

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, November 13, 2019**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers B**

**Members Present:**

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair  
Randy L. Filiault  
Gary P. Lamoureux  
Steven L. Hooper

**Members Not Present:**

Robert B. Sutherland

**Staff Present:**

Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director  
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager  
William Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Thomas Mullins, City Attorney  
Aaron Costa, Operations Manager  
Brett Rusnock, Civil Engineer

**Mayor Kendall Lane**

Councilor Manwaring called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

**1) James Phippard/Brickstone Land Use Consultants, LLC – Request to Discontinue Easement for Possible Future Road Extension at Black Brook Road**

James Phippard stated that he is here on behalf of NH Black Brook, LLC, a local industrial company. He continued that Amatek, a national company, purchased them. They have proposed an addition to the building to expand their manufacturing space. They went to the Planning Board and received conditional approval. As part of that site plan approval, they will reconfigure to add parking spaces to replace spaces that were going to be lost. The parking spaces are needed for the company to conduct their operations. They will expand their work force. They are looking at Janos Technology next door to expand that, too. This is good news for manufacturing in Keene.

Mr. Phippard continued that the request before the MSFI Committee is to eliminate the easement held by the City that is identified for possible future road extension at Black Brook Road. He showed a map of the area and showed Black Brook Road as it exists today, stating that it is about 1,400 feet and ends in a cul-de-sac. It is a dead end road built in 1998, and it exceeded the length of a dead end road allowed by the City's standards, but because it was possible to allow for a future extension of that road, the City Council approved a 1,400-foot dead end road.

Mr. Phippard showed another area on that map and pointed out the easement in question – a 65-foot-wide easement extending north from the cul-de-sac. He continued that his

clients think this request is reasonable because when Hillside Village was constructed an emergency access road was included. He showed the location on the map. He continued that an easement was granted to allow it to be used as a public emergency access road. It is paved, gated, plowed, and maintained by the Hillside Village. The City's Public Works, Police, and Fire Departments have access to open that gate as needed. The parking lot was partially reconfigured to allow for that emergency access. It is open year-round. The purpose of the easement for a future roadway is no longer necessary. That second access was built by private parties, not at the City's expense. For that reason, he and his clients feel the easement can go away. He showed another area on the map, of parking spaces. He continued that they wanted to create access all the way around the building for safety and for deliveries. They feel there is good justification for the City to eliminate this easement and that it is no longer necessary.

Chair Manwaring asked to hear from staff. Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director, stated that this was constructed in 1997. He continued that the forerunner of Monadnock Economic Corporation was the prime developer for the Black Brook Corporate Park, a successful project that involved the relocation of Wyman Road and the construction of Corporate Drive and then eventually the construction of Black Brook Road and the subdivision of the number of properties that are now there. This road is 1,400 feet long. The City's current dead end road standard, since the 1970s, is 750 feet. There are the same standards now that there were in 1998. There is a Council waiver process if the petitioner can demonstrate that there would be potentially a secondary access point that could exceed the 750 feet. As they laid out the road, that was part of the conditions, that this access be maintained. The City appreciates the offer of using the Hillside Village emergency access road to meet this requirement. Staff will look at this and bring back the previous City Council and Planning Board actions. The City Council took action based on the property developer's presentation in 1998, and the question is whether what they are now offering is equivalent to what the intent was back in 1998. Staff recommends placing this on more time.

Chair Manwaring asked how long Mr. Blomquist thinks it will be until this item comes back to them. Mr. Blomquist replied that the soonest they could be ready would be the MSFI Committee's first meeting in December, but it is holiday season, so it may be their first meeting in January. He continued that not much construction can happen in the winter. They probably want a resolution so they can plan their construction in the spring.

Councilor Lamoureux stated that he understands that the legal process is part of this. He continued that the City has been working hard on economic development. He hopes it is possible to allow these companies to add on and increase jobs. Mr. Blomquist replied that that will be part of the consideration.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee granted more time to allow staff time to research the records of the Planning Board and the City Council.

**2) Councilors O'Connor and Filiault – Proposed New Bus Route through the Wheelock Street, Newman Street, and Pine Avenue Neighborhood**

Councilor O'Connor stated that he was contacted by the neighborhood group around Symonds School about the proposed bus route change and the crosswalk. Regarding the new bus route, neighbors are concerned about an increase in traffic, future snow removal, and the safety of the children walking to and from school. There has been a meeting with Symonds School, open to the public, which went well. The Superintendent decided not to go forward with the new bus route until this meeting happened.

David Calhoun, of 21 Wheelock Street, stated that he wants to give an update on what transpired in the local community. He continued that he would first read a letter he received from Symonds School Principal Richard Cate, on September 26, 2019:

*“This letter is to provide notification of an impending change in traffic flow that will occur in early November, impacting the Pine and Wheelock Street area. You are invited to attend a meeting Wednesday, October 2, at 6 PM in the school library, at which time further details will be provided, should you desire them. Symonds School was originally constructed in 1928 and at the time vehicular traffic was almost nonexistent. Over the years we have struggled to create traffic patterns that are safe for our children and provide access to parents by keeping cars, school buses, and pedestrians separate as possible. After several years of studying and exploring alternatives, we have [Mr. Calhoun stated that he assumes ‘we’ is ‘SAU 29’] decided to create a bus circle on our playground and route our five school buses through Pine and Wheelock Streets. The buses will pick up and drop off students in this newly-created bus circle. The new bus circle will only be for school buses. The existing gate at the entrance to Wheelock Street will remain closed except for brief periods in the morning and afternoons to allow buses access to the circle. The circle on the playground will be fenced to keep play areas and bus circles separate. The circle area in the front of the school will become an area for parent drop-off and pick-up, creating a safe environment for our children. If you would like more details and have any questions concerning this, please attend the meeting October 2 from 6 to 6:45 in the school library.”*

Mr. Calhoun stated that this was the first notification anyone in the neighborhood had received saying that this was even a possibility. He continued that he was the only attendee at the meeting referenced in the letter. The idea was to hear and discuss what the potential was. Since he was the only one, he figured everyone else in the neighborhood was happy with the plan. He found out the next morning he was the only one given the letter. The other parents and pedestrians in that area were not contacted. They found out later, after that meeting, about the proposal. It was a more than a proposal. Construction started two days after the meeting. They were upset not to be informed. They put together a petition to see if they could halt any further progress.

They were informed the school would finish the project because money was already made available for it, which surprised him. On October 23rd about 30 or 40 people met at the library to discuss concerns. They feel that this is not a cure to the problem, it is not helpful, and it is a safety issue for the children as well. About 30 or 40 children walk the streets in this area each morning to go to school. They are requesting a review of this to see if there is a way around any kind of option at the school. It is a school problem but it has been made a community problem because it will affect the local area.

