

**CITY OF KEENE
BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

December 12, 2018

8:15 am

Second Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Linda Rubin, Chair
Dylan Benik, Vice Chair
Thom Little, Member
Charles Redfern, Member
Drew Bryenton, Member
Chris Brehme, Member

Staff present:

Will Schoefmann, Planner

Members Not Present:

Ed Guyot, Member
David Souther, Alternate

1) Roll Call

Chair Rubin called meeting to order at 8:20 am and roll call was conducted.

2) November 14, 2018 Minutes

Mr. Little moved that acceptance of the minutes be delayed until the next meeting because Mr. Little's corrections were erroneously entered from the October 8 minutes instead of the November 14 minutes, Mr. Redfern seconded and motion was passed unanimously.

3) Membership

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Little's term is up and Mr. Little has been in touch with the Mayor regarding becoming an alternate. Mr. Schoefmann said that Mr. Guyot's membership resignation and replacement is also in process and the Mayor is looking to replace him with Mr. Souther and to replace the alternate position with Mr. Bacon. Mr. Little said he is pursuing the alternate position because he has had two consecutive positions a member and he is not permitted a third term. Mr. Schoefmann stated that in order to become a member of BPPAC that you need to be a Keene resident, however, that requirement may be up for review. He said they are aiming to broaden the pool of individuals eligible for membership in the future. Mr. Schoefmann said that many members on the committee are up at the end of 2019 so that would leave some gaps in membership.

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

-Cheshire Rail Trail-Park Avenue Loop TAP project- Mr. Schoefmann stated that Engineering is managing the project and preliminary plans and reports were submitted. He said the City received feedback from DOT and the Engineering department met with Councilors to review the proposed improvements along Parke Avenue and West Street as there were some concerns. He said now they are awaiting approval of submitted plans to begin discussion with CNS on right-of-way negotiations in terms of purchasing or receiving property up towards the YMCA and Amy Brown Road, where it intersects with the Rail Trail. Mr. Little stated that he thinks it was a healthy move by the City Engineer because they were planning to build the bike lanes in 2019 and in 2021 they were aiming to upgrade the resurfaced part of the highway right next to the bike trails. He said they are moving the 2021 work back to 2019 so all work will be done at the same time. He said the funding was all there, it was just a question of timing. Mr. Schoefmann stated that it was a CIP improvement that they requested to Council to move the date forward to allow for the road improvements to be completed along with the striping to avoid improvements being made on poor asphalt. Mr. Little agreed that this way people do not become used to using the bike lanes only to have them closed when improvements on roads are in process.

Bike racks- Mr. Schoefmann stated if committee is still interested in putting out a letter/memo to DPW regarding the timing of putting out the bike racks, he can write a letter to DPW between now and next month. He said perhaps he use an excerpt from the minutes from one of the meetings where they discussed crafting the letter. He asked if there was a motion in the minutes about writing a letter. Chair Rubin said is not sure if there was a motion, however, she has it in her notes that they agreed to write a memo. Mr. Schoefmann asked if he should put the letter together. Chair Rubin agreed and said he should include putting out the bike racks by April 1. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that Chair Rubin send him an email with her suggestions so he can begin crafting the letter. Chair Rubin agreed. Mr. Little suggested to Mr. Schoefmann that the chart column labeled “MP” should be spelled out as “Master Plan” instead in order to avoid confusion. Mr. Schoefmann agreed.

Bicycle Mayor- Mr. Schoefmann stated that Ms. Manion was chosen to complete the final portion of the Safe Routes to School project that they have funding for, which is the tail end of the Maple Acres improvements (the neighborhood across from the Middle School). He said there was supposed to be a kick-off event for those facilities that never happened and he is not sure why it never did, however, DOT wanted the City to expend the funds so Ms. Brunner put together a Bike to School Event for the Middle School. There was a kick-off meeting with school faculty who will be collaborating on the project with Ms. Manion. He said she is tasked with updating the Safe Routes to School toolkit that is over 6 years old, and she will also be coordinating with the parent volunteer group and implementing the Bike to School event. He said he will update the committee with any volunteer opportunities as more information for that event becomes available.

Wayfinding- Mr. Schoefmann said members may have noticed more wayfinding signage downtown and although the signs are supposed to be pedestrian-level, he said they appear more vehicle-level. He said if members have feedback they should send suggestions to Mr. Lundquist or himself.

