

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

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

**Wednesday, December 13, 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  
Charles Redfern, Alternate  
Samantha Jackson, Alternate  
Autumn DelaCroix, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Andrew Bohannon, Parks/Recreation  
Facilities Director.

**Members Not Present:**

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

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

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

**2) June 12, October 11 and November 8, 2023, Minutes**

Chair Bryenton asked if there were any suggested revisions for the June 12, 2023, minutes. With no revisions, Dr. Rowland Russell motioned to approve with a second from Mr. Mike Davern. With unanimous approval, the June 12, 2023, minutes were adopted.

Chair Bryenton welcomed revisions for the October 11 minutes. With no revisions or edits, Ms. Jan Manwaring motioned to approve, which was seconded by Dr. Russell. The October 11<sup>th</sup> minutes were adopted with unanimous approval.

Lastly, Chair Bryenton welcomes edits or revisions for the November 8<sup>th</sup> minutes. Ms. Sam Jackson noted that in line 113, it should say one, not once. In line 168, it should read but, not btu and in line 215, 101 was written with an extra 0. The minutes were put forth for approval with

Ms. Jackson's edits by Dr. Rowland Russell and seconded by Mr. Davern. With unanimous approval, the minutes from November 8, 2023, were accepted.

### 3) **Mountain Biking Economic Impact Presentation**

Chair Bryenton explained that last month, the UNH group provided an overview. They have since wrapped up some of their work and have a formal presentation for the group. Mr. Andrew Bohannon spoke and thanked Chair Bryenton for the floor. Mr. Bohannon clarified that it was not an economic impact study because that would have been much more in depth. This was more a gaps analysis of how the city might be able to improve the economic conditions around biking and what that might look like for the city of Keene. He has had the great pleasure of working with Ethan O'Leary and Maddie Smith, Dovev Levine and Shannon Rogers and believes they have done some great things. He explained that this morning is a report out. At the last meeting, they shared a presentation related to the various trailheads. They now have the survey's back, have done some additional analysis and that is what today's presentation will reflect with some time for questions at the end.

He passed the floor to Maddie Smith. She thanked the committee for having them back and explained that she is a PhD student in the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Program and that is a partnership with the Rec Management and Policy. She continued that Mr. O'Leary is an undergrad in Record Management and Policy and they also used to work together at Outdoor Adventures on mountain biking programming. As such, this is a project that they both care a lot about and are very excited to be a part of.

Their report out for the meeting would contain all the work they have completed over the last three months. She explained that they have been working with Mr. Bohannon since September and during the entire Fall 2023 semester and during that time have developed ten trailhead characteristics. For background research, they assessed nine sites, created a survey that got ninety-seven respondents and analyzed three weeks of trail camera data. The survey consisted of ten questions that they pulled from background research on different areas of mountain biking locations throughout the country. In the survey, they were hoping to figure out and learn a little bit more about who the mountain bike community here in, how long they stay in the area, where they are from, what are their spending patterns, what trailhead amenities they care about and what else do they do while they are in Keene.

In the results, they found that most of the respondents were Keene residents, approximately 90%, and since they are local, they do not spend money on lodging. That was one of a couple of areas that they identified as a possible area of opportunity.

Mr. O'Leary spoke and explained that in trying to build off the local riders and the Keene residence, they took the zip code question and turned it into a heat map. He displayed it on the screen and explained that sixty people came from New Hampshire, thirty-six from Keene, and then 23 from other New England states. The Keene residents and local residents would likely just

be doing day trips. Most people coming to the area to mountain bike are not spending money on lodging as the vast majority are very local and the majority would only require a day trip.

They also asked about expenditures such as groceries, restaurants and breweries and found that 55% spent over \$50.00 in that category, which they thought was considerable. They also found that 55% spent money on mountain biking equipment when in Keene.

