

BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 8, 2017

8:00 AM

City Hall, Second Floor Conference
Room

Members Present:

Linda Rubin, Chair
Chris Brehme, Vice Chair
Councilor Robert Sutherland
Thom Little, Member Charles
Redfern, Member Drew
Bryenton, Public David
Souther, Public Dylan Benik,
Alternate Court Blomquist

Staff Present:

Rhett Lamb
Andy Bohannon

Members Not Present:

Ed Guyot

- 1) **Roll Call**- Chair Rubin called meeting to order at 8:02 am.
- 2) **Accept October 11 minutes**- Mr. Redfern moved to accept October 11, 2017 minutes next month, Vice Chair Brehme seconded and motion passed by unanimous vote.
- 3) **Project Updates**

Mr. Bohannon said he has been working with KSC Graduate Seminar students, Wayfinding project. He said it was a good meeting and one of the students had worked with lighting project and has a good sense of the trails and will see good results. Vice Chair Brehme stated that the seminar group is interested in presenting at December's meeting and details about how to present in the room should be arranged. Mr. Bohannon suggested using the IT training room and Mr. Lamb pointed out the second floor conference room has a television screen. Chair Rubin said she would add them to the agenda for December.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Bohannon about the progress on kiosk maps. Mr. Bohannon said that was a project he was working with Will on and some are ready to go. He said they came out great and will be a nice addition to the trail system and they should be up this fall.

Chair Rubin stated that bicycle boxes are up on Main Street and they were provided by the Southwest Region Planning Commission mini-grant. Mr. Lamb said it was a requirement of the grant that they were on the ground and painted by December 1.

4) **Complete Streets**

- Bicycles on Downtown Sidewalks- Mr. Redfern stated that the concern is bicycles, skateboarders and jay crossings and other violations of rules that have lacked enforcement because of constraints on the police department. He said he gets frequent feedback from the public because of his role with PFK and BPPAC, and they are always expressing safety concerns over the use of sidewalks for bike paths. He asked if the grant for painting the streets in November is going to be administered for implementation in the City in the spring. Mr. Blomquist said the grant was aimed for spring time as there will be increased presence in downtown in the spring. Mr. Redfern asked if there is a little more flexibility with this particular grant and Mr. Blomquist agreed that it is not as stringent. Mr. Lamb said it is one of three grants geared at foot patrol in downtown and a police presence in downtown with the program and funding coming from targeted control grant.

Mr. Redfern asked if they will be considering biking on the sidewalks and other concerns and Mr. Lamb said the violations at the site are at the discretion of the officer. Mr. Redfern stated that his concern is pushback from the public about not supporting bicyclists and he would like to see it mitigated through an educational program, as well as alerting the public about how Complete Streets and bike boxes work to motorists. He stated he would like to brainstorm with the group about what a PR campaign might look like; he has some ideas but would like to hear from others.

Mr. Little stated that he thought there was going to be a representative from the police department present at today's meeting to discuss safety. He asked if the grant does not kick in for another four months, does that imply there is not going to be a police presence until then? Mr. Blomquist said there is a police presence that is not constant but the department is doing what they can do to support the downtown area and the Chief is very concerned about having a presence in downtown. He said that the grant is very specific with a time frame but the public education is the key objective.

Mr. Bohannon stated that if Mr. Little would like to have a representative from the Keene police department represented at the next meeting they could arrange that. Mr. Little said a random presence would be effective, with some tickets issued for jay walking and other things, the word of mouth would carry forward. He said there are a few cyclists who think they own the sidewalks downtown and he is afraid someone will get hurt. Mr. Bohannon reiterated that education is the primary goal of police officers and they are looking to create repertoire with individuals through education. He suggested they leave the law and violations to the discretion to the department. Mr. Little asked if the public is aware of the new striping and boxes on the street. Mr. Blomquist described the objectives of the grant with bike boxes starting on 101 by Main Street, utilizing sharrow style markings to allow cyclists and the motoring public to share the road and a public relations program is the next piece that will be rolled out. Chair Rubin stated that the education and awareness and additional enforcement will be great and the long-term goal for Main Street is that it is incredibly dangerous for cyclists, as cars do not see cyclists while pulling out of parking spaces. She said moving Main Street into the direction of safety for cyclists is the overall goal.

Mr. Bohannon mentioned the space for public sessions for the downtown and it was very productive. Mr. Blomquist said right now the Mayor has appointed an ad hoc committee for Revitalization for Downtown, they have had a consultant working on visioning work for downtown and the first step was getting an idea of what types of ideas people had, for example, what is downtown? He said in December they will be reporting out to the committee the findings of those sessions and the next step in the process is laying out activities around downtown. Mr. Blomquist said it will take the next year between the Mayor's committee and the public and then probably in late 2018 they would get into a preliminary design process, to have wider sidewalks. He said there is only so much space and the challenge is deciding what to accommodate in that space and to what level. There is a movement towards a more usable space for downtown and that does not work well with cyclists on the sidewalks. Chair Rubin asked where Complete Streets and active transportation fits into the prioritization process as it does not appear to be in the hierarchy of priority. Mr. Blomquist replied that the sessions are stating that not everything can fit into the space currently available and he encouraged everyone to stay involved in the process but any physical changes are not going to happen until 2022 and out.