Mr. Calhoun continued that he is asking the MSFI Committee to see if things could be done differently and to ask if the proper channels have been gone through. It seems like this was done in very little time.

Councilor Manwaring stated that the Councilors present this evening will ask questions and then staff will comment and then the public can speak.

Councilor Hooper asked if it is correct that the bus circle has been completed. Mr. Calhoun replied yes.

The City Attorney, Tom Mullins, stated that people from the Keene School District (KSD) are here, too. He continued that Chair Manwaring might want to call on them.

Chair Manwaring asked if there are sidewalks on Wheelock Street. Mr. Calhoun replied on one side, yes, and on one side of Pine Avenue. He continued that there is none on Newman Street, which is adjacent to Wheelock Street.

Chair Manwaring asked to hear from the Keene School District.

Robert Malay, of 5 Morgan Lane, identified himself as the Superintendent of the KSD (Keene School District) and SAU 29. He stated that Symonds School Principal Richard Cate is here with him, as is Kenneth Dooley, Director of Buildings and Grounds, and they can provide more detail than he can. He continued that he would defer to them for questions.

Richard Cate, of Westmoreland, stated that he has been the principal of Symonds School for 40 years. He continued that the building was built in 1928 and at that point only had walking access. They added a wing in 1952, changing the entranceway. Access was through Wheelock Park. It has continued that way. As the school has grown in size, and particularly with the advent of modern transportation, increasing numbers of students are driven to and from school. Traffic congestion in the park has been a long-standing issue. There were a series of near misses starting in 2015. A student and a staff member were each bumped by a car, for example. The traffic is backed up in the morning and afternoon and is in gridlock.

Mr. Cate continued that he and other KSD staff have been looking at this situation for a long time. The Keene Police Department has sent staff from their Traffic Department out several times. There have been consultations. The bus company complained about the

situation because they could not even get in because of all the cars in the loop. He and KSD staff started to investigate and it took a couple years to settle on this option, with the bus circle out back. Budgets are tough; it took a long time to get the project included in the budget. In the spring, it was rumored that there was money to do this project. They were not sure it was funded until September. At that point, it became clear that the funds would be available. He noted Mr. Dooley sent him an email on about September 24, saying that they had the money and the project would start the next week. At that point, he sent the letter to abutters. He only chose the residents on the actual route of the bus and did not notify the rest of the neighborhood. Only one person showed up at the first meeting. Police have looked at the situation and believe that overall, and given the safety issues they have had at the front of the building, this is the safest alternative for the children. They looked at the issues. The project is taking place.

Kenneth Dooley, resident of Marlow, stated that the project is nearing completion. He continued that they did not find out until the end of the summer that they had funds for this project. The Keene Board of Education (KBE) directed them to complete the Symonds School circle. They had to move fast due to weather and contractor obligations. The circle will not be in use until further discussion.

Chair Manwaring asked if there has been parent or neighborhood input while the investigation of options was happening. Mr. Cate replied that the PTA has given input, but they had not had a neighborhood meeting. He continued that this project was a dream they had and they investigated different alternatives and felt this was the best one to make the situation better. It was the best way to separate buses from parent and pedestrian traffic as much as possible. There is a sidewalk that runs adjacent to Wheelock Street. It has been a dead end and no longer will be, at least for a half hour each in the morning and afternoon.

Chair Manwaring asked how many buses there are. Mr. Cate replied four or five. He continued that it varies; sometimes Special Education students are bused in. Next year there might be fewer buses once the school start time is changed.

Councilor Filiault asked if it is correct that the new bus route has not yet been implemented. Mr. Cate replied that that is correct. He continued that they have been following the same traffic patterns they have had for 20 years, until it is determined that this new situation is safe and everyone is satisfied.

The City Manager stated that the City reviewed this. She continued that the Police Department has been at the school. They thought that this would be an improvement to the safety. All that the City thinks needs to occur is for the KSD to go through the Planning Board to get a curb cut approved. That has not occurred. However, that would be an application that would need to come from the KSD. The City Council cannot make a motion and make the KSD do that. She has talked with the Superintendent and they are willing to do that.

Chair Manwaring asked what a curb cut does.

Mr. Blomquist, Public Works Director and Emergency Management, stated that the City became aware of this project at Symonds School when their contractor dropped construction plans off as informational. He continued that to give a brief history, in 1927 City Council discontinued Wheelock Street for about 500 feet to provide space for construction of the school. Staff did quick research of the 1949 flyovers – it appeared that there was an access point at the end of Wheelock Street but it did not appear to be used; all of the access appeared to be coming from Wheelock Park and that area. They looked at the 1984 flyovers. Those had a better indication of the gate and lock. Staff's opinion is that that has not been an access point for a very long time, if ever. The KSD did not realize that access to public ways requires a driveway permit, issued through RSA 236-13. The State has granted the Department of Transportation (NHDOT) Commissioner and the legislative bodies the authority to regulate access from private properties onto public ways.

Mr. Blomquist continued that in this case the City Council has delegated that authority to the Planning Board. The Planning Board issues all driveway permits through their site plan approval process or a permitting process, for which applicants apply. Some people say, "I've been here a very long time and never got a permit." When the RSA was adopted, the legislation said, "The Department of Transportation Commissioner or Planning Board shall retain continuing jurisdiction over the adequacy and safety of every existing driveway, entrance, exit, and approach to highways, whether or not an access was constructed or installed pursuant to a permit under this section." This means the Planning Board has authority to give a permit for these changes to Symonds School. The KSD would submit an application, and staff would review it and talk with the applicant if needed, and the Planning Board would review it at one of their meetings and issue a decision. Chapter 70 is the design standards that deals with design in Keene. Section 135 deals with driveway standards, mostly safety-oriented around the access point, looking at sight distance and that sort of thing. It is not a City Council process; it is a Planning Board process.

Councilor Lamoureux asked, if the Planning Board authorizes the curb cut, does that mean they can move the gate any time they want, or would that be part of the process? Mr. Blomquist replied that it depends on the conditions on the permit. He continued that the permit may restrict the times the gate can be opened. Today it may be opened and closed. The Planning Board does not look at just today; they also look into the future, because a driveway permit is a permanent right. There may be conditions after today. There might be a condition to say, "If you change the use you have to come back and see the Planning Board."

Councilor Filiault asked the City Attorney for clarification. Outside of the Councilors offering their opinions tonight, what legal structure do they have? Do they only have their personal opinions to offer? The City Attorney replied yes, essentially. He continued that that is why staff recommends the committee accept this as informational. It has to go to the Planning Board. Any discussion the committee has tonight is just

discussion. He encourages people from the neighborhood to attend the Planning Board meeting as well.

Councilor Filiault asked if the committee should make a motion to send this to the Planning Board. The City Attorney replied no, this is a little different. He gave an example of a past incident when it was appropriate for the committee to make a motion like that. He explained that this is different because it is up to the applicant to bring the matter to the Planning Board and file the application for the driveway permit. That is why staff recommends the committee accept it as informational.

