

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

8:15 AM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Drew Bryenton, Vice Chair
Brad Dufresne
Councilor Jan Manwaring
Michael Davern
Todd Horner
Rowland Russell
Charles Redfern, Alternate

Staff Present:

Will Schoefmann, GIS Specialist
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and
Facilities Director

Members Not Present:

Dillon Benik, Chair
Chris Brehme, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM, read aloud the virtual meeting rules, and roll call was conducted.

2) September 9, 2020 Minutes

Mr. Dufresne moved to accept the September 9 minutes, Mr. Redfern seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

3) Reprioritizing Projects

Mr. Bryenton stated that Mr. Schoefmann sent out a document with a ranking of projects. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the aim of the project reprioritization is to update descriptions and he included those updates in the document he sent out to the committee. He said he also updated the column for organizational support that was completed by City staff. The Y column includes input from BPPAC members.

Vice Chair Bryenton asked if members have questions about the projects so everyone is familiar with each project they will be ranking. Mr. Dufresne asked if they had sent out a Survey Monkey for members to rank projects on their own. Mr. Schoefmann said that idea had been part of the discussion, but he decided to use this ranking method instead of having members do the ranking individually. He said that last time they took the project ranking between organizational support and importance level for BPPAC members and then recalibrated priorities accounting for different factors. Vice Chair Brenton reiterated that BPPAC members will rank their project priorities and then see those priority projects line up with organizational support as identified by City staff. Mr. Russell added that it might be more efficient to raise questions as they move

through the list. Mr. Horner asked how the West Street bypass projects are different from the West Street projects. Mr. Schoefmann replied that Mr. Brehme had suggested a bypass on the northern side of West Street that might connect into the Ashuelot River Park spur. However, there was not a lot of support for that project.

Reviewing the document, Mr. Schoefmann said that project **P1** includes overall rail trail improvements and connectivity, which includes outreach to local communities. Mr. Bohannon offered the idea that the number one priority project out of the thirty projects should be more of a vision of what they inspire to be. Mr. Russell added that he had a similar thought, that the first project could be an overarching goal and then the other projects can be sub goals. Mr. Bohannon said that this process can be very overwhelming as there are so many projects and it is important to take a bite at a time. Mr. Dufresne added that if they establish a goal as part of a committee vision, they can potentially have a subcommittee charged with updates on P1 in order to free up the top five. He suggested forming a subcommittee to drive the vision and connectivity goals.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there are trail projects, and then Complete Streets and then other items that include connectivity between the two. He said there are also some destination type projects that are important as they provide a starting or ending point for people's use of the trails. He said he can look into breaking the items into separate categories to cater to specific interests that people may have in projects. Mr. Redfern stated that he would like to see a component of the Transportation Heritage Trail included in the top five. He said he needs to see that project as a top priority for the City for the purpose of grant applications. He added that Carpenter Field needs to be top priority because it is in the public realm right now seeking feedback and support, it is in the CIP, but it needs to be further recognized as a priority project. Mr. Redfern noted that he agrees with the categorization of projects. Vice Chair Bryenton proposed that today they may be able to lump some of these projects together and today they can focus on the ranking (high, medium, low) and then later Mr. Schoefmann can send a survey out and they can take an average of those results. Mr. Schoefmann said maybe they do not need to rank P1, as they will turn that project into an overarching vision for the trails.

Mr. Schoefmann segued into **P2** (improved rail trail on Eastern Avenue-part of Cheshire Rail Trail 4) which includes a pocket park in the abutment as part of a phased approach. Mr. Redfern stated that this is the first component to address. He said Mr. Don Lussier broke these down into components and proposed that it be the first component to address in the Transportation Heritage Trail. Mr. Redfern stated that he would like to see it moved up to **P1**. Vice Chair Bryenton suggested marking **P2** as a top category as the first step of the Transportation Heritage Trail project. Mr. Russell agreed that this is a logical grouping and then they can prioritize within the group. Vice Chair Bryenton said he would also like Mr. Brehme and Chair Benik to be able to submit their rankings as well.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P3** includes the widening of sidewalk from the section of shared use sidewalk that goes from where the trail ends at School Street and Gilbo and down to School Street to Emerald and heads westerly along Emerald Street. He said the sidewalk section shrinks from 8 foot to 6 foot at Emerald Street. Mr. Russell said that he thinks this can be revisited when the opportunity arises. Mr. Schoefmann agreed that it is not a project that is super high priority and he asked if members agree that **P3** be ranked as low priority.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P4** is the Jonathan Daniels trail maintenance, and improvements. Mr. Bohannon has ranked this project as high due to the capital program maintenance funds. Mr.