Complete Streets- Mr. Schoefmann said bike counts have been tabulated and the spreadsheet is attached towards the back of the packet for committee review. He said the counts represent a good baseline but they will need to continue the data collection over the next few years to capture any patterns or trends that might emerge. Mr. Bryenton asked if the committee should continue

scheduling the count data collection every quarter. Mr. Schoefmann agreed that would be his recommendation. He said that the West Street-Pearl Street area was busiest in February-March for pedestrians in the 12 noon spot which was generally on Saturdays. He stated that Ashuelot River Park had a lot of traffic during that time period and there were 204 counts in the 4-6 pm slot. Vice Chair Benik said that was a very nice day and that could be why there were so many counts. Mr. Redfern said he accused Mr. Schoefmann last month of losing his count sheets but he found them so that was not Mr. Schoefmann's oversight after all. Mr. Schoefmann said he could add those counts to the spreadsheet.

Mr. Schoefmann said that Cheshire Rail Trail 4-Transportation Heritage Trail was added to the supplementary category to the CIP for 2019 and that is a great first step. Mr. Bryenton asked where to find the wayfinding signage downtown and Mr. Schoefmann said it is around Gilbo Street area but he has not noticed them himself. Mr. Redfern stated that in April he plans on addressing the State about putting wayfinding signage up for the two pedestrian bridges so that drivers on the road are aware of the trail crossings. Mr. Little stated that South Bridge is not on Google Maps and he said it takes up to ten years for them to update the maps. Mr. Schoefmann said he has searched it and he has gotten a point and a label. Mr. Little said North Bridge was not covered until they sent their photography. Mr. Brehme said it could have been a different map app as they do not all share data.

5) Old Business - Bike Count Summary 2018 - Bike Racks - Public Outreach and Events

Public Outreach and Events- Mr. Schoefmann said that Ulta Design and Planning was selected by the State to update their state-wide bicycle and pedestrian plan. He said they will be holding meetings across the State in five of the different districts and Keene is one of them. He said they will be working with the City through DOT to schedule a public input session so he will let the committee knows in advance about that session if there is anything they can do to help.

Mr. Schoefmann also stated that the annual meeting for MAST will be scheduled for sometime in January.

6) Project Priorities 2019 Discussion

Chair Rubin stated that they were planning on using the bulk of today's meeting to discuss project priorities. They have five priorities and they were thinking of expanding that to ten. However, Mr. Schoefmann provided valuable feedback that ten projects might be too many in terms of staff support so they may want to stick with the top five. Chair Rubin said they need to review the five and make any changes they deem necessary. Mr. Schoefmann handed out project list sheets. Mr. Bryenton said that he has the overall project list with the five priorities and asked if those are the existing five priorities. Chair Rubin said those are the existing five priorities and they did not discuss definitely changing them at last month's meeting, however, they did discuss reviewing and discussing any changes they would like to make. Mr. Little stated that ten projects seems excessive, however, six versus five may be meaningful. He said he spent some time looking at the current list and asked why Cheshire Rail Trail-Park Avenue Loop is not included in the chart as he thinks that project is a number one priority. Mr. Schoefmann replied that the idea was to put energy behind projects that did not already have staff support. He said the funded projects are already being managed by City staff, for example, Amy Brown Road-Park Avenue Loop so part of the initiative was that the scoring for

projects that were high for the committee did not have much financial support on the City organizational side and in order to get the organizational support the committee wanted to do bike counts around the West Street corridor that would help build that support. He said projects like Amy Brown Road will get done either way and there is not a lot that the committee can do for it. Mr. Little recommended adding a BE-0, Cheshire Rail Trail-Park Avenue Loop as high priority and number one on the list. Mr. Redfern agreed that project should be on the list.

Mr. Little stated that including that project, he came up with nine projects- five that are already there- and he identified three others, two of which were associated with Cheshire Rail Trail-Phase 4. He said those are on the list but not yellow. The remaining one is the improvements to the approach to South Bridge, trail improvements BE-16 on the list. He identified that project as number nine of the list of nine. Mr. Littleton said BE-0 is 1, BE-2 is 7, BE-5 is high priority 8, BE-13 on the next page is 2, BE-15 is 3, BE-16 is 9, BE-20 on the next page is 4, BE-21 is 5. Chair Rubin said that Mr. Schoefmann's assessment of how the committee arrived at the top five projects is accurate and to remind the committee of what their process was, they made a bucket list of all the projects, went through and rated the projects according to their organizational support and importance to pedestrians and bikers as low, medium or high, and she said she does not remember exactly how they rated them from there but they may have had a discussion and then took sticky dot process to narrow the projects down to five projects. She said it was an extensive process and she does not have a recommendation about how to move forward other than to discuss it more but she wanted to give context as to how they arrived at the top five.

Mr. Redfern stated that he is in agreement with Chair Rubin and Mr. Little and said it is odd that the Cheshire Rail Trail Park Avenue Loop is in the spring and BE-0 makes sense because it does not change the order of other projects. He suggested adding a project that is already in the Capital Improvement Program under the Supplemental and that would be BE-5- the 101 Overpass-Trails System projects and that should be highlighted in yellow. He said if they end up with just two more projects highlighted then he would be in agreement with that list. He said instead of re-prioritizing, other than BE-0, they can just add two more projects and presumably the list will be ready for prime time and hooked up with the Master Plan to move forward accordingly. Mr. Little stated that he in agreement. Mr. Schoefmann clarified that Mr. Redfern and Mr. Little would like BE-2 and BE-5 to become priority projects. Mr. Little said he numbered them as BE-7 and BE-8 which did not change the priority of the other projects other than the BE-0 moving the list down one place.

Mr. Benik stated he is in agreement as they have nothing to lose by adding those projects to the high priority list. He referenced Mr. Bohannon's presentation about the Emerald Star project, and said the BE-17-Ashuelot Greenspace Trailhead- would be a great way to promote the trails to people outside of Keene and add an essential node for parking. Mr. Little asked Mr. Brehme if they would add that project as number ten. Mr. Brehme replied that he just threw the idea out there as something to think about. Mr. Little said he did not add BE-17, but he put BE-16 as number 9. Mr. Little asked if it would be a medium priority project. Mr. Brehme asked if they were reassessing priorities. Chair Rubin replied that they have not talked about reassessing the scores and she does not want to be the naysayer, but maybe they can add a few more projects to the list and then do another round of sticky dots to reevaluate the scoring. Mr. Schoefmann added that Mr. Little's process is sound, for example, the TAP project as number one is easy to promote. Mr. Brehme agreed that Mr. Little's priority list demonstrates that some projects do not require much effort from the committee, however, BE-16 feels like low-hanging fruit and could be achieved pretty easily. Mr. Redfern suggested involving the

College. Mr. Brehme added that the nine priority projects Mr. Little came up with vary in terms of the level of involvement from the committee so it might not be actually be a bad idea to have ten priority projects. Mr. Little said what they are essentially trying to do is keep the door open, as they have encountered reticence in the past about pursuing projects that were not on the top five list. He said no one wanted to talk about Cheshire Rail Trail-Phase 4 because they were still working on the Cheshire Rail Trail-Phase 3-Park Avenue Loop which was preventing constructive discussion and there is a lot to talk about at the onset of these projects in terms of keeping down costs.

Mr. Bryenton asked for clarification about BE-10- Amy Brown. Mr. Schoefmann replied that CRT-4 was envisioned as where the current TAP project ends on the Rail Trail out to the City Limit. He said the attached map shows that Amy Brown is highlighted in orange because it is going on, and BE-10 is above that in a green line which is the Rail Trail to the City limit and that is the section which is labeled. He stated that between TAP applications, the idea of completing the section of Cheshire Rail Trail from Eastern Avenue out to Swanzy was brought up as more of a priority. Mr. Schoefmann said the focus has shifted and that has become the next Rail Trail-Phase 4. Mr. Bryenton asked if the description for BE-10 is incorrect. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it is. Mr. Bryenton asked if the organizational support ranking and the importance level are high for both X and Y, does it make sense for BPPAC to spend time pushing for those projects if they are already in the works, or should they alternatively put resources into West Street which is off the radar now but could be positioned better for the future. Mr. Redfern stated that West Street is highlighted in yellow as a priority project. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, however, the organizational support for West Street is not that great.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that focusing on the trails and wayfinding with the College could be a great next step. He suggested bringing up items to Mr. Bohannon to see what he thinks. He encouraged BPPAC to stay away from downtown wayfinding as it is a bit of a mess. Mr. Bryenton asked if they would be able to accomplish more if there is both strong organizational support and a high importance level from the committee. Mr. Schoefmann replied that could be true, however, it is dependent on several factors and there is no across-the-board formula. For example, the Access Point and Connectivity analysis is high priority and will be included in the Master Plan, however, it is one of those projects that BPPAC has not had much involvement in and perhaps it is more a matter of knowing what the role or gap is that they can fill in per project and creating awareness about it. Mr. Bryenton asked if they need to get organizational support to a high level before they can expect any action. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes they would need to have discussion, make decisions on the information available to them and then send a memo to a point person about how to get action items. He said the bike racks memo is a small but good example of attempting to get movement on an issue. He encouraged members to keep in mind that the committee is advisory to City Council, so they can push it forward to City Council committee once they have enough action items. Mr. Little stated that in order to get movement on projects, they need to keep revisiting them at each meeting and making sure they are being pushed forward.