Chair Manwaring stated that she heard tonight that people have concerns about children's safety, walking to school in that area. She asked Mr. Blomquist if the Planning Board would address that. Mr. Blomquist replied that he couldn't say what the Planning Board will address. He continued that for all driveway permit applications, they look at the conditions, and the effect on the area. If pedestrians are a concern, the Planning Board will discuss it. Their rules to follow are in Section 135.

Chair Manwaring asked to hear from the public.

Councilor Jones stated that the committee is hearing what has to be done with the KSD and the Planning Board but they are not addressing what the neighbors are asking for. He continued that they do not want the traffic coming through there. He wants to know if staff can suggest another way. Is there some kind of thing they can do in Wheelock Park, like a turnaround? He thinks the neighbors want another option, so that the buses are not using Newman Street. That is the heart of the matter, not whether to get a driveway permit.

Lisa Bowman of Russell Street stated that she has children at Symonds School. She continued that her concern is that when they did the study and gave statistics for walkers, it was grossly understated. It does not address the traffic going in and out of Wheelock Park and causing traffic jams. Children would still have to jump across the Wheelock Park entrance to get in and out of the school. With the new sidewalks going in, she wants to know if there is a plan to move the crossing guard to the entrance to Wheelock Park for the children's safety.

Chair Manwaring asked who does the crossing guards. The City Manager replied the Police Department. She continued that she does not know the answer but she knows they are moving the crossing as part of this new improvement. They are looking to take it a little bit away from that intersection and maybe that will address it. She thinks the crossing guard will be where they put the crosswalk, which is not as far down as Ms. Bowman is recommending.

Councilor O'Connor stated that he appreciates the neighborhood bringing this forward. He continued that he also commends Mr. Cate who has been the principal for 40 years doing his own studies and trying to figure this out. It is dangerous out front. Trying to come up with a plan is important. He went on to suggest an official traffic study to be

done. Mr. Cate did his own and has notes and ideas, but they should have an official one, with a combination of City staff and KSD staff to appease both sides and come up with a compromise. The City Council is hearing a lot about neighborhoods and safety lately. These conversations have led to changes. The MSFI Committee has a decision to make. They should look at the whole situation and what is happening in this neighborhood. Maybe staff can do something like what Councilor Jones mentioned.

Chair Manwaring asked to hear from Mr. Blomquist, asking if he can come up with any other ideas. Mr. Blomquist replied that they have professional staff that can assist, but in many ways, this is like any other private property owner who is doing something to their own property, following the regulations of the City. If the KSD wants to chat with the City, they are open to that, like they are with any property owner.

Councilor Filiault stated that this is frustrating and he is grappling with where the committee can go with this. They are not on the school board and cannot see the whole situation. The City Council listens to neighborhoods. When virtually a whole neighborhood says they do not like a plan, the City Council listens. Clearly, this neighborhood does not like the plan. The City Council is limited. Councilor O'Connor is correct. This seems like trying to fix a problem by creating a bigger problem. Is there anything the City Council can do to prevent this? Why do this plan if so many people are against it? He thinks more talk needs to happen. The neighbors are showing frustration from not having been in the loop long enough. He hopes the KSD can slow this down and talk more. The Planning Board can slow things down if they choose to. The City Council members can call the Planning Board members and encourage that. Sometimes the City Council goes at a snail's pace but sometimes they get it right by going slow. More people need to get involved with this. If this were a City issue, he would say no to this plan. He thinks this should not be pushed through.

Councilor Lamoureux stated that he agrees, but that is what the Planning Board process is for. He continued that the KSD needs to apply to the Planning Board so all of that discussion can happen, to look at safety and all those things. This is the way to go to make the process work. All of that will come up during the Planning Board process. Everyone can have his or her say in the proper forum.

Councilor Hooper stated that he agrees with Councilor Lamoureux and Councilor Filiault. He continued that it obviously needs more discussion. The KSD came forth with their plan and he gives them credit: safety was their concern. The neighbors have more concerns beyond that. The conversation needs to continue. He thinks the Planning Board should discuss all of these concerns.

Mr. Malay stated that on October 23 the KSD slowed the process to a halt. He continued that they have stopped moving forward with any changes in traffic flow. They were notified on October 25 about the need for the driveway permit. He understands that the City Council is limited. The KSD wants to do right, too. They want to make sure students are safe. He will have his staff work with City staff to see if they see something that has not been looked at yet. They have a discussion planned November 21 at



Symonds School, not just for the neighbors, but also for the parents who drop their children off and the parents of children who ride the buses and of the children who walk from the other side of the school. It will be an expanded conversation. They are doing exactly what the City Council is saying. Those processes are in motion.

Councilor Filiault asked if Mr. Malay/the KSD has objections to seeking the permit from the Planning Board. Mr. Malay replied no, they will follow the process that everyone is expected to follow.

Councilor Clark stated that it seems like this whole problem is emanating from the fact that so many people are driving their children to and from school and blocking the entrance. He continued that over the last dozen years or so the City has spent so much money, millions, on Safe Routes to School (SRTS). The KSD should think about communicating with parents about how it is not that dangerous to let children walk to and from school. It needs to be thought about. There currently is a very dangerous situation with traffic. He tries to avoid certain streets when school is beginning or ending. People could solve this themselves without having to spend a lot of money on circles like this. They could ask themselves whether they could do measures in their own homes and families to make this a better situation.

Wanda Schumann stated that she has lived on Wheelock Street for over 40 years. She continued that her only point is the safety of the children. It has always been an issue. There is a gate that separates the school from Wheelock Street. There are children running all over and parents coming through there, and it is awful. She is surprised a child has not been hurt or killed there. When the neighborhood has all of this heaped on them, it is overwhelming to know that the KSD has decided this is the best way to take care of the problem. Wheelock Street is 20 feet wide. Can you imagine the great big buses come down it? That does not make sense. She has a problem with what the KSD thinks needs to be done.

Chair Manwaring replied that the Planning Board would look at the width of the streets.

Sarah Chavira, of 41 Russell Street, stated that she walks children to and from Symonds School. She continued that she echoes Ms. Schumann's concerns about the narrow width of the street, and in the winter, she mostly has to walk with the children in the street because the sidewalks are not plowed well. Neighbors brought up that concern at the meeting at Symonds and the answer was, the KSD assumes that the City takes care of plowing the sidewalks. Mr. Cate spends all of his time at the front of the school dealing with the dangerous situation. He did not know there has been a problem with the clearing of the snow. It is already a treacherous walk without the added traffic. Then you add the people who want to bypass the mess at the front and drop the children off in the back. If this goes through, how would they prevent parents in cars doing that also in the bus area? Are they allowed to say it is for buses only? Neighbors asked about getting a crossing guard for Newman Street, which crosses Wheelock Street, and were told it is not in the budget. Children's safety is the concern.

