

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

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

**Wednesday, May 13, 2026**

**8:15 AM**

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

**Members Present:**

Dwight Fischer, Chair  
Councilor Edward Haas, Vice Chair  
Brian Phillips  
Rowland Russell  
Charles Redfern  
Jacob Robertson  
Michael Davern, Alternate  
Diana Duffy, Alternate  
Andy Holte, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Coordinator  
Jason Nadeau, Parks & Recreation Program  
Manager

**Members Not Present:**

Samantha Jackson

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Fischer called the meeting to order at 8:26 AM.

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

**a. April 8, 2026 – Regular meeting**

A motion by Councilor Haas to adopt the April 8, 2026 regular meeting minutes was duly seconded by Dr. Russell and the motion carried unanimously.

**b. April 22, 2026 – Special Meeting**

A motion by Councilor Haas to approve the April 22, 2026 special meeting minutes was duly seconded by Mr. Phillips and the motion carried unanimously.

**3. Safety & Outreach**

**a. Annual Report to City Council**

Discussion ensued about the Annual Report to City Council. Ms. Duffy asked who wrote it. Chair Fischer said he wrote it with the help of AI going through all the past minutes of the last year. He said it might need editing. Ms. Duffy inquired about the process for approving the Annual Report: where it came from and where it would be going from here. As a City Councilor

who sees the other annual reports from City committees, Councilor Haas explained the intent. He said the report is meant to advertise what the Committee does and help it to get more visibility. It also helps the Committee to account for itself if it actually does something, as opposed to some of the other committees and commissions. Councilor Haas suggested taking another month for everyone to read it and coming prepared with edits for approval at the next meeting. At that point, the Committee can decide whether to send it to the City Clerk for distribution to City Council or to book time at a suitable Standing Committee of the City Council, likely the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee or the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, to present the report orally. He said that would give the Committee even more notoriety.

Chair Fischer appreciated the clarification and said it gave context to what the document is about, stating that it is not just a perfunctory annual report. Councilor Haas said it is absolutely not; it is meant for advertising and accountability. Dr. Russell added that doing a good job on this report means potentially having a budget for this Committee. He knows the Energy & Climate Committee has a budget whereas the BPPAC never had a budget. He thought a budget to count on for more events would be helpful. Mr. Schoefmann thought there had never necessarily been a request from the Committee that was denied and there always had been a department (e.g., Parks and Recreation) that finds a way to pay for requests. He thought a decent tactic would be a Committee that gets things done without a budget, knowing departments can be relied on.

Chair Fischer said this was designed as a starting point and he was happy to collect feedback on key points other Committee members would want to highlight. If turning this into a presentation, it should be nice and tight to the point about what the Committee has done. Committee members agreed to send edits to the Chair within one week after this meeting.

#### **b. Bike Month Proclamation**

Chair Fischer reported that the Bike Month Proclamation before the City Council went well and he thanked the Mayor. Chair Fisher looked forward to the Mayoral Bike Ride and wished a happy Bike Month to the Committee.

#### **c. Earth Day**

Chair Fischer said the Earth Day booth went well. The Monadnock Trails Coalition and Pathways for Keene were also there, so there were a lot of people coming through. There was nice weather. A lot of people came up and said they had just moved back here because of the trail system; people live right on the edge of it and they love it. He said it was very encouraging to hear a lot of that.

Mr. Holte added that Councilor Haas did a great job of pointing everyone to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan Survey both at the Earth Day and Kiwanis Kool Wheels events. He said they should do the same at the Mayoral Bike Ride. They heard some from people at the Kiwanis event who live near Wheelock Park and really want more access to get around by bike, especially trying to get to the nearby Middle School for their kids. This is the exact feedback the

Committee wants on the survey. Dr. Russell said that feedback warranted breathing new life into the Jonathan Daniels Trail 2 concept.

Mr. Redfern said someone came to the Pathways for Keene booth on Earth Day and signed up to volunteer. They had just moved here from Virginia and worked for NASA. They were in Keene to care for family but decided to retire and stay because they liked Keene and the trails so much. He could not speak about the trails enough. Mr. Redfern got his name for volunteering.