Mr. Bryenton stated that he supports adding the two new project items to the list, however, he said that BE-18- Downtown Revitalization- has been completely off of BPPAC's radar and he is not sure if that has been a strategic decision, because of that project's high visibility and task force, or if they should become more involved in the decision-making process. Mr. Schoefmann replied they could benefit from a better understanding of where that project is as it is led by DPW so he does not always receive project updates. Mr. Schoefmann stated the land use code updates, however, are probably

more important to understand as the major land use changes are for Downtown. However, he will see where DPW stands with the project and ask Mr. Lussier or Mr. Lundquist to talk to the committee about the project so committee has a better understanding. Mr. Bryenton added that he is not pushing for anything specifically; however, he does not want the committee to miss the opportunity to have a voice at the table pushing for the committee's interests in the Downtown Revitalization project. Chair Rubin agreed, she said especially in terms of assessment of streets in terms of how complete they are, for example, if Main Street were deemed incomplete in terms of Complete Streets, it would be elevated to a higher priority level. She said they have not focused at all on BE-20. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Keene State College is working on BE-20 and Mr. Brehme stated he just saw the results of a that project. Chair Rubin stated that West Street is in terrible condition and is incomplete and Main Street also has issues. Mr. Schoefmann and Mr. Brehme agreed that Main Street is very congested, the angled parking is bad and there is no delivery space. Mr. Brehme asked if they could anticipate points in time when their engagement could be useful, for example, when bike and pedestrian issues come up in debate, rather than having an eleventh item. Mr. Schoefmann stated he has not heard them getting to that point yet. Vice Chair Benik asked if anyone is on the Economic Development committee as there are some sketches he saw that are aimed at revamping entire sections of downtown, for example, Gilbo Avenue. Chair Rubin said she agrees with considering Main Street as the tenth item. Mr. Schoefmann suggested adding the Greenspace Trailhead as well. Mr. Redfern suggested shading that item green because it is privately-owned and out of the City's hands, which makes it hard to add that space into the mix. Mr. Schoefmann said that Mr. Bohannon stated there was not much they could do as it is privately-owned. Mr. Redfern suggested they send out a letter to "light a fire" under it. He said he would be glad to write a letter with Mr. Brehme. Mr. Brehme agreed. Mr. Schoefmann also suggested assigning tasks once they have identified their priorities. He stated that projects may get more action if they take initiative instead of waiting for him to draft up letters. Chair Rubin asked if they have added five projects

Mr. Little reviewed the projects in order of their ranking:

He stated BE-0 would be added as number 1, BE-2 would be 7, BE-5 would be 8, BE-13 would be 2, BE-15 would be 3, BE-16 would be 9, BE-17 would be 10, BE-20 would be 4, BE-21 should be 5, BE-26 should be 6. He said that includes the Emerald Star project from Mr. Brehme. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Main Street would be number 11. Mr. Brehme stated that Emerald Star can go down to number 11 in order of ranking as it is not within the City's purview as private property.

7) New Business - Items to be included for next meeting

Mr. Schoefmann said he will aim to use a shading scheme for ranking. He said the ranking they have accomplished today is strong, so the next step would be to talk about what can be done in 2019 for each project at the next meeting. He said, for example, coming up with one action item for each project for 2019, whether that means more counts or presentations from key point people. He said the ten projects may not fit into the financial process, so highlighting financial aspects that are most important would be key to getting funding, for example, getting attention on West Street for the CIP. Chair Rubin said they had a timeline of August for putting it into the CIP for West Street improvements similar to what they accomplished for Park Avenue. Mr. Schoefmann said they could also begin looking for funding. Chair Rubin agreed they would pursue those steps in January.

Mr. Redfern stated that the real priorities are determined by the opportunities as they present themselves, although they can also put items on the plate. However, for the most part, movement will

dependent on opportunities for funding or otherwise. Chair Rubin said she has Mr. Lussier on the list of things to do in January to discuss Amy Brown Road. Mr. Schoefmann replied he will see what he can do to get Mr. Lussier to do a Q&A session with BPPAC. He said he will also update the list and incorporate project updates list into the project priority list so they avoid having too many lists.

8) **Adjournment-** Chair Rubin adjourned the meeting at 9:35 AM.

Next meeting date – January 9, 2019

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute-Taker

Additional edits by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff