

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

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

**Wednesday, February 12, 2020**

**8:15 AM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Dillon Benik, Chair  
Drew Bryenton, Vice Chair  
Aaron Shields  
Brad Dufresne  
Councilor Jan Manwaring  
Michael Davern  
Todd Horner  
Charles Redfern, Alternate (by phone)

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation &  
Facilities Director

1) **Roll Call**

Chair Benik called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM and roll call was conducted.

2) **January 8, 2020 Minutes**

Chair Benik moved to accept the January 8, 2020 minutes as submitted, Councilor Manwaring seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3) **Elections**

Chair Benik announced that the committee would vote to elect for position of Chair and Vice Chair at today's meeting. He asked for member nominations for either position. Councilor Manwaring noted that the Chair should be an individual who has had experience with the committee already. Mr. Redfern voted by phone.

Vice Chair Bryenton nominated Mr. Benik to serve as BPPAC Chair for a second term, Mr. Dufresne seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Dufresne nominated Mr. Bryenton to serve as Vice Chair for a second term, Mr. Horner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

4) **Old Business**

a) **Public Outreach and Events Subcommittee**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that at the last BPPAC meeting, Ms. Kessler, staff liaison to the Heritage Commission (HC), shared HC's goals and presented the possibility of HC and BPPAC working together collaboratively in some capacity in the future. He said that HC meets every other month and are tasked with conducting research on the historic context of the rail line and the Stone Arch Bridge. He said they are focused on doing promotional outreach to drum up support for the project which is scheduled to run in 2024-2027. He stated that this project is in need of outreach and support and this opportunity could present a good kick-off point for the public outreach and events subcommittee aims of BPPAC.

Chair Benik stated that BPPAC had discussed starting with a written charge of what the subcommittee would accomplish. Mr. Schoefmann replied that Mr. Redfern had written a draft and he can send it over to Chair Benik for revisions. Chair Benik agreed and noted that this presents a good opportunity to work together with HC. Mr. Schoefmann suggested inviting HC members to the March meeting.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the public hearing for this project is scheduled for Thursday, March 5 at 7:00 PM, which will take place before the next BPPAC meeting. He said they have been unable to meet with the City Manager yet to go over the bigger picture with various conversations they have been having regarding this project. He stated that Councilor Manwaring spoke on behalf of the Council and Pathways for Keene (PFK) on Monday night and he proposed looking at the Finance, Organization & Personnel (FOP) Committee video of that meeting. He recommended paying attention to two important points: (1) the vision for the trail system, (2) the Transportation-Heritage trail project. He said it is worth watching the video as it gives an idea of the sorts of questions Councilors asked about the project. Mr. Bohannon stated that there is support for the project, however, there will be significant grant competition with other projects. He stated that the City will be searching and applying for grants but it would also be useful to keep eyes out on other grant opportunities.

Councilor Manwaring stated that PFK is planning on turning out for the March 5 meeting because of the strong competition for funds. Chair Benik recommended that all members have a look at the video which is posted under the FOP tab on the City website. Mr. Bohannon said that he will also send the link to Mr. Schoefmann to share with the committee.

Mr. Bryenton proposed that they take the next steps necessary for forming an events subcommittee by March and Chair Benik agreed. Mr. Bryenton proposed that members bring their questions and be ready to move on that action item in March.

Mr. Horner stated that he has been working with Ms. Jen Risley at Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation (MAST) and they are considering bringing a bicycle- related film screening called Motherlode to the area. He said the film features cargo bikes but is more broadly about building an inclusive bicycle movement in the community. Mr. Horner said it is a great movie and Ms. Risley has contacted the Monadnock International Film Festival who will bring the screening to their film festival in April 2020. He stated that they are currently discussing post-screening activities for after the screening, for example, putting together a panel discussion to provide an opportunity for public engagement.

Mr. Horner stated that BPPAC could fulfill the role of channeling the excitement and energy about cycling and promote local initiatives like the Transportation Heritage trail or other local projects. Mr. Davern stated that he has friends that use the trail as their main form of transportation and he will ask them about their interests in providing some real world experience as part of a panel. Chair Benik replied that the film screening is a great idea and they can aim to develop the idea further in March.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested that the committee move to have the Chair write a letter of support to City Council for the Transportation-Heritage trail project, as BPPAC's March meeting will take place after the public hearing on that project.

Vice Chair Bryenton moved that Chair Benik write a letter of support for the Transportation Heritage Trail project, Mr. Horner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**b) Winter Maintenance/Coop Trail Closure**

Chair Benik stated that the Monadnock Co-Op expansion project forced the closure of a section of the rail trail. Mr. Schoefmann shared that Mr. Lussier said that they have reopened the trail section and patched it up with concrete, and it will be open until April when they will replace the temporary concrete with pavement. Chair Benik said that the Co-Op now has signage up which explains the steps of the expansion process.

5) **Project Updates**

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

Mr. Schoefmann explained to new members that typically the full packets contains a spreadsheet which shows a list of projects; projects which have had movement on them are highlighted in yellow. He said that he typically attaches the previous month's project updates as a baseline to show movement on the various projects. Mr. Schoefmann said that he also included a map was last updated last spring and the numbers on the map correlate with the physical projects under the second page, called Master Plan projects.

a) **Master Plan**

Mr. Schoefmann reached out to Mr. Mack at Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) at the end of December; he said SWRPC is currently looking at ways to use State funds to wrap up completion of the Master Plan, with one public forum and then a report out to City Council as the scope of the public feedback component. He is waiting to hear back from Mr. Mack.

Mr. Schoefmann said he will also send out a link to the existing draft on the updated documents in the Google Drive.

b) **Arts and Culture Corridor**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there have been some community conversations regarding the Arts and Culture Corridor and asked Mr. Bohannon if he has heard any new information on the City-side. Mr. Bohannon replied that he had not. Mr. Schoefmann said he highlighted the project so BPPAC can maintain awareness as various concepts in the initiative may affect parts of the Cheshire Rail Trail through that section of town. He said the Arts and Culture project is aimed at creating a pedestrian and arts corridor for parts of Gilbo Avenue, including the parking lots and then moving easterly across Main Street.

c) **Wayfinding**

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Horner proposed a concept at last month's meeting which would use temporary wayfinding signage as a pilot for permanent signage. He said Mr. Bohannon agreed it is a concept that BPPAC will look into further.

Mr. Horner stated that he would be willing to put together discussion points for the next meeting regarding the pilot project. He said the temporary signage will allow the City to test out sign locations, sign design and can be used as an outreach tool for pointing out important destinations, locations and walk times. Mr. Horner said it is a low-cost way to promote cycling and walking and can be achieved this summer. He suggested that members look at the website Walk Your City for more information. Mr. Horner said one of the advantages of using temporary signage is that the signs can be moved easily and are cost-effective to be replaced.

Mr. Bohannon suggested that it may be helpful to incorporate wayfinding to a subcommittee agenda and he can work with that group to get the ball rolling with the aim of getting the

wayfinding signage out this summer. Mr. Horner explained that wayfinding signage represents one component of the projects as wayfinding can also include maps and kiosks.

Mr. Brehme stated that having one map occasionally can reduce the need for a lot of signs in between. Mr. Rollins said that the Ashuelot Rail Trail planning committee includes a kiosk project on Emerald Street (the part of the stretch that AUNE has adopted). He said that he lined up \$1,000 of funding for the project, and Mr. Poanessa is interested in doing another kiosk and there is a subgroup of people discussing that as well. He said he will reach out to the Historical Society to do the research for that kiosk.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the initiatives need have more crossover with each other as there are two trains moving at once. Mr. Rollins said he has \$1,000 to go into the project. Mr. Bohannon stated that Mr. Poanessa has not been involved in the Benson Wood conversation and the signage is a bit different than what BPPAC is suggesting so they need to unify the objectives a bit more. Mr. Bryenton asked if they would like to have Mr. Poanessa or someone from Benson Wood come to the next meeting. Mr. Bohannon replied that he was supposed to report back to BPPAC however he has not received final details about the signage yet from them. He described the signs is plastic with some logos on it denoting what trail you are on in a diamond or oval shape, however, he thinks they should put this as an item on the agenda for March. Chair Benik stated that they should invite Mr. Poanessa to the next BPPAC meeting. Mr. Bohannon stated that the scope is pretty much the same in terms of the signage.