Chair Fischer reported submitting a Letter to the Editor of The Keene Sentinel that would be too late for the Mayoral Bike Ride, but it did encourage the survey. He also spoke about the survey during the Proclamation. Then and in the letter, he talked about the fact that he thinks there will be a surge in biking this summer due to the high gas prices. He thinks people will convert for cost savings, especially for the e-bike sector that has taken off, which he knows has growing concerns in urban and suburban areas. He called it something to be collectively aware of.

Councilor Haas asked if anybody was in contact with the state groups about their positions or about what legislation may be proposed for the next year for e-bikes. Mr. Redfern said the New Hampshire Bike/Walk Alliance President Dave Topham was writing legislation for the state to update it. The concern is that these pedal-less bikes show that they can go up to 80 mph and they are going on trails, tearing them up. Deputy City Manager Andy Bohannon looked to Mr. Redfern, who referred him to Mr. Topham; they are now collaborating and organizing something here in Keene. Mr. Redfern suggested inviting Mr. Bohannon to a BPPAC meeting on the topic to find out about the City's position.

#### **d. Review Upcoming Schedule of Events**

Bike to Work Week: May 11–May 16, 2026 – including Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 15, and a Mayoral Proclamation. Member Contact: Chair Fischer.

Mayoral Bike Ride: May 16, 2026 – Mayor-led bike ride mostly on the Rail Trails, BPPAC members to help with safety; Dr. Russell and Mr. Holte planning route with Mayor. Member Contacts: Dr. Russell and Mr. Holte.

- Weather was predicted to be good for the Mayoral Bike Ride.
- Members discussed who would attend. Mr. Schoefmann would probably be there with a tablet for participants to sign waivers.
- As bikers gather, Dr. Russell would provide an overview of different BPPAC projects and during the ride, sweepers would point out where those projects have been happening.
- Mr. Holte rode the first part at a leisurely pace of 17.5 minutes, which leaves plenty of time to point things out.
- Mr. Holte would be leading the ride and Mr. Redfern said he would be at the back. It is important for the leaders to call out and keep the ride single file. Mr. Holte would provide the safety speech at the beginning. There would likely be some experienced community riders participating, like Sam Jackson, who made the flyer for the event.
- The Mayor could likely make some opening statements as well.
- BPPAC members would gather early at Railroad Square for the Ride at 11:00 AM.

Tour de New Hampshire: May 30, 2026 – Rail Trail rides across NH, one held in the Monadnock Region, TBD. Monadnock Cycling Club assisting NH Bike Walk Alliance with routes and guide services. Member Contact: Mr. Phillips.

- Mr. Phillips said the route is the Cheshire Rail Trail plus Summit Winery, beginning at 10:00 AM, with a 9:40 AM arrival. The tour is managed by Mike Kowalczyk and he was seeking help, so Mr. Phillips suggested reaching out to him if interested.

Great American Bike Tours - Test Ride Tour: May 30, 2026. <https://www.cycletheusa.com>. Member Contact: Mr. Redfern.

- Mr. Redfern explained the concept that people are paid approximately \$800 internationally (e.g., Canada, West Coast USA, Europe) to ride and they had chosen Keene as a sample to see if they want to add it in the region to their menu of places. There was nothing for the Committee to do.

4 on the 4th Road Race: July 4, 2026 – Annual Road Race fundraiser held by Pathways for Keene in the Downtown. Member Contact: Mr. Redfern.

- Dr. Russell said that even if not a runner, it is an event worth attending; it is a big party. Ms. Duffy said there are a lot of freebies.
- Mr. Redfern said it would be kicking off the City's 250th celebration of the Constitution, so it should be a fun and festive event. He highly recommended going even just for the food and gifts. They always need volunteers too.

Monadnock 250th Celebration: July 4, 2026 – Celebration of the USA, including Kids Bike Parade at Keene State College. Member Contact: Councilor Haas.

- Councilor Haas was seeking any volunteers for the Kids Bike Parade as well as materials like baseball cards, clothes pins, and crepe paper to decorate the bikes; no horns, please. He said there was no real organization around this, but the parade would start around Keene Ice / Public Works. It was about to kick off with more advertising to try to get the word out to schools and the kids.

A Week Without Driving: September 28–October 4, 2026 – <https://www.weekwithoutdriving.org>.

- On the back burner for now.

Community Transportation Week: September 28–October 4, 2026 – <https://www.nhtransit.org/community-transportation-month>. Member Contact: Lisa Steadman, Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC).

If Committee members know of any other events, they can mention them during this part of the agenda.

#### **e. Cheshire Rail Trail – Trail Walk in Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary**

Dr. Russell said he did some digging in the 1999 Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan, mentioned this to the Staff Liaison Mr. Nadeau, and it might be worth mentioning to the Public Works Department. Dr. Russell explained that the Cheshire Rail Trail (CRT) was completed in three

sections. The first section was from Island Street to the bridge and completed in 1998. The second section, the Industrial Heritage Trail, was completed in 1999. The third section between School Street and Island Street was scheduled to be completed between 2000–2001, but Dr. Russell could not find when it was officially completed. The City Engineer would likely have it on file. If 2000/2001 was the case, Dr. Russell said this would be the 25th anniversary of the CRT's completion, which would be a great chance to celebrate. Mr. Schoefmann clarified whether he was talking about the widened sidewalks around the Colony Mill and Dr. Russell said no that plan did not exist at the time, and there was some actual Rail Trail that still had to be completed.

Dr. Russell said his idea was that if this is indeed the 25th year, to celebrate the history of the CRT. He spoke with Mr. Redfern from Pathways for Keene and Jim Gruber from Antioch University New England who did all the research and helped write the original proposal. Dr. Russell would also reach out to the Historical Society of Cheshire County, so this would not necessarily just be a walk in celebration, but an event to speak about the different things in the downtown area. He suggested that at some future appropriate date once the downtown project is completed, it could be a good way to celebrate both the CRT and this Committee as well. He and Mr. Redfern agreed it would depend on confirming the date that the third phase of the CRT was actually completed in terms of planning any events. Dr. Russell will reach out to the City Engineer to try to confirm the date by the next meeting. In that case, if confirmed, it could become a formal event in the Committee's ongoing list of events.

#### **4. Regular Project Updates**

##### **a. BPPAC Master Plan Update**

No comments.

##### **b. Updates to Project Tracking Table**

###### Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan:

- The next meeting is still tentative, based on the consultants' review of materials and ongoing stakeholder focus groups.
  - The consultants scheduled a focus group with the Mayor's Youth Council at Keene High School.
  - Councilor Haas asked to be informed of the dates and times of other focus groups.
  - Dr. Russell reached out to contacts at Antioch University New England about a focus group and would pass names to the consultants.
- Discussion ensued about how the survey would be publicized. It was stressed that Committee members could spread it to their vast and unique networks as well (e.g., Monadnock Cycling Club, families, relevant Facebook and community groups). The City Communications team is working with the Senior Planner Mari Brunner to advertise the survey.
- Discussion ensued about visibility for the survey beyond social media, such as a banner with the QR Code for upcoming events, like the 4 on the 4th Race. Councilor Haas wanted to remember this is for pedestrians and hikers too, not just cyclists. Discussion continued on what the Chair thought should be a communication strategy for the survey

via the City's communication specialists and not the Committee. Mr. Schoefmann would ask Ms. Brunner for a report on what has been done to date (e.g., press releases).

- Discussion continued about having sheets with QR codes for the surveys to hand out at upcoming events. The goal is for as many people to know about and reach the survey as possible and Chair Fischer said there could be multiple methods to do that. Dr. Russell said he would reach out to Jen Risley, who has a regular column in the Monadnock Shopper News, to have the survey and this planning process mentioned in a column, just like Bike Month was featured.

#### Marlboro Street & Cheshire Rail Trail NHDOT #42515 - NHDOT TAP Grant:

- This is a Transportation Alternatives Program Grant. The City's contractor, Bazin Brothers, started work on April 13, 2026 and should finish by the end of May.
- This will formalize the connection through the Public Works parking lot up to the ramp.
- The road and sidewalk work will start thereafter, as well as the Main Street roundabout to that point.
- The scope of work is the from the Marlboro Street intersection with Main Street down to Bartholomew Court, which is the entry point to the Public Works Department; there is a larger extended sidewalk connection through the parking lot to the ramp up to the Rail Trail, and then street facilities on the roadway.

With regard to all projects, Councilor Haas said he asked Public Works for more on-site advertising of what is actually happening there for the people who do not attend public meetings and do not know about or remember upcoming construction projects. He called the Transportation Heritage Trail and Marlboro Street a perfect example when it started. He is asking Public Works to erect some kind of safety board on the site of every project indicating what was decided and what is happening. He asked other Committee members to press Public Works for when that is coming. He said it would help the public understand what is happening around the City. He suggested that Robin Hood Park would be the next big project and asked who knew what would actually be happening with that swimming pool.

#### 2026 Sidewalk Rehab Project:

- If the City Engineer had not sent out a list of sidewalks yet Mr. Schoefmann said he would send one from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- The project was awarded and construction would start on May 18, 2026. The project begins with Gardner Street, and includes Pitcher Street, which is a major trail connector, coming off the fire lane into Monadnock Marketplace on the CRT after crossing the North Bridge.

#### Downtown Infrastructure Project:

- Main Street construction anticipated to begin July 2026.
- Phase One: Central Square, Church Street, Lamson Street, stormwater utilities on northbound Main Street between Central Square and Railroad Square.
- Covered bike parking is now a bit old but not a part of the main project. City Engineering will improve bike rack locations.

Appel Way Trail Paving:

- Chair Fischer commented on the paving being completed and what a nice improvement it is. He gave kudos to the City.
- Dr. Russell noted that the lips of the pavement to the ground are ankle turners and wondered if the City could do anything about it.

THT Phase 1 - CRT Eastern Ave to NH 101 (Transportation Heritage Trail):

- Construction, tree clearing, drainage, and grading were completed. Mr. Redfern said it looked like it was coming along great.
- He said some neighbors wanted additional screening put in and one was vocally opposed to it. He said it had been pretty quiet. He thought the City had done a good job with Parks and Recreation and inviting the neighbors to a workshop during the early stages in January. Pathways for Keene brought in a speaker from MA who has a Bed and Breakfast on the trail and offered for anyone to try the trails and stay the weekend for free.
  - Dr. Russell said someone stopped by the BPPAC's table very upset because they felt like the screening was not completed as he wanted.
- Dr. Russell met with Peter Poanessa who agreed to spearhead two projects related to the THT in 2027. He is getting a bid to rehab a railroad signal the he retrieved off the trail and completed the electronics within it. Dr. Russell and Mr. Redfern saw it as an opportunity to highlight it as a part of the informational kiosk for the THT. The second project is that Mr. Poanessa would like to lead a project to add a mural at the abutment where the Marlboro Line crossed over the Cheshire Line. The mural would highlight the map of all the historic routes with insets of key things along the trail. Completing Phase 1 of the THT this year would set the stage for these projects. Fundraising would be needed and some funding or larger grants may be available, especially federal ones with art components that could score higher.

Mr. Redfern talked about the bridge behind Keene State College along the rail bed that was almost closed. He said the City received a Recreation Trails Program (RTP) Grant for \$80,000 and there would be matches for it to fix that bridge. The City Council just approved accepting the award to re-deck the bridge and shore up the supports.

**c. Mobility Management**

Ms. Steadman of SWRPC was not present to report.

**5. New Business (Suggested items for next meeting)**

Dr. Russell reported that where the Findings building was torn down needs to be capped. The City has proposed a parking lot. He said an alternate idea came up that some had written letters about, and others should feel free to do the same. He said the justification for the City's matching grant was to do something that provides more access to the park itself. So, he said the alternate idea was to have a covered parking garage for commuter bikes instead of a parking lot for cars. He said Councilor Haas had more details. The idea had not gone to the City Council's Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee yet. Dr. Russell said members could check with him, Councilor Haas, or Ms. Jackson who had also written a letter about it for more details about

writing a letter as well. Dr. Russell called this an opportunity to get something they could not get into the downtown project by maybe emphasizing the commuter aspect and a safe place for people to leave and lock their bicycles as an alternative to the parking lot. If anybody wanted to write that letter, including how the Committee and City got to where they are, Dr. Russell said to contact him.

Ms. Duffy felt like the downtown infrastructure project was the elephant in the room. She feared or was sensing that a lot of things the Committee advocated for, encouraged, or recommended might not be occurring. She asked if they needed to sit back and see what happens. Mr. Schoefmann explained that the City received two bids. Councilor Haas said the MSFI Committee would be deciding between the two bids at its meeting this evening at 5:30 PM and making a recommendation to the City Council. He doubted at this point that there would be any cutting of items within the project and that it would be accepted in its entirety to keep moving on. The City Engineer had mentioned that one of the most cost-effective components of the project are the dedicated protected bike lanes. Councilor Haas understood the conversation as having shifted from these bike lanes being all over the place to more so additional sidewalk, which he said is really what they are, although still intended for riding bicycles. Councilor Haas will send a note to the Committee via Mr. Schoefmann after the MSFI Committee's decision.

Mr. Redfern suggested inviting Deputy City Manager Bohannon for a status report on his work regarding speeds of mobility devices. Mr. Redfern said some are registered with the state and they do not care about the speeds or whether they are on trails because it is money for them. He said the e-bikes get a lot of momentum. He wanted to hear what the City is actually doing.

Chair Fischer said this came up with the consultants, but there are two dangerous cycling spots he wants the City to be aware of without waiting for the Bicycle Pedestrian Plan Update. One is Hastings Avenue, which is very narrow to begin with, but there is a sewer grate that drops about 10 inches and when cars are coming, bikes cannot avoid it without going into the grass. Another is by the Fire Station, heading toward town from the golf course on the Rail Trail, crossing a diagonal crosswalk on West Street. He said trees (small conifers) screening a property block visibility until right at the intersection and it is dangerous for cyclists and walkers. Mr. Schoefmann said he would share those concerns. For Hastings Avenue, he said for everyone to report it to the City via the SeeClickFix app.

Dr. Russell asked if there is any kind of signage at that crossing or other CRT crossings that warn cars to slow for pedestrians. Mr. Schoefmann said there is a stop sign on the trail and Mr. Robertson said the road is marked as a crossing but the trees at this location are a blind spot. Chair Fischer suggested it would require working with the landowner on trimming. Dr. Russell suggested bookmarking that for the next consultant meeting because he thought about the Matthews Road crossings, for example, where there is no warning that there is a CRT crossing. He thought standard, comprehensive signage would be helpful. Mr. Davern said there are little signs in on the road but the signage is buried by bushes.

Mr. Phillips mentioned something he did not get to include on the survey. Now that all the pine trees were removed due to disease on Maple Avenue and there was open visibility, he thought it would be a great place to build a mixed-use path on the west side for students and pedestrians.

There is no sidewalk on that side of the road; there is a dirt path trail that kids go through. Councilor Haas thought this was a great idea, stating that it could link into the other access path in Wheelock Park up to the Middle School. Mr. Robertson and Dr. Russell agreed to take on this idea and start looking into it for the next meeting's agenda.

**6. Next Meeting Date – June 10, 2026**

**7. More Time**

**a. A Week Without Driving**

No Comments.

**8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Fischer adjourned the meeting at 9:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katrinya Kibler, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Megan A. Fortson, AICP - Planner