

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

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

**Wednesday, December 11, 2024**

**8:15 AM**

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

**Members Present:**

Samantha Jackson, Chair  
Rowland Russell, Vice Chair  
Councilor Edward Haas  
Autumn DelaCroix (remote)  
Jan Manwaring  
Diana Duffy, Alternate  
Charles Redfern, Alternate  
Janelle Sartorio, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician

**Members Not Present:**

Dillon Benik  
Michael Davern

**1) Call to Order, Roll Call and Welcome**

Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:16 AM. Councilor Haas requested that all alternates be appointed voting members for the meeting. Dr. Rowland Russell seconded his motion. With all in favor, the motion passed.

**2) November 13, 2024, Minutes**

Dr. Russell noted that he had been marked as present but was not. Ms. Jan Manwaring pointed out that she was not present and not included in the members not present list. With no other corrections or errors of note, Councilor Haas moved to approve the minutes, treat the members not present or not included in the not present list as a scrivener's error, and accept the minutes from November 13, 2024. Chair Jackson seconded the motion, and with all in favor, it was approved.

**3) Safety and Outreach**

**A) New York Bike Summit Report Out**

Ms. Diana Duffy shared that she participated in October in New York's Bicycle Coalition Conference. It was a two-day event in Albany that discussed various mobility matters in the

state. She said she had a great time and that it was the only conference she had ever attended that had ten-minute massages, yoga for cyclists, meditation, and bicycling. She explained that it was very vibrant, primarily because New York works on mobility on many levels.

She wanted to share the top five things she took from the conference with the group. It came down to how broad the state's support for cycling and mobility is. At least four different state departments have programs addressing cycling and mobility. The Department of Transportation is working on a statewide strategic plan called the Active Transportation Strategic Plan to improve walking, biking, wheelchair use, and other forms of active transportation throughout New York.

In keeping with the overall safety message of the conference, The Department of Motor Vehicles is working on increasing safety given all the various modalities on the road. She learned that recreation is outspending agriculture money that is coming into the state of New York. The Department of Tourism understands that and sees the direct link that cycling creates an entirely new tourism engine rocking the state's regions, even remote areas. The fourth department, the Department of Health, promotes the health benefits of cycling for adults and kids and promotes the wellness factor of outdoor cycling recreation.

Lastly, Ms. Duffy shared that during the conference, she learned that the Governor of New York is striving for Vision Zero to make roads death-free through the governor's Traffic Safety Committee. Ms. Duffy learned that Rochester is one of the leading forces in Vision Zero and shared stories of how they got there by addressing issues ranging from snow removal at bus stops to improve safety to issues like electric vehicles not being allowed inside multi-family buildings in New York City.

Ms. Duffy said one of the things she enjoyed most about the conference was being in a place where everybody was speaking with this fresh and new vocabulary that is all about safe streets for all and understanding that safety is a human right. She highlighted how some cities leverage their bike-friendly credentials and how Keene can do the same given the City's involvement, Keene State's effort, and the Monadnock Co-op. She felt Keene was on the cutting edge of figuring this out, and it was reassuring to see that other states were in front and resources were available. She stated she has several handouts from the event that she is happy to share with those interested.

Councilor Haas asked Ms. Duffy if she could translate that into something the BPPAC could do or be actionable on other than the enthusiasm of all of it. Ms. Duffy wanted to create a glossary based on what she learned about the new language and how people speak about this topic. She thought it would help get everyone on the same page and help to create consistency. Ms. Duffy suggested having a separate conversation with Councilor Haas.

Dr. Russell did not believe they could influence the state but suggested thinking about what is within the BPPAC's locus of control. Assuming the Downtown Infrastructure Project goes

forward and the safety plan is accepted, the BPPAC will be front and center of the etiquette and promotion piece. He felt that by using this lexicon, they could introduce some of those concepts and ideas, get them out into the general population, and leverage them. He also suggested checking to see if the Monadnock Co-Op was renewed and if there were other businesses interested in becoming bike-friendly businesses.

Ms. Dufffy asked Mr. Schoefmann whether bike lanes would be dedicated plowing. Public Works Director Bryan Ruoff responded that the intent would be to snowplow with them integrated into the sidewalk. He believed they were going with six-foot-wide paths, which works for the sidewalk plows.

Chair Jackson wanted to pull the bike racks discussion forward to ensure Mr. Ruoff's time was respected.

