

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

8:15 AM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

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

Members Not Present:

Dillon Benik
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation,
Cemeteries and Facilities Director (left
at 9 am)
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director
and ACM (left at 9 am)
Jesse Rounds, Community Development
Director

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Drew Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:16 AM.

2) Approval of June 8, 2022 Minutes

Dr. Rowland Russell noted in one area of minutes where there was an inconsistency concerning inclusion of his title and misspelling of his name. Mr. Schoefmann noted and agreed to correct. With no further corrections, the minutes were approved unanimously.

3) John Burns, Norm's Ski and Bike Shop

John Burns is the new owner of Norm's Ski and Bike. He purchased the store with his wife one year ago. Previous owners have since retired and are happy to spend more time with their grandkids. Mr. Burns has been living in New Hampshire since 1978. Currently, he lives in Walpole and had previously been a customer of Norm's since the early 1980's. He purchased it with the intention to take input from the community on product lines, and other things needed in the community and has worked trying to see how they can fit it in. Bike rentals are clearly desired and needed, but their current location does not allow for storage or work force. Have researched and discussed it, but it is just not something they are able to take on right now.

4) Other Updates

On Wednesday, July 20th there will be a meeting for the Monadnock Alternative Alliance for Sustainable Transportation will be at Heberton hall across from the library. Information will be forthcoming. Will Schoefmann noted that there is also a membership opening and anyone interested is welcome to speak to him after the meeting.

5) Complete Streets Implementation-Road Resurfacing/Striping

Mr. Schoefmann addressed that some people have noticed the re-striping taking place around town. Department of Public Works, highway division and highway superintendent have said they are rebooting in-house striping program for handwork and more detailed tasks. Mr. Schoefmann went out last week and did some pre-marking. The hope is that with the in-house component, they should be able to catch up on some of the work without as much issue. It was suggested that the committee look at the roads that are up for resurfacing in the schedule.

Andy Bohannon and Kürt Blomquist joined at 8:48 AM.

Mr. Bohannon noted that there are several levels of different work with a pavement management asset plan, which consists of a survey of all road surfaces. Discussion ensued around the question of restriping for widening the shoulder width to assist in expanding the bike network. Mr. Bohannon pointed out that the bottom line is really around capital as City of Keene has the longer per linear foot of striping than any other town in the state. There are two kinds of cost around the restriping: capital and ONM cost. This year, the budget went up 2.25%, painting contractor cost went up 32%. Concerning the changing of the striping, Mr. Bohannon noted that fall of each year would be a good time to talk to the engineer for the following year. The schedule of striping is contained in the Community Improvement Plan and has a five-year schedule.

Jesse Rounds joined by Zoom at 8:39 AM. Mr. Rounds introduced himself and stated he was excited to be on board with the committee. Bikes and pedestrian access are near and dear to his heart. He just moved to Keene from Boulder, Colorado, and is looking forward to working with this group to improve the network.

6) Downtown Infrastructure Project – Central Square Park Concept

Mr. Schoefmann discussed the attachment that Roger Weinrich had originally submitted to the City Council earlier this year. Vice Chair Horner had requested the committee look at this to evaluate especially since the downtown infrastructure project happening right now. Vice Chair Horner reintroduced Roger Weinrich. Mr. Weinrich said the concept is to create a park in downtown Keene and put in a new around about. He has had a business in Keene for over 30 years along with living in downtown. Central Square was the happening place to have a business. That shifted years ago when traffic picked up and lower Main Street became a little more popular. At the same time, he used ride into downtown Keene from Gilsum on bikes and always had a horrific experience with kids having to walk their bikes because of the increased traffic. Establishing the downtown as a biking headquarters, would make it so that people bike out of here rather than in. Barry Crown helped design two other roundabouts in Keene. Mr. Weinrich had a conversation with him on the future of roundabouts. In this conversation, he asked Mr. Crown about the downtown square. Mr. Crown noted one would eventually be needed just past the circle park and how doing so would create more usability for the downtown park. By

encapsulating it and making it contiguous with the turf on the head of the square, it increases the walkability and use of the area. It is not a battle, but it really comes down to pedestrian versus motor vehicle. If there is an intention to limit or reduce MV traffic, the pedestrian traffic just flourishes. Idea is really to slow down traffic in downtown Keene. A roundabout will slow the traffic down. With such a wide main street, we can have travel lanes for bike, plenty of space for fire trucks etc.

Vice Chair Horner asked if there were any questions for Mr. Weinrich? It was asked by Chair Breynton who else has Mr. Weinrich has shopped this idea round? Mr. Weinrich said the Council sent it to the new infrastructure committee, but does not know the status of that team.

Smaller lanes generally equals slower traffic. While there is a business aspect or hoping businesses survive the construction, they already see the change in traffic and mixed use and the speed slows down the lingering in town.

Dr. Rowland Russell added a 2.0 version of this would be to designate and remunerate the parking spots. If you can demonstrate there is not a net loss of parking spaces for those business, might go a long way in obtaining buy in. A single roundabout is a cornerstone to be able to do protected bike lanes along Main Street. Talking about this project in terms of its key bike safety would also be helpful.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Weinrich if he had full support of this committee what would be the ask of this group or ideal that would help further (bearing in mind the committee advises city council) the project. Mr. Weinrich responded that those were good questions and appreciated Dr. Russell's comment about the parking. Any dialogue the committee can do amongst themselves about bike safety and pedestrian safety would be helpful. Around the country when things like this spring up, it is usually from people in the municipality that have a staked interest. He hopes enough people put a stake in this dream to go ahead and do it. Roundabouts can be done in so many ways and integrate the bike path into it, but it is only going to happen if enough people step forward and say they support it and want it. Mr. Schoefmann said he believes there is some visibility to it already, but Mr. Benik would be the best to get an update from on status.

Vice Chair Horner got an e-mail yesterday that the consultant is holding more information sessions one being this Friday, June 15th at 8:30AM and the other is Wednesday, June 20th at 5PM, both by zoom or in person at the chamber.

7) **Old Business**

a) **Wayfinding/Amenities: North and South Bridge Signage, Downtown Bike Racks**

Mr. Schoefmann updated that north bridge/south bridge signage. Mr. Redfern was asked if he had any ideas with how to move forward with it. Mr. Redfern chose to start with an update of current state. It went through MSFI committee and they approved of the idea or recommending that the city manager be authorized to negotiate with NH DOT for rights of way to put up four signs. One sign would be on each side of each bridge for identification of the trail near the bridge.

A couple of comments about the signs were around expense. Mr. Redfern pointed out that two signs cost just under \$400. They are asking for four signs so should be under \$1000. Council was struggling to find ways to come up with the funding. One councilmen pointed out that times are

tough. Mr. Redfern pointed out that this is an easy reach and how the City has already put in significant amounts of money towards making the city more bike friendly.

Mr. Redfern was asked if they would be affixed directly on the bridge. He responded they would not- they would instead be attached to the side near the bridge because they do not want to increase the likelihood of rust or anything like that on the bridge itself.

Mr. Redfern mentioned that one councilor made a comment that they were not fond of the green and white signs. They preferred the recreational appearance, but NHDOT considers it a traffic/transportation thing so NHDOT insisted they be green.

It ended up passing that committee unanimously with the full council. Not sure of timeline, but Mr. Blomquist would have a better idea of that. We can check in with him before the next meeting.

b) Bike/Pedestrian Counts: 2022 Plans

Mr. Schoefmann did a walking audit through downtown collecting and updating locations that he had for bike racks. Seems like they are fewer out within the sidewalks area. If people have comments about locations they believe could use or benefit from one- please send those to him and he will work with DOT to get those placed. None south of Cheshire rail trail (near Thai garden, south side of The Colonial). North of Railroad Street, there were a similar amount to what has traditionally been there. It was asked if the info in the original map was the same as current. Mr. Schoefmann will have a conversation to investigate further.

Bike Pedestrian counts. Mr. Schoefmann got an e-mail that Southwest Regional Planning Commission was doing a count at some of those locations. He plans to check in with Henry Underwood there to see where that is happening. He did confirm the locations looked good. He believed that they should be getting done as was envisioned and that it does not seem like manual counts will be needed. Mr. Schoefmann suggested seeing how the counts look before committing to manual counts. Mr. Redfern added that there is a kiosk going up. Pathways donated \$3500 to the City to build the kiosk with wayfinding, safety, reminders, etc. Mr. Redfern is hoping it will be aesthetically done. This is for the new parking area at the bottom of the Ammi Brown rail trail.

c) Public Art and the Trails Update

Walldogs executive committee had a meeting and Mr. Russell talked to Peter Poanessa. Mentioned there might be interest in railroad signal he retrieved from the Rail Trail. The emerging idea is to temporarily install that at one of the historical society sites like Wyman and Bruder and perhaps make that the focus of fundraiser efforts to fully restore and fix up the railroad signal. Ideally, this would happen before the Historical Society's brew fest so that people see it. Then wherever it makes sense as a sculptural element, to place it. Have not formally presented it to The Historical Society, but will informally present to the Director to see if it makes sense as something to work with. It is at the shop right now, taking up room and Peter and Mary would like to get it into action at some point.

d) Volunteer Opportunities

Mr. Schoefmann put that in there as a placeholder. No, activities from him yet. Mr. Davern mentioned he is on the Greater Goose Pond stewardship committee. They will be planning future workdays and trail days and could use that to promote them. Mr. Redfern added that in very near future there will be a ceremony to open the Amy Brown trail and will have the ceremony at the trail head where the new kiosk will go. City staff will be there as well as members of Pathways. Will send out an e-mail when they get a date on that. Having members from this committee there will add diversity to the promotion of the trail heads. Another member brought up potential to promote Rail trail clean up days.

e) Kiosk Map Updates

Andy should have copies of those next week and hoping to get them run and installed.

8) Regular Project Updates

Already covered.

9) New Business

Ms. Manwaring spoke and said a little birdie told her that IT is looking at the City of Keene website. She would like to add an agenda item of what the committee would like to see for a landing page. Had the discussion in the human rights committee and the group wondered why no one knows who they are and what they do and it is because there is nothing easily accessible for public to know the who/what/ when why and where?

Vice Chair Todd Horner shared that he is helping Hannah Grimes on the Radically Rural Summit. One session will focus on walkability in rural downtowns and bringing in Mark Fenton who is a nationally known walkability expert and faculty at Tufts University. He will speak to how increasing walkability helps downtowns. He has a process for helping community members understand where certain members of our street scene are struggling with access. Hoping to set it up so that people can attend this particular presentation rather than the entire event. That particular workshop is happening September 22, 2022. More information will be forthcoming.

Mr. Schoefmann will forward an e-mail from Charles Redfern on the Active Transportation Infrastructure and Invest Program. It is an opportunity that will not come about until next year, but should start poking around now. Minimal grant award will be 15 million and will likely have to be a regional award. Chair Bryenton suggested adding this to the agenda as an item for next month.

10) Adjournment

Next Meeting date – August 10, 2022.

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff

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