

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

8:15 AM

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

Members Present:

Dillon Benik, Chair
Drew Bryenton, Vice Chair
Brad Dufresne
Christopher Brehme
Charles Redfern
Todd Horner
David Souther

Staff Present:

Will Schoefmann, GIS Technician

Members Not Present:

1) Roll Call

Chair Benik called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM and roll call was conducted.

2) September 11, 2019 Minutes

Chair Benik stated that there was no quorum last month as they are a bit low on membership.

Mr. Dufresne moved to accept the September 11, 2019 minutes, Mr. Redfern seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3) Chair's Update to Council Committee (MSFI)

Chair Benik stated that there was an update to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee (MSFI) and he will be reviewing BPPAC's notes from the past year at tonight's committee meeting. He pointed members to the notes in the back of the packet and encouraged members to provide feedback or to attend the meeting tonight. He said Mr. Bryenton and Mr. Schoefmann have already reviewed the notes as well. Mr. Bryenton asked when Chair Benik will speak during the meeting and Mr. Schoefmann said the agenda should be posted in the elevator and on the board downstairs. He said they will discuss the naming of "Thom Little Way" trail is also on the agenda tonight. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Chair Benik will speak at the end of the meeting at around 6:15-6:30 PM.

4) Membership

Chair Benik stated that one full member and two alternates are needed on the committee. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Brehme's and Mr. Redfern's terms are up and Mr. Souther had been moved into a full-time membership position. Mr. Schoefmann said that Mr. Redfern is interested in serving as an alternate and there are two alternate seats available. Mr. Redfern stated that Mr. Brehme and he can put in for alternate positions. Chair Benik said he already put in a letter recommending Mr. Redfern be moved to an alternate position he said he can send another email to Mr. Schoefmann stating the recommendation again. Mr. Schoefmann said that City Clerk had a discussion last week with Mayor Elect Hansel about membership in boards and commissions so he will follow up with them to see what was learned from that meeting. He said the new Mayor may want to hear more from Chairs on recommendations to get placement for committees.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that if members know anyone who is interested they can visit the City's Boards, Commission and Committees webpage and fill out a form. He said they have stopped asking for full resumes and are trying to streamline the submittal of interest. Mr. Dufresne asked Mr. Redfern if there is possibly anyone from Pathways for Keene (PFK) that would want to join on. Mr. Redfern suggested Ms. Jan Manwaring and said he can send out an inquiry email to PFK. Mr. Schoefmann said a common practice is to have a Councilor on the committee to help advocate for and facilitate the agenda. Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Schoefmann if Councilor Manwaring would want to join BPPAC and Mr. Schoefmann suggested that Chair Benik reach out to her about potential membership.

5) Old Business

a. City Council Referral for 160 Emerald Street, Sale of City Property Update

Chair Benik stated that BPPAC voted 5-1 that City does not sell the 160 Emerald Street property to Mr. Tousley. Mr. Schoefmann said the first attachment in the agenda is from City Council's October 3rd meeting. He said after the recommendation had been heard by the Finance, Organization and Personnel (FOP) committee, they recommended the City Manager enter into lease negotiations with Mr. Tousley for the property he had paved that was under discussion at the BPPAC meeting. He is not sure where the lease agreement process is at right now but the decision was based in part by BPPAC's motion. He said this update can be removed from Old Business until the lease agreement runs out.

b. Fall Bicycle & Pedestrian Count Update

Mr. Schoefmann said he received the counts from the KSC students today so members can await update for counting numbers for December meeting. He said the students did conduct counts along the West Street corridor and also got some bike rack volume counts which will help set a baseline.

c. Dedication of Path System Section (Thom Little)

Chair Benik stated that this is moving along and it will be a resolution at tonight's meeting for BPPAC to have a say on. Mr. Schoefmann said it will be heard at Council Committee for review and then it would move forward to full Council and assuming they do not make any changes to it, it will pass on the second cycle of this month. He said it is an update to the current resolution on major trail names in the City, for example, it outlined the process of changing trail names. He said there is a map attached in MSFI's packet. Chair Benik said they are calling it "Thom Little Way" as opposed to "Little Way."

d. Arts and Culture Corridor

Mr. Schoefmann said he sent out announcements for several open house events. Chair Benik replied that he regrettably did not attend so all of his information is second hand. Mr. Schoefmann said he sent a few maps to Monadnock Economic Development Committee (MEDC) as there have been some concerns about what happens to the rail trail along Gilbo Avenue depending on MEDC's plans. Mr. Souther said he attended and it was a sort of a visioning session. Mr. Brehme added that they were looking for feedback and one of the questions Mr. Souther asked what will happen to the bike path when events are taking place at the amphitheater space they are creating in back of the Monadnock Co-Op. Mr. Souther said they are cognizant of the bike trail but did not give any concrete answers as to how they will handle that conflict. Chair Benik noted that the extent to which the bike trail will be impacted will be dependent on how many performances will take place there during the summer. Mr. Schoefmann said he is not sure if one more wall is going to increase performance attendance, as they do not use the space much per year anyway. He said when he heard about the amphitheater idea he thought it would be more than what it currently is, so unless they can bring in more attention it does not seem worth it. Mr. Brehme added that during the walking workshop, a group of 12-15 people was standing on the path and cyclists were already complaining about people being in the way.