### **B) Plan Discussion and Budget Requests**

Councilor Haas shared that he had started writing down what things come into safety and outreach and putting them on a table. He explained that he likes getting specific and highlighted that items on the table are all items the BPPAC could take on, suggesting that each member could take on one box or line and make it happen. Each person could contribute something that could be sourced from somewhere else, be it from LED, or the New York Summit, or wherever, and put into a form that they could then take to the next step, whether that be posting it on the website, distributing it as some other media or putting it in the newspaper. The idea is to start building this library of materials they have discussed. Regarding engagement and connection, he added that he would also want to reach out to all the commercial shops to introduce and clarify the BPPAC purpose and highlight that the BPPAC is interested in what store owners might be interested in or open to. He would also invite them to the BPPAC meeting as a voice. If nothing else, he felt it sometimes removes the antagonistic relationship, and rather than putting the burden on them, it makes them part of the process.

Dr. Russell wanted to recognize that bikes are not the only recreation they are trying to promote and suggested including other groups in the outreach. He shared that he represents the BPPAC at the Monadnock Outdoors monthly meeting that the Cheshire County Conservation District and Hospital Health sponsor. Councilor Haas agreed.

Mr. Charles Redfern offered to take on Norm's Bike and Ski Shop. Councilor Haas questioned whether that was a good idea given Mr. Redfern frequently goes in their hat in hand.

Mrs. Jan Manwaring felt she was behind the eight ball and wanted time to look the table over and think about it before agreeing to go into any business. Councilor Haas reassured her that she was not behind on anything. He said this was "just new spaghetti thrown at the wall." He suggested focusing on the first column, saying the rest of the table was just his ideas of how that could be done.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested allowing the group time to digest and review it during the next meeting. He acknowledged Councilor Haas's desire to go and do it and suggested discussing it today or going over whatever budget ideas people have and then confirming during the next meeting.

Mrs. Manwaring said that she would pass something around. As many know, her issue is the website, where her focus is. She realized she had written this document in 2022, which shows how long she had been working to change the website. While it needs to be updated, this was her original plan. She said she is now confirmed for another year and cautioned that she will not let this go. She suggested it be tied in with Councilor Haas's table. Councilor Haas requested members send him their ideas so that he could synthesize them into a table for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Schoefmann reiterated that if anyone had recommendations for any cells within the table that Councilor Haas produced, they should send them to Councilor Haas. He then asked if members wanted to review the budget items or wait. He reminded folks that the significant items were a banner and a pop-up tent. He thought the banner was a good thing to focus on. He suggested that Councilor Haas add a new column called budget requests. He highlighted that they already have the banner for Bike Week. Once they start accumulating stuff, there is an inventory of things that must be looked after. He was still determining if they would be able to update that banner. Councilor Haas said he would check with Kiwanis again to ensure everyone is copacetic with it, but at worst, he can put a sticker over the date. Dr. Russell suggested naming the additional column "resources" with existing or desired resources as the options.

### **C) Map Project Update**

Mr. Schoefmann explained that a project is underway between several groups, including the city, Pathways, Southwest Regional Planning Commission, and the Regional Rail Trail Collaborative Group. They are working on a two-sided, regional, and Keene-centric map. He shared that Mr. Redfern has been networking support for runs of this product, which is in its final draft stages.

Mr. Redfern stated that the sponsors will be the Chamber of Commerce, the two bike shops, and the Savings Bank of Walpole. The maps would be dispersed at all those locations along with City Hall except for the bank. They have enough for 1500 maps to be printed, which should cover them for two to three years.

Chair Jackson asked if they expected changes to the map during that time frame. Mr. Schoefmann said there will be some changes, and they are trying to figure out a way to designate and integrate the items along the Transportation Heritage Trail as "coming soon."

Dr. Russell said the timeline for the wayfinding project has yet to be established for when the new kiosks will be built, highlighting that kiosks will still need to be added to the map. Mr.

Schoefmann stated he would need to know those, to which Dr. Russell responded that Mr. Andy Bohannon would have the latest updates.

Mr. Redfern said it is possible to cut it to \$1000, leaving some money in reserve for a future run should there be additional changes.

**4) Regular Project Updates**

Ms. Ruoff shared that last week, the Ms. submitted a letter of intent to seek funding from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) for phase two of the heritage trail under the NHDOT TAP Grant program. That will go to the next step, which will take place sometime in January. Applications are due at the end of January.

Ms. Ruoff explained that they are rebidding the Marlboro Street work, which includes some of the trail work. The intent is to rebid that in early January to ensure construction for this year. They are contacting contractors to ensure they have enough bidders for a good price. In the past, they have only had one bidder, resulting in the bidder seemingly having higher pricing, possibly due to a lack of competition. They are also doing an internal audit to clarify the design and pay items to get better pricing.