Chair Rubin asked if any member from BPPAC should be on the Revitalization Committee and Mr. Blomquist stated that is a decision for the Mayor. Mr. Sutherland asked if City Engineer should be involved as he was disappointed in how Emerald Street was designed and communication between committees is important, as well as with the City Engineer and the public. Mr. Blomquist said City Engineer is involved in Revitalization project. Mr. Bohannon agreed that the communication is key and stated that Complete Streets should continue to be a presence in their thoughts processes and for BPPAC to be advocates for that and raise flag back to the Mayor and suggest that someone from BPPAC be involved in the Revitalization committee. Mr. Lamb said that committee needs to be reappointed in January so it is a good idea to ask about membership as they are moving into a different phase of the project so design guidelines like Complete Streets could fit into that. Chair Rubin suggested committee members think about whether or not they would like to become members of the Revitalization committee. Mr. Redfern asked if anyone is interested and Mr. Bryenton and guest said they would. They all agreed that parking is a major priority. Mr. Blomquist said for 2018-2048, parking is on the table.

Councilor Sutherland shared that the public is concerned about cyclists on sidewalks and cyclists are forced onto sidewalks as they are afraid to get their pedals onto the road. He said he has been talking to Councilor Jacobs and other constituents about what to do about enforcement, but perhaps education is best. He stated that with all of the changes happening on bike paths such as striping, boxes, sharoes, etc. and considering maps, public service announcements, perhaps federal PSAs that are already recorded that they could access. He said the Bike Mayor is interested in pursuing some of these areas already which is great, but that perhaps education safety programs can also be coordinated with the school system as well as leveraging existing communications and grant money.

Councilor Sutherland said the safety of cyclists versus diagonal parking is safety concern and perhaps putting diagonal parking on the left lane and handicap parking on the right lane is something to think about. Mr. Lamb said other ideas have been considered but not had support, for example, parallel parking.

Mr. Benik stated that his concern is the sharrows on Main Street are right up against back out parking and way too close to the bumpers of cars. He said new cyclists have to look out for themselves, as he

saw someone trying to take advantage of the sharrows and almost got hit. Mr. Redfern stated sharrows give a sense of a protected lane and perhaps give a false security that maybe is more effective for motorists than cyclists. Mr. Bohannon mentioned the diagonal being switched and Mr. Lamb said the curbing is designed for diagonal parking so it would be difficult. Mr. Bohannon said this conversation has been ongoing and it is not easy to resolve. Mr. Blomquist said they originally proposed the parallel parking concept when they constructed Railroad Street and it was not a popular idea. Chair Rubin suggested bringing Mr. Fenton back from Healthy Monadnock. Mr. Little asked if anyone has done an analysis on parallel parking. Mr. Lamb stated that a lot more space is needed for parallel parking and it will be greater than a 2 to 1 loss. Mr. Blomquist stated these are issues the Revitalization committee is discussing to create more space and gain more width on the road but the business people got upset about where their customers would go. He said the discussion is about parking management, how and where they can provide it. He stated it is difficult to convince a community that is used to parking in front of the door to park someone else.

Mr. Bohannon agreed that he would talk to Bicycle Mayor and he will attend the meeting next month again. Councilor Sutherland said there is no easy solution as there are nowhere parallel streets to Main Street; however, there is presently nowhere to alternately push the traffic. He said it would involve a bigger solution on where to move the traffic and that would be an answer. Mr. Lamb stated there were some plans from the 70s that would turn Main Street into pedestrian mall, and would require removing a lot of building and money. Mr. Lamb did encourage big picture ideas to be evaluated continuously. Chair Rubin shared the theme of a keynote speaker from a summit she attended entitled, "Everything you Know About Economic Development is Dead Wrong", and the main point he made is that people come to places because things happened when they were there that have created memories for their families. She stated that it is not through buildings, shopping or even restaurants, and more about the community interactions and social connections. She shared the example of Church Street example in Burlington, Vermont, where there are various characters present to create a sense of community and brings people to spaces.

Mr. Little said there is parking off of Main Street and if you are new to Keene you will choose parking spaces on Main Street because alternative spaces are hard to find. Mr. Brehme said accommodating parking maybe is not the central issue as automatic vehicles are going to become the majority. He asked if there was a bike registration program as it could be a way to educate cyclists.

Mr. Redfern asked if there is educational outreach that they can engage in. He declared that bikes have overtaken the community as the activity is more popular than it was fifteen years ago. He said he would be glad to take on the responsibility of developing a comprehensive public outreach program. Mr. Redfern stated that maybe bicycle registration is not a bad idea and one that would be revenue generating for the programs and assist with developing a fund for bicycle facilities and pedestrian matters.

Mr. Lamb stated he would not start with bicycle registration. Mr. Blomquist said the enforcement piece would be challenging. Mr. Lamb said the dog licensing program is a precedent for that and it is difficult. Mr. Brehme shared that there are probably ways to put a positive spin on bicycle registration but maybe it is not a good starting point. Mr. Blomquist stated that Chair Rubin's insight into building a sense of place in the community is probably more inspirational. Mr. Redfern said runners with PFK have to pay registration fees associated with their races and that money is plugged back into cyclist activities. Mr. Blomquist cautioned against extra facilities as the question of who

pays for them is problematic. He mentioned the complaints coming from the ATV registration economy up North and the discord in the South of the state and the question of where exactly that money goes.

Mr. Redfern stated he will create a public education campaign over the winter with support from the Councilor perspectives as well as the Bicycle Mayor with the committee's blessing. He asked for Bicycle Mayor's contact information.

-West Street- Chair Rubin stated that one of the project priorities for the updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan from BPPAC is West Street. They discussed at last meeting what steps would be taken to gather data to show that West Street warrants being a priority project, as well as what education awareness is needed. She said BPPAC is aware of the scope of the project; however, West Street is a major thoroughway and is the least safe. She said there is an incredible amount of jay walking, lack of crosswalks and sidewalks are inadequate for cycling and the roads are unsafe. She said West Street could be seen as a social justice issue as well, with the presence of sober living apartments, hotels and the sorts of people that may not have their own vehicles and are of lower socioeconomic strata. Chair Rubin asked how to prioritize the West Street project.

Councilor Sutherland recommended foot counting as a useful data point. He said there are a lot of people walking on the north side of the street, laundry facilities and a matter of understanding what the traffic volume is on West Street relative to Main Street. He suggested working with the City Engineer on the possibility of a center turn lane because one of the major problems on West Street is constant shifting against traffic. He suggested finding out whether or not freeing up real estate for bike lanes is possible. Mr. Lamb said that the last plan for West Street was 25 years ago and did not get traction then.

Mr. Blomquist said West Street has 22,000 cars per day and reduction of lanes could be accomplished, but capacity is an issue. He stated that perhaps simple things can be done as of now. Chair Rubin stated that as a committee BPPAC would like to get West Street on the radar. Councilor Sutherland suggested getting the data; develop short term, then mid-term and long-term goals. He stated that it would look the same lower Main Street aimed at short term fixes until they can get further down the line. He said it starts with staff then Councilors through CIP process, and extra data collection requires extra money, hiring a consultant and SWRPC requires money now. He said a grant may be possible through SWRPC. Mr. Sutherland said the bike path is the only alternative. Mr. Benik said once the snow comes, people carrying groceries have to walk on West Street. Mr. Sutherland mentioned that public transportation can alleviate that problem. Mr. Benik stated that there will also be more people living off West Street with Colony Mill condominiums being constructed.

Old Business- Chair Rubin stated that Mr. Schoefman was going to put together a schedule of events for committee, but he did not get around to sending it out this month so they will probably have to wait until December. She said he was also going to draft a schedule of events, as well as a letter for the ATV trail use. Mr. Redfern asked if it was to accompany the resolutions and Chair Rubin replied yes. Mr. Lamb said Mr. Schoefman can send it out as soon as he can and not to worry too much about the letter itself as the motion usually goes with a targeted audience which is the federal regulation. He said he will make sure the letter gets copied to committee members.

Chair Rubin said Ms. Manion was scheduled to be present at today's meeting to talk about Bicycle Mayor updates but she was not in attendance. Mr. Bohannon said he has a meeting scheduled with Ms. Manion for next week to better understand her role and objectives. He sent her a grant that was working with Kiwanis Club and Cool Wheels centered on more education and riding safety. He said something that came forward in the Council meetings was safety and also a bike share type program as they receive informational emails from various companies who do bike sharing so he forwarded those emails over to her. Mr. Bohannon stated that when they installed the bike stations she attended a conference and shared some information so that he could learn more about the Bike Mayor role and said when he gets more information from her he will be glad to share it. Mr. Redfern stated that Ms. Manion's role is to educate the public about motorist, pedestrian and cyclist responsibilities in the City of Keene. He said once the discussion starts with Councilor Sutherland, himself and Councilor Jacobs they will discuss their concerns and he asked Mr. Bohannon if he could relay the interests that arise from the committee meeting to Ms. Manion so their objectives are more aligned.

Mr. Bohannon stated the City has received 40 poles and will be working on installing them through the fall and what they do not complete now they will complete in the spring. Mr. Redfern asked if the ground will be too hard after Thanksgiving and Mr. Blomquist said not yet, as the temperature will be going up again next week and of more concern is digging into the rail bed and gravel.

Chair Rubin asked if there is anything else, they had discussed walking counts but they could discuss that next month.

7) **New Business**- N/A.

8) Adjournment – Chair Rubin adjourned the meeting at 9:25 am.

Next meeting date –December 13, 2017

Minutes recorded by,

Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Additional Edits by,

Will Schoefmann, Planning Staff