

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 9, 2024

8:15 AM

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

Members Present:

Samantha Jackson, Chair
Dr. Rowland Russell, Vice Chair
Councilor Edward Haas
Autumn DelaCroix
Diana Duffy
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Jan Manwaring
Mike Davern

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Coordinator

Members Not Present:

Dillon Benik
Janelle Sartorio, Alternate

1) Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome

Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:19 AM and recognized alternate members, Ms. Diana Duffy and Mr. Charles Redfern, as voting members.

2) September 11, 2024 Minutes

Chair Jackson noted that she had already submitted some changes to Mr. Schoefmann and the minute taker and received a corrected version. She asked for any other changes. With no other changes, she requested a motion to approve the corrected minutes. Ms. Autumn DelaCroix motioned to approve the amended minutes, which Councilor Ed Haas seconded. With all in favor, the September 11, 2024, minutes were accepted.

3) Downtown Infrastructure Project

A) Bike Lane Rules Updates from MSFI

Chair Jackson shared that she thought it was a very positive meeting regarding how they took the bike rules themselves. She felt that the City Manager presented the rules very well. She was clear and concise and answered questions well when needed. She recalled Councilor Randy Filiault, who was not present, raising concerns through Councilor Mitch Greenwald about wanting a designated speed limit and not having electric bikes on the bike lane. Mr. Schoefmann stated that those concerns jibe with what the mayor has been promoting. He administration and the legal

team would address those concerns when writing the ordinance.

Councilor Ed Haas stated that he had seen an ordinance from New Jersey prohibiting e-bikes in protected bike lanes across the board, which surprised him. He felt they would need to watch and see how this goes from state to state.

Ms. Autumn DelaCroix felt that there were safer ways to do that. For example, she explained that if Main Street were only 20 miles per hour, it would be far safer for e-bikes to share that lane with cars because the maximum speed is the same as the speed limit. She felt it would do a lot to reduce conflict. Mr. Mike Davern joined the meeting, and Mr. Schoefmann briefly recapped the discussion to bring him up to speed. He explained that he believed it would require waiting to see what the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee (PLD) says.

Chair Jackson added that bikes are tricky right now because even places with bike policies that have been in place for some time are unsure of the direction the policies will take going forward, saying they were all learning together.

Chair Jackson recognized Mr. Charles Redfern, who noted numerous other e-devices besides e-bikes. Multiple committee members shared examples such as scooters, one-wheelers, skateboards, etc. Mr. Redfern felt he could endorse a speed limit because it is more measurable than other examples that fall into the eye of the beholder and result in one person's word against another. He explained that the dealerships are against a speed limit throughout the seacoast. Dr. Rowland Russell said one of the challenges brought up was the enforcement aspect.

B) Enforcement Concern Email from Fred Parcels

Ms. DelaCroix imagined enforcement would be more of an afterthought to an unrelated issue or behavior, resulting in speeding being tacked on. She noted another point mentioned during the meeting: the desire to avoid additional signs on Main Street. She thought it was worth pointing out that the speed limit must be reasonable for all bike lanes to reduce confusion. She felt that leans into the idea that safe speeds are still relevant and that if the road is designed for vehicles, bikes, and other electric things like that to go slower, they will go slower.

Dr. Russell added that the paint markings, textures of the paths, layout, and design, among other things, all serve as calming measures, and he felt that was positive. He added that, of course, it will get worked out in detail during the design phase, but as a group, they should be prepared to support and find other ideas, keep track of those designs, and add to the conversation as appropriate.

Mr. Davern apologized for being late and asked what speed people were proposing. Chair Jackson responded that there is not a proposed speed right now. She continued to explain that she had looked online at other places and found they did anything from twelve to fifteen miles per hour. She has heard some people proposing eight miles per hour. Mr. Davern thought one might be hard-pressed to go twelve to fifteen miles per hour down Main Street during business hour traffic. An early morning or late evening ride might be able to near those speeds, but he explained that fifteen miles per hour is a sound clip on a road bike. Casual people riding bikes

will not go that fast, but e-bikes might be a different story. To him, enforcement is no different than cars going forty-five miles per hour down Main St. He said there is no reason to make a big deal out of this, suggesting the group pick a prudent speed and post a few signs. Mr. Davern felt that the police department would struggle to enforce this the same way as any other motor vehicle laws. They are not everywhere at the same time, all at once.