Councilor Jones stated to the neighbors that the Planning Board has criteria they have to follow, including traffic and safety. He continued that the neighborhood should go to the Planning Board meeting. They need actual numbers and to prove their point; they cannot just say, “We have a lot of traffic.”

Chair Manwaring encouraged neighbors to attend the Planning Board meeting. She continued that the City Council hears their concerns.

Councilor Filiault stated that the committee is limited as to what they can do, so they will accept this as informational. He continued that the City Council will always listen. School issues do not always come to the City Council, but if anyone needs someone to talk to or to ask the City Council to make recommendations to the Planning Board, they can call the City Council members – their numbers are public.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the communication as informational.

**3) Councilor Philip Jones – Maintenance of the Wilson Pond Dam on Arch Street and Communication from Robert Malay/Keene School District – Maintenance of the Wilson Pond Dam**

Councilor Jones stated that he sent this to get it on the agenda and thinks it is very important. He continued that his letter spells out dates that came from the Keene Board of Education (KBE). They want the City to take over the dam. They are willing to build a new one. They want the City to take over maintenance by January 3, 2020. He does not think that will happen. There is a question as to who owns it. Does the KBE have the right to make this proposal, since it is not really their property? He has been finding different things from different people. This was gifted from Phineas Chamberlin, the original owner of Keene Industrial Paper and Kipco Party Outlet. There are permits that need to be done. He has been finding out more from staff and they will talk about the legalese.

Councilor Jones continued that he wants to talk about what happens if the dam goes away. About 15 to 20 years ago, there was an article in the Keene Sentinel about how environmentally sensitive the area is. There were pictures of children catching turtles in the pond. The flora and fauna might be endangered. That pond affects the market value of people who live around it. They need to look upstream and downstream. There is a park kind of behind Shadow Lane that many might not know is there, an area which is environmentally sensitive. Near the parking lot of Pizza Down Under, there are wetlands because of the dam and those would go away if the dam went away. There are sensitive wetlands downstream, too, at the end of Bent Court. The brook meets up with White Brook and it would affect the flow there, too. Arch Street is flood prone. The Arch Street condominiums sometimes have had over two feet of water, and flooding could

increase if the water is coming straight down. There are many issues that need to be tackled with this. He does not know what is going to happen. There are people who want to talk about it. Councilor Jones showed photos of animals that thrive in or around the pond, including turtle, deer, and bears. He continued that this is an important part of Keene's green space.

Councilor Jones continued that this issue has to move along, but it is not up to the City Council, it is up to the KSD (Keene School District) to get straight who owns the dam, who has rights, and more. Some of those questions are answered in the letter from the Superintendent and he thanks him.

The City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, stated that the dam itself is owned by the Keene Athletic Association (KAA). She continued that the City is in a difficult situation. The reason the KSD is approaching the City is because they have an agreement with the KAA to maintain that dam and it needs about half a million dollars in repairs. The KBE voted to repair the dam if a third party would take over the future maintenance of it; otherwise, they were inclined to have the dam removed, which is a cheaper option. She asked the Superintendent to forward this letter. The City did not have information about what they were proposing. If the City takes over the maintenance, if the City Council and the KAA decide that, then they have to clearly identify the public benefit. The environment is a public benefit. She had discussed other things with the KSD as well. When the dam was given to the KAA they were given the land that abuts it and have created athletic facilities there. She continued that she discussed with the Superintendent whether there would be public benefit, not just the dam, but maybe the rest of the property deeded along with the dam – for, say, public use of the fields. She also looked at parking/access to the dam, and whether the City would be able to use the facilities of the school to have some public parking. There were a lot of ideas to discuss. They had not gotten to any agreement on what the public benefits might be.

The City Manager continued that she received a letter from the Superintendent on Friday, saying that the KSD is looking to just give someone (i.e. the City) the maintenance and upkeep of the dam, but is not looking at the public use of fields, because the fields are important for the school. If the City Council is interested in moving this conversation along, they need to be having it with the KAA and the KSD at the table. The KSD and the KAA need to define the public benefit and negotiate with the City what they are willing to give. It is great that they are willing to spend the money to repair the dam, but there are other options, too. City staff are asking for time, to talk with the KAA, to see if they want this to occur, and then have all three parties discuss how to move forward, if the City Council wants. The KSD does not want to be in the dam business, and they are under a time crunch from the KBE, but it is a long, environmental process to remove a dam. The KBE may have decided on a date to make a decision, but the removal process would be a lengthy one. She hopes the KBE will give more time and the City Council will give the City time to bring all the parties to the table and come back to the City Council with a more complete picture.

Mr. Blomquist, Public Works Director and Emergency Management, stated that this was originally given to the KAA by the Bents in 1961. He continued that in that gift, they said, "In trust for the use and benefit, the KAA use of the athletic fields for games and exercises of said high school and for other public schools or of said city, and for such other school uses or similar public purposes as the trustees and their successors shall from time to time designate." When the Bents gave this to the KAA they did set up some specific conditions of their gift. The KSD has been utilizing this. In the deed, they also indicate that the boundary is the high water mark. He continued that it is all one parcel. It is not like the pond is one and the field is another. The fact that it says "to the high water mark" means that even the adjacent property owners only own up to the high water mark. They do not have property rights to the land under the pond. There was a mention of the City in 2004 – property owners abutting the area were selling an estate and they offered the City a small section of land to the high water mark. The City does not technically own/have permission to go onto the pond. This is also the area where Mr. Bohannon indicated there have been Eagle Scout projects to install benches.

Mr. Blomquist continued that a concern is that there is not good access for public purpose, as there is no public parking. In addition, the idea of the City maintaining the dam goes against the issue of not expending public funds on private property. There has to be a public interest. This land and dam is owned by a private interest, the KAA. There has to be a public purpose, as the City Manager indicated she is working on with the KSD. Why would the City expend public money on maintaining this structure? The KSD is represented by DuBois & King, and has been talking with the Dam Bureau; the City has not been involved in any of the discussion or design. The KBE has looked at three options – keeping the dam, removing it, or reducing the height. It is about eight feet today. If it is six feet or below it is not considered a dam. That might not drain the pond. He encourages them to look at that possible third option. This City Council is aware of the conversations they (the City and community) have had about the West Street Dam and the necessary processes for removal. An environmental review might indicate that the removal of the Wilson Pond Dam is not an option. So the KBE gave that deadline but it could just be a starting point.

Councilor Hooper stated that as Councilor Jones mentioned, there is a lot of wildlife at the pond. He continued that it is a beautiful spot to photograph wildlife. It is enjoyed by the neighbors. From that point of view it would be a shame if it went away. Environmental impact is a huge consideration and that needs to be discussed in detail and cannot be decided by January 3. He wants to see this slowed down and have it studied thoroughly, regarding what to do.

