

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

8:15 AM

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

Members Present:

Drew Bryenton, Chair
Todd Horner, Vice Chair
Jan Manwaring
Michael Davern
Dr. Rowland Russell
Samantha Jackson, Alternate
Autumn DelaCroix, Alternate

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician
Kürt Blomquist, ACM/Director of
Public Works/EMD
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation,
Cemeteries and Facilities Director

Members Not Present:

Councilor Andrew Madison
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Janelle Sartorio, Alternate
Dillon Benik

1) Call to Order

Chair Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM.

2) August 9, 2023 Minutes

Chair Bryenton asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Vice Chair Horner motioned to approve the minutes with a second from Dr. Rowland Russell. The motion was approved unanimously.

July minutes were not included in the packet so they will be put forward for approval in the October meeting.

3) Safety and Outreach Working Group

Mr. Will Schoefmann reminded the group that there was discussion about getting ahead of the e-bike issue through research on the topic, working towards developing an effective template for

outreach and establishing training. Dr. Russell explained the idea is to do an inventory of resources and put them together or package in such a way that provides guidelines.

Chair Bryenton said he believed LAB to have the standard on cycling instructor safety courses and they have a train-the-trainer cycling course. He shared that Tiffany did a cycling 101 course for the public when she was bike mayor. Being able to offer something like that would be valuable. Becoming a LAB certified instructor is not a minimal task, so if there is some other group where it is not quite such a heavy lift for them or if there are people in the area that are already certified. When researching for the bike friendly city, he did not remember seeing anyone locally on the LAB website, but believed there might be someone on the sea coast. Ms. Sam Jackson asked if there was a resource somewhere that explained how someone could become a trainer.

Chair Bryenton said LAB has a good set path for that which requires a weekend course and then test. (Kurt Blomquist joined the meeting.)

Chair Bryenton referenced the August notes and brought up the idea of drafting a letter which Todd Horner had mentioned. Mr. Horner said the objective was to respond to some of the narrative that has been in the public discourse about how the bike lanes were going to be responsible for deforesting downtown and serve to debunk some of that and that this committee is very much pro-tree. Dr. Russell shared that it was a 400 word limit, but that if they wanted to do something longer, they could propose it as an editorial. Mr. Horner said he will make a reminder for himself and thought the outreach subcommittee could work on that.

Mr. Schoefmann said he did not think it needed to be the same people all the time as it would be good to get input from various group members. However, in an effort to not have to notice for an official meeting and take minutes, it would have to be limited to four people, but it could be revolving. Dr. Russell suggested calling it a workgroup as done in the Energy and Climate Committee, but that does not address the max number of committee members. Dr. Russell asked if that limit included alternates, which Mr. Schoefmann said he would have to ask the lawyers.

Dr. Russell suggested a straw poll to see who is actually interested.

Chair Bryenton suggested that before talking about level of interest, he welcomed any questions on the task or charge of the safety and outreach workgroup.

Mr. Schoefmann asked him to go through what Chair Bryenton had for notes in terms of focus. Chair Bryenton said one area of focus is the e-bikes, interacting with 2024 city council members and maintaining a presence and lastly, the LAB training with a stretch goal of getting someone certified. He questioned whether that last part was somewhat out of the scope of BPPAC, to which Mr. Schoefmann stated that was not necessarily the case. He continued saying promoting the idea, saying there is a need and bringing it to council are certainly within the charge.

Chair Bryenton asked if there were interested individuals willing to participate and stated it will likely feel similar to the bike friendly community group. Four committee members expressed interest and Chair Bryenton commented that he liked the idea of it being dynamic as he can't commit to another committee, but can certainly drop in as available.

Mr. Schoefmann said the nice thing is participants can choose to attend the dates which are most interesting or applicable to their skill set. He offered to find out the details on whether participating by Zoom was allowed.

Mr. Mike Kowalczyk expressed interest in participating.

Without wanting to get too far into the weeds, Chair Bryenton asked the committee whether they anticipated the group meeting monthly, or biweekly. He suggested the fourth week of the month since BPPAC meets on the second. He asked if planning for this month was too early or whether they needed to vet it and determine the level of interest from members not present in the meeting. He asked members if they wanted to plan for an October meeting or go ahead and try to meet this month.

Dr. Russell responded that he did not think it was a bad idea to try and meet this month and thought if Mr. Horner could get a draft that would work towards goal one and allow the group to fine tune that in preparation of getting it out before voting.

With everyone in agreement, Chair Bryenton offered to take the initial charge on getting it rolled out, organized and scheduled with the hopes of it becoming a self-perpetuating in the future. Chair Bryenton asked Ms. Jan Manwaring if she had a question, to which she responded that she did not but wanted to put herself forward as a resource for collecting letters. Chair Bryenton thanked her for her offer.

Chair Bryenton asked if this was something the city could provide a room for or if it should be a more informal gathering at a coffee shop.

Mr. Schoefmann said that based on some of the identified goals they wish to accomplish, he believed trying to find a quieter location would be ideal. He believed he could work on helping facilitate that to some degree. It was noted that they often reserve rooms at the rec center and asked Mr. Andy Bohannon if there was a particular process for that.

Mr. Bohannon responded that it is just date, time and noted some of the rooms available. Chair Bryenton thanked Mr. Bohannon for the information.

4) **NHDOT Route 101 Project**

Mr. Schoefmann explained that there was a letter included in the back of the packet that was sent to committee members that was from the consultant hired by the Department of Transportation (DOT). He explained that these are similar to a blanket letter that they send to city staff members

like himself. A number of them received them as they blanketed the city. The letter explains that there are improvements that they are going to be working on in the Route 101 area. Earlier this summer, the DOT was out there doing survey work. They are trying to investigate a couple of alternatives. No information was included about when the public meeting is going to be or what the next steps will be. He explained that Mr. Don Lussier reached out and said that engineering would like to coordinate the city responses and asked the committee that if they have thoughts on where it should go, he would welcome their input. He showed a map and explained that the red options are a no go due to existing work happening or historic areas.

Mr. Kurt Blomquist explained there were two options (the red options) that he received a hard no on. The green and the blue areas were areas that they would potentially consider. He thought it was important that the committee understand what is happening explaining that the plan is to redo route 101 from down around Branch Road up to just past the Arch Bridges. As such, they are looking at reworking that ordinance as well as developing a better path for pedestrians. The other area they are looking at is Swanzy Factory Road and he noted there are number of options being considered for that area. One of note is to divert the traffic and then come in at a 90 degree angle to join up with 101, which would require the installation of a bridge. The other option is to continue it and run it along the existing rail behind the buildings.

Thirdly the City Engineer is not overly excited about adding another bridge to the existing inventory, especially since it would be a relatively long one given the width of the wetlands there. He suggested the committee do its normal function to continue to make sure pedestrian bicyclist are accommodated.

Chair Bryenton thanked Mr. Blomquist and opened it up for discussion.

It was asked by Mr. Horner if Branch Road was the town line. Mr. Schoefmann explained that the town line was further down towards the Jail. Mr. Horner asked for clarification on whether the original scope was to the town line and that it was determined to be too pricey, which was confirmed.

Chair Bryenton stated that riding out from Optical to the Bridge is not an area that he is particularly enthused about riding through for a number of reasons, but noted that the speed limit drops once you get into Marlboro. He sees how this could potentially become a corridor for people to commute into Marlborough. He asked if Marlborough had any interested in their side of 101. Mr. Blomquist responded that right now, there is no involvement on behalf of Marlborough. Mr. Horner added that the Planning Commission is developing a complete streets policy with Marlborough and he knows they are interested in 101, but was not sure what segment they were interested in.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested and asked the potential for this committee to communicate they're interested in seeing if NHDOT would consider putting bike lanes in or shoulders to accommodate. Mr. Blomquist said that would be appropriate.

Chair Bryenton said the other two considerations would be from Stone Arch Bridge to Optical and whether Keene had interest to serve or mirror that. He did not want to put in advocate for bike lanes in isolation.

Mr. Blomquist said right now, the project stops there, but pointed out that the other issue is The designation of a limited access highway.

Mr. Schoefmann offered to contact and shared that NHDOT has multimodal specialists that coordinate the complete streets committee he is presently a part of and shared that they have a process for requesting those. He said it will be convoluted due to all of the various access points, but believed they could certainly try and venture into that.

Chair Bryenton shared that there is excitement for the potential that 101 could become a bike corridor. He asked if there was any way that project could connect into the Transportation Heritage Trails and wondered if they could get egress ramps from the bridge going over 101. Mr. Schoefmann explained that it would be on the City end of things and would be part of their design. Mr. Schoefmann believed putting it out there is a good thing and that given the BPPAC is proposing the viaduct facility, it would make sense to include in any connectivity to the viaduct facility.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested that the committee think about and be considering the integration as they move through THT (Transportation Heritage Trail) and depending on what comes out of the 101 project. Dr. Russell shared that he would find it helpful to have additional visuals of the area and routes being proposed for connectors.

Mr. Schoefmann clarified that what Mr. Bryenton was saying was how to connect whatever facility they get out of the project to the THT.

Mr. Horner asked about formalizing the connection between 101 and the dead end on Eastern Ave because right now there is barricade there. Mr. Blomquist suggested putting it on their list. Mr. Schoefmann offered to send Mr. Lussier an excerpt from the minutes to follow up. Mr. Horner suggested making sure they had a representative on the presentations. Last time, it required a bit of petitioning. It's important to remind them that the committee does want to participate.

5) **Regular Project Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann provided project updates with the help of Mr. Blomquist:

Bike Friendly Community- was submitted. Rankings will come out in December and a report card and report will be provided, which he can share with the committee. He thanked all the volunteers that helped with the application. There was a lot of analysis involved.

Transportation Heritage Trail- Mr. Lussier responded for the city to NHDOT on that regarding potential impacts from 101 on that.

Transportation Heritage Phase one- City Council approved selection of Stantec for the Phase one design. The city is in process of updating its 25-31 CIP, which requires review of projects and adjustments in the capital program.

Safe Streets for All- Mr. Blomquist shared that they received the RFQ's re-evaluation of those for the Safe Streets for All Grant.

Marlborough Street TAP- is still online for construction in 2024.

Downtown Infrastructure Project- The City is waiting for their acquisition request to NHDOT for the Downtown Infrastructure Project. That will go back to Council likely in February or March of next year.

Lower Winchester Street-101- roundabout going to Market Basket. The council received its presentation last week and the report out from the steering committee, which will then to the MSFI. The project does have pedestrian bicycle facilities in it and he suggested the committee attend because the chair has asked to review all the information the steering committee reviewed. Set to occur the fourth Wednesday of the month, September 27th at 6PM. That project will start its review and he is anticipating at least two meetings, if not three to get a recommendation up to Full Council. Pedestrian Facilities are included through the corridor and the committee is recommending three roundabouts at Krif Road, Matthews Road and Market Basket. Mr. Horner asked Mr. Blomquist if there was any bike ped being considered for the Lower Winchester Street project. He clarified that yes it was all the way down to 101, but there are none on 101.

6) Volunteer Opportunities

A) Fall Fun-Ride Kickoff (Sunday 10-22, 3PM)

Mr. Todd Horner has been working with Pamela Bys, a member of the cycling club, who is interested in putting together some fun rides. They hashed out some plans for a fun ride on October 22, 2023 from Railroad Square on to the Rail Trail to Frisky Cow for some gelato. The trail is still being ironed out. There will possibly be two routes where one group could go up Main Street and around the Square and for those not comfortable, they can be picked back up on the Rail Trail.

The goal is to get people interested and increase visibility.

B) Trail Clean-ups (planned)

Mr. Charles Redfern and Mr. Russell have been talking but have not set a date yet. Once settled, they will get that information out.

C) Bike Friendly Community (recap)

Covered in Regular Project Updates

7) Old Business

A) Downtown Infrastructure Project Updates

Covered in Regular Project Updates

B) NHDOT North, South Bridge Signs

Currently just waiting on the go ahead from DOT to be able to start making the signs.

C) Project Priorities

Mr. Blomquist suggested review the ranking and identifying which are included in the CIP as things will be changing. The Route 101 project was not included on the list and would be added. Mr. Schoefmann suggested reviewing this at the next meeting. Discussion continued around the usefulness of the spreadsheet of priorities and how it can best be used on advocating for projects. Mr. Horner moved to adopt the priority list with discussed edits. Mr. Russell seconded the motion which was unanimously adopted.

8) New Business

A) Items to be Included in Next Meeting

- 1) Project priority list
- 2) Mr. Bohannon mentioned that he is working with a graduate student from UNH related to mountain biking, economic development and the impact it is having. While they will not have a full development study out of this, they do (thanks to Mr. Horner and Southwest) have trail counters out on several of the trail heads collecting data. Those will be out for three weeks and they would like to come back to this group in the November meeting to give a report out.
- 3) Workgroup report outs
- 4) Membership review

Mr. Haas introduced himself as running for councilor at large. He is very supportive of multimodal transportation and pedestrian friendly design. He thinks creativity and incorporation of cycling is not utilized as well as it could be.

He is an avid cyclist and is looking forward to helping advocate.

- 9) **More time**
A) **Kiosk Map Updates**

No update at this time.

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff