

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

**BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, July 8, 2015**

**8:30 am**

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

**Members Present:**

Greg Pregent, Chair  
Thom Little  
Charles (Chuck) Redfern  
Andrew McCarron  
Christopher Brehme  
Don Hayes

**Staff Present:**

**Others Present:**

**Members Not Present:**

Linda Rubin, Vice Chair  
James Duffy, Councilor

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Pregent called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM. Roll call was conducted.

**2. Approval of Minutes – June 10, 2015**

Mr. Little made a motion to approve the minutes of June 10, 2015, which was seconded by Mr. Redfern. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**3. Project Updates – see attached table**

**a) Roundhouse T Phase II**

The committee discussed that they are looking for a timetable for construction of the Roundhouse T Phase II project.

**b) Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II**

The committee talked about putting a “slow down pedestrians” sign on Whitcomb’s Mill Road as you head down to the bike trail crossing. There was concern that with the improved trail there would now be increased bike and pedestrian traffic. It is hard to see oncoming traffic up the hill because of the curve in the road.

The committee expressed thoughts and concerns about equestrians using the trail, which is a legal use. They are glad the project was completed in time for summer.

Mr. Redfern stated that when he went to this area before the trail was completed, the ground when you’re just entering on Whitcomb’s Mill Road was soft and mushy. He asked if that has been taken care of or if it has dried out in the past month. Discussion ensued and Chair Pregent

stated that he thinks it is fine. He continued that they made the trail a little higher with hardpack or whatever the material is, to alleviate the problem. They will have to wait and see.

Mr. Redfern asked if Mr. Little will drop off the ??? for staff. Mr. Little replied yes.

Mr. Little stated that it would be good to ask Stonewall Farm how many horses have been out on the trail so far, so they can get an idea of how much it will be used by horses and how well it will hold up. Another committee member expressed concerns about vehicular traffic sometimes going too fast. Chair Pregent replied that that is something they can talk with City staff about – maybe they could install signage.

Mr. Little spoke of how he has suggested to the City, and still suggests, a sign up on Hurricane Road, as a warning to people new to the area, about the sharp drop-off they are approaching. Chair Pregent stated that they will bring this up at the next meeting when staff is present. Mr. Redfern agreed and stated that something needs to be done.

Chair Pregent asked for further thoughts on the Cheshire Rail Trail Phase II project. The committee members agree that they are happy with the construction. Next time they will talk about drainage, which might be an issue.

??? asked if Complete Streets is a new project. Chair Pregent replied that it has been in the works for a while. He continued that there has been talk about adding a Complete Streets subcommittee and working off of that. Part of the Mayor's Challenge is to address those issues. The Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) is very active with Complete Streets. It has been worked on in the past and people want more action with it.

#### **c) Jonathan Daniels Trail**

Chair Pregent stated that the study is not in the CIP; there is no money for it. He continued that they took the money for that study and put it to towards the rail trail. They will work with the Conservation Commission to come up with some ideas, regarding the wetlands out there. It seems like there still needs to be a connection between staff and the Conservation Commission. ??? replied that the Conservation Commission has been briefed and they are not in favor of the trail going through sensitive areas. Mr. Redfern replied that what a "sensitive area" is needs to be explored. Brief discussion ensued about how the trail could work. Chair Pregent stated that they will wait to get input from staff, and also get clarification about the Conservation Commission's position.

#### **d) Cheshire Rail Trail - Park Ave Loop**

Chair Pregent stated that since it is a Class 6 road, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) needs to be part of the conversation. Mr. Brehme (?) replied that there were issues about ownership of the property and deed research that is still up in the air. Mr. Redfern replied that the last he heard, the City is in pretty good shape with that. He continued that it is a Class 6 road and boundaries have been determined. The City will have to work with one land owner but they feel good about the prospects of that. That is what he heard from Mr. Schoefmann about a week ago. Tomorrow night at the Finance, Organization, and Personnel (FOP) Committee meeting, the Cheshire Rail Trail Park Ave Loop is coming up for a vote for

the City Manager to be authorized to enter into some kind of agreement or contract with the vendor. Mr. Little replied with NHDOT, to move forward with the 80%/20% split for funding. Mr. Redfern replied that they wanted a commitment and the City asked for a commitment from non-profits, especially Pathways for Keene (PFK). PFK has raised about \$30,000 to give the City. The PFK president will be at the FOP Committee meeting tomorrow to affirm that.

**e) South Bridge**

Chair Pregent stated there have been changes since the last meeting. They will start doing some stuff this fall and construction will begin in the spring, is what staff says. They will cross their fingers; they never know what will happen with the State. But this is great news. Mr. Redfern stated that he hopes the State can make sure they have it completely funded. He continued that he is concerned that if they ask any other entity to kick in money he does not know what the response will be. Mr. Little replied that it is a requirement that NHDOT pay 100% of the cost; that was a result of a court action. He continued that the only problem they have ever had is that the court direction never said when. But they are required to pay 100%.

Mr. Little stated that the BPPAC has not seen what the South Bridge plan is, and that would be real nice to see. Chair Pregent replied that since it is a State project rather than City, he is not sure who they would even get a hold of for that. Mr. Little suggested this committee somehow look into looking at the plan. Chair Pregent replied that the BPPAC's input may be moot. Others agreed. Mr. Redfern stated that unless there is a safety issue, and they should give notice publicly. He continued that he could call someone at NHDOT and informally ask for the plans, if the BPPAC wants him to. Mr. Little replied that he thinks there should be something formal. He continued that NHDOT came to the City a while back and asked if the City would accept South Bridge looking like North Bridge. The City Council voted yes. Then NHDOT came up with a plan and the price for the project was cut almost in half as a result. It would nice to get an update about what the plan is, considering the bridge will be a part of the city for the next 150 years.

Chair Pregent asked Mr. Redfern to contact NHDOT and see if he can get something for the BPPAC to look at. Mr. Redfern agreed. He continued that what he has been using as a selling point when people say they hope it does not look like North Bridge – which actually has historical connection to the rail trail, and a nice color and design, in his opinion – is that the preferred design by the public was one that would cost twice as much. He tells them that the original design was a “grasshopper design,” which is twice the cost of the North Bridge concept design. A member of the public who put in that input and wanted to remain anonymous discovered that the cost was halved. That has quelled some of the criticism of the design. Chair Pregent replied that he has had people complain about North Bridge's aesthetics, but you cannot please everyone. He continued that he thinks that North Bridge looks good. Many local people will be glad the City does not have to contribute money to South Bridge.

**Mr. Hayes ??** stated that he has questions about promoting the ideas of the community regarding bikes and pedestrians. How about putting up a sign? There are Bike-Friendly signs, but maybe they could put up something along those lines to let visitors know. Mr. Little replied that Keene State College (KSC) is on one side and the KSC athletic field is on the other side. How will all of those people travel between the two? It is unsafe passage at this point. Snowmobiles on

North Bridge would tear it to shreds. South Bridge is being designed to carry snowmobiles. It would be nice to know what the engineering is and how they will achieve that. That is part of the reason that project is more expensive than the North Bridge project was. Getting insight into that would be helpful – not for the BPPAC to approve anything, but so that the BPPAC could go out and sell the idea of how wonderful it is that the city will have this bridge in the future, and explain its features.

Mr. Redfern stated that he agrees with the need for signage stating the name of the bridge, specifying that it is a rail trail facility, and so on and so forth. He continued that people will also want to know where they can park their vehicle to drop off their bikes to go on the bridge and trail. They need ways to help guide where people can park for trailheads. Local people might know them but visitors and new citizens might not. There is a need for an education program associated with the two bridges. Chair Pregent replied that that is tough. He continued that maps show some of the trailheads. They can only do so much with signage. Maybe they can do some stuff on the radio but out-of-town people will not hear it until they get into town. It is a challenge that they can keep talking about, to try and figure out some educational methods. Maybe they can put flyers in local businesses, do PSAs, and have some signs.

Mr. Little asked, when there is an event at the athletic field and South Bridge exists, where will people park? Discussion ensued. Committee members suggested the parking lot near the athletic field, or the parking lot on campus, and then people could walk over South Bridge. Chair Pregent stated that this is a KSC issue they will have to address themselves with signage; the City does not really need to worry about how KSC markets their facilities.

**f) Bike Racks**

Chair Pregent stated that the Rack It Up program is in the installation stage. He continued that he read in the minutes that some racks do not require installation and there is an organization helping with the costs for installation of others. He thinks Mari Brunner and Tara Germond/SWRPC are doing a great job with this program. He is glad to see more bike racks around town. Maybe PFK could think about helping with installation costs if that would be helpful – something to think about.

**g) Complete Streets**

Chair Pregent stated that there will be a Complete Streets demonstration coming up on Marlboro Street. He continued that at the east side forum there were discussions about revitalizing Marlboro Street, which is great for Complete Streets since it is the second widest street in the city. The BPPAC is encouraged to help out as much as they can with the demonstration. Discussion ensued and committee members noted that there is a meeting tonight at the Hannah Grimes Center about volunteering.

**h) BPPAC Master Plan**

Chair Pregent stated that he read the big discussion in the minutes about how to actually set aside some time for the master plan, since it has been difficult to schedule extra meetings. He continued that one idea is to add extra time to the BPPAC meetings – he personally likes the idea of adding 15 to 30 minutes to talk about the master plan only. It is important. He asked for others' thoughts. They can go through the agenda a little faster. Discussion ensued about the

master plan process so far. Mr. Redfern asked when they should start talking about the master plan in BPPAC meetings. Chair Pregent replied next month, and he will let Mr. Schoefmann know that that is what they want to do. They will plan on starting at 8:00 AM. Mr. Little asked about people being on vacation in August and suggested the September meeting instead. Discussion ensued. Chair Pregent stated that as far he knows they will only be missing one member in August so he thinks starting with the August meeting is okay.

**i) Signage**

Chair Pregent stated that they have more Bike Friendly Community signs and they need to be installed. Mr. Redfern replied that they are on the kiosks. The Eagle Scouts did that as a project. The only concern he has is that the signs are positioned in such a way that there is not much room to put a map there. They might have to construct another surface area for a map or figure out something else, because they need to have a map, in his opinion. All other communities with kiosks for rail trails have maps. Others agreed.

**4. Mayor's Challenge Exercise**

Chair Pregent stated that the group talked a lot about this at the last meeting. He continued that he is not sure where they are at with this. He asked if the group finished going through the questions at the last meeting. Committee members replied no. Discussion ensued. Chair Pregent agreed with others that they need to spend a lot of time on this but do not have enough time today. They will table it until next month, when they will have more time, and staff is back. Others agreed.

The committee talked about what the purpose of the Mayor's Challenge is. Mr. Redfern stated that it is a challenge from the Secretary from the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), who is asking local communities to fill these out. He continued that there is further action to be taken but he does not recall what it is – follow-up to be done by staff, reporting back to the USDOT. Chair Pregent replied that it is an overall assessment that will be looked at to assist with developing priorities.

**5. Old Business**

Chair Pregent asked about old business. He continued that the master plan is in this category and will be addressed next month.

**6. New Business**

Chair Pregent welcomed Rob Gordon (?), member of the public. Mr. Gordon shared his thoughts about safe bike and pedestrian access and the work of the BPPAC. He stated that he did not know the South Bridge project was coming. He loves the look of North Bridge, which he did not know was a foot bridge. He knows there are sensitive areas, such as the Jonathan Daniels Trail area. He went to the Conservation Commission meeting in which they discussed that, and it was a very sensitive topic, and he can see why. He can see where that trail could somehow link into the eastern side of the Cheshire Rail Trail. He loves the trails, and walks and bikes on them, and they are impressive. There are sensitive areas and that is a tough topic. It could be dangerous with erosion. He sees people hop over the guard rail for the emergency vehicle turn off by the hospital, and he also saw horse tracks. He has an interest in transportation around the city and would like to talk more with the BPPAC and the City Engineer. Mr. Redfern and others

encouraged him to come to more BPPAC meetings, which are all open to the public. Future meetings will be more informative when staff is present.

Mr. Gordon asked for more information about the meeting about the Complete Streets demonstration on Marlboro Street. Committee members explained the location of the Hannah Grimes Center and how to get there, and clarified the difference between the Center and the store.

Chair Pregent stated that there are a lot of electric bikes that will be coming onto the market soon. He continued that they need to have a discussion about how the BPPAC feels about electric bikes being on the trails. As for the State-owned trails, he does not know the State's policy on that. Mr. McCarron replied that that is a good idea. He continued that he saw someone on an electric powered skateboard on the trail the other day. Discussion continued about this and Segways, which are like sideways skateboards, which go pretty fast. There will soon be more electric powered things on the trails so it is good to discuss it and come up with a recommended policy. Chair Pregent stated that he does not think they should allow electric bikes on the trail. Others replied that they should make exceptions for mobility devices approved by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Discussion ensued about snowmobiles also. Mr. Little stated that they need to find out what the State's position is on the State-owned trails. So far they allow only ADA-approved vehicles. He has not heard that the State has changed that. Others replied that they have not heard that the State has changed that, either. Mr. Little stated that it does not matter so much what the BPPAC thinks is acceptable if they are talking about State land. Chair Pregent replied that he disagreed. Discussion ensued about the BPPAC expressing their thoughts on the topic. Mr. Redfern stated that the NHDOT has a process for communities to ask for variances – e.g. Claremont is asking for a variance to allow ATVs on the rail trails.

**7. Adjournment - Next Meeting is August 12, 2015**

Hearing no other business, Chair Pregent adjourned the meeting at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted by  
Britta Reida, Minute-taker

With some information provided by Greg Pregent, BPPAC Chair