In phase one of the Transportation Heritage Trail, Ms. Ruoff shared that an aspect came up in which they need easements for some existing drainage. They hope it does not hold up the project and funding and are working to address that. He explained that it is currently at the top of his list of priorities because they could also lose funding if they lose it. He is currently working with the Ms. appraiser and the public works director to secure the easements for this project. Aside from that, the project is in final design, and the permitting state is otherwise in good shape to bid on the project in April of next year. Construction completion is expected for next year.

On the Downtown Infrastructure Project, there is Ms. action to delay the project for one year that will be heard tomorrow (December 12, 2024) at the Ms. Meeting. Depending on how that goes, construction is anticipated for summer and fall next year, possibly continuing into the following year. They have broken the project into three phases: Central Square as the first phase, Railroad Street and Gilbo Ave as phase two, and the southern leg as phase three. Everything currently hinges on the Ms.'s action and their decision.

Ms. Schoefmann asked if they are taking public comment at the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Meeting (FOP), to which Ms. Ruoff responded that he would imagine they are.

On the Safe Streets for All grant, Ms. Ruoff shared that there was a final meeting in late November in which they voted to adopt and recommend to the Ms. the adoption of the report and corrective actions therein. From that, the Ms. will get that as an item. Ms. Ruoff was unaware if Ms. Don Lussier had brought that on schedule for January. The hope is to vote for Ms. approval

in January and then have that accepted by the governing body. They would then seek funding based on that report, which would serve as the catalyst or engine.

Ms. Redfern shared that an individual will be ranking the TAP grant projects. This individual has already said that he will not vote in favor of the Ms. TAP Grant because the Three Bridges Project, to which this TAP grant is dedicated, does not apply to TAP Grants as it puts it too far back in the ten-year plan. Ms. Redfern shared that he has had people share with him that it does not necessarily mean it is going in the back, and he has heard that it could happen as early as 2027, which is only a few years away. Ms. Redfern expressed concerns about that comment and was unsure where to take it. This individual has not seen the applications for the Ms. of Ms. and has this preconceived notion that TAP does not apply to bridges.

Ms. Redfern empathically said that all ranking members need to be educated. Ms. Ruoff noted that while it presents a challenge in that someone opposed to the project is not great, all they can do is show the best-case benefit for the project and why the project benefits interconnecting communities. Including the language and doing what they can to portray that message in their application and presentations will be paramount. He felt Ms. Lussier was a very eloquent speaker and joked that he did not think he was far behind, and between the two of them, he felt they would be able to push a narrative that would provide favorably for this.

Ms. Redfern felt that this individual's preconceived notions would negatively affect the ranking of these projects, particularly Ms.'s. Given that this person has not even seen the applications, he thought it should disqualify them from ranking the projects. Ms. Schoefmann stated that the best thing to do would be to obtain letters of support from area organizations and persons. Ms. Ruoff agreed. Ms. Redfern felt there should be one from the BPPAC through the Ms., stating that this group serves to advise the Ms. Ms. on all things pertinent to their mission. Ms. Schoefmann suggested getting the BPPAC to approve in January. Ms. Ruoff offered to send Ms. Schoefmann an e-mail with bullet points of dates, points of discussion, etc, sometime that week that could be used to formulate a letter.

Dr. Russell asked if there was anything new on the Winchester Street project. Ms. Ruoff explained that on upper Winchester Street, some close-out items need to be addressed by the contractors, such as lighting, and some negotiating with abutters that had property damage during the process. Still, all in all, that project is closed out and moving forward. On Lower Winchester Street, they are progressing with the consultant engineer into preliminary and final design. The goal is to complete the preliminary design by May of next year, at which point NHDOT will take over the right-of-way process, which could take up to two years. He has meetings next week with the design team and all the utilities in that area. They then will start dialing in on the design and getting feedback, setting up public meetings to gather that feedback. Members thanked Ms. Ruoff for his input and updates. Ms. Ruoff left the meeting.

Ms. Haas asked if anyone was willing to pen the letter of support. Ms. Jackson said she did not mind but felt "woefully unaware of the intricacies of the situation." Ms. Schoefmann offered to

look at what she developed. Seeing reluctance on the Ms.'s face, Ms. Autumn DelaCroix offered to take an initial stab, warning that it would be "too spicy" and others might need to temper her. Members thanked Ms. DelaCroix.

5) **Volunteer Opportunities**  
A) **Membership**

Mr. Schoefmann shared that Dillon Benik is the only one terming out, and he understands that the mayor has someone in the queue for that spot but cannot remember who the person is. Last time, the GIS person at Southwest had expressed interest in joining. Mr. Schoefmann is trying to get from Mr. Horner whether that will happen. Bryan Ruoff provided an individual who lives in Keene and does a lot of the trail maintenance and is also interested. There have been many e-mails flying around, and Mr. Schoefmann is trying to get a couple of people appointed to at least alternate positions. He mentioned wanting to move interested alternates, like Ms. Duffy, to voting member positions in the next round. Dr. Russell shared that he also has someone interested in joining. Mr. Schoefmann urged Dr. Russell to have him fill out the form. Ms. Manwaring suggested (unless the mayor is against it) appointing Councilor Haas as Council Liaison because it would open a seat for him. Councilor Haas said they are in the process of fixing that. Mr. Schoefmann offered to send around the background of incoming members.

Mr. Redfern suggested adding a public comment section at the end. Dr. Russell shared that he had attended for about six months before joining and viewed it as an excellent way to get to know the group. He highlighted that it also provides insight into their commitment. Chair Jackson was not opposed but preferred allowing and expecting the public to speak at any time on any of the items as the meeting progressed. Dr. Russell shared that is how the Energy and Climate Committee also does it.

Ms. DelaCroix added that she and Chair Jackson also began the committee by attending as guests. As for public comments, they could be informal. She felt the most straightforward way was to address them at the start of the meeting, ask why they were there, and provide an opportunity for them to share, introduce themselves, and share what might be relevant to them, recognizing that not everyone can sit through an hour and a half meeting.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if there was anything else on membership. Chair Jackson asked what the chair and vice chair looked like term-wise. Mr. Schoefmann explained that those positions are voted on annually in January. Mr. Redfern added that people can be re-voted.

**B) Yield Counts: Bike Rack Census and Bicycle/Pedestrian Counts**

Mr. Schoefmann explained that Henry Underwood at Southwest got a copy of the agenda and saw that there were yield counts. In talking with Mr. Schoefmann, he mentioned seeing it on the agenda and shared what method he used last summer when he completed them. Mr. Schoefmann

thought using the same method others in the region are using made sense. He has the paperwork and will share the method for everyone to look at, and they can then formalize a plan.

Mr. Schoefmann has the counts from Pearl Street, which he believed were about two and a half years old. He is providing that information to Mr. Lussier per his request. He has an extrapolation tool for the data and will punch that information in. The city is looking to install mid-block crossings at Pearl and West Streets. That data will serve as justification through Council Action. Dr. Russell added that one of the great things about having a methodology already been used is that it provides even more data. Despite seeming far out, he felt this timing was ideal as the West Street project is coming closer. He thought that having this data would be helpful for any advocacy they may want regarding the West Street project.

- 6) **Old Business**
  - A) **Wayfinding Updates**
  - B) **Website**

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Manwaring is working on adding information to the website. Councilor Haas suggested updating the BPPAC purpose.

Dr. Russell said there is a Friends of Public Art Board meeting tonight, and someone who is a benefactor interested in supporting sculpture is meeting with them. Dr. Russell planned to mention Peter Poanessa's railroad signal that they hope to be a part of the Transportation Heritage Trail and see if this person might be interested. Mr. Schoefmann asked Dr. Russell how plugged in he was with Mr. Ruoff and Mr. Lussier, to which he responded that he was not at all plugged in with them. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they had a concept of which section they wanted it to go in. Dr. Russell said the idea is to have it somewhere closer to Railroad Square.

- 7) **New Business**
  - A) **Items to be Included for the Next Meeting**
- 8) **More Time**
  - A) **Bike Lane Rules Update**
  - B) **Continued Bike Racks Discussion**

City Engineer, Ruoff shared that they had reviewed the bike rack inventory for the city that was meant to be submitted to the Council. They understand the language and desires regarding what is and is not acceptable/desirable for bike racks. He explained that the idea is that since they are replacing all the sidewalks, all the mountable style bike racks will have to come out, at least temporarily. They hope to try to salvage them and reinstall them. The exact locations and number of racks can be coordinated later. There are some moveable bike racks, and he understands the desire to have at least three in the downtown area. There is flexibility in where those go. He is looking for feedback on whether there should be more on the locations and not, in a definitive sense, more to help facilitate the conversation with MSFI next week. The intent is to

keep most of the new bike racks mountable to increase their availability throughout the year. This will also help reduce the maintenance required to move them, especially given that they will be located adjacent to the landscaping areas or the furniture zone, making it an area that does not need them to be moved for winter.