Dr. Russell noted that there was some discussion of parking enforcement being the agents of that. He felt there would be pushback from the parking enforcement due to them already being demonized. Mr. Schoefmann agreed that it might be a hard sell. Councilor Haas felt the agents of enforcement would be themselves. It will be social enforcement of established, demonstrated, and expected behavior. Dr. Russell agreed and stated that one of the points he made when there was open for public discussions is that their committee has talked extensively about the difference between regulation and recommendation. The recommendation part is where they still have a chance to influence things, and asking what culture they want to create, how they support that culture, and how they communicate is a start. Another thing is how they develop and hold training for people or workshops about riding downtown that they can have complete control over as a committee. Mr. Schoefmann felt that getting the material together would be the first step, as the BPPAC and Policy Committee had suggested, following the proper etiquette and process and then going from there.

Chair Jackson shared that she was talking with her coworkers just before the meeting about figuring out a speed limit and how one of her friends made an interesting point regarding educating the populace. The suggestion was to create an event with officers where cyclists can use a speed gun to get an idea of speed and how fast or slow they travel. The idea was to make it fun with a straightaway or race and educate people by showing speed.

It was asked if this was about the e-mail. Mr. Schoefmann clarified that Councilor Haas had requested the e-mail from Mr. Fred Parcells be included. Councilor Haas explained that Mr. Fred Parcells had sent a letter to the council and others about the enforcement aspect and asked who would enforce this given the understaffed police department and highlighted that even when fully staffed, the police department does not have the time for this. Councilor Haas responded to Mr. Parcells that it would be a social effort to enforce defined rules and regulations that set a threshold for where liability may be put in the event of an accident. He has not yet heard back from Mr. Parcells. Mr. Schoefmann explained to Councilor Haas that he probably will not hear back from him until he returns from Germany.

Dr. Russell wanted to bring up the Forbes article in the packet they received before the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee (MSFI). They were concerned it would come up at the meeting and serve as a point of contention to push back against. He was relieved to share that it did not come up but cautioned that the article was still out there and could presumably get into the hands of the city council. He explained they had a couple of shared e-mails within the group that received that article. He had pulled together previous studies about safety that countered the argument in the Forbes Article, and he also drilled down into the article itself. The person who wrote the article is the Director of Environment and Energy for The Heritage Foundation, which wrote Project 2025. Presumably, this is in Project 2025. He explained that Ms. DelaCroix had also drilled down into the article. Since the letter and the

Forbes article are now part of the public record that the City Council has to review, he thought it would be worth putting their documentation into that. The two previously created e-mails could be transcribed into a letter from BPPAC to MSFI and the City Council. Dr. Russell motioned Chair Jackson to draft a letter to MSFI and the City Council. Mr. Redfern seconded the motion.

Councilor Haas explained that he had responded privately to Mr. John Loveland and pointed out that even though Mr. Loveland had been writing these letters for two years, he was late to the party. According to Mr. Haas, questioning someone's assumptions is the easiest way to start an argument. It is a debating technique, and it does not prove anything. In one of Mr. Loveland's earlier letters, Councilor Haas pointed out that Mr. Loveland credits Stantec as a reputable company, stating that Keene did a good job hiring them. Mr. Loveland then goes on to criticize everything that they have done based on questioning assumptions. Councilor Haas said at the end of the day, the choice of how the downtown gets designed is a citizenry and political choice, and they will use studies to guide. He continued by stating that there will never be a line drawn scientifically from some group of studies to a final result, as that line has to be adopted by the people. He felt they were at the point where they had a great design accepted in the political process and were moving forward. He then thanked Mr. Loveland for providing ample reading material.

To proceed, Dr. Russell said he would compile what was in those emails and send them to Chair Jackson. He welcomed her to "pretty it up," add supplements as appropriate and then send them once completed.

Mr. Schoefmann recommended, depending on the timing, dropping it off to the clerks and asking them to include it in one of the council packets as informational. He explained that he would not be back until the nineteenth and Dr. Russell could inform them of that if they asked why he was giving it to them. Councilor Haas shared that the next council meeting was next week. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that the deadline would be Monday if they try to make it to the next council meeting.

Ms. DelaCroix asked if they should include an answer to the question about the miles per hour for bikes. Committee members did not think so, and Dr. Russell believed this should be a communication about safety. Mr. Schoefmann asked if PLD would be hearing that at the next meeting. Councilor Haas responded that the next step would be for staff to write a draft ordinance, which will come before PLD for public hearings. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that one member stop at the clerk's office on the way out of the meeting to inform them to expect that letter on Monday.

Chair Jackson revisited the previous motion put forth by Dr. Russell for the chair to draft a letter for MSFI, which Mr. Redfern seconded. With no further discussion and unanimous approval, it was approved.

4) Safety and Outreach

Mr. Redfern said he found out that the City Council has other committees that get advice from these committees, such as the Energy Climate Committee. While minor, they have budgets for

outreach and other activities. He proposed setting up a minor budget request before the city council. Councilor Haas was asked by Mr. Redfern when their next budget review was, and Councilor Haas responded that it was next Spring. Mr. Redfern suggested a budget of five hundred dollars with the understanding that it does not have to be used if not needed.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested revisiting it in January or February and sending it to the folks on the fourth floor. He was unsure of the exact process but assumed it would require the committee to write an informational letter to the council.

Dr. Russell liked the idea but felt it was too early to attach a dollar amount to it as he believed more work needed to be done to determine what that money would be used for, such as training, materials, etc. Mr. Schoefmann suggested creating an outreach plan with the request for funding rather than simply requesting money. Dr. Russell said there are also grant programs available, like America Walks, that get used for this type of thing but are competitive.

Mr. Redfern explained that he will not be around in person during the January/February timeframe but will be available online. Ms. Manwaring suggested withdrawing the motion. Mr. Redfern withdrew the motion but requested someone take it up and urged the committee to continue the outreach discussion. Councilor Haas suggested putting the development of the outreach plan on the next agenda.

5) **BPPAC Website**

Mr. Schoefmann pulled up the BPPAC website, showing the state's guide and the link for the city to the ordinances and membership qualifications. Mrs. Manwaring shared that she and Mr. Andy Bohannon had met with Ms. Rebecca Landry over a year ago, who said it was no issue to put information up on the website. Mrs. Manwaring highlighted the fact that she has been working on updating the website for over three years.

Councilor Haas asked Mr. Schoefmann about other committees that use committee members to work on the website. He hesitantly said no, explaining that there has been some development for certain projects like the Heritage Commission. The answer, in general, was no.

Councilor Haas asked if it funnels through community development or communications. Mr. Schoefmann responded that it spans this weird realm, which tends to be a bit of both. He confirmed with Mrs. Manwaring that she had indeed spoken with Ms. Landry and asked if Ms. Landry had communicated this with IT (Information Technology). Mrs. Manwaring responded that Ms. Landry was working in information technology during their conversation.

Mr. Schoefmann said he needed to figure out a better channel to put forward the request so that it would come in as a work request rather than just a conversation. Dr. Russell shared that he was aware that they could not link to the outside of the city of Keene website but understood that they could link to where the trails are on the parks and recreation site or the Transportation Heritage Trail, etc. He felt that some great information should be on the site, such as the video the consultant did about the bridges.

Mrs. Manwaring said the Energy Climate Committee has their accomplishments on its site, which she felt validates its effectiveness. Mr. Schoefmann offered to look into ways to submit a ticket based on what the committee is looking to have done. He explained that while e-mails are logged for right-to-know requests, having them logged in a work order system will ensure they are addressed and not overlooked. Councilor Haas suggested Mrs. Manwaring send the list of tasks to him, and he would put it into a document that could be voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. Redfern asked if they could have a copy of the proposed letter before the meeting so they could have time to review it. Dr. Russell clarified that it was not a letter but rather a request. Chair Jackson asked if they could get an update on whether the work order request would be feasible. Mr. Schoefmann agreed.

6) Regular Projects Updates

Mr. Schoefmann asked if the censuses were launched. Chair Jackson and Councilor Haas said they started doing census counts in August.