They also asked some demographic questions, of which the results were not very surprising as they had looked at several reports from various studies with similar results. They found 81% of the respondents were over the age of 35, most (57%) held a four-year degree, and 68% had an income over \$75,000. These statistics are typical for not only mountain bike recreationalists, but also for Keene and New Hampshire in general.

Ms. Smith added that one of the other questions that they asked of the respondents was what three trailhead amenities were most important to them. Respondents answered trail maps, public restrooms and water filling stations were the three most important trailhead amenities to mountain bikers. They then took the results from the site visit earlier in the fall and created a checklist for what sites already have those amenities.

She stated what she thinks is most exciting about this is a lot of work has already been done on trail maps by Mr. Bohannon and his department. She continued that trail maps are an achievable next step for increasing ridership. Krif road was a site that they had visited that would support more people as well as Summit Road and she said it is exciting to see what that looks like, what currently exists and what could be done next.

Mr. O'Leary added that Wheelock had phenomenal NEMBA maps. He suggested taking those maps and spreading them to some of these other trailheads and believed that would be a reasonable next step and do a phenomenal job of adding a desired amenity and increasing ridership.

He added that they were really impressed with Goose Pond and the map they had there. The reasonable approach would be to take those already existing maps and place them in other places that do not have any.

Ms. Smith said another question that was asked was what else they do when they are visiting Keene. The top three questions were shopping, concerns, and breweries. They suggested thoughtfully encouraging visits from non-local riders would be a way to continue to improve the mountain biking economic value and contributions to Keene and the key part of that being thoughtfully thinking about where to send people so that sites are not being overwhelmed or overwhelming the local residents of the site. A big piece of their calculation and math from the project was taking the trail count data from Goose Pond. They used about three or four weeks of trail count data and she thanked Mr. Bohannon and Southwest Regional Planning Commission for helping her obtain that data. The data collection ranged from September 22 to October 10<sup>th</sup>.

They were able to take the number of mountain bikers on that trail, count data and use the trail traffic calculator from Rails to Trails. This takes short term data and can project annual visits accounting for regional temperatures and adjusting for the cold weather in New England. The annual traffic estimate was 9,935 trips with an annual average daily traffic of 27.22 trips. With that information, they can do additional math.

Mr. O'Leary explained that the numbers presented were from Goose Pond alone and are considerable. Using the projected annual visits, they combined it with their data obtained from the survey questions. They took lodging, travel, mountain bike equipment and food and take the mean and then multiply that by the Goose Pond total. It came out between 1,000,000 and 1.4 million per year just from Goose Pond. That comes out to about 106 or 145 per person depending on whether mount bike equipment was included. This was purposeful because a rider will not be buying a new tire every time they come to Keene, but they may be going to a restaurant for lunch each visit.

He explained that one other thing they looked at was the Bureau of Economic Analysis and New Hampshire is ahead of the typical rate of outdoor recreation contributing to the GDP. The national rate is around 1.5% and New Hampshire comes in at 3.4%.

New Hampshire as a whole is doing well with the outdoor recreation industry and Keene is no exception. They asked an open-ended question at the end of the survey trying to see what people wanted to share and see if there was specific feedback they would receive. It was clear that bikers were very passionate about Keene. One in three respondents left their e-mail for follow-up questions and follow-up surveys on top of provided their feedback. There was a lot of support for NEMBA, volunteering and numerous comments about how great the trail works has been. There was particular feedback about certain trailhead locations that they are happy to share. Some people mentioned Krif Road and areas for expansion. He thought it was pretty cool that over 33% of people were willing to follow up with more information and provide more feedback about their trip to Keene.

Ms. Smith summarized and reiterated that it is impressive seeing what Keene has already done in terms of building up the mountain biking infrastructure and trying to build a community of bikers in the area. In terms of growing participation in mountain biking, promoting key locations via Ride Keene could be a great way to do that and focusing on the addition of maps and bathrooms at a few key locations (Goose Pond, Krif Road) would be some good action steps moving forward.

Mr. O'Leary suggested keeping in mind how significant mountain biking is for the economy. Looking at the data gathered from Goose Pond and extrapolating that out with the survey answers, it is significant that the Keene economy is between 1 and 1.4 million per year just from that one trailhead. There are plenty of people (one in three) out there who are willing to help with future surveys and who are passionate about Keene, which is a great asset to use for future development.

Ms. Smith thanked everyone who helped them over the last couple of months, including NEMBA, Alpine Bike Works, Prime Roast, Mr. Bohannon, and the BPPAC committee themselves. She also thanked Ms. Shannon Rogers and Mr. Dovev Levine. She explained that this was a pilot project and the first time that something like this has happened between UNH and Keene. She was appreciative of having the opportunity to see how the work they have been doing in school can be applied outside of the classroom and hopefully have an impact and be helpful to a community like Keene.

Mr. O'Leary shared Ms. Smith's appreciation and extended his own thanks.

Mr. Bohannon thanked both Mr. O'Leary and Ms. Smith for the great work they have done and shared that he learned a lot working with them over the course of the semester. He went on to share that Mr. O'Leary graduates this semester with his bachelor's degree and extended kudos to him for that and his next steps. He explained that Mr. O'Leary will next be pursuing his master's degree. Mr. Bohannon what a pleasure it was working with all of them and how he looked forward to taking and implementing the recommended next steps. He opened it up to any questions.

Dr. Russell stated he was really struck by the numbers for Goose Pond and the economic benefits. He wondered if they had recommendations for the committee on how to extrapolate it to other areas in Keene to get an understanding of how much activity there in within Keene and then calculate that as a percentage of the GDP to determine where Keene falls within the state and within the region. He thought that would be fascinating and beneficial information for them to have for grants, budgeting, and advocacy.

Chair Bryenton asked Mr. O'Leary if he knew was Keene's annual GDP. Mr. O'Leary did not. Chair Bryenton asked if they could do that calculation with the bike park as he felt that would have a lot of visits as well. Mr. Davern said that would be difficult because there are so many entry points so there is not one trailhead to measure the number of people coming in. He did believe they could sit somewhere and count some, like how traffic counts were done by picking a couple of days and weekends.

Mr. Bohannon added that for bike races, they have registrations related to them.

Mr. Redfern referred to their mentioning of parking being an issue at Krif Road and the need for maps there and questioned whether that meant that people were coming in from out of town and generally unaware of the trails, but also wondered if they had any remedies as to what people might find helpful.

Mr. O'Leary said for him personally, it was unclear when they arrived at Krif Road if there was even a trail there at all. He stated they were confused and looked around for a bit wondering if this was the right location Mr. Bohannon had mentioned. The parking was on the side of the road, and it was not clear at all to non-locals where it was or where to go. He believed a more distinct parking area would be a draw along with an identifying sign and maps explaining where the trail is going to bring you to.

Ms. Smith added that they were laughing when they first visited because Google got them turned around as it tried to send them over a pedestrian footbridge that they could not traverse in a car. She added that the area is also a bit industrial and there is also entrance to an athletic facility in the same area only serving to increase the confusion for an outsider. She even suggested something as simple as additional signage on the way in letting people know they are allowed to be there would be helpful.

Mr. Schoefmann added that even as a local, he is never clear on whether that is a legitimate place to park. Mr. Bohannon said sending them to that location was a bit strategic in that if they had difficulty getting there then it would show that all the other people coming in from out of town are also experiencing the same thing. It was a way for the city to be able to demonstrate that they need help in that location and was partly purposeful.

Mr. Ed Haas asked if Mr. O'Leary or Ms. Smith spoke with the local bike shops about their economic dependence on mountain biking or what kind of impact they have. He was sure they would say it was significant and wondered if they had any impact on what it might be.

Ms. Smith said they did not speak with them, but she agreed that would be a great next step to check in with them and share what they found in their study to see what they have to share back with them.

Mr. Haas asked Mr. Bohannon if at some point whether this presentation would be on the city website. Mr. Bohannon said they do have the presentation slide deck and they will have to figure out how to get the recording up.

Mr. Haas responded that when he travels to other cities, he often refers to the city website to find out that kind of information (parking, trailheads, etc.).

Mr. Horner said the presentation was great to see and said he was thinking about how the survey respondents were almost entirely from Keene and wondered if that was correct. He wondered how that compares to the actual usage of the mountain biking facilities here and if it jives with Mr. Davern's understanding.

Mr. Davern said he thinks people do travel. He thought they were a little later in the season so maybe they missed prime time. Summer might show a lot different with a higher number of people from out of town.

Mr. Horner asked strategically, should the committee lean into mountain biking facilities as a magnet for residents. He said it does not need to be mutually exclusive, as there is potential to also leverage them as a tourism attraction. He questioned trying to find the niche and where to focus the energy. He said he wondered if connecting with the Chamber's destination marketing efforts might be of benefit as they have money for digital ad buys and they are targeting mostly other areas of New England. Mr. Davern added there might be opportunities for cross promotion like how the Ride Keene project got started. He said if the committee got involved in that project, they have two bike shops engaged, several different trail groups, the Chamber, Granite Gorge, and Mr. Bohannon. They all meet and look at how they can promote mountain biking and do it in a responsible way that does not grow too fast and create problems or growing pains.

They investigate what kind of stuff is needed to put in place first, like parking maps. They also look at what are the maintenance implications as they try to move it at a smart pace.

Dr. Russell added that the city already has a pretty good sense of when their peak tourism times are such as leaf peeping and commencement.

Mr. Davern explained that while they do not have specific numbers, they can rank the other trail head areas in terms of usage and popularity to provide an idea of where people are riding.

Dr. Russell asked if they had counts from those areas. Mr. Bohannon said they have Antioch's counts, but Southwest only focused on the Goose Pond area.

Chair Bryenton said in looking at time, he asked Mr. Bohannon how the committee could support the follow-up on some of these actionable items.

Mr. Bohannon suggested taking the report that Mr. O'Leary and Ms. Smith send and begin to chip away at some of the locations. He suggested comparing their recommendations with the master list the committee has to identify any gaps as well as any they identified and include them.

Mr. Horner had one last question and said he did not know that there were bike races at the Keene Bike point. He asked whether there were other events like that up in Drummer Hill or other areas.

Mr. Bohannon responded that there is a foot race within Drummer Hill. Stonewall Farm used to do a mountain bike race but was not sure if they still do. He believed those were the things that the committee needed to start connecting the dots on. It is known that stonewall farm has a great system, but they do not promote it. He suggested envisioning how to bring them into the fold.

Chair Bryenton thanked Mr. O'Leary and Ms. Smith for their time and their presentation.

Chair Bryenton noted that Ms. Diana Duffy joined.

#### **4) Safety and Outreach Working Group**

Chair Bryenton shared that they met in November and had some good conversations. They have two sections: Dr. Russell and Ms. Manwaring are working on communication focused on the City Council and Ms. DelaCroix and Ms. Jackson are working on information around ebikes.

Dr. Russell shared that he is working on whether they can include with the letter a couple of infographics that explain some of the key statistics about rider safety, ridership increases and things related to bike paths.

Chair Bryenton said he knew they were targeting the new councilors and questioned how often they meet. He asked if they were targeting a release for that information.

Dr. Russell and Ms. Manwaring thought they should give it to everyone on the council and that it should go to council as informational.

Mr. Schoefmann said they would want to approve it at a regular meeting as part of the report-out. From there, it would go to the clerks as they have a system for sending this type of information out to the council.

Dr. Russell said he would shoot for a January draft to go to this group for edits and approval.

Ms. Jackson said she did not have many updates. She talked briefly with the folks at Alpine about how to tell the difference between ebikes. The long and short of it is that it is difficult and there is not a good way to tell the difference between the class one and class three. Class two has the throttle.

Dr. Russell explained that to keep a particular class off the bike trails, you must be able to identify the different classes, which is presenting to be a challenge.

Mr. Horner questioned why you could not simply identify by whether the cyclist is using their feet or not.

Ms. Jackson explained that class two has a throttle, so they do not necessarily need pedal assist, though some come with it. She shared that the speed cap is lower than a class three at twenty miles per hour with a max watt of 750.

Class three ebikes have a max speed of 28 miles per hour. They are generally pedal assist without a throttle.

Mr. Redfern said he was unsure of whether he was on the outreach committee and so he just attended the meeting. It just so happened that the New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition had done a big study on ebikes. They wrote up a state law that got enacted and it basically defined the classes. He explained that class one and two are allowed on the rail trails. Class three is not. The difference is that the throttles will cut out on one and two at about 20 miles per hour, whereas class three can go up to 28 miles per hour. They are now coming out with electric motorcycles and some people are believing that they can go on the trails because of how some businesses are advertising them. He shared that there is a whole list of fifteen different categories of emobility devices that can go up to 50 miles per hour, are unlicensed and unregistered. He shared that he has a sheet that he will bring to share to show the classifications to date. Having the classifications will benefit legal enforcement but could also serve as a revenue generator if enforcement is adopted. If registration was required, it would funnel additional money to cover more than just maintenance.

Ms. Diana Duffy wondered if towns in the area should just look at speed limits and if that would be a way to simplify rather than by class. She also suggested being cognizant of vocabulary and used the word biker as an example saying that when she thinks of a biker, she thinks of a motorcyclist. She wondered whether the way they as a committee communicate with each other and the way they communicate outside aligned or not.

Ms. Jackson said speed enforcement is hard on the trails especially since they tend to be straight paths. Speed as a factor is a bigger deal in an area like Main Street where you have pedestrians

high at rest. Promoting and encouraging paths that chicane around trees help to calm and lower the speed.

Dr. Russell explained that one thing Ms. Jackson had shared in the meeting was that the differentiation between class three and the other classes is that there are some municipalities that require class three to have a speedometer mounted on the bike and that can be enacted at the municipal level. This serves as a differentiation as well as a reminder for people to check their speed. Mr. Schoefmann stated enforceability might be tough on that one.

Chair Bryenton said Ms. Jackson did an extensive report-out and asked that for the January meeting that she have typed up some of that research around the different types of bikes. He said it would be nice to deliver something to the council in terms of recommendations from the BPPAC on how to handle this because it is so conflicting. There is desire to encourage use of the trails and know there are some people who need increased mobility, but if speed becomes an issue or something else, what kind of stance can be taken and what does that look like. A well-thought-out recommendation to the city would be helpful.

Mr. Horner in any communication about safety of e-devices, he thinks those remarks or observations should be prefaced with the primary hazard to pedestrians is motor vehicles. Ebikes can pose a risk to folks on foot, but cars are the primary risk and not to lose sight on that.

#### **5) Route 101 Improvement Project/ Transportation Heritage Trail**

Mr. Redfern requested the committee consider a letter of support for a program that the city is going to propose in that they combine the 101-improvement project with the Prause Bridge and Stone Arch improvements and possibly the Swanzey Factory Road/Bailey Bridge. The reason for the combination is efficiency and better engineering, grant funding and speed. City of Keene is driving the idea of combining, but Pathways is suggesting supporting the initiative to ask for better coordination, efficiency and so on.

Mr. Davern added that even if the work is not done at the same time, having the conceptual plan that covers everything would be fantastic.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested getting some bullet points from the city engineer on what should be included in the letter and offered to reach out to Mr. Lussier.

To clarify, Mr. Redfern is suggesting BPPAC create their own letter with input from Mr. Lussier mirroring the letter created by Pathways.

#### **6) Regular Project Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann shared that the master plan recommended scope of work from Southwest still needs to be reviewed by city staff. He needs to try and coordinate that meeting. He said this group should be thinking about any feedback on bike racks especially around spots they might

have missed last year, a plan, etc. There is a map that they can review at the next meeting so that they have a little guidance when they go to install them in the spring.

Mr. Horner wondered why there cannot be permanent bike racks. Mr. Schoefmann said they are currently removing them; it eases the work of public works for snow removal and it how it has been done for some time. Installing permanent would result in changes to the workflow and require changes in process.

Mr. Schoefmann shared that Ms. DelaCroix was appointed as this committee's representative for the Safe Streets for All Grant.

He also shared that they received the report out for the safety and outreach working group, which is doing great things, and they will have that for January.

The phase one meeting of the Transportation Heritage Trail took place at the Blastos room. Not surprisingly, the biggest feedback was citizens wondering how the city was going to screen the property. Mr. Horner wondered how that is the city's responsibility, but Mr. Bohannon responded that the city has screened several properties along Bradford Road.

Dr. Russell shared that there are studies that show that the value of the property increases being close to the trail. Most people are concerned with crime and homelessness. He has seen references about safety and crime reduction, so he suggested digging those out to try to address those concerns.

Mr. Schoefmann will distribute the rankings via Google drive.

**7) Volunteer Opportunities**

**A) Crosswalk Yield Counts**

Dr. Russell wanted to try at some point to identify counts of people running the crosswalks with the focus being West, anywhere the rail trails cross and focusing on the beacons.

Chair Bryenton thought it seemed it would be hard to do manually but suggested keeping it on the agenda. He also thought it would be nice to do something pedestrian oriented as the group tends to focus on bikes. Dr. Russell suggested bringing in Councilor Laura Tobin as a champion.

**B) Trail Clean-Ups (planned)**

Dr. Russell said they will be late in the year and rather than have a formal time, he and Scott Wilson will connect and decide a time and let people know when they will be out. They plan to do them twice a year (spring and late fall).

**8) Old Business**

**A) Bike/ Pedestrian Counts (report out)**

Nothing reported. Mr. Schoefmann did share that he and Mr. Bohannon are trying to piece together a budget item for one of the counters like a fire box. It would have multiple modes that account for short-term counting that could be moved around the city.

**B) Membership Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann updated that Mr. Horner and Mr. Bryenton's terms are up. There is a gap in the alternates because Chris Brehm moved to Maine. There is also a new mayor coming in. The mayor will be the one to make the new appointments and per discussions that have been had here, the recommendation for staff was to have Ms. Jackson and Ms. DelaCroix fill the spots that are being vacated by Mr. Horner and Mr. Bryenton. Ms. Duffy is also interested in serving, so there will also be a recommendation for her. Jack Aaron was also recommending as an alternate. As soon as he gets information about when those nominations are going to be put forward by the mayor, he will let people know and they may hear from the Clerks office. Mr. Benik is not terming out. Mr. Redfern asked if Mr. Horner and Mr. Bryenton could serve as alternates to which Mr. Schoefmann replied yes and encouraged both to continue to show up. Depending on when that happens, the committee may need to delay elections.

**9) New Business**

**A) Items to be included for the next meeting.**

- Bike racks
- Subgroups report outs
- Memo for Council
- Mr. Redfern's letter and input from the engineer

**10) More Time**

**A) Old Stone Arch Bridge Safety Improvements**

**B) NHDOT North/South Bridge Signs**

Mr. Redfern asked for the status and Mr. Schoefmann said he will have to ask Kurt Blomquist before he leaves.

**11) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:29 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Will Schoefmann, GIS Mapping Technician, Community Development