Mr. Redfern asked what Mr. Brehme's initial thoughts were on the Gilbo Avenue corridor and Mr. Brehme said that the Gilbo Avenue area is less of a concern than the area behind the Co-Op, however, they are planning to turn Gilbo Avenue into a pedestrian area. Mr. Breynton asked how far down Gilbo Avenue development is expected and members replied all the way down to School Street.

Chair Benik asked Mr. Schoefmann to keep members posted on those events and they will continue to try to attend the informational meetings in the future. Mr. Horner asked if there is a charrette event planned through MEDC. He said it is important to keep tabs on impacts to the trail system, however, he believes the project is a great opportunity to enhance pedestrianism and cycling in the City. Members agreed. Chair Benik asked if anyone knows when the construction will begin on the Monadnock Co-Op project as that will impact the trail during that period. Mr. Schoefmann said he will investigate when they will begin construction and will update members via email.

6) Project Updates

a. Winter Bike Parking

Mr. Schoefmann said they may still need to dialogue with Department of Public Works (DPW) about winter bike parking and asked if members have any ideas. Mr. Bryenton said they could invite Mr. Lundquist to the next meeting, however, they talked about it with him already. Mr. Schoefmann suggested putting a rack under the Wells Street parking deck and under the awning on the backside of YoLo. He said those could be two good spots to focus winter bike parking and he will relay that message over to DPW. Mr. Schoefman asked if that sounds like a good plan and members agreed. He said he will reach out to DPW and do some publicity about the winter bike parking as well.

b. Pathways for Keene Lighting on Appel Way

Mr. Redfern said lighting is finished on Appel Way. Mr. Schoefmann said Parks and Recreation are responsible for the lights now. Mr. Bryenton asked if the lights are out is that a function of not getting enough sunlight that day and Mr. Redfern replied that with a lack of sunlight and they will either be dimmed or not light at all. Mr. Brehme said that he is appreciating the lights over by Andy Cycle on Winchester Street and he proposed putting even more lights in. Mr. Redfern said that was not PFK's project. He added that lighting the trail from Eastern Avenue to 101 would be great, however, they would need a TAP grant for that and he will keep Mr. Brehme's suggestion in mind. Mr. Redfern suggested that if BPPAC wants the lighting completed on the Ashuelot Rail Trail they can place it as an item on the agenda for December and Chair Benik agreed.

c. Complete Street Grant from 2017-2018

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the grant included striping and signage for Main Street/Central Square and it has been completed just in time for plowing. He said the RFP and the numbers that DPW got back were way above budget so that became an issue this year. He stated that the bike boxes have not been completed to spec, for example, the green bike boxes have no bike symbols in them and he and Ms. Brunner are going to start a conversation with the highway foreman to address those challenges. He said they are reporting on the grant to Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC), including accident data and a couple other report out items and that will wrap up that project. Mr. Bryenton asked if there if they striping will always be done in the summer or can they do it earlier in the spring. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he hopes they can move the cycle to spring and he and Ms. Brunner will address that, however, unfortunately this year that was not possible. He said he even suggested an opportunity for volunteerism to paint Main Street-Central Square but he does not think that was a well-received idea.

Mr. Souther asked if they could consider paying the contactor upfront for the following year. Mr. Schoefmann said that DPW has a road striping budget. Chair Benik added that the corporations have plenty of demand so it would not make too much of a difference to them whether they get the money in November or April as they will get work either way. Mr. Horner asked if the City striping and bike boxes were a lower priority. Mr. Schoefmann replied that there was a lot of confusion over the bike boxes and he sent very specific instructions that were not followed properly. He said they finally accomplished

the job, however, the lanes were laid down first which explains why there are inconsistencies in the bike lane approaches. He said it requires a lot of communication and boots on the ground while the people are working and the first year they did the bike boxes, he went out in a truck with the construction people from 11pm- 4 am. Mr. Horner said there is research that suggests that not striping can improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Mr. Schoefmann said he and Ms. Brunner can pitch some of these ideas when they have their meeting.

