



BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Wednesday, September 10, 2025 8:15-9:30 AM City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room

Members:

Sam Jackson, Chair	Charles Redfern, Alternate
Dr. Rowland Russell, Vice Chair	Diana Duffy, Alternate
Ed Haas, Councilor	Andy Holte, Alternate
Autumn DelaCroix	
Dwight Fischer	
Jan Manwaring	
Michael Davern	

- 1) Call to Order, Roll Call, Welcome, & Mission Statement**
- 2) Adoption of Minutes** – August 13, 2025
- 3) Safety and Outreach**
 - a) Annual Report to City Council – Review of Final Letter
 - b) MAST Grant Applications – Review of Draft Letters of Support
 - c) League of American Bicyclists Recognition – Fire Dog Breads
 - d) Bike & Pedestrian Yield Count Updates
 - e) Airport Road Closure
- 4) Regular Project Updates**
 - a) BPPAC Master Plan Update Process
- 5) Volunteer Opportunities**
- 6) Old Business**
- 7) New Business** (*Items to be included for next meeting*)
- 8) More Time**
 - a) Website
 - b) Community Bike Share
 - c) Public Art & Trails Updates
- 9) Adjournment**
- 10) Next meeting date** – October 8, 2025

The full agenda packet can be found on the BPPAC webpage at: <https://keenenh.gov/bicycle-pedestrian-path-advisory-committee/>.

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

8:15 AM

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

Members Present:

Samantha Jackson, Chair
Rowland Russell, Vice Chair
Dwight Fischer
Michael Davern
Councilor Edward Haas
Jan Manwaring
Diana Duffy, Alternate
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Andy Holte, Alternate

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, Mapping Coordinator

Members Not Present:

Autumn DelaCroix

1) Call To Order, Roll Call & Welcome

Chair Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.

2) Reading of Mission Statement

At last month's meeting, Councilor Ed Haas suggested the committee begin each meeting by reading its mission statement to refocus on its purpose and ensure alignment with its goals. Chair Jackson read the committee charge. Dr. Russell suggested clarifying terminology, noting that the City document labels this as the charge, not a mission. He explained that mission statements are typically short, memorable, and impactful, while the charge serves a different purpose. If the group wants to create a mission statement, that could be addressed later when working on the master plan.

Councilor Haas suggested that simply reading the first paragraph of the charge at each meeting would provide enough focus. He also noted and supported the fact that the planning department and the master plan were emphasized repeatedly in the wording.

3) Adoption of Minutes

Dr. Rowland Russell noted that the letter “e” had been left off Mr. Andy Holte’s name in the body of the minutes. Chair Jackson motioned to approve the minutes pending correction to Mr. Holte’s name. Dr. Russell seconded the motion, and with all in favor and none opposed, the minutes for July 9, 2025 were approved.

4) Safety and Outreach

A) Downtown Project- Final Updates to Recommended Rules

Councilor Haas introduced the downtown safety and outreach project, emphasizing the need to finalize updates and recommendations for MSFI and the City Council. He explained that having a clear proposal in place would show that the project has been well thought out, would help to guide its operation, and shift the focus away from debating its existence. He acknowledged questions around enforcement and logistics, but stressed the importance of providing concrete ideas to move the discussion forward. Copies of the recommendations were circulated with the agenda. He hoped to adopt it and submit it for inclusion in the MSFI agenda packet next week.

Councilor Haas clarified that the document was a summary carried over from last year. Mr. Schoefmann asked if this was part of a larger presentation. Councilor Haas clarified that this was part of a larger package along with supporting materials and input from Ms. Autumn DelaCroix, which was submitted to the committee on merits and did not move forward beyond that point.

Mr. Fischer clarified that the proposal is not final or authoritative, but rather serves to fill a gap with recommendations, since the group has no rulemaking power. He suggested applying the “80/20 rule,” considering the document good enough to advance, and moved to pass it forward as a recommendation.

Councilor Greenwald, attending as the MSFI Chair and as a cyclist, expressed concern about downtown bicycle safety. He noted the proposal lacked a clear rule requiring bikes to ride with traffic, which many riders ignore. He emphasized that without clear guidance and enforcement, increased bike and e-bike use in downtown traffic lanes could become dangerous. In discussion with Mr. Schoefmann, Councilor Greenwald reviewed the numbered safety points. He emphasized the need for clarity and simplicity, noting that while rules already state vehicles must obey traffic signals and yield at intersections, additional signage could help. He suggested signs reminding riders to walk bikes in crosswalks, ride in the correct direction of traffic, and keep fast e-bikes on the road rather than in bike lanes.

Councilor Haas noted the difficulty of distinguishing between electric-powered vehicles and bicycles, a challenge even at the state level. Mr. Schoefmann explained that regulation currently relies on the rule limiting speeds in bike lanes to 8 mph.

Councilor Haas asked Mr. Kowalczyk about trail regulations for electric bikes. Mr. Kowalczyk responded that the current state law allows Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on trails. A bill to regulate personal electric vehicles was introduced but did not pass, though further attempts are expected.

Councilor Greenwald shared that he and the Mayor tested e-bike speeds in a Public Works Department trial with cones on the sidewalk. Riding a Class 1 pedal-assist bike, he found exceeding 8 mph felt unsafe, especially when the Public Works Director unexpectedly stepped out to simulate a hazard. He stressed the need for this Committee's input to refine the rules before sending them to MSFI, emphasizing his support, but also strong concern about safety.

Mr. Schoefmann advised Councilor Greenwald that, procedurally, it would be best if MSFI asked BPPAC to revisit the recommendations rather than making changes directly. He noted that BPPAC had already collaborated with a Mayor- and City Manager-appointed task force to reach an agreement on what to send forward, so altering them now could create confusion. Councilor Greenwald said he would run it back to the City Manager.

Councilor Greenwald raised the issue of Airport Road being closed for non-vehicle use, noting that walkers and bikers use it. Dr. Russell added that Antioch classes have long used it, and its closure will affect educational and recreational uses. They agreed it should be placed on the next meeting's agenda for further discussion, including exploring alternatives like a separate pathway.

Councilor Haas remarked that the Mayor and City Manager's committee had stopped meeting without results. Mr. Schoefmann clarified that the committee did produce draft rules, which were reviewed and adjusted through a couple of sessions with BPPAC until both groups reached consensus. Once that was done, the committee disbanded because its task was complete. Councilor Haas acknowledged and apologized for the earlier mischaracterization.

Councilor Haas seconded Mr. Fischer's earlier motion to accept the recommendations as is and to submit the recommendations to MSFI. He explained that doing so shows the committee is taking ownership and establishing rules, which helps reassure those concerned about downtown biking. While supportive of cycling, he stressed the need to balance it with safety and public comfort, joking about Councilor Greenwald's e-bike speed. He confirmed the goal is for MSFI to review it at their meeting next week, with the option to send it back if needed.

Chair Jackson opened it up for comment and acknowledged Ms. Diana Duffy. Ms. Duffy raised a process question, asking whether Council would understand how the recommendations were developed and whether the Committee's work would be acknowledged appropriately. Mr. Schoefmann responded that staff would include background in the memo to Council, summarizing the four-month process and collaboration between the Mayor/Manager's group and BPPAC. He emphasized that this consensus should be highlighted, and the recommendations sent forward as-is, with MSFI able to refer the recommendations back later if further input is needed.

Mr. Holte emphasized that since the goal is to make people comfortable with the new rules, it's essential to highlight the effort and careful thought put into them. Presenting it this way at the MSFI meeting will help show that the recommendations are intentional and focused on everyone's safety.

Mr. Schoefmann added that the task force consensus included the need for outreach materials, like infographics, to accompany the rollout. He noted that after MSFI review, the next step would be incorporating the rules into City code, so it's essential to ensure they are complete and precise before that stage.

Chair Jackson opened the motion to a vote. With all in favor and none opposed, the motion was approved.

Councilor Haas asked Councilor Greenwald for suggested next steps for presenting the recommendations to MSFI. He agreed it would be helpful for committee members to attend and speak at the meeting. After clarifying dates, they determined the proposal would be on the agenda for the following Wednesday's MSFI meeting, and Mr. Schoefmann confirmed it would be forwarded once the agenda was set. Councilor Greenwald thanked the committee for having him and then left the meeting.

B) Bike-Walk Alliance of NH- Safer Streets Initiative

Councilor Haas noted that the Bike Walk Alliance has recommended pushing speed issues to the state level, but that noted that this differs from the Committee's focus. He pointed out that while their materials emphasize lowering speeds, state law doesn't allow reductions below 25–30 mph on roadways. However, this restriction doesn't necessarily apply to paths or other non-road areas.

Chair Jackson suggested that lowering Main Street's speed limit to 20 mph would help align bike and car speeds, reducing conflicts. Councilor Haas explained that while state law generally restricts lowering speed limits, it can be done if a special traffic study demonstrates the need. Mr. Schoefmann felt the yield counts would help with that.

Councilor Haas noted past advocacy for elevated crosswalks, such as at Railroad Square, as a way to slow traffic without changing speed limit laws. Mr. Schoefmann asked if there was a specific request, and Councilor Haas replied that there wasn't, but suggested supporting Bike-Walk Alliance efforts. He added that while new legislation is unlikely to pass this session, staying engaged and showing support is still worthwhile.

Mr. Holte pointed out that road design can reduce traffic speeds even without changing speed limits. He noted that Stantec's initial downtown proposal had one lane in each direction, but it was changed to two due to parking concerns. He suggested advocating for fewer lanes in future projects, such as on West Street, as a way to naturally slow traffic where lowering the legal speed limit is difficult.

C) Annual Report to City Council

Councilor Haas noted that the committee is tasked with providing a report on its activities. He suggested, as discussed at the last meeting, that the report also include the group's identified challenges and opportunities, which were already shared in the meeting packet.

Councilor Haas and Mr. Schoefmann reviewed the draft bullet points for the Committee's report. These included future opportunities, such as improvements on West Street, expanding green bike infrastructure and hiking initiatives, strengthening the local bike/walk community through public engagement, and enhancing collaboration with groups like MRRTC and Monadnock Outdoors. They also mentioned ideas like small bike repair pop-ups and developing accessible bike paths to support tourism. Councilor Haas noted that this list was built on earlier drafts of accomplishments and had been updated with challenges and opportunities, though it was less urgent than the Downtown Project rules discussion.

Councilor Haas emphasized the importance of showing the Committee's work and contributions to the City, so it's not seen as idle or unnecessary. He noted other committees, like the Agricultural Commission, were disbanded after long periods of inactivity, and stressed that this should not happen to their group.

Mr. Schoefmann asked about the schedule for committee updates. Councilor Haas explained that Council requested them by July, but the City Manager hasn't yet presented any, and still needs the Committee's accomplishments and challenges summary. Mr. Schoefmann suggested using Councilor Haas's template, with the Chair reviewing before submission. Chair Jackson added that a notable challenge is wayfinding gaps, such as on the Cheshire Rail Trail near School Street to Island Street, where navigation is unclear.

Ms. Duffy asked whether the Council receives detailed committee reports with a presentation or just the written document. Councilor Haas and others explained that currently reports are usually accepted in written form only, though in the past, there were presentations. The group agreed it could be valuable to bring presentations back in the future, as they help highlight the Committee's work and keep the Council more engaged.

Mr. Redfern asked Chair Jackson if the challenges and opportunities document was readily available, as he couldn't find it in his email. Chair Jackson agreed to send him a copy. Councilor Haas then moved to have Chair Jackson finalize the report and submit it to the City Manager, with the motion seconded by Mrs. Manwaring and passed unanimously. Chair Jackson said she would try to send it out that week.

D) Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan Update

Mr. Schoefmann reported he has been coordinating with Mr. Andy Bohannon on staff responsibilities and noted there is CIP funding to support moving the work forward. Councilor Haas then asked when the last Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan updated was completed. Mr.

Schoefmann explained that the original was drafted in 1992, with an update around 2000–2001, meaning another update is overdue.

Mr. Schoefmann suggested a good place to start would be to email Mr. Bohannon. Councilor Haas said he would circulate what he could find of the old Master Plan. Mr. Schoefmann explained that the plan would need to be rebuilt from scratch, though a partial template and scope of work that he and Mr. Bohannon had started drafting could serve as a foundation. Councilor Haas agreed, and they suggested bringing that material to the next meeting as a starting point to move the update process forward.

E) Bicycle & Pedestrian Yield Count Updates

Mr. Schoefmann updated the group on e-bike and pedestrian yield counts, noting that he is still collecting data and can compile everything into a spreadsheet. He asked members to send scans or legible photos of their counts. He confirmed having received some from Mr. Davern, Mr. Holte, and Dr. Russell, and noted he would double-check past emails for any others.

Dr. Russell reported that he, Mr. Holte, and Dr. Russell conducted yield counts, noting nearly 50 violations in two hours at the Island Street crosswalk, including drivers running lights while pedestrians were present. He stressed that this needs to be addressed, especially for West Street. Mr. Schoefmann added that intersection safety is a known issue. Following a question from Dr. Russell as to whether red light cameras were allowed, Councilor Haas clarified that state regulations currently do not allow cameras to enforce such violations.

Councilor Haas explained that past legislation to allow traffic enforcement cameras in New Hampshire, brought forward by Phil Jones, was dismissed by the committee despite research showing success in other states. He noted that it will take at least a year before it can be raised again. Chair Jackson suggested that coordinating with Councilors in other cities might make future efforts more effective. Both agreed it's worth continuing to push, especially since red-light cameras are widely accepted elsewhere, such as in school zones and construction zones.

Councilor Haas asked if yield counts were still ongoing and whether more could be done. Mr. Schoefmann confirmed they could, explaining that the original time slots (7–9 a.m., 3–5 p.m., and 11–1 on weekends) were based on standardized research guidelines. He offered to resend the sign-up form or find another way for members to coordinate, noting the current system seemed to work well.

Mr. Redfern, being mindful of the time, asked to be reminded why Mr. Ruoff had been invited to the meeting. Mr. Schoefmann explained that Mr. Ruoff was there to provide project updates, particularly on the Downtown Project, and to give feedback on treatment options and costs related to bike lanes and markings based Stantec's recommendations. He noted that this would come up under the "*Project Updates*" agenda item and also reminded the group to allow time for Mr. Pete Hills, who was present.

Mr. Davern introduced a colleague from Ohio with experience in bike rentals along rail trails, suggesting their perspective could be helpful in the group. Mr. Schoefmann recommended moving quickly into regular project updates to allow time for that input.

5) Regular Project Updates

A) Transportation Heritage Trail Construction

Mr. Ruoff reported that all easements for the Transportation Heritage Trail (THT) project (Eastern Avenue to Route 101) have been secured, with the final design submitted for the Department of Transportation and Federal Highway for approval. He expects approval soon, aiming to go out to bid in September and start construction this year.

He also provided an update on the Marlboro Street project, noting that it took three bid attempts and an extra \$1 million in funding, but a qualified contractor was secured. The project includes extending the Cheshire Rail Trail and features traffic calming measures and bump-outs. Since it's federally funded, changes would require formal approval to ensure construction follows the approved plans closely. He added that the plan drawings are available electronically and will be shared through a website. Councilor Haas confirmed that the Eastern Avenue connection is part of the project and expressed support for the updates.

Dr. Russell asked if the fall project included the steep connector from the Barbara Avenue extension to Chapman Road. Mr. Ruoff confirmed it does, noting DOT's comments were incorporated into the design, and it is in good shape.

Mr. Ruoff reported that funding decisions for the Prowse Bridge and Stone Arch Bridge projects under the current TAP grant round have not yet been announced, but remain under consideration. He expects a decision after the federal fiscal year ends in September, given competing priorities with federally funded projects like the THT. He also noted that planned sidewalk construction was pushed to next year due to contractor issues. The contractor failed to meet conditions and gave inadequate notice, leading the City to cancel the contract. The sidewalks will now be bundled into next year's project schedule.

Mr. Ruoff explained that Downtown Project cost estimates have been received, but cannot yet be shared, as the scope is still being refined with Stantec. Some items, like benches, were initially budgeted as new but will be reset, which will reduce costs.

Regarding bike lanes, colored concrete was considered but rejected due to excessive cost (about \$450 per yard compared to \$100 for standard sidewalk). Instead, the plan is for dark gray bike lanes with clear striping that meets MUTCD standards, plus green striping at road crossings for extra visibility. He added that he would be meeting with the City Manager to review project budgets and identify potential cuts, since the City did not receive the grant it had applied for, which has constrained funding.

Dr. Russell asked if Main Street's redesign included raised crosswalks beyond the table at Railroad Square. Mr. Ruoff confirmed that all central crosswalks downtown will be raised, with the same approach planned for West Street. He added that West Street will also feature lane narrowing to slow traffic, with preliminary design beginning next year (FY27) and public input to be gathered similarly to the downtown process.

6) Volunteer Opportunities

7) Old Business

8) New Business

9) More Time

A) Website

B) Community Bike Share

Mr. Schoefmann introduced Mr. Pete Hills, noting the Committee's ongoing interest in bike share and rental options, and invited him to share his experience. Mr. Hills introduced himself as a long-time New Hampshire resident and competitive cyclist with 25 years of experience in road, mountain, and cyclocross cycling. He explained that he co-owns Loveland Bike Rental in Ohio, a business operating for over 25 years on the 75-mile Little Miami Rail Trail near Cincinnati. The rental shop serves both recreational and competitive cyclists and has become a hub for cycling activity in the area.

Although he has lived in New Hampshire for the past decade, Mr. Hills continues to actively manage the business remotely, handling hiring, staffing, scheduling, and payroll. He emphasized that the rentals are used almost exclusively on the trail rather than on roads and offered to answer the Committee's questions about his experience. He then opened it up for questions.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Hills about Keene's potential for bike rentals, given the regional trail system. Mr. Hills responded that Keene does have opportunities, especially as local trails have improved over the past decade. However, unlike Loveland, Ohio, Keene lacks both the extensive flat trail mileage and proximity to a large population center. As a result, while rentals could work, the overall volume here would likely be lower than what his Ohio business experiences.

Dr. Russell asked Mr. Hills to describe the setup of Loveland Bike Rental. Mr. Hills stressed that its success comes down to location. He explained that their small building sits directly on the trail, eliminating the need for customers to cross roads or traffic. The facility itself is modest but functional, storing around 100 bikes total, with a check-in counter, small maintenance shop, employee space, and outdoor storage area.

He explained that for starting a bike rental business, the essentials are:

- Visibility and direct trail access so customers can ride safely without navigating busy streets.
- Adequate storage for bikes and equipment.
- A simple setup, which could even be a storage trailer and canopy rather than a permanent building.

The rental season typically runs from Memorial Day to mid-October, with weekend-only openings in early spring and late fall. The business is staffed mainly by high school students (about 15 each summer), which he manages remotely. He noted that this model works well, as younger employees tend to follow directions closely.

Their fleet mainly consists of hybrid bikes (straight bar, geared, hand brakes) and cruisers (single-speed, coaster brake), with just a few road bikes. Mr. Hills highlighted that trail access and safety for families, especially with kids and trailers, would be a key challenge for launching something similar in Keene.

Mr. Hills explained that many customers confuse “hybrid bikes” with e-bikes, so his business is updating terminology to avoid misunderstandings. He emphasized that they do not rent e-bikes because of insurance concerns, the weight and maintenance of the bikes, and the challenges of storing and charging batteries. Instead, their rentals focus on traditional bikes with straightforward pricing: hybrid bikes cost \$19 for two hours or \$30 for a full day, cruisers are \$14 for two hours with slightly lower longer-term rates, and road bikes are about \$60 per day, but are rarely rented.

Most customers only ride for about two hours, since many casual riders are not comfortable going longer. People usually rent bikes because transporting their own is inconvenient, their bikes are in poor condition, or they do not own a bike at all. Rentals are almost exclusively used on trails rather than roads. Mr. Hills also pointed out that rentals create economic benefits for the community, since customers often go out to eat, grab ice cream, or stop at breweries and shops after returning their bikes. He noted that this “ride-and-dine” model works well in Loveland and could be even more successful in Keene, where downtown amenities connect directly to the trail system.

Mr. Redfern asked whether most of the bike rental business is for the same-day period. Mr. Hills confirmed that about 90% of rentals are on the same day, with very few longer-term. He added that while he hasn’t yet based himself in Keene to ride its trails extensively, he’s seen significant improvements in the past decade, including recent work by the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative and upcoming projects like the Stone Arch Bridge connection. He believes there is potential for a rental business in Keene, though likely on a smaller scale, using around 30 to 40 bikes. Economically, he noted, bike rentals don’t generate significant profit compared to his consulting career. Still, for him and his business partner, the value lies in being part of the cycling community, supporting local riders, and giving nearly 90 high school students their first jobs. He said they take pride in mentoring those kids and building a strong foundation for cycling in Loveland.

C) **Public Art & Trails Update**

Mr. Mike Kowalczyk, founder and president of the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative, gave a comprehensive update on trail rehabilitation efforts. He explained the group's mission is to make all regional rail trails safe and usable year-round, with the guiding principle that "a 6-year-old should be able to ride a bike on it."

On the Cheshire Rail Trail, recent work included clearing trees, ditches, and culverts, and resurfacing sections in Westmoreland, Surry, and north Keene. A mile-long cut in Surry is now passable, and new culverts have improved drainage. In Keene, about 1.5 miles near the Amy Brown trailhead were also improved, with more surfacing to come if City crews can assist. Looking south, the Swanzey Factory Road Bridge remains the main missing link. Mr. Kowalczyk is working with the county and local partners on a fundraising campaign to reuse the Bailey bridge from Island Street for this crossing.

Meanwhile, Swanzey will soon receive 3.5 miles of new hard-pack surfacing, and Marlborough and Troy are nearly complete, with final sections expected to be finished this fall. Once done, the Cheshire Rail Trail will be continuous from Walpole to Fitzwilliam, minus a few bridge gaps. An RTP grant has also been submitted to complete the last four miles in Fitzwilliam to the state line.

On the Ashuelot Rail Trail, washouts from 2023 remain an issue. The largest, at the Eversource substation in Swanzey, is scheduled for repair in 2026, with four more to follow in 2027. Smaller projects are underway, including replacing deteriorating culverts south of the Riley Conservation Trail to stabilize the railbed and adding safer road crossings along Matthews Road. Plans include extending trail improvements from South Holbrook Road to Route 10 and exploring connections into Winchester and Hinsdale. Mr. Kowalczyk emphasized that with bridges and final surfacing, the region is close to completing a nearly continuous, family-friendly trail network across Cheshire County.

Mr. Kowalczyk reported on efforts to extend the Monadnock Rail Trail from the Massachusetts state line north through Rindge and Jaffrey. He is in discussions with the local snowmobile club to potentially manage an RTP grant, with support from Cheshire County for writing the application. Work would begin at the state line and progress north, though a gap exists between Jaffrey and Peterborough where the state never purchased the rail bed. The Monadnock Conservancy is exploring whether conservation land could help bridge that gap.

He also highlighted the Rail Trail Challenge, which encourages people to walk or ride regional trails and check in at participating businesses via QR codes to earn reward points redeemable for stickers or T-shirts. So far, 165 participants have registered, and businesses from Keene to Walpole, Hinsdale, and Hillsborough are involved.

Additionally, new regional trail maps have been created with support from Pathways for Keene and the Southwest Region Planning Commission, showing both City and regional rail trails as well as mountain bike connections.

Finally, he shared that the group is working on signage improvements. With design guidelines from the state and funding from the New Hampshire Horse Council, they are beginning in Fitzwilliam and creating mile markers, wayfinding, yield signs, and “what three words” location markers. These signs will start appearing on trails over time to improve navigation and safety.

Mr. Schoefmann admitted that, due to capacity constraints, he has not been active as the City’s representative on the Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative (MRRTC) and asked if anyone from the committee was interested in taking on that role. He noted the MRRTC’s projects are valuable and could use stronger representation from Keene. Having someone with more bandwidth would be a great help, since Mr. Redfern currently serves as the alternate, but already has many responsibilities. He encouraged committee members to contact him or Mr. Kowalczyk if interested.

Councilor Haas noted the need to properly sign the bridge named after a founding member of Pathways, with some debate about the proposed signage. Chair Jackson then moved to send the recommended sign to MSFI for their next meeting. Dr. Russell seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Chair Jackson confirmed she would send the letter to move the process forward.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:40 AM.

11) Next Meeting Date- September 10, 2025

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Megan Fortson, Planner

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS RECOGNIZES 25 NEW AND RENEWING BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

August 27, 2025 / Marlee Townsend (<https://bikeleague.org/author/marlee-t/>)

Washington, D.C. – From small cafés to major employers, businesses across the country are helping more people experience the joy of biking. Today, the League of American Bicyclists welcomes 25 new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Businesses (BFBs) into its national program, joining more than 1,200 businesses already recognized for creating places where people can ride, network, and thrive.

“Bikes are a vehicle for connection, friendship, and community,” said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. “This round of new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Businesses highlights how investing in biking creates momentum for positive change –building safer, healthier communities and strengthening the networks that bring people together.”

Alongside the 25 honorees, three organizations received an Honorable Mention: a common designation for first-time applicants that, like in all Bicycle Friendly America programs, comes with a custom feedback report to provide the applicant with a roadmap for improvement. The true power of the program lies in how awardees use that feedback to grow—like The Thirsty Goat in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, which advanced from Honorable Mention in 2023 to Silver this year.

List of all Summer 2025 Awards + Honorable Mentions

(https://bikeleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/BFB_Summer_2025_Only.pdf) | **List of all Current BFBs** (https://bikeleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/BFB_Full_List_through_Summer-2025.pdf)

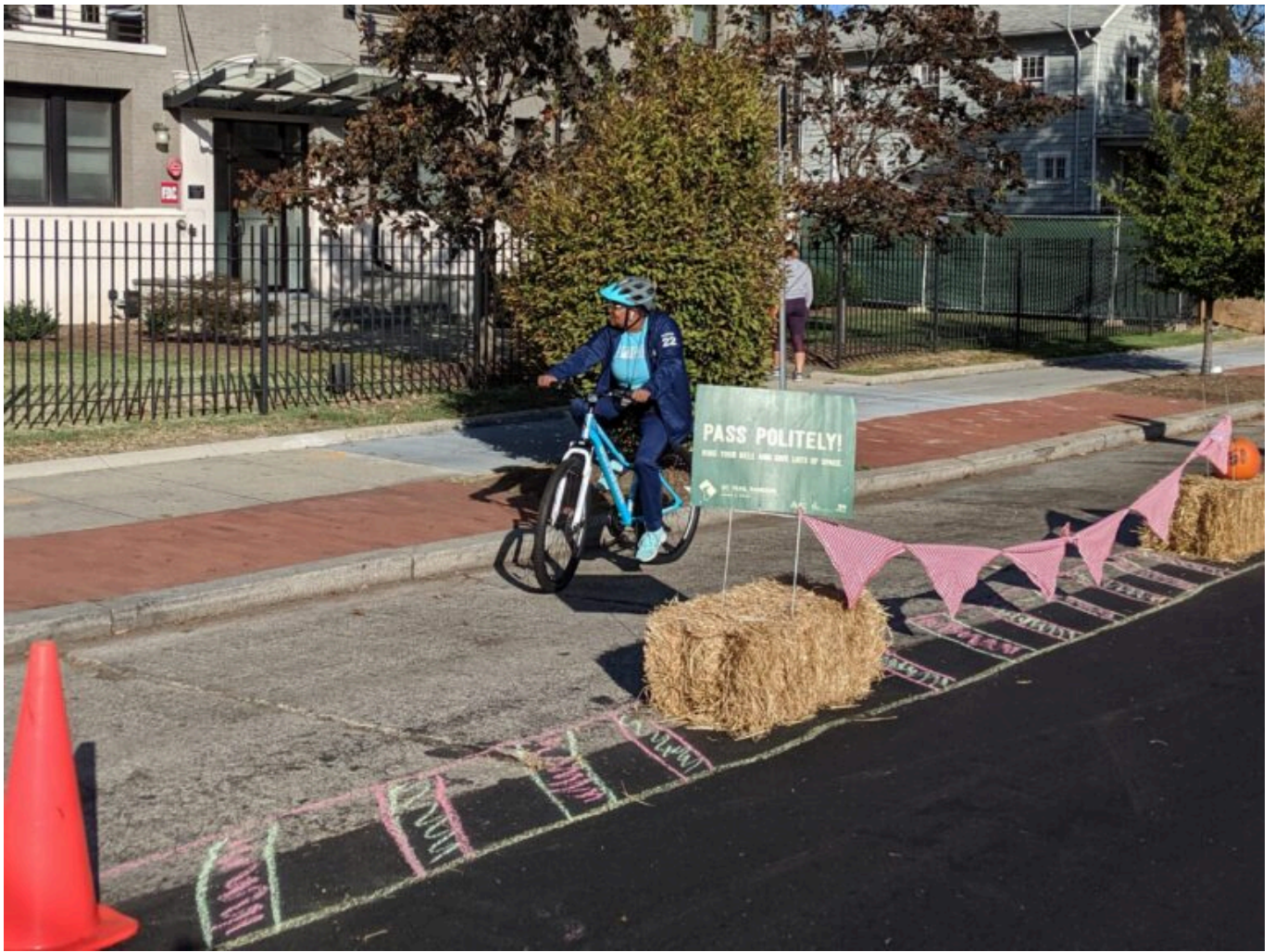
This round reflects a wide range of industries—from rural schools to city agencies and planning firms. Retail and hospitality led the way this round, with strong showings from government agencies, nonprofits, and bike industry businesses.

Any type of organization can apply for a Bicycle Friendly Business award – all it takes is consistent investment in making it easier for employees, customers, and clients to choose biking. Some, like BikeAthens (a new Gold BFB in Athens, Georgia), provide free bikes and repairs for staff while installing free bike parking across the community. Others, like Kittelson & Associates (renewing Gold BFB in Washington, DC), foster a strong culture of support for bike commuters through their Staff Wellness Committee atop a long list of pro-bike internal policies.

Below, hear from some of this round's honorees about what being a Bicycle Friendly Business means to them:



Tampa Bay History Center – Tampa, FL



Kittelson & Associates – Washington, DC



Sierra Club, Minnesota North Star Chapter – Saint Paul, MN



Fire Dog Breads – Keene, NH

"Above all, we want to ensure that museum-goers know biking is an easy, convenient, and enjoyable way to get to the History Center. Whether through digital outreach, on-site signage, or event programming, we continue to highlight cycling as a practical transportation option that aligns with our commitment to sustainability, accessibility, and inclusive public engagement."
–Tampa Bay History Center (Renewing Bronze BFB in Tampa, FL)

"The joy and camaraderie of riding a bicycle with friends is one that builds community and a positive relationship between employees. Encouraging and supporting a lifestyle that incorporates bicycles creates additional common ground for employees to have fun and build a strong collaborative team." –
RDG Omaha (Renewing Platinum BFB in Omaha, Nebraska)

"As bike commuting by our staff has grown, our firm's firsthand knowledge of bicycle issues has dramatically increased.... This growing expertise has allowed us to win more projects and better serve the communities we work in." – **Kittelsohn & Associates (Renewing Gold BFB in Washington, DC)**

"As a local state chapter of the nation's oldest, largest grassroots environmental advocacy organization, we are proud that we are reducing carbon emissions and other pollution, while increasing public health and community livability by working to reduce car trips and increase bicycle mode share." –**Sierra Club Minnesota North Star Chapter (Gold BFB in Saint Paul, MN, moving up from Silver)**

"The efforts Fire Dogs makes... go a long way to normalizing bicycling as a means of transport, as a means of community, as a means of living. When twenty bikes gather, people know that it's at Fire Dogs. When the bike shows up with baguettes, people are filled with wonder at the possibilities of bikes and build positive associations." –**Fire Dog Breads (new Bronze BFB in Keene, NH)**

By making biking safe, accessible, and welcoming, these businesses are driving positive change –strengthening communities, connecting people, and inspiring others to follow their lead. If your business would like to join the movement, submissions for the next round of the Bicycle Friendly Business program are due on October 30th, 2025.

Learn more about the program and how your workplace can become a Bicycle Friendly Business at bikeleague.org/business (<https://bikeleague.org/business>).

Apply for BFB Status (<https://bicyclefriendly.secure-platform.com/a>)



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.1.

Meeting Date: September 4, 2025

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Staff Report: Recreational Access to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Driveway in Swanzey and Public Communications Relaying Concerns with Restricted Public Access**

Council Action:
In City Council September 4, 2025.
Report filed as informational.

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the Staff Report on Recreational Access to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Driveway in Swanzey and the Public Communications Relating to Concerns with Restricted Public Access to the Airport Road be accepted as informational.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Chair Greenwald stated that staff heard the public's concerns, as did the MSFI Committee. He continued that he acknowledges the communications received from Steve Hooper, Katharina and Peter Rooney, and Susan Albert. He asked to hear from staff.

Don Lussier, Public Works Director, stated that to begin, he takes responsibility for the poor roll-out of this initiative. He continued that staff's focus is the safety of pedestrians and people who use the area. That said, he could have done a better job communicating with the public about why they were closing the Airport Road and what brought them to this point. He then turned the floor over to Aaron Costa, who manages the Wastewater Treatment facility.

Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works Director, Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) Manager, stated that he oversees all things water and sewer related. He continued that he has worked at the WTP for nearly 25 years. He knows some people are upset and confused by the decision to close the access road to recreational activities during normal business hours. He understands that it is a beautiful location, and he has walked and jogged there many times after work. He supports birding, walking,

and jogging. However, recreation of all types has become a problem, creating unsafe driving conditions for those who need to access the WTP. This also creates an unsafe condition for recreational users.

Mr. Costa continued that he would like to share factors that went into this decision-making process, which might seem sudden but was something staff had been thinking about for a long time. The WTP was constructed in the early 1980s and came online in 1985. The WTP access road and the WTP are located on City-owned Airport property that is located in Swanzey. The Sewer Fund pays rent to the Airport for the WTP, which includes the access road. He showed a photo of Airport Rd. off Rt. 32, with the WTP access road highlighted. He continued that the access road is not a public road. It is a private, City-owned driveway. There are no homes or businesses on the road, and its main function is to provide access to the WTP. It is not a City-designated park or recreational area. To explain why picnic tables are on the road, a few years ago, the Airport decided to open some of the property to the public and created a nice spot by the terminal parking lot with a few parking spaces and picnic tables. People can hang out and watch the planes. Around the same time, the Airport also put two picnic tables on the access road. He understands that might have sent the wrong message. It was a lack of communication between different City departments with different objectives. However, the policy that was presented would have allowed those picnic tables to stay.

Mr. Costa continued that the entrance to the access road used to be gated. After the last WTP employee left for the day, the gate would be closed, and after the last WTP employee left on the weekend, around 10:00 AM, the gate would be closed for the weekend, too. In 2018, the Public Works Department re-evaluated the need for that gate, and it was removed. They did not anticipate that the removal of the gate would inadvertently invite more recreation, and the access road no longer had the appearance of a restricted area. With the gate removed around the same time picnic tables were added, they start to understand why the area has become increasingly popular for recreation over the years. The Public Works Department always reserved the right to reinstall the gate if needed. Reinstalling the gate was not part of his initial recommendation. However, the Sewer Fund recently spent around \$300,000 to resurface the access road for the first time since it was constructed. Some people have been doing burnouts on it and tearing up the new pavement, and some people have been doing donuts in the fields outside of the fenced area of the WTP. If these types of behaviors continue, the gate might have to be reinstalled.

Mr. Costa continued that another contributing factor to the popularity of the area is the internet and social media. If you do an online search for "Birding at Keene Airport," it comes up as a popular spot. He has learned that some organizations provide guided outings on the property, which he was not aware of. The City has policies and protocols regarding the use of City-owned property, and organizations are required to obtain a license to conduct activities on City property. He does not know if these people have a license. He would support them having a license during non-business hours, for those activities. His main point is that a lot of recreational activity has been happening on the access road. Other contributing factors have changed the amount of vehicle traffic on the road over time. Regulations have changed since the WTP went online, mainly regarding septage. Some septage haulers had and managed privately-owned septage lagoons on their property. About 15 years ago, that practice was no longer acceptable, and regulations changed to say all septage waste must be discharged at the WTP. That is good not only for environmental reasons, but also as a revenue source for the sewer plant. The WTP is a business and staff have worked to optimize the septage receiving policies to generate as much revenue as they can. In 2006 before the regulations changed, the WTP took in about 2 million gallons in waste and generated about \$141,000 in revenue. In 2010 after the new regulations, their business tripled. All these gallons are trucked in by septage

truck, not pipe. In 2021, the WTP had its biggest year ever, receiving over 7 million gallons, generating over half a million dollars in revenue. Typically, it is in the range of about 6 million gallons per year.

Mr. Costa continued that septage haulers use the access road for business. He showed example photographs of septage trucks. He continued that when they are side by side, there is very little room in between the two trucks' mirrors, and almost no room on the side of the pavement. These heavy-duty trucks are freighted with liquid. He showed an example of the sludge hauler, which is only in and out a few times a week, but there are 60,000 pounds of material in the trailer, which does not include the weight of the trailer or the truck itself. He showed a chemical tanker, which was never on site before 2004, because they were not using that chemical in the processes, but again, the processes change over time. In addition, the WTP maintains an RV discharge station. He showed an example photo of one of the RVs, continuing that these are big rigs, which vary in size from the big ones you drive to smaller tow-behinds. In addition, staff use the road regularly. They are responsible for maintaining 27 different utility outstations. There is a lot of activity on the access road during the day.

Mr. Costa continued that he wants to clear up the hours of operation, and why staff recommended that closure time. There might be confusion about the 6:00 AM to 4:00 PM timeframe, because the sign outside the facility says 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The sign is old and outdated, and the WTP has been running a 6:00 AM shift for about 20 years. Staff, haulers, RVs, and other traffic is on the road starting at 6:00 AM. As part of the bigger picture, he would like everyone to understand that the WTP and the sewer system operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Closing at 3:00 PM does not mean they are locking the gate and will not be back until the next day. Because the plant and supporting systems operate 24/7/365, staff have to be able to respond at any time of day or night. The road might have traffic on it at any time and must remain passable. Often, staff do not leave the facility right at 3:00 PM. A hauler or an RV might still be dumping. The 60 minutes between 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM allow for the closure of the facility and the (road's) transition from business to recreation. The plant is staffed on weekends and holidays. Someone is there 365 days a year, and they are also open for septage receiving and RVs on Saturdays, Sundays, and all City holidays, from 7:00 AM to 9:30 AM. The decision was made to allow unrestricted access for recreation on weekends and holidays, but during those two and a half hours in the morning, there might be truck and RV traffic. They are cognizant that traffic is minimal on weekends, and they were trying to be as accommodating to recreation as possible and not be unnecessarily restrictive.

Mr. Costa continued that over the years, staff have tried to educate people about activities on the road, by posting signs. He showed photos of signs saying "NOTICE: ACTIVE ROAD TRUCK AND VEHICLE TRAFFIC" and "PEDESTRIANS, MOVE TO THE SIDE." The "Dogs must be leashed" sign disappeared, so they put new ones up. The entrance to the facility has three "NOTICE: DO NOT ENTER" signs, because they get people coming into the facility, which is an industrial facility with industrial activities happening. Still, people drive in and turn around in the septage receiving facility, and some bicyclists and joggers come in. This year, during two construction projects on the access road, staff put up large, digital "ROAD CLOSED" signs, which some people went right by. The signs have not been effective. He has heard concerns from staff and haulers who drive on the road, regarding the recreational activity. He himself observes it when he drives to the WTP. It puts him in a difficult position. He cannot ignore the concerns; he has a responsibility and obligation to report these activities to his supervisors and make a recommendation. If an accident were to happen and someone got hurt or worse, it would be terrible. If there were an accident, the road would be closed anyway. He believes this was a common sense, proactive approach, intended to prevent an accident. It also was a compromise. It provides safe, unobstructed driving conditions for those who drive the

access road for business purposes and safer conditions for recreational users. It gives 104 days a year, Saturdays and Sundays, of unrestricted access, plus the 11 City holidays, for people to head out there with their running shoes and binoculars. In addition, people would have access after 4:00 PM on another 250 days per year. That was a no-cost solution. You could build sidewalks or a bike lane, but he does not know how they would enforce it and make sure people stay on the sidewalks or bike lane and stay off the road, nor who would pay to install and maintain such infrastructure. The Sewer Fund has many higher priority expenditures. The city is a great place to live and offers many miles of walkable sidewalks, hiking and biking trails, and beautiful parks.

Mr. Costa stated that in conclusion, he knows the decision to close the access road during normal business hours has ruffled a few feathers, but he hopes everyone understands the history and the rationale used in this decision-making process. He hopes they understand this was an opportunity, beginning in 2025, to establish an access road use policy that can accommodate both business and recreational activities, just not at the same time, because the area will not get any less popular, and the WTP is not going anywhere. Lastly, he thanks everyone who has abided by the new policy, even if they are unhappy with it or disagree with it. Driving on the roads since the new policy went into effect has been a night and day difference, and he appreciates everyone's cooperation.

Mr. Lussier stated that that is how we got here. He continued that Mr. Costa feels very strongly about this, as he does. He continued that they have also heard the community's concerns, and he knows the MSFI Committee has, too. Thus, against Mr. Costa's recommendations, they will be re-opening the roadway on an interim basis. He suggests they open it with appropriate signage that reminds people of the rules, for a two- or three-month period and then re-evaluate whether they can safely accommodate recreational use during the business hours. He hopes that people here tonight, who care about this facility, will help remind the other users to keep their dogs leashed, walk on the shoulder, be mindful of the big trucks and not stop their car in the middle of the roadway, and so on and so forth. In two or three months, staff will report back and give the MSFI Committee a recommendation for whether it will be possible to keep it open for the public.

Chair Greenwald stated that he thanks Mr. Lussier for his opening comment. He continued that Mr. Costa's presentation was extremely well presented. He understands how they got here and Mr. Costa's rationale, and he hopes everyone present heard it, understands it, and will carry the message. This is their chance. If people do not abide by the safety rules, such as staying to the side of the road, the access road should be closed. No one wants there to be an accident or injury. He asked if the Committee had comments or questions.

Councilor Tobin stated that she, too, thanks Mr. Lussier for his opening comments. She continued that she hears the concern. As a follow up, she wonders if he could explain, for everyone who does not drive a large vehicle, how it is different than a car moving to the side of the road, in terms of the ability to maneuver. Mr. Lussier replied that the biggest difference is the width of the vehicles. He continued that personal vehicles are about six feet wide, and the big trucks are about 25% wider. Two of them passing each other, with their mirrors, are a little more than 10 feet wide, on a 22-foot-wide roadway. They cannot just pull over to the side or drive around people. Councilor Tobin replied that it sounds like it would be much more difficult to maneuver around pedestrians. Mr. Lussier replied that is correct.

Chair Greenwald stated that members of the public who are here have heard what the future status will be. He continued that if anyone feels the need to say more, they can. The Committee and staff have read the letters. Hearing no one wishing to speak, he asked the City Manager if this will be

handled administratively. Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager, replied yes, since this is not a public road, it is an administrative decision to open or close it. She continued that they heard tonight the reasons why they got here, and the plan to come back and report to the Committee in a few months about how it is going. Chair Greenwald replied that he thinks a little more signage would not hurt.

Councilor Workman stated that she wanted to thank Mr. Costa for the presentation and Mr. Lussier for his opening up and taking responsibility, which says a lot about him. She continued that she understands that staff has authority and it is administrative, and they can close the access road at any time. As a Councilor, she did not like finding out that way, herself, so she can only imagine how the community felt. Moving forward, she wonders if they can shut the access road down to personal vehicles which are not being used for business use at the facility, if the only use should be vehicles going to and from the facility.

Mr. Lussier replied that he knows some people in the birding community like to drive up and down the road in search of particular species and to take photos. He continued that staff would put up a sign saying people cannot stop their vehicles on the roadway. It has been a problem for the haulers when, for example, someone sees a (special bird) species and just stops their car in the middle of the road, with a 60,000-pound vehicle coming up behind them. Councilor Workman replied that she understands and was even suggesting taking it a step further and prohibiting personal vehicles, because Mr. Lussier has painted a clear picture. There has been increased use by the City and the community. Fewer vehicles on the road would help with that. She is hopeful that the community will hold each other accountable and not let the bad actors and bad apples ruin it for everyone else.

John Bates of Colorado St. stated that he worked as a municipal employee for the City for 25 years, so he knows how things work. He asked if there was a study on vehicle traffic, so that they know how many vehicles travel the road daily, what the daily and weekly averages are for pedestrians and vehicle traffic, so they have numbers instead of hypotheticals. He knows Mr. Costa is not in favor of keeping it open. He thinks Mr. Lussier made a great decision to keep it open, and he appreciates it. He and his family enjoy going to the road to look at different wildlife, birds, deer, bobcats, and more animals you cannot see anywhere else in Keene. It is a huge resource for people, including people with disabilities. Many people drive because they cannot walk, and they can park and enjoy the beautiful sights and the airport. He understands the concerns, and that the trucks go fast. He does not know what speeds they are going. It is not posted, because it is a private road. He has driven large vehicles, so he knows you either have to slow down or use air horns; there are other ways to get pedestrians to move if they are a problem. However, he would like to know, before they decide in three months to shut something down, and recommends that a study be done. The City does studies all the time, to see how many pedestrians cross Main St. or how many bicyclists. He thinks what people do not realize is that this access road is such a great resource for Keene, with so much wildlife, year-round. Many people go down there every day, maybe just for five minutes, as a way of improving their mental health while enjoying nature. The Keene Sentinel publishes many photos that people take on the access road of migrating birds and other wildlife that you do not see elsewhere in Keene. Before they even think about shutting it down, there should be a traffic study. How many trucks per day go through there? It is not that busy. He has been there many times over many years, and it is not that busy. It has received more attention, especially since more people were out there during COVID. The geographical landscape is changing a lot, too. The water is evolving. The community should be able to enjoy this resource. Regarding the people doing things they should not be doing, like burnouts and donuts, that is unfortunately enforced by the Swanzey Police Department. If they put up "NO TRESPASSING" signs, Swanzey is not going to respond. They see cruisers there to have a presence, but it is not enforceable by the Keene Police Department, as it

is not the KPD's jurisdiction. His point is to think about the people who cannot walk and need the ability to drive on the access road to enjoy the outdoors.

Steve Lindsey of Franklin St. stated that he is concerned about losing these recreational spaces. He named recreational spaces that have been lost in other NH towns. He continued that on Sunday, he went for a walk in Turner's Falls, which has had great success with an access road that is used for recreational trails. He wonders if City staff have studied what other communities have done. Turner's Falls is a much more distressed city than Keene, with drugs and other issues, yet they have a success rate. He saw about 30 people along the access road that is twice as long as the WTP access road, and he suggests Keene study their success. For example, the Turner's Falls access road has a few cut-outs where people can stop in their cars and watch the birds, and there are a few other things that get people off the road, and there seems to be a respect between the patrons using the road, the truckers, and the people using the research laboratory that is at the end. He suggests Keene visit some of these communities that have been successfully allowing recreation on the access roads such as this much longer than Keene has. He ended that the City should improve signage, too.

Ken Bergman of Blackberry Ln. stated that he was a biology professor at Keene State College (KSC) for 37 years. He continued that he believes the public officials here are sincere, competent, and well-intentioned in what they are doing. His daughter is a federal attorney, so he knows best not to question the legality of issues he knows nothing about. However, he wants to highlight the uniqueness of this location. He is one of the photographers who has been published in the Sentinel. He first started working there with students, using trail cams along the river, all the way from the WTP outlet on the river to north Keene. The wildlife they saw and documented with the trail cams is remarkable. Some of it leaks out onto the road and some even enters the vicinity of the runways. As a member of the Conservation Commission, he has worked as a liaison with Airport Director David Hickling, helping with letters to the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), regarding the placement of the wildlife control fence. It was initially planned for the berm or dike that fragments the wetlands there, and Director Hickling felt the fence should be much closer to the runways. Director Hickley drove him around the perimeter of the runways and they scouted locations, and his application for funding for that fence includes a strong recommendation from him; McFarland Johnson, the consultant; and the Conservation Commissions of Keene and Swanzey for it to be placed as close to the runways as possible and far away from Airport Road, because of the way it would obstruct the view and study of nature in those locations. It is unique habitat, and not just for Keene – there is almost nothing else like it in southwest NH, which is why it attracts so many birders from out of the city. It is on a dike. You probably could not build the road today, given the current wetlands regulations, but it provides access as if you were at one of the western or southern wildlife refuges where you can drive and use your car as a hide or a screen to not scare away the birds. At least one of the outstanding photographers is severely handicapped and cannot walk that distance. Over 200 species of birds have been documented there, many of them rare species that are very difficult to see anywhere else. There are good shoulders to pull out on, and he always tries to make sure he is off the road and on the shoulder. You can sit there patiently with a long-lens camera. It is an educational place for people to come and understand what kind of resources the city has. Legally, it may well be a private driveway, and probably as a policy, the City has every right to regulate it and regulate traffic, but he asks them to take into the balance the unique values, not just for recreation, but for education and scientific study.

Chair Greenwald thanked Mr. Bergman and again reminded people to pass the word to stay to the side and follow safety protocols.

Mr. Costa stated that is thankful for the comments tonight, and he agrees with them. He continued that however, as someone who has the business to run at the WTP, he was just asking for that compromise, and he thought closing it during business hours was a good proposal, leaving all other hours open for recreation. He agrees with everyone that it is a great spot.

Steve Hooper of 5 Colby St. stated that he thanks the City for giving the situation another chance. He continued that now that they have this extension, it is important for everyone to try to educate people on the importance of safety. When he was a City Councilor, safety was his utmost concern. Everyone in the city, everyone who uses the road, needs to realize the importance of safety for the septic truck drivers, for the pedestrians, and for the private vehicles.

Councilor Favolise stated that he sees the Sentinel here, and he guesses that many people are following this closely. He asked if there will be an additional press release on social media. Chair Greenwald replied that is a good thought.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the Staff Report on Recreational Access to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Driveway in Swanzey and the Public Communications Relating to Concerns with Restricted Public Access to the Airport Road be accepted as informational.