Ideally, as part of the project, they will remove all the bike racks considered undesirable or not serving their intended purpose and replace them with the desired mountable racks. The excess racks can then be relocated wherever the BPPAC suggests.

The plan is to use black to match the downtown aesthetic and keep an antique look. There has been some discussion about doing art projects where these are painted or decorated. They will also do this for walks in the area and the peace poll at the proposed fountain. If there is any additional feedback he can relay through their consultant to present at MSFI, he welcomes it.

Chair Jackson said the one thing she has yet to see presented today, which has come up before, is bike lockers. With the rise of E-bikes and the more significant expense of the bike itself, bike lockers could be a good way to keep the bike out of the elements and provide extra security for it. Mr. Ruoff said that it was on his next slide.

Chair Jackson recognized Ms. Autumn DelaCroix, who said she had one minor note regarding the mountable bike racks' usability in winter. She noted that they all have a lip where they are bolted to the ground. If there is any way to recess that, it would be ideal to ensure that shovels or plows refrain from constantly kicking that and causing issues or making it impossible to shovel or plow around them. Mr. Ruoff said they would investigate it.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if there were installation guides for places where winter is a factor regarding spacing. He wondered if it was possible to space them out appropriately, given that the intent was to have the sidewalk plow be able to get between the racks to alleviate the manual labor of shoveling them out.

Mr. Ruff responded that they would need a five-foot buffer on their side of the rack and that it was closer than five feet in the grid he had reviewed. This would result in hand work to shovel them out, but they could coordinate with the consultant to ensure they are laid out appropriately. He continued saying that that is not something that needs to be described exceptionally well in the plans as that is something that, as they go into construction, they can provide direction to the contractor of placement, highlighting that they have time to coordinate this all.

Chair Jackson recognized Dr. Russell. Dr. Russell suggested that the cost of a bike locker could be offset by charging a fee like what the city does for parking. Mr. Ruoff said that was a great idea and a great point. He explained that they are considering adjusting fees to pay for other infrastructure and trying to incorporate that into the project.

Mr. Ruoff brought up another slide with images of the development on Railroad Ave and Railroad Square. Currently, they call them a covered structure. They do not want to lead anyone too much, but the intent would be that you could put bikes under it. The images displayed were more open structures. He wondered and welcomed feedback on the preferences about having it open versus covered, whether there were preferences on siding, and whether these should be solely for bikes or split use. He said this is undoubtedly a location where the bike lockers would make sense.

Ms. Duffy asked if the trend and idea was to eventually use these as charging stations for E-bikes, highlighting the safety aspect and pushing folks not to charge at home. Mr. Ruoff said there was potential for them to discuss with the consultant.

Ms. DelaCroix said if there is a question about what is preferred, rain and snow are some of the biggest deterrents for her. The rafted structures may cool the seat in the summer but do not help with rain and snow. She would prefer fully covered structures.

Mr. Ruoff agreed and said he was looking for more covered structures instead of something more decorative, such as the pictures on the left. Those will not be useful here, and he agreed with Ms. DelaCroix, but he wanted to present the options to get people's input.

Chair Jackson said she is very attached to the first picture because of its dappling. It reduces the amount of sunlight that would be pouring down on someone, and it is also more attractive. She noted that the dappling does not come from the structure so much as from the surrounding trees and stated that she would like to see some trees nearby to help with that.

Councilor Haas asked if there was anything out of the bike rack survey. Mr. Schoefmann stated he would have to look. Councilor Haas then asked if they were discussing locations for the short term. Mr. Ruoff said that is something that does not need immediate discussion. He could even send a plan to Mr. Schoefmann so the committee could provide input. To move that forward, Mr. Ruoff offered to coordinate plans with Mr. Schoefmann for the group to start and then discuss where it makes sense to adjust the bike racks.

Chair Jackson added that the only place she would suggest a bike rack if it does not currently exist is at the top of the square. Mr. Ruoff agreed and said they are anticipating the square having concrete walks. In that instance, they do not have an option to have them be mountable, and it makes more sense to remove them. He added that the location was on their radar.

- C) Community Bike Share**
- D) Public Art and The Trails Update**
- E) Connection via Cheshire Rail Trail at Arch Street Tunnel**

- 9) **Next Meeting: January 8, 2024**
- 10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:33 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Will Schoefmann, GIS Coordinator