Chair Manwaring asked to hear from the KSD.

Mr. Dooley, Director of Buildings and Grounds, stated that both parties represented where they are very well. He continued that yes, the deadline imposed by the KBE is really the starting point. They have been looking at this dam for a few years. They have DuBois & King consulting. They wanted to know what they could do to rehabilitate the dam. It has been classified to "low menace" instead of "non-menace." They looked at

the costs of the three options: rehabilitation, rehabilitation lowering, and removal. The price of rehabilitation lowering is about the same, maybe a little less, than rehabilitation. It would still be somewhat of a pond, more like a flooded stream. They are talking with the City. They are just trying to keep this ball rolling.

The City Manager stated that staff recommends this go on more time.

James Phippard, of 81 Arch Street, stated that he is an abutter to the pond and can see the dam from his window. He continued that he enjoys the wildlife year-round. There are public benefits to having the pond there, not just for abutters. There is a limited public access today. Most people who do not live in the neighborhood park by the maintenance building or Alumni Field and sometimes ask him to park in his driveway to unload their kayak or canoe. There is a small park there, Bent's Ice House Park, and remnants of the icehouse are still there. It is a stone foundation, and at the bottom is the remnant pieces of the metal conveyers once used to get ice out of the pond. It is a historic property as well. Public benefits also include the educational benefits. High school students have used that pond for years to conduct pretty extensive environmental studies. They have worked with the NH Fish and Game Department and have monitored migratory ponds, tagging migratory geese, and more. He does not know if any are endangered, but in the permitting world, migratory birds are protected. That is a hurdle to altering the environment. He has learned a lot about Canada Geese and they are a protected migratory bird. He has talked with consultants who do environmental impact studies relating to the removal of dams and learned that such a study can take up to two years to determine all of the effects. When you remove a pond on a small brook, it has a dramatic effect on an environmentally-sensitive area. He does not know if any of the turtles are endangered but annually he watches them bury their eggs in his backyard and he and his family try to help the babies get into the water. He has seen herons, eagles, hawks, and so on and so forth.

Mr. Phippard continued that he wrote to Councilors in Ward 5 and he asks that the City consider taking over the maintenance expense for this dam. He and the other abutters are somewhat already paying for part of the maintenance expense. Twenty years ago when he had his house assessed, there was an additional \$20,000 in property value because of the pond. If it is still that much at the current tax rate, he is paying over \$700 dollars per year because he has frontage on the pond. The City probably gets about a third of it and the KSD gets the rest. The KSD has been saying the expense is coming out of "all of your pockets." It is not a gift to them or a free ride to the abutters because they are paying because of the additional assessment. He hopes the committee agrees it is reasonable for the City to take over that expense. He talked with Mr. Blomquist about how much it costs to do the normal maintenance of a small dam; it is not really an earthen dam, there is a wood structure inside of it. The bulk of the maintenance work is a crew of people going in with weed whackers and removing the woody vegetation so the roots do not cause damage, unless there is some major erosion event. Most of the time that would not be a big deal. The KSD did not have the staff or equipment to do it, so over time, the trees have gotten too large and erosion was caused. That is what got them to this point.

Maintenance done on a regular basis would make it work. He hopes the City Council supports this request as it works its way through the system.

Kendall Lane, of 5 Hastings Avenue, stated that he is here as an abutter of the pond. He continued that he has had the opportunity to attend many of the Facility Committee meetings of the KBE. He was there when the recommendation was made for the KSD to fund the dam repairs in exchange for some third party, principally the City, taking over the maintenance, which is a leasehold on the dam. Mr. Dooley was correct. They spent four years without being able to come to a resolution. The KSD does not know anything about dams. Their role is education. They want to move this forward. If the City is moving forward and making reasonable progress, the January 3 date will not hinder anyone. The discussions will go on far beyond that. If the City is clearly not interested, the KSD will start the process of removing the dam. That is why this is before the City Council. It is necessary for this to be a public process to determine the City's role. The City made some modifications to the fiscal policy to encourage cooperation with the KSD and find ways to share expenses and this certainly fits in that category. The City owns property on both ends of the pond. The Shadow Lane small park is on one end and the area adjacent to the dam on the other end is owned by the City. Many people fish there.

Mayor Lane continued that Mr. Blomquist raised the possibility of lowering the level of the pond. That was sort of explored. At the dam, the water is about six or seven feet deep but it quickly peters out. His house is about a quarter mile from the dam and there the water is only two or three feet deep. So there is not a lot to work with there. All they want now is some consideration by the City Council that they are willing to explore with the KSD and the KAA the possibility of the City taking over the maintenance. He met with the trustees of the KAA tonight and their feeling is a leasehold interest could be accomplished in fairly short order. If someone wants to own a portion of the property the KAA are willing to sell, but it would be a long, difficult process. Simply setting up a leasehold interest for the City for the maintenance for the dam would be a fairly simple process.

Chair Manwaring asked if anyone from the public or committee had questions. Hearing none, she asked, if the committee places this on more time, will that be enough in order for the parties to continue this process? The City Manager replied yes. She continued that she talked with the Superintendent tonight and he agreed that that would work.

Councilor Lamoureux made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommended placing this item on more time.

#### **4) Roaring Brook Watershed Management Plan – Public Works Department**

Aaron Costa, Operations Manager of Drinking Water and Waste Water Facilities, stated

that Peter Walker from VHB Consulting is here. He continued that he will give a brief background on the project and then hand it over to Mr. Walker. The City owns about 2,500 acres of watershed land, mostly located in Roxbury, including Babbage Reservoir and Woodward Pond. Development on and around the watershed is limited. The Roaring Brook Watershed is accessible by class V and VI roadways. There is limited security, but the City contracts with the Town of Roxbury for minimal patrol services. The City funded a watershed management plan through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. The scope of the work was fairly extensive, including water quality, security, and an infrastructure and natural resource inventory. A committee was formed, of people with a vested interest, including a Roxbury Selectman, representatives from the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), a member of the City's Conservation Commission, and people from the Planning and Finance Departments. Mr. Costa went on to introduce Mr. Walker to speak to the Committee.

Peter Walker from VHB Consulting stated that Keene is fortunate to have a resource like this watershed. He continued that it is about 3,200 acres of land, in Roxbury, Nelson, Marlborough, and Harrisville. He showed a map including the Roaring Brook Watershed. He stated that the green line is the boundary of what contributes to the city's water supply. The yellow line is the boundary refined through this study: what the City currently owns. When you overlay the two, the City owns about 1,965 acres of the 3,200 total, which is about two thirds of the watershed. About a third is privately owned.

