

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

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

**Wednesday, March 8, 2023**

**8:15 AM**

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

**Members Present:**

Drew Bryenton, Chair  
Todd Horner, Vice Chair  
Jan Manwaring  
Michael Davern  
Dr. Rowland Russell  
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Andy Bohannon,  
Kürt Blomquist,  
Staff Member Name, Title

**Members Not Present:**

Andrew Madison, Councilor  
Chuck Redfern  
Dillon Benik  
Janelle Satorio, Alternate

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

Chair Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:16 AM. Dr. Chris Brehme will be sitting as a full member and will have voting privileges. Two guests attended; Andrew Bower and John Mathews. Mr. Bower shared that he bikes a lot and had received Andy Bohannon's number from someone at Pathways of Keene. In speaking with Mr. Bohannon, he was informed of the meeting and decided to attend. Mr. Mathews has lived in town for almost three years and had a question he was hoping to have answered. He uses most of the trails in town when they are passable and was curious why the Apple Way trail was never clear. Chair Bryenton asked if they could address that question during project updates.

Chair Bryenton asked about updates on new members. Mr. Schoefmann plans to look at the Council Actions and Referrals e-mail and get back to the group.

**2) Approval of Minutes- February 8, 2023**

Chair Bryenton asked for any corrections to the minutes. With no corrections, Mrs. Manwaring moved to accept and Dr. Russell seconded the motion. Motion to accept was unanimous.

### 3) **Downtown Infrastructure Project Update**

Mr. Bohannon announced a workshop next Tuesday night at 6pm in Council Chambers. The meeting will begin with a council workshop discussion and then open to the public. There is a hard stop for that meeting at 9AM. He said there will likely be additional meetings, but is unsure of dates having just returned from vacation.

It was asked if there was any expectation of delay. Mr. Bohannon said his understanding was that the city is looking to delay the year related to approval of grants. He briefly explained the grant process and requirements and how prior to applying for grants, the plans and procedures must be clearly laid out and ready to be implemented. A decision about design must happen to be able to submit for grant monies.

Chair Bryenton asked if he saw any value for the committee to continue to provide support. Mr. Bohannon responded that he believes the committee remains useful and pertinent as long as they continue to advocate and offer a shared voice for pedestrian and bike access.

Mr. Blomquist was welcomed to the meeting. Chair Bryenton asked if he had anything to add. Mr. Blomquist recommended continued advocacy. He said it is still unclear what the ultimate process will be. There will likely be workshop(s) to culminate in a recommendation. That recommendation will be presented to MSFI and then MSFI will make a decision, which he hopes to happen sometime between May and early June.

### 4) **Safe Streets for All Grant**

Mr. Schoefmann asked Mr. Blomquist if there was any more movement on the Safe Streets for All grant. Mr. Blomquist shared that the city had applied for and received a three hundred and fifty thousand dollar grant through what is referred to as Safe Streets and Roads for All (SR4). It is part of the IJO money/funding. The "Getting to Zero" program is the federal highway and safety program with the goal of reducing highway deaths to zero. It will look at all streets within the city of Keene including state routes and identify potential improvements. There is public education component included with the idea that you are working towards vehicle pedestrian deaths towards zero. Within the next ten to twelve months, they will be developing this plan and then in 2024/2025, they will be applying for more money for implementation.

Dr. Russell asked if there was potential to help add implementation funds for protected bike lanes. Mr. Blomquist hopes the money could be utilized for that.

Mrs. Manwaring asked what happened to the Marlboro street project. Mr. Blomquist responded that the money would become available in 2024 in the state plan. They are finishing final design with the state right now. The project is currently over budget by six hundred thousand than what is available for 2024. A committee in the state will review the updated estimate and they do not anticipate any issue with approval. The state has indicated they have funding they can shift. The

staff has placed into the FY24 capital improvement program the additional money for the twenty percent match needed for this.

Mr. Schoefmann shared that there is a larger meeting planned for Friday. We will know more about it next month.

5) **Old Business**

A) **Public Art and The Trails Update**

Dr. Russell shared that friends of public art is having their first meeting tonight after a pause in meetings. A number of things they will be discussing could touch upon this group.

He still has not gotten a cost of Peter Poanessa's railroad signal. They are exploring a sculpture exhibit on the grounds of the Historical Society. They would have voting for the community's favorite sculpture. Mr. Poanessa's signal would be mounted as a keystone for that.

He previously mentioned the mural at the back of Antioch was taken down and put into storage. They thought they could fit it into the annex, but they would have to cut it down to make it fit. They have been looking at other potential locations and investigating options. Ideally, they prefer locations visible from the rail trail. Asked Mr. Bohannon to share if he had any locations that might work. Mr. Bohannon suggested including community development and approaching John Rogers of building and code for approval as anything that goes onto a building, even if privately owned, needs to go through them for approval. Dr. Russell asked if people had suggestions, please let him know where and he will investigate.

B) **Volunteer Opportunities**

Green up Keene and Earth Day will be April 22, 2023.

Pathways and Mike's group had teamed up with a table on Railroad Square. Would be happy to have some BPPAC people representing. Dr. Russell discussed how Antioch had adopted West Street to Winchester Street. Since they have moved, Pathways volunteers to do that stretch so there is opportunity to combine forces with Mike Kowlczyk's group and do the cleanup together. He noted they would need to pick up bags and supplies ahead of time.

The rock-climbing group reached out to the Mountain Bike club on cleaning up the corridor near the landfill on Route 12 North.

6) **Regular Project Updates**

Chair Bryenton wanted to address Mr. Mathews's earlier question about plowing on the bike path running from Court to Wheelock. Mr. Bohannon stated that since Apple way is a recreational trail, they only maintain corridor Eastern Avenue to West Street due to limited capacity. Mr. Blomquist

added that Keene has fifty-two miles of sidewalk and five units to do plow all of that. It takes fourteen to sixteen hours to do one round of sidewalks. It generally takes ten to twelve days after a snowstorm to do the cleanup in its entirety. With limited resources (staffing), they have to prioritize. In those areas, where there is multi-use trails, there are not convenient sidewalks. In spring, if snow has not been significant and there are complaints, they will do a run through.

Chair Bryenton asked if there was some way to highlight the importance of maintaining the trails. Mr. Blomquist noted that the type of trail (recreation versus transportation) would depict the priority. Another aspect is expectation as this is more than just plowing, and will require determining what is the expectation for the condition of these facilities/pathways.

Mr. Mathews asked what they would recommend for next steps. Mr. Blomquist said at the end of the day this is budget and resources. He added that the City council policy for the past ten years has been no tax increase beyond the CPI.

Chair Bryenton said it would be interesting in putting an infrared counter to identify usage. Kurt suggested looking at the bigger picture to determine what the purpose of the trails is and what benefit of maintaining them is.

Mr. Horner asked if they were to set up an infrared counter, is there be a particular location that would make sense. Mr. Schoefmann suggested either end would be useful, but closer to Wheelock Park might be better.

Mr. Bohannon said this conversation really comes down to and is part of the master planning process. Mrs. Manwaring asked if they had money from the Council. Mr. Blomquist said there are multiple different ways to get funding such as CIP (if thirty-five or bigger), operating budget for anything below that, and using end of year funds or carryovers. It would also depend on what is the plan for the funds.

Mr. Bohannon said he has been successful having a minimum CIP project with concept plans or development. He suggested putting together a CIP, recognizing that it is FY25 and put thirty-five thousand dollars in there and he believes Mr. Schoefmann would get the result they desire. Mr. Horner asked if Southwest planning commission was selected as third party to do the work, he thought it would translate into a robust work scope and with timing; it would be nice to have an updated master plan in place. Mr. Bohannon noted that the master plan could offer accountability.

Mr. Horner added that an updated master plan would be useful in having conversations about the downtown infrastructure and there might be advantages in doing it sooner than 2025.

Mr. Schoefmann said he is working with Mr. Harry McKelvey in highway to establish a baseline of the needs to road striping and possibly reducing unnecessary costs. He also stated they are planning to try to submit the application for Bike Friendly Community at the end of summer.

Mr. Blomquist said he needed to visit with Mr. Don Lussier, City Engineer regarding the Lower Winchester Street project. The steering committee that has been working on it just had a meeting and had an update on traffic and potential intersections. They will be meeting again late April. It is a unique challenge as the volume of southbound traffic is much more substantial and creating a challenge of how to accommodate without creating a six-lane highway.

Chair Bryenton asked if the project was at a point where having someone at the meeting would be helpful and he agreed.

Mr. Blomquist updated and shared that the transportation heritage trail has two sources of funding. The first is the congressionally directed funding and the other is the transportation alternative program (TAP) grant. Project estimates have increased substantially and both funds will be fully utilized to fund that project.

- 7) **New Business**
  - A) **Winter count for Apple Way**
  - B) **Master Plan**
  - C) **Primer for prioritization of projects**
  - D) **Report on Website**

Mr. Bower asked the North Bridge over Route 12 is usually covered in snow until it gets packed down. He asked for clarification on the jurisdiction of the bridge since it is plowed up to one side, but then the plowing ceases. Mr. Blomquist explained that the city owns all the way to the highway. The north bridge sits on that side and goes over the highway. The state takes over the opposite side. They plow from the Cheshire trail up to the bridge, but they do not go over the bridge because it is a wood deck. The snowmobile clubs take over on the opposite side. They groom from underneath the bridge and then go up the rail trail north. He maintains the corridor in spring, summer and fall. It is owned by the state including signage, benches, etc. For maintenance, they do not maintain the bridge at all.

- 8) **More Time**
  - A) **BPPAC Website**
  - B) **Wayfinding/Amenities- North and South Bridge Signage**
  - C) **Bike/Pedestrian Counts**
  - D) **Kiosk Map Updates**
- 9) **Adjournment**
  - A) **Next Meeting: April 12, 2023**

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Will Schoefmann, Community Development  
Staff