Mr. Redfern stated that he counted a few bike racks behind The Hundred Nights facility, and there were over forty bikes at that rack when he was there to take pictures. He explained that the grant he had applied for had to be for underserved populations. He used those pictures as justification and to serve as an argument for the trails, given that a significant portion of the population uses bikes to ride the trails due to financial constraints.

Mr. Schoefmann added that the shelter should probably be one of the first stops on any outreach campaign. Mr. Redfern agreed and said that the college would be another.

Dr. Russell said a bike rack used to be installed where Island Street connects to the bike path. He noticed it had been removed and was lying on the grass near Domino's. A few days ago, he saw it standing on a different curb but still in the same area. Mr. Schoefmann believed it was part of their site plan and was a requirement of the plan.

On the Safe Streets for All Grant, Mr. Schoefmann said it sounds like the report is coming out of the Steering Committee and will be adopted by the council in November. This was according to the timeline that the Department of Public Works had sent him.

The bids for the Tap Grant on Marlborough Street are due October 11th, so by the next meeting, Mr. Schoefmann expects to know if there will be construction next year. Councilor Haas asked if they had passed the state approval, to which Mr. Schoefmann responded yes. Councilor Haas asked if he could find the bid document on the city website. Mr. Schoefmann responded yes, he should be able to see it.

The next step for safety, outreach, and bike lane rules is to go before the PLD. Mr. Schoefmann was not sure when that would be.

Mr. Schoefmann updated that the Downtown Infrastructure Project is looking for bids in March, with construction beginning in late May. This timeline will depend on several factors, but it is tentative for 2025.

Mr. Schoefmann shared that a group has been working with Mr. Andy Bohannon on wayfinding. He asked Dr. Russell if he knew where that stood. Dr. Russell believed the committee intended to look at the map and the information from the consultant. The consultant's page shows potential models for kiosks, confidence markers, and such. It was not sent out in the packet, so potentially for November. Dr. Russell explained that Mr. Bohannon admitted to dropping the ball on this and is urgently trying to address it.

Mr. Schoefmann imagined they could get the items produced over winter and installed in the spring. Dr. Russell suggested that people review the page and the maps and share if they have additions. He explained that he and Councilor Haas worked with Mr. Bohannon to mark existing kiosks, proposed kiosk locations, wayfinding points, and confidence markers, especially street crossings where people could potentially lose the path. Dr. Russell explained that Mr. Bohannon said the budget is not there for them to do them all at once, so there is intent to focus on the areas close to downtown. Dr. Russell added phases to the map, with phase three being the Transportation Heritage Trail because they cannot install any wayfinding until the trail is completed. Design options have not been decided upon, but they are worth looking at. Dr. Russell offered to contact Mr. Bohannon on his timeline, and once they receive it, they will provide committee members with a deadline for feedback.

Mr. Redfern shared that Bensonwood has offered to design the Transportation Heritage Trail fixtures. Mr. Redfern plans to tell them it is too early but that they want to keep their offer. He believed they were looking to do a kiosk, storyboard, or something similar. Dr. Russell suggested keeping in mind that Mr. Bohannon is working with these consultants. Mr. Schoefmann suggested sending that item to Mr. Don Lussier and Mr. Bohannon.

Dr. Russell suggested keeping in mind that Peter Poanessa has a railroad signal that could be refurbished and used as part of the gateway. Mr. Redfern shared that he believed Pathways would have money for that, and Dr. Russell said the Historical Society might also have some money.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested Dr. Russell send out those documents and that Mr. Bohannon collect any feedback, as he will be out of the country for the next week and a half. Dr. Russell agreed, but he asked that feedback be sent to him, and he and Councilor Haas will collect it and then share it with Mr. Bohannon.

Councilor Haas praised Dr. Russell for carrying the weight of this project. He explained that they had been scouting places and commenting on the signs but highlighted that Dr. Russell had been holding the weight.

Dr. Russell thanked Pathways, explaining that he had used their base map to create the one to be sent out. He explained that on the map, where there is a confidence marker or a kiosk or something that was not noted on the map; he wrote the name of the street where it was. He also

said that he had seen four different spellings of the Ammi Brown and that the correct one is Ammi.