Mr. Horner noted again that wayfinding can include a number of the things and Chair Benik suggested that they discuss these ideas further in March.

**d) Cheshire Rail Trail-Phase 4 (Transportation Heritage Trail)**

Mr. Schoefmann suggested setting up a meeting with HC. He said he can give Chair Benik the HC Chair contact information so he can extend an invite to them for the next BPPAC meeting.

**e) West Street Counts**

Chair Benik stated that they are due for another round of counts on West Street. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they want to continue doing the March counts, or just stick to the May and September counts. Chair Benik noted that the bigger traffic counts are more worthwhile. Mr. Brehme added that he can recruit Keene State College students to perform the counts in March and in the fall. Mr. Schoefmann and Chair Benik agreed that at least one winter (March) count is useful. Mr. Davern asked what the commitment would be and Chair Benik described the data collection protocol which involves tallying counts using different subcategories in three different locations for two-hour blocks.

Mr. Schoefmann added that he performed a training to Keene State College students in an outdoor recreation class last semester. Mr. Brehme said he could perform the training as well. Mr. Bohannon asked where they will perform the counts. Mr. Schoefmann replied they count at the location at Kohl's at the overpass (station 3), Pearl Street and West Street (by the Keene Inn), Island Street and Park (another node).

Mr. Schoefmann said that he is still entering the Outdoor Recreation class student data which generated summaries for total counts, which they can analyze. Chair Benik stated that they identified West Street as a problem area for pedestrians so BPPAC proposed that they get an idea of how much foot traffic there is before they start developing a plan. He said that they started the

counts three years ago; they agreed that three counting sessions in the winter, summer and fall is the schedule they are adhering to.

Mr. Horner proposed that they consider using automatic counters at the trunk of the rail trail before going over the bridge, as it would be interesting to know how many people are using the Rail Trail to go to West Street. He said they could submit a request to use the counters which consist of pneumatic and infrared tubes. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will make that request for using the counters.

Mr. Redfern stated that during the City Council meeting on Monday, Councilors wanted an idea of the traffic on the Rail Trail; therefore, using the counters for the location over the bridge is a good location because it fulfills the Council's request. Mr. Horner replied that SWRPC already has data on other locations along the Rail Trail so this is a good opportunity to share that data as well. Mr. Schoefmann said he also has some raw data dumps from the csv data, however if Mr. Horner has summary information that he can share that would be great. Mr. Horner said the Rail Trail's conservancy now has a calculator which allows you to upload the count data and using seasonal adjustment factors, gives you a summary of trips per year.

6) **New Business- Items to be included for next meeting**

- Invite HC to next meeting to discuss the possibility of a subcommittee
- Wayfinding and Trail discussion

7) **More Time**

a) **New Trailhead near the Food Network Trail System**

Mr. Schoefmann suggested that they remove this item from the agenda after a brief update today. He said the Food Network is a mountain bike trail system on CNS property over by the YMCA and the Amy Brown Road, above Skyline Drive. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they during the wayfinding discussion they will discuss the parking area associated with the trailhead for Park Avenue loop, and the improvements for Amy Brown road up to the Cheshire Rail Trail. He said there are conversations about putting up simple wayfinding for the Food Network trail for that location as well as the kiosk at the trailhead. Mr. Bohannon said the kiosk for the trailhead is a part of the project, however, once they get rolling they will seek BPPAC input for the kiosk.

Mr. Bohannon said he and Mr. Lussier will be talking to neighbors in that area who have raised concerns about dog walkers being let off leash after a neighbor's dog was attacked by an unleashed dog. He said he will share more about the leash concerns and formal ways to prevent dogs being let off leash at next month's meeting.

Mr. Davern said there are also more "no parking" signs put up all along that stretch of the road by neighbors and his group has encouraged mountain bikers to not park along the road.

8) **Next meeting date – March 11, 2020**

Chair Benik adjourned the meeting at 9:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Additional Edits, Will Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Additional Edits, Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office