubin, Vice-Chair
James Duffy, Councilor

Others Present**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, Mr. Little was selected as Acting-Chair for the meeting. Acting-Chair Little called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Accept September 9, 2015 Minutes

Mr. Little made a motion to accept the minutes of September 9, 2015. Mr. Redfern seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3) Project Updates - see attached table

Mr. Little referred the Committee to the updated table and updates that are marked in red. Mr. Redfern asked where the name "East Bridge" originated and stated that this is part of the Cheshire Rail Trail. Mr. Little replied that the objective was to get a short name to identify the bridge. He continued, stating that Mr. Redfern is correct in stating that this part of the trail goes south. Mr. Redfern stated that the Committee should have a say in the name of these trails and projects. Mr. Little stated that this suggestion can be deleted from the agenda. He continued, stating that the other suggestion refers to an asphalt path from South Bridge to the completed

asphalt section of the Ashuelot Rail Trail. Mr. Brehme stated that there will only be asphalt on one side of the bridge. The Committee accepted these suggestions.

a) Roundhouse T Phase II

Ms. Germond noted that she is covering for William Shoefmann who is at a workshop. She continued, stating that Roundhouse T has been completed and a trail opening ceremony will occur. Mr. Little passed around a picture of the trail and noted a hazardous diagonal cable running along it. He continued, stating that there is no sign stating that it is a dead end and he witnessed several cars having to turn around on Emerald Street. Mr. Little noted that there used to be a sign. He continued, stating that more signs are needed on Island Street explaining where the trail path is located. Mr. Little asked if the cross over Island Street will remain. Mr. Little noted that he has not seen the flashing signs working either. Mr. Hayes stated that he has seen these signs work on Island Street.

Mr. Little asked if the first stop will stay. Ms. Germond noted that this is the stop at the north crossing and stated that this will remain. Ms. Germond stated that it is a known cross walk. Mr. Little stated that appropriate signage is necessary for the trail.

Mr. Hayes noted that the posts on the trail head on Island Street are very narrow as well. Ms. Germond noted this concern.

Mr. Redfern commented on the picture handed out by Mr. Little and suggested extending the cable and replanting it further down. Mr. Little stated that the pole is fragile and is unsure about the support. He continued, stating that the cable should be wrapped in orange tape at least. Mr. McCarron stated that the Committee can state that this is a concern and allow others to determine safety procedures.

b) Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II

Ms. Germond asked if drainage is still an issue. Mr. Little stated he does not believe the issue has been resolved. He continued, stating that he thought a drainage pipe would be installed. Mr. Little stated that the ditch remains wet and will increase moisture. Mr. Redfern agreed. Mr. Hayes asked if Andy Bohannon walked the trail. Ms. Germond stated that she will follow up with him on this action item. Mr. Hayes noted that Kurt Blomquist was asked to walk the trail as well.

c) Jonathan Daniels Trail

Ms. Germond stated that this project has made it into the city's capital improvement program but up to City Council to make a final decision. Mr. Little stated that there is a very high budget to do a study on this and is a requirement to get the project moving forward. Mr. Little suggested figuring out the cheapest option to continue the project. Mr. Brehme asked if there have been comparable studies done. Mr. Little replied, yes.

Mr. Little stated that North Bridge is an example where a pilot design project occurred before funding. Mr. Brehme stated that the Jonathan Daniels Trail is more comparable to the Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II. He continued, stating that it would be interesting to know the amount of money the city typically spends on a project like this.

Mr. McCarron stated that he believed the project focused on the continuation of the Jonathan Daniels Trail up to the middle school. Mr. Little stated that the study was to review the four ways to make that continuation possible. He continued, stating that this was then decreased to three possible paths due to the homeless population in that area by the river. Mr. Brehme stated that there seems to be an overlap between this project and the Park Avenue Loop project as well. Mr. Little stated that the goal was to connect the middle school to the swimming pool at Wheelock Park. He continued, stating that this would be very safe and the Park Avenue project would not focus on this.

Mr. Little asked if \$20,000 should be spent for the study to get into the CIP. Mr. Redfern stated that it is currently in the CIP. Ms. Germond confirmed this statement and stated that it is past the point of acting on. Mr. Brehme stated concern that if significant changes are confirmed along Park Avenue this would make of the majority of the route to the middle school and money would be wasted for an alternative and additional project. Mr. McCarron stated that the rails are still important and people like to have loops for recreational use. Mr. Hayes stated that the study would answer a lot of questions.

d) Cheshire Rail Trail/ Park Avenue Loop

Mr. Little stated that this deals with federal money and there is a lot of overhead with it. Mr. Little stated that he could see an assessment of topographical maps showing the full length and where to develop bike lanes. Mr. Little suggested having a smaller project for the Park Avenue portion.

Ms. Germond stated that the Department of Transportation has allowed a bid selection and negotiations with consultants once selected. She continued, stating that the challenge is that the funding will not be available until December. Ms. Germond stated that the process can begin but it will not be official until December of 2015. She continued, stating that this process has started. Mr. Little stated that the Committee should decide if an additional project is needed for Park Avenue improvements. Mr. Redfern stated that the key words are: if needed. He continued, stating that it would be premature to raise the possibility of a second project. Mr. Redfern stated that the Park Avenue project has various components besides the rail trail. He continued, stating that the Committee can wait until January when a consultant is determined.

e) South Bridge

Ms. Germond stated that there was a request for lights added to the bridge. She continued, stating that the Department of Transportation is already going out to bid. Ms. Germond noted that the

request for lighting was on record at the City Council and should be considered. Mr. Little asked if this means the city will not construct lighting. Ms. Germond replied, yes. Mr. Redfern stated that a conduit was discussed and could be negotiated with the awarded bidder. Mr. Little stated that the bids were open on the 29th of the month. He continued stating that the city should contact DOT and the letter in discussion has been talked about for several months. Mr. Little asked why the letter referring to lighting for the bridge is not being sent. He continued, stating that if this is too expensive, conduits can be added lights in the future. Ms. Germond stated that a letter was drafted and is currently awaiting signatures. Mr. Little noted that the Vice-President of Keene State College agrees with the lighting for games as well. Ms. Germond stated that she will let staff know that the letter should still be sent out.

Mr. Redfern made a motion for City Staff to modify the drafted letter by bringing it up to date and carry out the intent of this committee on this information. Mr. Little seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Hayes suggested solar lighting be installed. Mr. McCarron stated that the Committee should add trail lighting to the agenda. Ms. Germond stated that the city owns North Bridge and the state owns South Bridge. Mr. Little stated that this point was discussed at the public forum. Mr. Little stated that the design and the award are still unknown. Ms. Germond confirmed.

Mr. Little stated that on question raised was what the surface would be for the bridge. He continued, stating that concrete material was decided so snow mobiles are allowed. Mr. Little asked when the city of Keene will see a design from DOT for the bridge. Ms. Germond stated that she will ask Mr. Shoefmann. Mr. Redfern stated that the bid prices should be compared to the budgeted price as well. Mr. Hayes stated that this is all state funding. Mr. Redfern stated that the city of Keene does not have the funding if there is a shortfall from the state. Mr. Little stated that when the Bypass Project was terminated it went to court and stated that DOT will build the bridge without funding from Keene. He continued, stating that if bids came back over the budget he is unsure what the status on the project would be.

Mr. Little stated that he would appreciate knowing the design of the bridge. Mr. Redfern stated that this is public information and we should know if it fits in the budget. Mr. Little noted that there has been little updating to the website. Ms. Germond stated that she is unsure how much information is available but she will check.

f) Bike racks

Ms. Germond stated that Mr. Shoefmann is looking into covered bike racks for the winter.

g) Complete Streets

Ms. Germond stated that she will be presenting to the MSFI Committee tonight and can choose to vote tonight for City Council approval.

h) Signage

Ms. Germond stated that there is no update at this time.

Mr. Little wondered if the solar power crossing signs would be appropriate for the Cheshire Rail Trail crossing on Main Street? He continued, stating people have mentioned that this area on School Street is dangerous. Mr. Hayes stated that this solar power crossing would be ideal in many locations but is expensive. Ms. Germond stated that each one is \$20,000. Mr. Little stated that if it is appropriate on Roundhouse T then why not on Main Street.

4) BPPAC Master Plan - Review Priorities List - Discussion

Ms. Germond stated that Mr. Shoefmann had given handouts to the Committee in reference to potential projects and priorities for the master plan. She continued, stating that the Committee should list potential projects that are of interest and prioritization can occur later.

Ms. Germond state that projects discussed include: creating a safer connection through Colony Mill at Island Street, safer crossings on Main Street, School Street and Water Street, signs on the rail trail as well as advertising this to outsiders, and encouraging more use of the trail.

Ms. Germond stated that there are continuing projects as well to discuss including the completion of rail trails from city limits as well as the connection from East Bridge. Mr. Little stated that the original purpose was to connect the East Bridge to the city limit but it actually goes south into Swanzey. He continued, stating that the Keene could consider working with Swanzey on this item. Mr. Little stated that this is a south bound connection and the Committee had previously talked about going east. He continued, stating that there may be room for two projects. Mr. Little stated that this is a way to bring communities together and have a regional approach to the trails. He continued, stating that this would create two projects, one would be to continue to city limits southbound and another would branch out eastbound.

Mr. McCarron stated that he has always viewed this as two projects. He continued, stating that one connects the Stone Arch Bridge to the Cheshire Rail Trail which is a very pretty path and the other creates a path going east- possibly north of Route 101. Mr. McCarron stated that there are some old trails on the path from Main Street to the Otter Brook area but they are in rough condition. Mr. Little stated that the area is narrow and adding a 200 foot opening would be tough.

Mr. Brehme commented on extending the trail south and stated that he has noticed trail development in Winchendon as well. Mr. Redfern stated that this trail goes from Troy to Winchendon, Massachusetts. Ms. Germond stated that she recently worked with Swanzey and they are very invested in their trail network. She continued, stating that the town would be happy to partner with Keene. Mr. Little stated that there is a drainage problem on the connection from Marlborough Street to East Bridge but the rest of the trail is fine. Mr. Hayes stated that the

Committee should focus on the support and connection with other communities. Ms. Germond stated that Swanzev has received funding as well.

Mr. Brehme stated that there is a lot of pedestrian traffic along West Street and wonders how much property toward the back of Hannaford's is city property. He continued, asking if a trail could be added toward this back area. Ms. Germond stated that there is an existing unofficial trail. Mr. Brehme stated that the trail is unkempt. Mr. Redfern stated that it could be a short trail and connect with the Jonathan Daniels Trail. Mr. Brehme suggested lighting in the area as well. Mr. McCarron stated that if this trail loops around the plaza, it can connect to the existing rail trail.

Ms. Germond asked if West Street is an area to focus on. Mr. Redfern stated that there are too many curb cuts to make it safe. He continued, stating that he is in favor of a trail behind the plaza. Mr. Little asked why people would not use the Cheshire Rail Trail instead. He continued, stating that there is also a homeless population in the area as well. Mr. Brehme stated that it is human behavior to take short cuts. Mr. Redfern stated that West Street is a major barrier.

5) Old Business

Mr. Redfern mentioned the maps that were requested for the kiosks around the city. He continued, stating that Mr. Bohannon had mentioned that he will work on this item. Mr. Redfern stated that he would like to know when this item will occur. He continued, stating that Mr. Shoefmann is able to create the maps in a reasonable period of time. Ms. Germond stated that the process is a bit more involved but she will bring this item up with Mr. Bohannon

Mr. Hayes stated that the Cycling Club purchased signage for the road and is wondering what the status is. Ms. Germond stated that the *Share the Roads* signs have been purchased and the city is decided where to put them. She continued, stated that she will get an update.

Mr. Brehm asked about the North and South Bridge signs to for promotion of the bridges. He continued stating that these would help provide knowledge to tourists and commuters. Mr. Redfern suggested having the Rail Trail name on the bridge so people know the use. Mr. Little suggested a sign stating: Cheshire Rail Trail North. Mr. Brehme stated something generic would work as well.

Mr. Redfern made a motion that the city considers placing an identification sign on each side of each bridge to identify it as a Cheshire Rail Trail on the North Bridge and Ashuelot Rail Trail on the South Bridge and include all future bridges. Mr. Brehme seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Little brought up discussion for what to place on the signs. Mr. McCarron suggested leaving it as Cheshire Rail Trail to promote the trail and not the bridge. This will also be easy for replacement.

Mr. Little suggested putting Cheshire Rail Trail South and Cheshire Rail Trail North on the signs. Mr. Redfern stated that it would confuse people to mark the signs in this way and agreed that it should stay generic.

6) New Business

Mr. Redfern stated that the 6 year transportation bill has passed which includes a component for active modes of transportation, He continued, stating there is money available for future projects and infrastructure.

Mr. McCarron stated that he is excited that the Round House T is completed but the Committee should keep in mind that people ride straight through and would like to suggest a project to create a straight line headed west through Colony Mill. He continued, stating that people will continue to use this path and the Committee should push for it. Mr. Brehme agreed and stated that it is currently a safety issue. Mr. McCarron stated that this would create a nice loop. Mr. McCarron stated that the path currently runs through a parking lot and something safer needs to be created. He continued, stating that you cannot bring a bike up to speed at that point and on Island Street there are several entrances for the parking lot which does not allow a cycle to go fast. Ms. Germond stated that this suggestion ties into the Master Plan as well.

7) Adjournment

Acting-Chair Little adjourned the meeting at 9:32 AM.

Next meeting date – December 9, 2015

Respectfully submitted by:

Lana Bluege, Minute-taker

November 10, 2015