Mr. Walker continued that VHB had a number of tasks. It was important to look at the road inventory and public access. There are a series of trails and unclassified roads. They studied all the maps the City had on hand and maps from the State archives, GIS data, and GPS data. They remapped the roads on the ground to develop a more complete set of maps showing roadways. They used a tool to rank the condition of the roads, from "good" to "completely failed." They generated information regarding the legal status of the roads. The map has a red line overlay to show town-maintained roads (class V), and a green line to show public rights-of-ways (class VI), subject to gates and bars. The blue symbols represent gates and security measures Mr. Costa and his staff have installed and maintained. The City has done a good job of notifying people that it is private property and sensitive property. Access to and activity in the watershed is limited to protect it and the City has done a good job with that. There are some recommendations for improvements along those lines.

Mr. Walker stated that roadway conditions essentially are very rough; there are two-track and single-track type roads. There is some erosion, and some contribution to that from ATV use, but that is not a major concern and for the most part the quality of the water was extremely good. There were three places where VHB recommended improvements to perimeter control – there is access via Grimes Road and they recommend installing another gate. There is an access point on the southwest point of the property that is unclassified; it is not a public road and there should be gates and signs. In addition, on Horse Hill there is another unclassified roadway that needs gates and signs.

Mr. Walker continued that when they started the project they considered the possibility of using portions of the watershed for recreation or allowing public access. They talked with other watershed managers and quickly ruled that out. Keene has a pristine watershed and they do not want to encourage public access. That has caused problems in other watersheds.

Mr. Walker continued that they developed a timber type map. Timber has not been harvested in the land since the late 1970s and early 1980s. There is a large stand of mature red oak. The ecological integrity of the land is very high; this is intact forest. They laid out the pros and cons of timber management. There can be some ecological benefits, and some disadvantages. They found that harvesting timber would impact the chance of having water quality issues.

Regarding the water quality, Mr. Walker continued, they collected new data at nine locations, including Woodward Pond and Babbage Reservoir. They used the samples to build a watershed model. It allows them to make predictions. It is calibrated to the existing conditions. It allows them to predict the water quality effects of different land management strategies. The City owns about two thirds of the watershed. What would happen if the remaining land were developed? They found that that is the biggest risk to water quality, of all of the things that could happen.

Mr. Walker continued that the final part is VHB's findings and recommendations, and a few of the items are already in progress through Mr. Costa and his staff. One of the first recommendations is to have an annual water quality-monitoring program. That is already in process thanks to grant funds. Also, they should address the erosion issues. There is an ongoing maintenance program doing that. It is surprising that there has never been a comprehensive survey of the parcel. They recommend that the City commission a full survey. That would flesh out the data gaps. Additional recommendations are about researching the status of the roadways and improving signage and gates at certain access points, which needs to be done in conjunction with the Town of Roxbury's Select Board; and developing a forest management plan; considering preservation of additional lands within the watershed; and creating a long-term stewardship and monitoring program of the watershed to protect water quality and natural resources.

Mr. Blomquist, Public Works Director and Emergency Management, thanked Mr. Costa and Ben Crowder, Water Treatment Facility Manager, for their work. He continued that this is a project that has been at the top of his own list for the past 20 years. The watershed is very important. He was reading meeting minutes from 1902, and the City at that time was looking at purchasing property in Roxbury for the watershed. In staff's recommendation to the City Council then, they used the words "to maintain the pristine water quality for the future of the city." Hats off to them, who visualized the importance of control of and maintenance of water quality. As he always says, it is easier to protect water by keepings things out, than to treat once something has gone in.

He continued that the rationale for the watershed management plan is: over the years, people have asked questions about why not harvest timber within it, or why not allow



public access or activities, and so on and so forth. The study puts those issues into perspective for not just this City Council, but future City Councils. It also helps with the City's relationship with the Town of Roxbury. The City owns a significant portion of the Town's land, and many private property owners abut City-owned land. There are many class VI roads that still have public access. These are ongoing conversations the City has with the Town. Staff recommends that the MSFI Committee accept this plan. Over time, the City Council will be seeing different items in the operational budget, and possibly items in the CIP, and staff will continue to seek grant funds. They will be using this as their plan for how to continue to work with the watershed, and to answer people's questions about why not do this or that.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommended accepting the Roaring Brook Watershed Management Plan.

#### **5) Marlboro Street Corridor Improvements – Public Works Department**

Brett Rusnock, Civil Engineer, introduced DuBois & King consultants Chuck Goodling and Nick Sceggell. He continued that in 2018 they started the design process for utility upgrades on Marlboro Street. Construction started last month near the intersection of Marlboro Street and Adams Street to build new sewer mains. It will continue as weather allows and resume in the spring. In the fall, they submitted an application to the NHDOT (New Hampshire Department of Transportation) for a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant. It is a federal program administered through the NHDOT to promote multi-use transportation options. In January, they were notified that the City was selected. The grant is providing about \$500,000 to implement these Complete Streets features. Staff undertook a good number of public engagement methods. They had two public meetings, one in January and one in October, with about 75 total attendees. They received a lot of good feedback, from residents, business owners, abutters, and other stakeholders. They took those comments, revised the design where possible, met with many individual property owners and had those discussions, talked with other City departments, and talked with the City's insurance carrier. They believe what they are showing tonight are the best possible solutions.

Nick Sceggell, Project Manager with DuBois & King, stated that part of the project is the study phase. He continued that tonight he and Mr. Goodling will present findings from that and present a proposed action. They articulated the purpose of the project: to improve safety, to support all modes of transportation and to help identify the alternative that best meets the need. They are looking to improve safety, circulation for all modes of transportation, and a connection to downtown from the Cheshire Rail Trail. There has been a lot of work in the past on Marlboro Street; they are not starting from scratch. They wanted to build on what has already happened. In 2014 and 2015 there were multiple studies and projects, from land use and zoning to a SRTS (Safe Routes to School) project for Wheelock Elementary School, which is located at the intersection of Adams, and

Marlboro, and Grove Streets. There is discussion about the Complete Streets design guidelines, which Marlboro Street is incorporated into, so they took design guidelines from that.

Mr. Sceggell continued that the existing corridor is a straight shot from Main Street to Eastern Avenue. Pavement widths vary. He showed a photo of the widest part. He continued that travel lanes are up to 19 feet wide. The guidelines show being able to use 10- to 12-foot travel lanes. There are two segments of Marlboro Street, eastern and western. The western segment, from Main Street to Baker Street, is more commercial and has multi-family homes, and it is important to utilize parking on one or both sides of the street. They want to have a parallel parking lane about 8 feet wide, a 6-foot bike lane on the same side as parking, two travel lanes of 10.5 feet each, and a bike lane of 5 feet on the other side.

