

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 11, 2017

8:00 AM

**City Hall, Second Floor Conference
Room**

Members Present:

Linda Rubin, Chair
Chris Brehme, Vice Chair
Thom Little, Member
Charles Redfern, Member
Sam Hawkes, Alternate
Don Hayes, Member
Drew Bryenton, Guest

Staff Present:

Will Schoefman, Staff

Members Not Present:

Dylan Benik, Alternate
Ed Guyot

1) Roll Call and accept September 13, 2017 Minutes

Mr. Little motioned to accept September minutes as submitted, Mr. Redfern seconded and it was passed by unanimous vote.

2) Project Updates (Note: BPPAC Master Plan Documents available to committee members on google drive)

Master Plan- Mr. Schoefman pointed members to a spreadsheet in the back of their packets. He said he brought the Master Plan with him today and he be uploading it for members once he gets more details under the Funding and Collaboration section which will round up the Introduction. He said he will be focusing on the Master Plan again and he is open to comments whenever they arise and significant changes can be discussed at BPPAC meetings.

NH Pass Signage- Mr. Schoefman said they put up old noncompliant signs in town- one on Washington Street, one on Maple Avenue coming off of the state routes and a smaller one at the Northern side of the Court Street roundabout where it meets 12 A, Old Walpole Road and Maple

Avenue. He said the sign installation person will go back after the New Year to re-tap them because the signs tend to settle into the ground. He said they have three newer signs that he needs to get approved by the State to install at three preapproved sites on the list. Mr. Schoefman said those signs will be up by spring once DOT has signed off on the new signs and locations.

Bicycle Mayor- Mr. Schoefman said Tiffany Manion heard feedback from BPPAC and she had a follow up meeting with the Mayor who expressed similar sentiments. He said Ms. Manion was announced at the Fall Festival with the help of Jen Rizley as a kick off for her bicycle mayor campaign. Mr. Schoefman said he added that item as an update because she will probably work closely with the Planning department on some of the goals from the Master Plan and he believes those efforts will be complimentary to the objectives of BPPAC. Mr. Hawkes asked what types of crowd funding she is doing and Mr. Schoefman replied she will probably utilize a multi-pronged approach involving multimedia and other launch events.

Wayfinding Project- Mr. Schoefman said he met with the Keene State geography seminar group conducting their junior/senior seminar. He said they reviewed their goals for their project which is focused on downtown wayfinding and separate grade path wayfinding analysis and he is working with them to ensure their goals are aligned with BPPAC and the City's objectives. He said one aspect they are looking at are the Main Street crossings at Keene State College and he expects some good results from the group. Mr. Schoefman also suggested that they deliver a presentation to BPPAC once completed.

2. Complete Streets Mini-Grant

Mr. Schoefman said the City was awarded the \$10,000 mini-grant for its proposal for Main Street bike lane sharrows, bike boxes and signage that they will install along with in-street striping. He said the grant is due to be implemented by November 1. He said the Engineering department has an estimate from the lining contractors so they just have to initiate the project, probably in the next week or so. Mr. Brehme asked who the donor is and Mr. Schoefman replied it was an anonymous donor who wanted to target the Monadnock region. He said they are trying to make this round very successful so it serves as a good pilot for the donor to encourage him/her to continue this type of work.

3. West Street

Mr. Schoefman said at the last meeting he gave the committee some interim solutions in the five year span and then some longer-term plans. He said he hoped to get some feedback from BPPAC about their ideas about West Street as a priority goal for them. Chair Rubin asked Mr. Schoefman what the steps would be for the City process and community input. Mr. Schoefman suggested a public forum or workshop on West Street to compile community feedback. He said he does not see West Street on the resurfacing projects priority list as the City's financial guidelines are curtailing many bonding projects for roads. Mr. Schoefman said he would like to

get ideas from the group to relay to the City Engineer about West Street as a priority project. He said they are doing a sidewalk assessment and plugging data into software to determine where the efforts should be concentrated and that West Street would factor into where they could focus improvements. He emphasized that the financial climate is an issue, however. Mr. Redfern said he has observed a lot of activity downtown on Main Street and not necessarily on West Street as a complete street focus. Mr. Schoefman said downtown has a lot more limitations on what can be accomplished as a complete street and right now it is closer to the criteria for a slow street and he thinks there is also opportunity for West Street. Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Schoefman if he believes that Main Street needs to be monitored like West Street. Mr. Schoefman said the conversation about West Street is not very open right now so there is an opportunity to build awareness, perhaps through a public workshop.

Mr. Little added that there is an education problem with Main Street and in the past the police department would enforce no cycling on the sidewalks, however, that is no longer the case and he suggested the police enforcing the no-cycling law with tickets again as it is a very dangerous situation. Mr. Schoefman replied that the topic came up in the Revitalization forum and if BPPAC wants to take a position on that they could make a motion.

Mr. Redfern said that he was approached by Councilor Sutherland and he thinks there needs to be some educational outreach on that issue. Mr. Hawkes said that is one of Ms. Manion's objectives with her program. Mr. Schoefman said Ms. Manion is planning to bring the outreach to driver's education programs as well. Mr. Little said that Main Street is a terrible place to ride a bicycle because of the parking situation and he is surprised that there are not more injuries. Mr. Schoefman said he rides Main Street probably 60-75% of the time commuting to work in the summer, and only once he experienced a car backing out without seeing him, however, he rides with caution. Mr. Schoefman said this speaks to the outreach that is necessary on both ends of the spectrum for all users of the roadway. He said if Councilor Sutherland has ideas that there is opportunity at the Councilor level for some ideas that the group might have. He said perhaps they can motion to bring the sidewalk issue to the police chief's attention. Mr. Schoefman stated that there has to be incentive from somewhere for enforcement of no bicycles on the sidewalk. Mr. Redfern said he would be glad to submit a letter from a citizen and asked if they could invite Councilor Sutherland to a meeting as he had asked to attend the group meeting. He also suggested having Ms. Manion and Councilors at a BPPAC meeting to discuss bike safety issues and suggested adding that item to the agenda.

Mr. Brehme suggested a middle turn lane so there is one lane of traffic going each way. Mr. Schoefman said he thinks there is enough space to do an unprotected bike lane right now but the major stumbling block for DPW is the gateway street configuration and determining the amount of space there is to work with. He encouraged group to think about what things could be done in a 5-10 year time span, and what things could be done in 10-15 years. Mr. Schoefman stated that what is being done with the TAP project by the Y is a full gravel side path which would not work on West Street, but a paved side path concept might work on West Street during reconstruction in 10-15 years, and he encouraged brainstorming about finding options in the meantime.

Mr. Bryenton asked if there are case studies where a city has taken a five lane road and implemented it to see the results. Mr. Schoefman said there is an Urban Street Design Guide that has some case studies and shows how to bring down huge expansive roads into complete streets and those concepts could be considered. He said that is definitely within the 10-15 year scope and would probably involve reconstruction, for example, the middle turning lane idea would involve re-laning (5-10 years) and resurfacing (10-15 years) and bike facilities (5 years). Chair Rubin asked how they can get these ideas on the radar to a level of people taking notice and actually being put into the CIP and receiving attention from the leaders of the community. She asked if there is relevant data and how they could disseminate it. Mr. Schoefman said they need data to make a case about why West Street is a nightmare for pedestrians and cyclists. He said if BPPAC wants to invite Ms. Manion and Councilor Sutherland in for a meeting with committee he could develop bullet points to focus some attention to West Street. Mr. Schoefman said that once the TAP project ends, West Street issue might begin so it is strategically positioned. Chair Rubin asked if they have pedestrian and cyclist counts for West Street. Mr. Schoefman said he would have data once BPPAC members help do the counts. Chair Rubin suggested BPPAC members go out and organize public counts. Mr. Schoefman said that is a good idea and would show ownership among committee members.

Mr. Brehme stated that West Street is a pedestrian problem first and Main Street is a bicyclist problem. Mr. Hayes said he does not think the City has any real interest in West Street and it is shameful. Chair Rubin said BPPAC has prioritized West Street and they need to elevate the issue to the powers that be. She said it is a safety and social justice issue as the most disadvantaged sector of the population does not have a means to safely travel West Street so it is beyond a recreational issue for cyclists. Mr. Schoefman agreed that people with wheelchairs or who lack transportation cannot navigate West Street safely. Chair Rubin emphasized that they cannot wait 15 years to make positive changes on West Street.

She said if it is a design charade they can get Mark Fenton into the meeting. Mr. Schoefman said if they are going to build a case, they need to get counts. He stated Bike Walk to Work week is in spring and an opportunity for public input at events in Central Square during that week and if BPPAC can help coordinate input gathering at that event, perhaps they can get enough momentum with the counts, scheduling out some kind of workshop similarly to the Downtown Revitalization project. Mr. Schoefman said scheduling a summer workshop in June could be feasible as that is when the TAP project will be out.

Chair Rubin asked Mr. Redfern which Councilors are interested in attending a meeting. Mr. Redfern replied Councilor Sutherland and Ms. Manion. Chair Rubin recommended they talk about West Street and cyclist education and any data that they already have for West Street during the meeting. Mr. Schoefman said there are no good ways to count without actual people collecting the data. Mr. Bryenton said he could maybe do a count on West Street by Starbucks. Mr. Schoefman said that he would have to crunch the data a certain way to tease out the bicycle data. He said manual counts are the most intensive but the most precise. Chair Rubin said

between MAST and BPPAC and friends and family they can get the job done. Mr. Schoefman said he did counts for the mini-grant on Main Street and there is a standard protocol for data collection. He said he has a template for the counts of the mini-grant which he can send out and can be complete on an iPad or other device. Chair Rubin asked if they could discuss that more at the next meeting.

Mr. Schoefman said that collecting data during snowy days would be good for creating a case as plowing the sidewalks is probably as dangerous as walking on the sidewalks. Mr. Bryenton stated that perhaps linking West Street and Main Street in its objectives by taking the data from the Down town Revitalization CIP that is being done could be helpful on creating a case for West Street. He asked Mr. Schoefman if that approach is possible. Mr. Schoefman said there is no West Street Revitalization CIP, but it might make a good opportunity to piggyback the inertia and agreed that the design principles are similar enough to transfer them, especially with the mini-grant implementation, as it showcases interim solutions. He said he believes they successfully made the case that sharoes and unprotected bike lanes are interim solutions aimed at waiting for a more complete street in the future.

5) Old Business

N/A

6) New Business

Schedule of events

Mr. Schoefman said he would put out a schedule of events for the group, including Cool Wheels, Bike to Work Week event and maybe others. He said he will bring the preliminary schedule and calendar for bike and pedestrian oriented events to the next meeting and they can go from there.

Request for letter/resolution (re: ATVs)

Mr. Schoefman said the resolution was approved by Council for staff to draft a resolution and it should have its first reading at Council next week. He said it takes two readings to be approved or ratified. Mr. Little asked if it will be in the agenda and his concern is that the resolution does not appear anywhere where the public can see it. Mr. Schoefman said it will be released when the agenda is released after October 18. Mr. Little emphasized its importance because the resolution is a very significant change that will impact the future and the more community involvement, the better. Mr. Redfern said that he agrees with Mr. Little and stated that Swanzy voted in the resolution already and there are at least 4 or 5 other towns on board so there is a lot of local support. Chair Rubin said it is a good idea for members to attend the full Council meeting on October 18 to show support. Mr. Schoefman said the resolution got bounced back for language last Thursday and he has revisions for submittal for the October 18 meeting. Mr. Little

said there is one possible hiccup in this resolution because prior to this action, if there is snow on the ground, ATVS had access. He said under this resolution ATVs will be restricted access and the ATV community has been silent on this issue.

Mr. Little said the new pedestrian crossing on Roxbury Street was installed with white lights and then five days later they installed yellow lights so it is no longer a problem.

Mr. Brehme asked if they would like to have the geography students present their work during finals week as that is typically when they present their work. Committee members agreed.

Mr. Hawkes announced that he will no longer be attending meetings into the future and that he would provide a resignation letter. Committee members thanked him for his service. Chair Rubin stated that a spot would be open and that they should think about new members. Members suggested Mr. Bryenton and he said he would consider it for next time.

7) **Adjournment-Next meeting date –October 11, 2017**

Chair Rubin adjourned the meeting at 8:08 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Additional Edits Submitted by,

Will Schoefmann, Planning Staff