

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

8:15 AM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Will Schoefmann, GIS specialist
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks and
Recreation, City of Keene

Members Not Present:

Michael Davern
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate

Chair Benik called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Benik read aloud the Zoom platform meeting rules and roll call was conducted.

2) Elections

Councilor Manwaring moved to nominate Mr. Benik and Mr. Bryenton as Chair and Vice Chair for the year 2021, respectively, Mr. Dufresne seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

3) December 9, 2020 Minutes

Mr. Redfern moved to accept the December 9, 2020 meeting minutes, Mr. Russell seconded, and the motion was passed by unanimous vote.

4) Reprioritizing Projects

Mr. Schoefmann proposed that the committee discuss the focus projects they had ranked at previous meetings and recap each one to hone them down to five top priority projects. He stated that there are currently seven priority projects ranked as very high priority by the committee (P-1, P-3, P-4, P-11, P-17, P-19 and P-21). He said he will go over each one.

P-1- Eastern Avenue to 101 section of the Transportation Heritage Trail

P-3- Jonathan Daniels trail maintenance

P-4-another portion of the Transportation Heritage Trail involving the Cross Bridge overpass conceptual project.

P-11- Wayfinding facilities and signage

P-17- Pat Russell Park improvements which are currently being worked on.

P-19- West Street-which has been proposed in the new NHDOT ten-year plan by City staff.

P-21-General amenities.

Chair Benik asked if members would like to rank these seven projects further into a top seven, or whittle them down to a top five. Mr. Redfern suggested that they add P-5, the Swanzey Factory Road safe crossing, because it is a component of P-1, P-4 and P-5 and is a top priority that should be in the top hand corner of the matrix. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the committee would have to revote that as City staff has placed that project as a medium level priority because it is the final piece they would focus on once the other three components fell into place, including the improvements to the Stone Arch Bridge. Chair Benik noted that he is wary of this project diluting their other priorities, as P-5 is part of a project that is already doubly represented in their top priority projects. Mr. Schoefmann said if they ranked it high it would fall into the same category as P-6.

Mr. Redfern added that the Winchester Street improvements from Key Road to Island Street are on the close horizon would include replacing the bridge that is used on Island Street with a different bridge structure known as the Bohannon-Bailey bridge. Chair Benik asked what the plans are for that bridge. Mr. Redfern replied that it was proposed to use that bridge for temporary use (less than five years) and it has been there for thirty to forty years. It is not really fit for automobile truck traffic anymore as its useful time for that purpose is up but it is still good for pedestrian use. Mr. Blomquist stated that the bridge was installed in 1977 and structurally the decking is no longer good and DPW's goal is to disassemble it for possible reuse, however, once they disassemble it is not known if the members can be re-used. There have been a couple of uses that have been identified for it, for example, an extension for the Marlboro to Victoria Street project and other locations. He said that if the bridge is re-usable there are potential ideas, for example, Swanzey Factory Road, however, it may not be long enough. He said the City has thoughts about re-using it but they won't know the full potential until about early to mid 2022. Mr. Schoefmann said it sounds like flexibility might be the best course of action for when the bridge gets replaced. He said he knows that Victoria Street is important to Mr. Redfern and he would hate to see that opportunity go to the wayside. Mr. Redfern agreed with the idea of flexibility. Chair Benik agreed as well.

Mr. Russell said that in terms of highest priorities, there will always be emergent ones as projects change and BPPAC's impact will as well. He said he feels they already have their five, however,

it does not seem that BPPAC is the driving force behind the Pat Russell project. Chair Benik agreed strongly with Mr. Russell. Mr. Bohannon agreed that BPPAC is not in the driver seat of Russell Park. Mr. Schoefmann asked Mr. Bohannon if he could provide his perspective on the Jonathan Daniels trail maintenance as it is ranked high by the committee and asked if it scheduled for grant funding. Mr. Bohannon replied that they will get FY-23 funding back from the trails maintenance program and they will be looking for trail grant money for assistance with that project. He said they are trying to make various things happen with that trail and other projects. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they should keep it on the radar and Mr. Bohannon replied that yes. He said it is a heavily used trail in the City and certainly needs attention as it has not received any infrastructure-based attention in recent years. He suggested keeping that project in their priority list as it is definitely a 2023 project.

Vice Chair Bryenton added that he agrees with removing the P-3 and P-17 because of the driver seat location and the length of the Jonathan Daniel trail maintenance he would prioritize the other five. Mr. Redfern stated that when he did trail counts at the Island Street and west Street intersection there was a tremendous amount of pedestrian and bike use into that park. He said since the Colony Mills condos have become occupied, the use of that Park has gone up tremendously. He stated that he will go with whatever the consensus is in any case. Mr. Horner stated that he agrees with keeping the Jonathan Daniels trail maintenance as medium level, however, Mr. Redfern's comments make him think that they should do counts in that Park area over a couple of years for the trail maintenance in the park. He said they could do manual counts or use an automatic counter. Mr. Russell added that doing the counts at the crossing and the entrance to the trail would be advantageous. Mr. Schoefmann noted that there is plenty of opportunity to work with other groups like the Ashuelot River Park committee to collaborate.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is another Zoom meeting scheduled for 9:30 am so they have to wrap up by 9:20 am.

Chair Benik stated that he would be okay with keeping a top seven, however, he sees a top five including a P-1/P-4 combination and then pushing Pat Russell park to the periphery and simply track that project.

Mr. Schoefmann proposed that they keep all projects ranked high priority, except for the Jonathan Daniels trail maintenance project and the Pat Russell Park project.

Councilor Manwaring moved to clarify that BPPAC's top five projects, P-1, P-4, P-11, P-19 and P-2, are ranked as high priority projects, Mr. Redfern seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will update the project update list in the packet so that it reflects the committee's work.

Mr. Redfern asked if Mr. Schoefmann what they will do with the two projects they are dropping. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they will stay on the list, but the other five projects will receive grater allocation of energy from the committee. He said they will still receive updates on the other two projects.

5) Old Business

a. Wayfinding

b. UNH Downtown Trails

Mr. Bohannon stated that they are scheduled to circle back with UNH at the end of January so he will report back to the committee in February. Mr. Bohannon stated that they are working with Mr. Redfern to identify aspects on this and working towards what they want to do. However, they want to get the UNH project started first. He said he talked to Mr. Poanessa about wayfinding at the Bike Park and he is not interested in being involved with wayfinding for the City. However, they will continue to move forward with the project.

c. MAST Grant

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he attached the metrics report that he submitted to Southwest Regional Planning Commission for the 2017 project on Central Square. He will post it on the BPPAC website as well.

d. MRRTC

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Horner went through the guidelines for the Walk Your City project on how to identify walksheds and where the signs will be placed. He said Mr. Bohannon and Mr. Redfern spoke and they are working together on the MAST grant signage. Mr. Schoefmann said Mr. Horner worked on the walkshed signage and City staff had conceptualized going a bit further rout with the walk your City signage to include the improvements happening on Park Avenue and the JD Trail and Appel Way. He said this is something the committee should take a look at closer and maybe getting a bit more involved with the idea sharing for sign placement. Mr. Schoefmann said Mr. Bohannon and he are still trying to figure out the nuts and bolts but they will have something to provide to the committee soon. Mr. Bohannon said they would like to get this up and running by spring time as they will have college students in town later than usual until the end of May, so that will provide a better idea of traffic patterns on the trails. Mr. Schoefmann said they will have a better update by March for the committee in terms of the locations and verbiage for idea sharing. He said they used Mr. Horner's guide to come up with the locations. He said he will work on refining the map to help guide the conversation with the committee once Mr. Bohannon and Mr. Redfern offer their input.

e. West Street NHDOT Ten Year Plan Project

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he reached out to Mr. Lussier and perhaps Mr. Horner has some more information about ranking projects. Mr. Horner said he will have to check on with Mr. JB Mack on that however, he thinks they are waiting to hear back from NH DOT but he is not sure. He said it's a conceptual roadway drawing about how West Street can be reprogrammed which is high level but he did see a drawing of a median with trees planted in the middle and better shoulders for cyclists. Mr. Schoefmann said he will try to get his hands on the drawings from Mr. Lussier. Mr. Horner said the drawing he saw retained four lanes but they are narrowed and he is unsure if the public right of way will be expanded in that conceptual drawing.

f. Marlboro Street Design

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is a website up that he sent in the committee email. He said this is part of a public information meeting held last winter that involves the entire section of Marlboro Street until its intersection with Eastern Avenue and Optical Avenue. He showed a cross section with design elements included. There are proposed bike lanes inbound towards Main Street, some “Sharrows” (shared lane markings) that help with the continuity between the existing in street facilities from the 2017 MAST grant. He said there has been talk about what will happen at Grove Street but a lot of these elements were borrowed from the temporary Complete Street project that they had a few years ago through Friends of Public Art. Mr. Schoefmann stated there is a crossing proposed with a refuge island. Some curve extensions and then the bike lane adjusts according to the traffic patterns and narrowing of lanes. Mr. Horner stated that he attended this meeting and neighbors proposed that the crosswalk should be placed on the east side of Grove Street because of the turning traffic going west on Marlboro Street. Chair Benik said he remembered the same concern being raised by parents about school kids crossing. Mr. Blomquist stated that this crosswalk has a crossing guard during school hours controlling traffic and moving it to the east side put it in conflict with the driveway into the school so the crosswalk configuration is in accordance with MUTCD and federal guidelines. Mr. Schoefmann said there was a turning study done there as part of a linked project and he can convey some of that information to the committee. Mr. Blomquist stated that NH DOT has asked for additional review for the intersection as one of the challenges is the tightness of the area and not being able to meet all of the standards so they are attempting to demonstrate that what the City has done is the best that can be done in that particular location. He said bringing the crossing guard to the center of the location drivers are unable to ignore that so from management perspective, this is a better control point because there is the ability to control traffic. Councilor Manwaring said there the sidewalk on Grove Street is on the east side, so there will still have to be the crossing of Grove Street in order to get to this island and Mr. Blomquist stated that is correct and perhaps in the future they can get the right of way to finish it up on both sides. As of now, the concern was the traffic coming off of Marlboro onto Grove Street, not necessarily the traffic on Grove making a left or right. Mr. Schoefmann stated that hopefully they will have some information to report out next month. Chair Benik asked if tree markers are existing trees or new plantings. Mr. Blomquist said it’s a combination of existing and proposed plantings. Mr. Schoefmann said there are; also, some examples of chicanes and what they might look like near the U-Haul and Beaver Brook and then moving down towards the entrance of Bartholomew and the vicinity of the Butterfly Park. Mr. Schoefmann stated that further down there is a proposed crossing at Optical. Mr. Blomquist said these designs may be out of date as there is no sidewalk there. He encouraged the committee to speak to Mr. Lussier and get the most current design elements towards that end of the street.

g. Amenities

f. Public Survey

Mr. Schoefmann proposed they table this item for the next meeting. Mr. Redfern encouraged members to visit the Parks and Recreation website for a virtual tour of Carpenter Street as there are great features. He said there are two options and the City is looking for input on both of them. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will send out a link. Mr. Bohannon noted that the

information input is over but there are members of that committee on BPPAC, Mr. Dufresne and Councilor Manwaring, and encouraged members to check it out.

6) Regular Project Updates

Mr. Schoefmann stated there has not been a lot of movement on projects. He highlighted the Bicycle Mayor project and said nothing has moved on that, however, there is a lot of material that they can rehost on the BPPAC site. For example, the Safe Routes to school material and a toolkit developed by Ms. Tiffany Manion, so as long as members are agreeable, they can add that information to the BPPAC page.

7) New Business

- Amenities
- Wayfinding
- Emerald Street connectivity and pocket park

8) Adjournment

Chair Benik adjourned the meeting at 9:19 AM.

Next meeting date – February 10, 2021

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
William Schoefmann, Staff Liaison

Additional edits by,
Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office