Chair Jackson said that while she mentioned this during the last meeting, she wanted to bring up the need to identify areas where there is an overpass and no connection to the trail. Councilor Haas responded that they had addressed it.

Mr. Schoefmann shared that the preliminary design submission date for the Transportation Heritage Trail is the end of October. Bidding is possible in the spring of 2025, and a summer and fall 2025 construction plan is anticipated.

Mr. Redfern shared that Mr. Brett Rusnock was leaving to work as a New Hampshire Department of Transportation project manager. He explained that Mr. Rusnock has been instrumental in many of the trail movements and was a key player in helping Pathways for Keene land their \$100,000 grant donation for the match required for the local share of the Transportation Heritage Trail. Mr. Redfern felt Mr. Rusnock was a tremendous asset for this section of the state and believed he would continue to be an advocate.

Mr. Redfern continued saying that he has not met the city engineer and is requesting that this group meet with the new city engineer, have introductions, and educate about the committee. He clarified that he was asking the chair if that would be appropriate. Chair Jackson responded that she believed that it would be.

Dr. Russell believed it would be a good idea to have him attend, especially given their plan to have that session be a brainstorming session for safety and outreach. He asked if they wanted to invite Mrs. Carrah Fisk-Hennessey to that meeting. He highlighted that city staff is understaffed and overworked and believed the committee needed to be more intentional about having particular people at meetings. Chair Jackson agreed. Mr. Schoefmann offered to send a note to Mrs. Fisk-Hennessey.

7) Volunteer Opportunities

A) Bike Rack Census Counts, Yield Counts, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Counts

Dr. Russell shared that they had not had a chance to meet, so they had not set a date yet for the clean-up. However, it would likely be a Sunday towards the end of October or early November. Once they set the date, he will share it with everyone.

Ms. Diana Duffy volunteered to help count, highlighting that the data will shift as the weather changes. She wondered if there were intentions to do the counts quarterly. Chair Jackson responded that they still have census aids available to use downtown, but she has not seen anything for the yield and bicycle-pedestrian counts for downtown, West Street, and Island Street areas.

Mr. Schoefmann responded that he would need to determine the required form. He said he could formulate something quickly if someone were willing to do the research and send him the resources. Chair Jackson agreed.

Mr. Marcus McCarroll just wanted to ensure the Green Bikes project is ongoing. He shared that they were meeting that day at the library in the Vincent Miller Room at 3:00 pm and were looking for members and input from people. He hoped to have a project moving forward and announced that he had gotten the application in with the state to re-up the old Keene City Green Bikes. He wanted to remind people and encourage anybody who knows anybody interested in the project to send them along.

8) **Old Business**
A) **Wayfinding Updates**

Chair Jackson recognized Ms. Duffy, who said she hopes to attend the New York Bike Summit next week. It is a two-day conference in Albany, and it is the only conference one might attend where they have dedicated bicycle valet parking. It is a statewide effort to educate advocates, municipalities, attorneys, and policymakers. There will be two days of plenaries and panels on walking equity, mobility and safety, etc. Essentially, many of the same things that the BPPAC is dealing with, and because it is New York, they tend to be leaders. She asked if she could have time for an update if she attends. Chair Jackson explained that she could submit another agenda item to Mr. Schoefmann anytime.

Chair Jackson recognized Mr. Redfern. Regarding the request for dollars, he had come up with a few items for the justification, such as a banner with rules for bike lanes and the maps and attending a conference within New Hampshire relating to bicycle and pedestrian issues. Various groups have conferences on bicycle pedestrian issues that have minimal fees. He would also request the city purchase a 10x10 tent for such uses.

9) **New Business**
A) **Items To Be Included In The Next Meeting**

Mr. Schoefmann reiterated the four focus areas for the November meeting: the safety and outreach plan discussion, Diana's conference, the budget, and the yield counts.

Councilor Haas moved to adjourn and received a second from Ms. Duffy.

10) **More Time**
A) **Community Bike Share**
B) **Continued Bike Rack Discussion**

11) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:24 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, GIS Coordinator,
Community Development/KGIS