Bohannon said it will be a prioritization to get the recreational trails grant to leverage multiple projects. Vice Chair Bryenton said that this is existing infrastructure that they should ensure does not get ignored. Mr. Bohannon agreed. He said they used to have a volunteer that took it upon himself to clear the Jonathan Daniel trail and worked closely with the Department of Parks and Recreation, however, there were some things that occurred in the Ashuelot River Park that the advisory board did not take kindly to and they refused his assistance this year. That responsibility will now fall upon the Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Schoefmann asked what members would like to rank **P4**. Mr. Redfern replied that he if Mr. Bohannon is planning to apply for grants, he would rank it as high. Mr. Bohannon stated that the ranking is scheduled for 2023.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P5** is the Cheshire Rail Trail cross bridge section and interconnection to the Stone Arch Bridge. He said since they have done more work with the Transportation Heritage trail project this is tactually wo projects: the cross bridge and improvements to the Stone Arch bridge. He said it would be best to break those two projects out as they are unique and separate in terms of how they will be worked on. Mr. Russell noted that the funding sources for the two projects will be different as well. Mr. Schoefmann added that the Stone Arch bridge will require historic funding and permitting whereas the cross bridge not so much. Mr. Redfern added that it makes sense to break the Stone Arch Bridge into another component. Vice Chair Bryenton asked if there is an update on the cross bridge. He said Mr. Little had hammered down the dimensions of it. Mr. Schoefmann said they had UNH engineering students and Mr. Lussier's engineering division do some assessments on the cross bridge as well. Vice Chair Bryenton proposed that these two projects be ranked as high priority and members agreed. Mr. Schoefmann said in the updated version he will break the two projects out and place them under the subcategory for trails.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P6** is a component of the Transportation Heritage Trail project-Swanzey Factory Road trail crossing. He said there is talk about an overpass and improvements and safety concerns about getting people across 101 safely. Mr. Russell said there is not an information yet to make it a high priority project. Mr. Redfern asked if that is where the trailhead would be placed also; Mr. Schoefmann said he does not think so. Mr. Redfern stated that Mr. Lussier put in Swanzey Factory Road trailhead in the project component breakdown from Department of Public Works (DPW). Councilor Manwaring stated that the project should be ranked medium priority and members agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P7** is a capital program to extend Victoria Street which comes off of Water Street which would bisect the Cheshire Rail Trail and complete the street which enters in to the old parking lot off of Kingsbury. It would create a throughway and an economic development project for East Keene of old industrial land improvement. He said it is a concern for BPPAC as it involves bisecting the Cheshire Rail Trail and is in the CIP. Mr. Russell added it would bring more traffic across the trail. Mr. Redfern stated that they should push for an overpass as they are talking about diverting truck traffic on that extension if pedestrians and cyclists are crossing so it should be an overpass. He said they were talking about the Bailey Bridge being relocated that way for that reason. Vice Chair Bryenton said he is concerned about this initiative as it could compromise the safety and utilization of the Cheshire Rail trail. Mr. Russell added that especially if they are promoting more use of that section, it is a key part of the corridor and it needs to be safe. Vice Chair Bryenton sked if there was money budgeted to facilitate the rail trail. Councilor Manwaring said the other problem is that it requires the City to

buy land from the Kingsbury property and so far, that has not happened. Mr. Redfern asked who the decision maker is about whether or not it would be an overpass or a crossing. Mr. Bohannon said it is a matter of cost and would be coming from the City staff and Council. He said if they go above grade it will be more expensive and may factor into the discussion. Mr. Redfern suggested they make this project a high priority as far as submitting their interest as a committee. Mr. Bohannon said that he has always felt it should be a bridge but the cost is a big factor, he said that he gets a lot of comments from the old Bentley Commons who use that section of trail about the trash and it is important to keep that demographic in mind. However, they also must keep in mind the economic development of that area. Vice Chair Bryenton said they should keep their pulse on this project as it could turn bad very quickly.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P8** is Appel way assessment and maintenance. Mr. Bohannon said that he has re-pavement of Appel Way scheduled for 2024. He said they had a section of paved inadvertently recently, so that may lower the cost. Members agreed on a medium prioritization of **P8**.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P9** is the Marlboro line trail which is an old branch that spins off of the Cheshire Rail Trail section from Eastern Avenue to 101 and Chapman road. He said it is pretty fragmented and is probably more of a pipe dream project, however it was included during their last prioritization ranking. Mr. Russell asked if there are any pieces of that trail that connect in Marlborough and Mr. Schoefmann said that there are sections that are contiguous. Mr. Russell said Antioch University owns a section up by Thompson Road, and Monadnock Conservancy maintains a section. Vice Chair Bryenton proposed that this project be ranked as low. Members agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P10** is a portion of the Cheshire Rail trail heading north towards Surry. He said this project would continue improvements for Amy Brown Road where it intersects the trail after Hurricane road all the way to the City limits. It falls into that vision of connecting the rail trails and enhancing Keene's connectivity. Mr. Russell asked Mr. Bohannon about the status of the "Sharrows" on that loop. Mr. Bohannon said it is out to bid. Mr. Schoefmann said it is passable until the waste transfer section where it gets rough. Mr. Bohannon said they should perhaps start conversations with Mike in Westmoreland and there is some work being done could that potentially become a trailhead at the gate right at the Westmoreland border. Vice Chair Bryenton said he would rank this project as medium as it is in good hands right now. Members agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P11** is an extension off of where the Jonathan Daniels trail intersects the Appel Way trail. He said if you head towards Wheelock Park and cross the river, there is a field and a single-track woods trail that creates a loop across from the hospital. Mr. Russell said there is a beaver dam where you can cross on foot and it takes you to Tanglewood. Mr. Schoefmann said the City has prioritized putting money into other projects instead of new trails. He said there was a concept that it might connect to the boardwalk behind the Keene Middle School, but it is all conceptual. Mr. Redfern said in the 80's he got a lot of pushback from conservationists due to habitat concerns and the Planning Department was resistant to it as well. He suggested rating this project as low. Vice Chair Bryenton proposed that they wait until the Appel Way re-pavement happens and seize the opportunity sometime in the future.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P12** is the maintenance plan and was originally envisioned as a Master Plan component or in the appendices. Mr. Russell said this project feels like an

overarching project or goal. Mr. Schoefmann asked if everyone agrees that it this project feeds into the goal components. Members agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P13** is the access point and connectivity analysis. He said this has been happening between KSC projects and GIS work he has done and will feed into the Mater Plan. It was ranked highly previously. Mr. Russell proposed that it be put into the **P1** as a part of the connectivity goal. Mr. Schoefmann said that baseline data and bike counts are included in this project, as well as KSC's help with a high-level Complete Streets assessment. He said it feeds into the overarching goals as they are tied into the Master Plan. Members agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that **P16** is wayfinding signage. They have broken the project out as it's a unique. Mr. Russell stated that amenities and wayfinding seem clustered. Members agreed that this project should be ranked as high priority. Mr. Schoefmann said it is part of a continued plan of the wayfinding, so this is interrelated with what is happening already. Mr. Russell said it could be combined.

4) Wayfinding
a) UNH Cooperative Initiative

Mr. Bohannon stated that they are still awaiting funding for this initiative.

b) New Ashuelot Rail Trail Kiosk

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the Ashuelot Rail trail kiosk is now up.

c) Bike Repair Station

Vice Chair Bryenton said he has not made big progress on this front yet.

d) MAST Grant 2020 <https://walkyourcity.org/>

Mr. Schoefmann said the grant application status is currently pending and they may hear back in November or December.

5) Old Business
a) Downtown Bike Racks and Emerald Street

Mr. Schoefmann will go down to the DPW garage and match up racks to the Rack it Up grant racks to provide racks to businesses who have requested them.

b) Bike Counts

Mr. Schoefmann stated that bike counts have wrapped up for the fall and they can discuss more about areas of focus for pedestrian and bike counts at other locations.

c) Downtown Sidewalks

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the City Manager mentioned that there is an opportunity to work with Mr. Blomquist on Downtown Revitalization and have his outreach help inform some of the discussion about cafes expanding seating. He will follow up with Mr. Blomquist and he seemed excited about conceptualizing an outreach component. He proposed that they keep it on old business and he will get more information from Mr. Blomquist.

6) Other Project Updates

Mr. Schoefmann said that Amy Brown and Park Avenue Loop are out to bid and once they get bids going, he will update the committee.

7) New Business

Mr. Schoefmann will reshuffle edits for project prioritization list.

Mr. Russell stated that he would follow up with the AUNE individual who may potentially join the committee. He said he will cc Mr. Schoefmann on that correspondence.

Vice Chair Bryenton asked about an update for the Arts Corridor and Mr. Schoefmann said he would talk to Ms. Beth Woods about opportunities for collaboration.

8) Adjournment

Next meeting date – November 11, 2020. As November 11 falls on a holiday, Mr. Schoefmann will update the committee with next meeting date, perhaps Wednesday, November 4.

Vice Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:32 AM.

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

Edits by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff

Additional edits by,
Katrnya Kibler, City Clerk's Office