Mr. Sceggell continued that at the intersection at Grove Street and Adams Street by Wheelock School, there is a school crossing with a crossing guard. They want it to be safer, by narrowing the travel lanes to reduce speeds and providing some visual shifts to slow vehicular traffic, and adding a left hand turn lane. This intersection has had some history. The City has done some improvements here. Feedback from the public included the recommended removal of a tree in front of 114 Grove Street, because it affects sight distances for drivers traveling off that street. At the most recent public input meeting, residents shared concerns about left-hand turns and safety, and as a result, DuBois & King produced a different option of having the crosswalk on the eastern side of Grove Street, instead of the initially-proposed western side. They looked again at traffic turning movements out of Grove Street, from the Safe Routes to School Action Plan, and made changes based on the findings. They found that fewer cars would have a conflict with pedestrians if the crosswalk were moved to the east side. Other factors were the Grove Street sidewalks continuing to the north, so having a crosswalk on that side provides continuity with the neighborhood to the north. Just to the west, there is parking. There is proposed parking on both sides of the street in this area, which will shift to just one side as they move east. That allows them to take advantage of the existing curb widths. They are trying to fit this project within the budget, and thus limiting the curb movements to fit the new configuration into the existing curb footprint.

Mr. Sceggell continued that moving east; there is the intersection at Jennison Street. The slides show some of the improvements they are trying to do in conjunction with private property owners. There is a large curb cut for the laundromat, and to make it safer, they want to close that up and will work with the landowner to address improvements within the right-of-way that can work for everyone. It is about providing adequate parking and circulation for the business, while improving safety for pedestrians. Also in this area is the first “chicane,” or shift in the travel lane. It shifts slightly south, where the parking is moved from the south side of the street to the north side. The shifts provide traffic calming/slowing, so vehicles do not have a straight runway through the corridor. They also proposed a new crosswalk at Kelleher Street.

Mr. Sceggell continued that at the crossing of Beaver Brook is the chicane coming back to realign the road to the north. They want to add additional green space, reducing pavement, which will yield storm water benefits. During the preliminary design they will investigate which storm water best practices they can implement; they have ideas in terms of vegetation, trees, and/or swales that provide some infiltration and treatment.

Continuing further east, Mr. Sceggell noted there is another chicane lane shift and a new crosswalk at Baker Street and Bartholomew Court, and some parking spaces created in front of the Butterfly Park. The idea would be to use this as a bus stop at some point. They would keep the spaces as parking until there is a regular bus stop there. As they move to the east they will start to eliminate the parking on the street because more lots are available.

A typical cross section as they go from Baker Street to Eastern Avenue would have two 10.5 foot travel lanes (narrower than the existing ones), 5 foot bike lanes, and a no parking lane, similar to the existing conditions. In this area, the speed limit is 25 mph and they want cars to more closely react to that.

Chair Manwaring stated that the speed limit is 30 mph. Mr. Sceggell stated that Google shows a sign saying “25 mph” traveling east and “30 mph” traveling west. Regardless, they are trying to slow people down by narrowing the lanes. As they move east the existing pavement widths shrink. They are trying to fit within the footprint to fit within the budget.

At the end of the project, the bike lanes would end/start in this location, depending on which way one is traveling. As bikes come into the corridor, they want to direct them into the bike lane to promote the use of that facility.

Mr. Sceggell continued that another key component is the connection to the Cheshire Rail Trail. This is the DPW (Department of Public Works) parcel at the end of Bartholomew Court. The trail would be 8 feet wide and multi-use, to allow bikes and pedestrians. The recommended alternative is one where they have routed the trail essentially around the DPW parking lot to minimize impacts or conflicts between pedestrians and DWP operations or visitors to the facility. They have some vegetated areas and landscaping to try to separate the parking from the trail, and additional lighting for visibility and safety. They considered other alternatives, such as having the trail go through the parking lot, but they wanted to enhance safety for bikes and pedestrians and this is best done by having the trail go around the parking lot. He continued that DuBois & King also had feedback from City staff, regarding their preferences, and from the City’s insurance carrier.

Mr. Sceggell asked Mr. Rusnock to talk about the next steps.

Mr. Rusnock stated that he hopes the MSFI Committee will recommend the Proposed Action as proposed. He continued that this is a NHDOT project that requires three reviews from NHDOT and based on what has happened with previous projects they think that those reviews may take quite a bit of time. Staff’s goal is to have final approval by

spring of next year but that is subject to some of those NHDOT timelines that the City is not in control of. Technically, according to the NHDOT Ten Year Plan the funds are programmed for FY 2026. However, the City was informed of that by noticing that the Ten Year Plan had been delayed several years and talking with NHDOT about that. He continued that NHDOT said if the City is able to have a “shovel-ready project” they may be able to allocate funds that had been unable to go to another community if that other community did not have a project ready to go. They do not know.

Councilor Filiault asked if the Victoria Street extension was considered for this project. Mr. Rusnock replied that they are not considering that for this project. He continued that the scope of their grant application was focused on the improvements at the Wheelock School intersection, Baker Street intersection, and the Cheshire Rail Trail at Marlboro Street. Councilor Filiault asked the City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon: that would not cause any major impact, would it? The City Manager replied no.

Chair Manwaring asked if, as part of this project, the small park at the end of Eastern Avenue would be eliminated. Mr. Rusnock replied that that triangular wedge of property created by Optical Avenue and Tiffin Street is a privately-owned parcel the City is not in control of, thus, this project would not have any intended effect on that.

Chair Manwaring asked for public comments or questions.

Raleigh Ormerod, 4 Monadnock Court, stated that he lives about two blocks from where Marlboro Street and Wheelock School are. He continued that he attended the public input meeting, and spoke a lot with residents in that neighborhood and with the principal of Wheelock School. He sees that the City wants to move the crosswalk to the east instead of the west. He asked if this was based on looking at pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Sceggell replied that it was part of the traffic study from the SRTS study. Mr. Ormerod stated that he thought the SRTS study recommended it be on the other side. Mr. Sceggell replied that at the public input meeting, DuBois & King misspoke. He continued that the SRTS study did not have a specific recommendation; it only recommended that this be looked at. Mr. Ormerod replied that they should look at it very carefully then. He continued that the Principal of Wheelock School, Patty Yoerger, was really looking forward to it being on the east as originally planned and she does not know it has changed. She knows there is more traffic. But he asked, and she said only five students cross and go north on Grove Street. The main pedestrian route is the other way, where the crosswalk would have been before. He asked them to check on that and check with Ms. Yoerger.

Chair Manwaring asked if there were any additional comments or questions. Hearing none, she asked for a motion.

Councilor Lamoureux made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the proposed corridor improvements, Proposed Action, as presented, is selected for the Marlboro Street Corridor Improvements Project and that the City Manager is authorized to do all things necessary to implement the Marlboro Street Corridor Improvement Project.

**6) Periodic Reports from Standing Committees: BPPAC**

Dillon Benik, of 635 West Street, introduced himself. He read the following report:

*“I’m here today to supply a brief update on what the Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee has been working on and discussing in the past year, as well as some projection of what we hope to accomplish going forward in 2020.*

*2019 has found the BPPAC in sort of a transitional period. While I believe we have succeeded in performing our functions as a committee, there have been some challenges regarding membership. The year saw some membership turnover, as well as the unexpected and tragic loss of a long-time member and ardent advocate for the community in Thom Little.*

*Working with the new Mayor and other leaders in the community to fill our membership holes will be a priority heading into the New Year and first quarter of 2020. We’ve already started the process internally of reaching out to a few members of organizations like Pathways for Keene and MAST to see if there are folks interested in joining the committee. Of course, these final membership decisions would be made by Mayor Hansel and I look forward to hearing his suggestions.*

*This past year BPPAC was asked to consider two different requests to purchase City property. I believe these items were referred to us by Council via the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee. Both properties were in the same area of the city and both abutted the trail system.*

*The first was a spur of land off of Ralston Street that wrapped around a building owned by SHALDU LTD. This piece seemed to us like a harmless strip of land for the City to give up. BPPAC recommended this sale be executed as long as the Rail Trail property was not encroached upon in any way.*

*The second referral regarded a piece of City property adjacent to property owned by Mr. Toby Tousley. It was a parcel of land off of Emerald Street, across from the ‘spur’ purchased by SHALDU LTD. After careful consideration and hearing from Mr. Tousley, the committee voted 5-1 to recommend that the City not sell this property to Mr. Tousley. The committee felt that the area Mr. Tousley looked to purchase (the ownership of which was in question until recently) could have future value to the Trail System. I believe this recommendation held and the City has entered into lease negotiations for a piece of this area.*

*BPPAC worked this year with staff and DPW to sort out placement of a bicycle rack about town. Later in the fall traffic counts were conducted with the help of KSC Geography students*

*I mentioned earlier the loss of Thom Little. Thom was passionate about Keene, particularly about our paths and bike/pedestrian infrastructure. BPPAC recommended naming a portion of the trail system after him in his honor. This plan was met with enthusiasm by staff and I believe this is moving forward smoothly and you are seeing a draft resolution this evening.*

*BPPAC is also exploring creating a Public Outreach and Events subcommittee. A charge is being drafted by a committee member and we will discuss it at our next meeting. The idea is a small group of people dedicated to creating, hosting, or promoting events that further or accommodate the interests of bicyclists and pedestrians in town. I believe this idea was posited when someone mentioned how we missed an opportunity to host some sort of cycling event in conjunction with the Keene Wall Dogs.*

*A lot of our committee's work and focus as late has revolved around a Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan and the various projects therein. In late 2012 it was acknowledged by BPPAC and City staff that an updated master plan was needed going forward. This plan will guide the development of the City's bicycle and pedestrian facilities and provide tools for their care.*

*The next few years were spent creating the vision of this plan, outlining goals and zeroing in on projects. By 2016 this big picture work was complete and BPPAC had a list of projects that they prioritized using a matrix they had worked with City staff to create. 2017 showed BPPAC with a list of 29 projects, five of which we designated as 'top 5 priority.' These projects have been monitored by BPPAC via communication with City staff. BPPAC has checked in on progress and acted as a sounding board for staff when appropriate or necessary.*

*These top five are:*

- \* Cheshire Rail Trail – Park Avenue Loop – Work has begun and is wrapping up soon*
- \* Access Point and Connectivity Analysis – Staff involved KSC Geography students, and they did a study which can be shared*
- \* Wayfinding*
- \* Complete Streets Assessments – Staff involved KSC Geography students*
- \* Sidewalk/Pedestrian Connectivity*

*The top five list of projects was expanded loosely in the early part of 2019 when other project possibilities were identified or when organizational support or perceived importance shifted. One such project that has been particularly prioritized by BPPAC is finding interim and long term solutions for bicycle and pedestrian facilities on West Street. In 2018 BPPAC started conducting bike and pedestrian counts at three different points of West Street to establish baseline traffic numbers for future solutions.*

*The three points where counts are being conducted are the intersection of Island Street and West Street, the intersection of Pearl Street and West Street, and where the Rail Trail Dogleg ends near the intersection of Route 9 and West Street.*

*We've voluntarily conducted the counts as a committee, and with some assistance by KSC Geography students, quarterly since starting in the spring of 2018. The results are being compiled and tabulated by City staff.*

*It is a BPPAC goal, with the help of City staff, to complete this master plan in 2020. To do so we would like to utilize outside consultants to bring fresh perspective and expertise. We would start by seeking a few cost estimates. Once estimates are gathered we can begin to explore funding options such as: attempting to create funding out of the budget, working on fundraising all or a portion, and discussions with the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission. Once funding was sorted, a consultant would aid us and staff in buttoning up this plan. I believe this is all possible during the next year.*

*In closing, I believe the work we're doing is good. We look forward to working with the new mayor and the council. We're excited to bring forward results from our initiatives with the help of City staff and I'm confident 2020 will be a positive and progressive year for the city."*

Chair Manwaring asked what the mission of the committee is. Mr. Benik replied that the BPPAC is an advisory committee that weighs in and advocates for bicyclists and pedestrians in the city.

Chair Manwaring asked if the BPPAC considers promotion of the trails. Mr. Benik replied yes, individually and as a group. He continued that that is partially where the subcommittee idea came into play. They realized they were missing opportunities to create or promote existing events to get more people onto the trails. Chair Manwaring replied yes, people who use the trails know them well, but when new people come to Keene, they need to talk about how to help people find the trails and how to attract people to them. Mr. Benik replied that one of the projects the BPPAC prioritized was connectivity and wayfinding, thinking about questions such as, do people know about the trails? Are there signs? Do the new students each year know about the possibility to, for example, walk to Target from the trails?

Raleigh Ormerod, 4 Monadnock Court, stated that the Chamber of Commerce just published a big map of the city, including the rail trails. He continued that there are many maps that are not getting deployed. Maybe the BPPAC would have ideas for how to help the Chamber get the maps out.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Hooper.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee accepted the Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee report.

**7) Relating to the Official Trail Name Designations Resolution R-2019-38**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that before the committee is a resolution regarding the official naming of City trails. He continued that the City Council had asked staff to draft this, specifically, regarding naming a section of the trail for Thom Little, who passed away suddenly earlier this year. The proposed “Thom Little Way” is the trail section from Emerald Street to Island Street. He and Mr. Blomquist are looking for the committee’s favorable recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Blomquist stated that he knew Mr. Little over a number of years working the trail projects. He continued that Mr. Little was a passionate advocate. He was very involved with the PWD from time to time, looking at maps and documents and giving staff his thoughts. Naming a trail section after him honors his work. With North Bridge and South Bridge, Mr. Little’s influence was great. He was also influential in Pathways for Keene.

Chair Manwaring stated that City Council authorized staff to write this resolution. She asked if anyone else wished to speak. Hearing none, she asked for a motion.

Councilor Lamoureux made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2019-38.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker