

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, January 9, 2019**

**8:15 AM**

**City Hall, Second Floor**  
**Conference Room**

**Members:**

Dillon Benik, Vice Chair  
Christopher Brehme  
Charles Redfern, Member  
Brad Dufresne, Member  
Thom Little, Alternate

**Members not present:**

Linda Rubin, Chair  
Drew Bryenton, Member  
David Souther, Alternate

1) **Roll Call**

Vice Chair Benik called meeting to order at 8:15 am and roll call was conducted.

2) **Membership & Elections**

Mr. Schoefmann introduced Mr. Dufresne as BPPAC's newest member. Mr. Dufresne shared that he just moved into town in April from Boston, he is an avid cyclist, coaches the rugby team and is interested in becoming involved in the zoning planning as well.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Little's sixth term is up so he has been appointed as an alternate. He said that the Mayor has received some requests from other potential members and as soon as City Council confirms those people he will let the members know. Vice Chair Benik stated that there is one more alternate position and one more member position available. Mr. Schoefmann stated that today they will be nominating members for Chair and Vice Chair positions and voting on the nominations.

Mr. Redfern nominated Vice Chair Benik as Chair. Vice Chair Benik stated that he was going to nominate Chair Rubin for Chair again, however Chair Rubin had expressed she may not be interested. Vice Chair Benik nominated Mr. Bryenton as Vice Chair. Mr. Brehme nominated Vice Chair Benik as Chair, as he also recalls that Chair Rubin was not interested in another term. Mr. Brehme nominated Mr. Bryenton as Vice Chair.

**Vice Chair Benik moved to elect himself as Chair, Mr. Brehme seconded and motion passed unanimously.**

**Vice Chair Benik moved to elect Mr. Bryenton as Vice Chair, Mr. Brehme seconded and motion passed unanimously.**

**3) November 14, 2018 & December 12, 2018 Minutes**

**Mr. Little moved to accept the November 14, 2018 minutes as submitted, Mr. Brehme seconded and the motion passed unanimously.**

**Mr. Little moved to accept the December 12, 2018 minutes with revisions, by adding the project name next to ID numbers and attaching a table to the minutes, Mr. Dufresne seconded and motion passed unanimously:**

*Revisions are as follows:*

*Page 2, paragraph 1, change: “move the date forwards” to “move the date forward.”*

*Page 3, last paragraph, change “She said they need” to “Chair Rubin said they need.”*

*Page 6, paragraph 2, change “BE-21 is 5, BE-26 is 6” to “BE-21 should be 5, BE-26 should be 6.”*

Mr. Schoefmann said he could post the project table on the website with the packets and minutes. Mr. Little asked if the information would be available for the next 10-15 years and Mr. Schoefmann replied yes. Vice Chair Benik agreed that the table should be attached in the minutes and Mr. Schoefmann said he will make sure that is possible. Mr. Little suggested inserting a table in the minutes that lists the project codes clearly so people can follow the minutes more easily. Mr. Brehme suggested adding the name of the project next to the identification number in addition to posting the table online.

**4) Project Updates**

(Note: BPPAC Master Plan Documents available on google drive)

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there are two tables in the packet: the first two-page table lists the updates for the current month, and the second table is from the previous month so people can track the project updates. He said he rearranged the January table by putting the Master Plan projects the committee had discussed in the bottom portion of the table. He said he listed the ranks as well, and in the third column the Master Plan number is listed.

Draft letter for Department of Public Works (DPW)- Mr. Schoefmann said he was supposed to have a draft letter in memo form for the Department of Public Works ready for today’s meeting but he did not get a chance to write it. However, he will send the committee a draft so that members can provide feedback and communicate changes and then send the letter to DPW before next month.

Wayfinding project- Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is continued development of downtown pedestrian level wayfinding by DPW; however, the signage is not ideal for pedestrian level wayfinding. He encouraged members to visit the downtown area and provide feedback about signage by email to himself or Mr. Lundquist. Vice Chair Benik stated that the signage is difficult to see. Mr. Dufresne asked Mr. Schoefmann if BPPAC made the recommendation for signage. Mr. Schoefmann replied they can make suggestions; however, downtown is a funny animal politically, with a lot of competing interests, and their feedback may not be incorporated. He said members should look for signs from Emerald Street to the Pedestrian Square to assess whether the signs are noticeable. Vice Chair Benik said the signage is more aligned with wayfinding for auto traffic as the signs are placed higher up than pedestrian level. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the wayfinding ties into the Downtown

Revitalization project that DPW has been spearheading, as well as the public forum they held last summer.

**Cheshire Rail Trail Phase 4-Transportation Heritage Trail** – Mr. Schoefmann stated that the Transportation Heritage Trail will go from the Eastern Avenue trailhead across 101. Mr. Little asked where the name for the trail came from and Mr. Schoefmann replied the City Engineer named it in league with the Industrial Heritage. Mr. Little said the project name is Cheshire Rail Trail-Phase 4 and Mr. Schoefmann said Mr. Little would have to talk to Mr. Lucier about that. Mr. Schoefmann said the trail will create an overpass at 101 to provide safe crossing over to the Old Stone Arch Bridge and improve the top of the bridge with railings for pedestrian and cyclist safety, as well as the crossing at Swanzey Factory Road. Mr. Schoefmann said it is a comprehensive project and in the past the project was broken out into different sections, for example, the crossing at 101 and the Stone Arch Bridge as a National Historic Registry feature. He said it has typically been viewed as three projects; however, they are attempting to incorporate them into one project for the purpose of the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) as a funding mechanism. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he included the supplemental CIP page the City Engineer submitted in this year's CIP at the end of the packet. He said the project is not funded and is purely supplemental; however, the idea is to get this project onto the books hopefully for next year.

Mr. Little asked if the bridge is the same one they had discussed previously which is buried somewhere waiting to be delivered to Keene. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, however, he does not have the answers to all of Mr. Little's questions. Mr. Little asked if the bridge has a 200 foot span and if it does not, he asked if NH DOT has approved its use over their highway. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will forward Mr. Little's questions to Mr. Lucier so Mr. Little can get better informed answers to his questions. Mr. Little said it is surprising that the City would move forward without the answers to these questions. He said the North and South Bridges taught him about the self-rusting steel concept which means that they would not have to maintain the bridge for the next 150 years. He asked if the bridge is not self-rusting steel, what would be the annual maintenance cost for the bridge. Mr. Little added it might be more cost-effective to build a third bridge that is a carbon copy of South Bridge if maintenance costs are high. Vice Chair Benik asked what the cost of South Bridge was. Mr. Little replied that it cost 1.5M for the structure and the work; however, because it was done by the State of NH some of the overhead may have been reduced in the process. He said North Bridge was more expensive at a cost of 2.5M. Mr. Little stated that there is no indication of where the external million dollars is coming from for the current project which is listed on the bottom. He said the whole concept is "drafty" and there is a danger in publishing numbers that are not confirmed as that strategy can backfire. He said the width is possibly a deal-breaker and that is why he brought the question up in the first place. Mr. Little said South Bridge is not centered over the highway to allow for expansion in the future.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Little what his qualifications are for challenging the City Engineer's evaluation of the width of the bridge, as DOT and the City Engineer are both confident that it will accommodate future growth. Mr. Little said nobody from the City has confirmed that NH DOT has approved it. Mr. Schoefmann said he will reach out to Mr. Lucier to have Mr. Little's questions addressed. Mr. Little stated that he is not trying to impede the project and instead wants to help it move forward.

Mr. Little thanked Mr. Schoefmann for putting the top eleven projects on the list. Mr. Schoefmann said the eleventh project is the Emerald Star project which is still in a conceptual phase and not a Master Plan project yet. Vice Chair Benik said at the last meeting

they came up with a top 10, and they placed the Emerald Star project in the eleventh spot to keep that on the radar as it is not in the Master Plan, it is on private property and not within the City's purview. Mr. Schoefmann asked if anyone has questions and feedback on the list and offered to answer any questions new member Mr. Dufresne may have.

5) **Old Business**

Bike Counting: Schedule 2019- Vice Chair Benik stated that the committee needs to schedule bike and pedestrian counts for West Street to collect data on traffic for this year. Last year they did the counts at the end of February and early March and he asked if they should repeat the same timeframe that this year. Mr. Schoefmann recommended that they keep the timeframe consistent with last year. Vice Chair Benik stated that he hopes they can get counts with snow on the ground. Mr. Schoefmann said the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation project have not released their new count dates on their website. However, last year they posted May and September dates, so when they release those dates perhaps BPPAC can sync up their counts with those dates. He said he can confirm whether or not those dates have changed with a contact he has at Ulta Design. Mr. Schoefmann said he will send a Doodle Poll out for members to sign up to perform the counts.

Bike Racks: Memo review/approval- Vice Chair Benik stated that Chair Rubin emailed a draft of a letter to DPW, Mr. Schoefmann will forward the letter to the committee and members can respond with suggested edits and input regarding the bike racks to himself and Mr. Schoefmann.

Public Outreach and Events- Mr. Schoefmann stated that the State chose a consultant for their Bicycle Pedestrian Plan update called Ulta Planning and Design, who also worked with the City on concept planning for the Park Avenue-Cheshire Rail Trail Three-Loop project. He said Ulta will be holding a meeting in Keene with a Q&A session. He is working on a date with them, as they are planning on attending the TAC meeting, however, MAST was aiming to schedule their annual meeting later that day to reach out to the broader community. He said he will send out meeting dates as they are confirmed.

Mr. Schoefmann said there is a Marlborough Street corridor project informational meeting next Wednesday and he will send the meeting date out so members can participate in that. He said the meeting date is also listed on the new electronic information board in the City Hall lobby.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the City had applied for funds from the MAST Complete Streets grant which they did not get awarded, as well as the NH DOT TAP funds in which Keene was ranked fourth in the region. He said NH DOT makes final selections for that grant program around the New Year so announcements should be made soon. He said DPW is forging forward with projects as much as they can without the grant funds.

Mr. Redfern said there is a group that has been organizing to get the State of NH to put state money aside for rail trail development. He said the group is requesting members of the public to contact Senator Sununu and request he put 5M aside for the next two years from the supplemental biennial budget for rail trail development. He provided the Senator's number, 603-271-2121, and said an aide will take a name, address and phone number and comments. He said members can call the office and state that they would like the Governor to support

the supplemental biennial budget for each year for rail trail development. Mr. Redfern said their office was inundated yesterday with phone calls.

Mr. Redfern said there is also a House bill that deals with e-bikes on rail trails through federal classifications 1-3. He said the State is looking at consolidating the statutes to allow e-bikes on the trail as long as they do not exceed 20 mph on the rail trail.

Mr. Redfern said a trail plan is going to be created under a bill submitted by Senator Kahn which has bipartisan support for creating a trail plan that was due ten years ago. He said it will tackle current issues for rail trail development. Mr. Schoefmann asked if all the information is available on the Bike-Walk Alliance website. Mr. Redfern replied that the e-bike information is on the Bike-Walk Alliance website and the Senate bill for rail trail development is on the State government website.

6) **Project Priorities 2019 Recap/Action Item Development**

Mr. Schoefmann asked if members are happy with the way the projects have been prioritized. He asked if he should put number eleven on the bottom. Mr. Little stated the fact that the projects are listed is great, even if they are subject to change, most importantly the projects that BPPAC care about are listed so they do not lose track of projects. He said he is happy with the direction the committee is moving in. Mr. Little said that BE-0- Cheshire Rail Trail-Park Avenue Loop project is missing from the list, which is the highest ranking project and happening now.

Vice Chair Benik reviewed the committee's action items for the meeting. He said they will be scheduling their pedestrian counts, sending out a letter to DPW about bike racks, assess wayfinding signage put out by the City and send out Mr. Little's questions regarding the bridge and its feasibility.

Mr. Little asked where the summary of the new counts can be found. Vice Chair Benik replied that the new counts were listed in last month's packet. Mr. Dufresne asked what the purpose is of performing the new counts. Vice Chair Benik replied that they want to compile a strong data set to make the case for West Street, as it is a project that is not currently on the City's radar and there many issues, including utility and social justice issues, as well as narrow sidewalks that are in various states of disrepair. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they need to establish the need for better pedestrian walkability and bike ability and they need to get it on the budget. He said he is not sure if it is even in the five year pipeline. Vice Chair Benik said the Street needs a lot of work so it will be a big future project.

7) **New Business**

Items to be included for next meeting:

Vice Chair Benik said they can firm up attendance for pedestrian and bike counts at the next meeting. Mr. Schoefmann said he will try to have Mr. Lucier come in and speak to the committee to answer questions and he will let members know in advance. He said they will also let Mr. Bryenton know of his new Vice Chair position.

8) **Adjournment**

Vice Chair Benik adjourned the meeting at 9:20 am.

**Next meeting date – February 13, 2019**