d. Marlborough Street TAP grant

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the TAP project for 2018 is projected to be delayed due to Federal Highway recollecting distributed funds to states. He said all projects are now projected 2025-2026 kick-offs unless local municipalities can pony up funds. He said they are trying to reshuffling some leftover funds from uncompleted TAP grants of which the City of Keene still has. He said the Marlborough Street grant proposal included CIPS for infrastructure replacement and that is why it matched up as “shovel ready”, however, now they are being told it is a ways down the pike. They will not be able to put in those facilities before resurfacing the roads so DPW is working with NH DOT to figure out how they can still accomplish the grant in the initial timeframe based on the amount of funds the City has to put towards it.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will get more information, but in general projects in the last TAP funding round will not be addressed until 2025-2026. Mr. Redfern asked how this will affect the Cheshire Rail Trail and Mr. Schoefmann said it will not. Mr. Redfern stated that he will write a letter to the Mayor and City Council stating that this project is being pushed out and they may run into risk of losing federal funds on the Park Avenue loop project. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that Mr. Redfern talk to Mr. Blomquist first to learn more about the situation as DPW is managing that project. However, the anticipated construction is this coming spring. He said the right of way negotiations are almost concluding with CNS (which is the major property holder) and they turned what used to be a Class 6 roadway into a Class 1 or 3 trail. Mr. Schoefmann said that is good news because that process can usually take quite some time and the prospect is they will have the project wrapped up in 2020. He suggested that Mr. Redfern reach out to Mr. Lussier to get more information.

e. Bicycle Mayor Status and Update

Mr. Schoefmann said he is working with Ms. Mannion about how to run a nomination process for a two-year term. He said he is not sure if the title will be Bicycle Mayor of Keene or a larger regional identity and how the Keene trail system connects to Swanzey and Hinsdale and some other areas. He said if they want to pull people in from outside, which is part of the discussion, they may broaden the scope of the position. He said Ms. Mannion will not run for another term but she will help develop the nomination and election process. Mr. Schoefmann said Ms. Mannion was appointed but they can do an election or appointment process. Chair Benik asked when Ms. Mannion’s term ends and Mr. Schoefmann replied that her position as Bicycle Mayor ends at the end of the year.

f. West Street

Mr. Schoefmann said they had help with counts with KSC Geography students and he will keep touching base with Mr. Brehme about potential students who are interested in mini-internship experiences that can help the with counts in the future. Mr. Schoefmann said he delivered a presentation to an Outdoor Recreation class on why they do this work locally. He said he will compile numbers and put together a report.

g. Complete Streets-Main Street

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the Keene State-Main Street crossing is completed for the most part. He said most of the bike facilities as part of the Complete Streets grant have been restriped and BPPAC should figure out how to provide input into the process as DPW will have CIP funds to move process along. Mr. Horner asked if they have done any design work for Main Street. Mr. Schoefmann said that part of the CIP is to put those designs out there and then hold public input sessions again.

7) New Business –Items to be included for next meeting

Ashuelot Rail Trail Plan by SWRPC

Mr. Brehme stated that several members have been involved in the Ashuelot Rail Trail plan. He said Swanzey is thinking about connecting the Ashuelot and Cheshire rail trails into a loop, which would benefit the Keene community so perhaps they add this item to the agenda.

South Bridge, Ashuelot Rail Trail gap

Mr. Redfern stated that there is a small part that of the South Bridge, Ashuelot Rail Trail that is noticeably missing pavement. He suggested they send in a request that this gap be agendized for the City College Committee (CCC). Mr. Schoefmann replied that Mr. Redfern would need to agendize the item with CCC and then give a presentation. Mr. Schoefmann explained to Chair Benik exactly what area of land they are speaking about is right after the trestle bridge, near the Walmart backside parking. Mr. Redfern clarified that if Chair Benik and he wrote an email to CCC they can perhaps have it agendized at some point in time. Mr. Brehme added that the community liaison for KSC, Mr. Fortier, reached out to Mr. Brehme about how the City College Committee can become more engaged in the community and this may be a good way to reach out. Members agreed that is a good idea. Mr. Brehme said he can email Mr. Steve Fortier and copy Chair Benik and Mr. Schoefmann.

Membership and Elections

Chair Benik suggested they discuss in membership and elections in December.

Main Street Mile

Mr. Souther announced that PFK is running a fundraiser race called the Main Street Mile, which will start at the bridge by the hospital and go down to Ted's store. He said the first place prize for each male and female is \$250 cash.

8) More time

- Public Outreach and Events Subcommittee for December agenda.
- New Trailhead near the Food Network Trail System- Members agreed to put this item on agenda for December. They can discuss getting people from that network to the meeting in January.

9) Adjournment

Next meeting date- December 11, 2019

Respectfully submitted by,
Ayshah Kassamali-Fox, Minute Taker

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