

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

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

**Wednesday, March 11, 2020**

**8:15 AM**

**City Hall, Second Floor  
Conference Room**

**Members Present:**

Dillon Benik, Chair

Brad Dufresne

Councilor Jan Manwaring

Mike Davern

Todd Horner

Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Parks and Recreation

Director

Will Schoefmann, GIS Technician

**Members not Present:**

Drew Breyenton, Vice Chair

Charles Redfern, Alternate

1) **Roll Call** – Chair Benik called meeting to order at 8:17 AM.

2) **February 12, 2020 Minutes**

Mr. Dufresne moved to accept the February 12 minutes, Mr. Davern seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

3) **Transportation Heritage Trail**

Chair Benik introduced Ms. Carey from the Heritage Commission (HC) to discuss a potential collaboration between the Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC) and HC. Ms. Rose stated that HC is most interested in collaborating with BPPAC on public outreach and education for the Transportation Heritage Trail. She offered the Heritage Commission's assistance with performing research into the history of the area. Ms. Carey proposed that they plan one event, for example, hold a community event at the pocket park at the end of the trail, or between the pocket park and the Monadnock Co-Op.

She stated that she does not have many ideas yet. Chair Benik replied that the community event is a good idea. Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is a two-fold focus on the Transportation Heritage Trail awareness and research, which could help in the City staff's endeavors to apply for grants. He asked Ms. Carey if HC is looking at acquiring a preservation grant and Ms. Carey replied that they were already turned down by the last grant. Mr. Schoefmann stated that perhaps BPPAC and HC can work together on applying for a grant as part of their collaboration as well. Chair Benik asked what type of research is needed for grant applications. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the research can provide context, for example, the era of significance, the rail line, the bridge, and coordinating and compiling research that has already been done by City staff. Ms. Carey agreed and said the history of the surrounding neighborhoods would be of interest as well, as well as creating themes for each neighborhood and gathering people there. Councilor Manwaring asked Ms. Carey about

the lack of fencing on the Stone Arch Bridge and whether HC is focused on restoring the fencing. Ms. Carey replied that they would like to place a fence that would be aesthetically similar to what was originally in place on the Bridge. She said they had applied for a preservation grant to put in four capstones but they were not awarded that grant and currently there is no money for putting in new fencing.

Ms. Carey stated that the Mayor asked HC to focus on researching neighborhoods, name each neighborhood by theme and then create a gathering event in each neighborhood. Mr. Schoefmann suggested using the trail as part of the gathering. Ms. Carey added that they also would like to show what the trails used to look like going through the neighborhoods. Mr. Schoefmann said that HC has done some interesting historical promotional events in the past and are well positioned to do this community outreach initiative. Chair Benik stated that he liked the idea of neighborhood gatherings.

Mr. Brehme stated that there are three students in the Keene State College geography seminar class that will be dedicated to research into the Stone Arch Bridge and the Cheshire Rail Trail South and will develop some type of project around that and they can perhaps contribute research to the collaboration, however, they will only be in class from August through late November, with potential follow up of presentations. Mr. Schoefmann noted that there are discussions between Swanzey and Keene around the corridor which was awarded funding through NHDOT's TAP award by 2025, and is a way to bolster the corridor for better access and usage and highlight the Stone Arch Bridge in that section of trail as a way into Keene for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. Ms. Carey asked members if they have contacted the Boy Scouts yet and Chair Benik replied they have not yet reached out as this is their first meeting regarding this initiative. He said that could potentially fall under the purview of an outreach subcommittee. Mr. Schoefmann noted that today BPPAC can define the collaboration and then the subcommittee can outline priorities on that level as their charge, for example, promoting research on the Transportation Heritage Trail. Mr. Dufresne added that they can also reach out to Pathways for Keene and Mountain Bikes as well.

Chair Benik stated that BPPAC wants the project to happen to completion and they want the public to get behind it so they can get funding for it. Mr. Schoefmann said that the overall project would be 80% grant funded. He said the grant-side is for City-staff to assemble, however, if the staff needs assistance they can draw from the research performed by the subcommittee to assist with a quicker turnaround. Mr. Schoefmann noted that there are other promotional efforts going on with the corridor that would provide input for moving forward and big opportunities for collaboration. He said it will not all fall on the subcommittee's shoulders, instead, what they choose to work on would help in moving things forward.

Chair Benik proposed getting a base level of public outreach that needs to be done to create awareness about the project in the City and then once that happens the other action items might fall into place. He said that BPPAC has not put a community event together yet but they are capable of doing so, and they can push to get a path tour or neighborhood going by late spring/summer. Mr. Schoefmann added that a basic event at the library can showcase the event for Bike month in May, perhaps a slideshow that is put on a large monitor where volunteers can go down and sit at a table to promote the initiative.

Mr. Horner said that outreach and a plan is a task of the subcommittee, however, it may make sense to come up with a written brochure of what the project is to provide a vision for the trail, why it is important and worth spending money on and provide a high level summary for the vision and the project as a tool for outreach. He said that it would also help if everyone on City staff and committees are on the same page. Mr. Schoefmann said most of that material already exists so it just is a matter of bringing it together and the subcommittee can define the scope. Mr. Brehme said that the students can frame their work for the fall, with maps, if the material is available. Mr. Schoefmann said the trail portions are broken out based on whether or not they are funded to give it context. He said he can send that information out to the committee by email so members can see the context. Chair Benik suggested reviewing the information and providing feedback by April. Mr. Schoefmann said they may want something ready to go by April, so this could be something for the subcommittee to do as a first task.

Mr. Bohannon asked if they are assuring that the language will be consistent with the CIP as it has to be. Mr. Horner reiterated that is why it is important to communicate and coordinate internally between departments before they start. Mr. Schoefmann proposed that a subgroup of BPPAC and HC meet prior to the April meeting of BPPAC to review some material he has and assemble it- that might be a good jumping off point. Ms. Carey said she can pitch that idea to HC. Mr. Schoefmann said they would need three members of BPPAC and two members of HC to avoid unnecessary quorums which would require a minute-taker. Mr. Horner said that they may want to invite members from PFK or reps from the neighborhoods along the trail that might be interested in order to spread out the labor and take ownership of the project would be good to think about as well. Ms. Carey asked if the trail passes by businesses and Mr. Schoefmann said it does. She stated those would be in the keep people to reach out to. Ms. Carey left the meeting at 8:41 am.

Mr. Horner asked what time of day the subcommittee would meet as he could not take time out of work but is interested in participating. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that Chair Benik work with Ms. Carey on a date that might work. He said the same three members do not have to meet each time to create more flexibility. Chair Benik stated that the Mayor would like to extend the number of alternates for committees and Mr. Schoefmann said the City Clerk is working on that change to the ordinance. He said they have to wait for the ordinance change to happen first; Council hears it next Thursday and then votes on it on Thursday, April 6. He said then they will have to work on getting alternates approved and appointed but they could have more members by the beginning of May. Mr. Schoefmann said now would be the time to compile a list of names of people who might be interested to provide to him and the Mayor. Mr. Horner asked what the role of alternates are in the committee and Mr. Schoefmann replied that they fill as members to create a quorum but cannot vote unless they are in that role.

Chair Benik stated that he will communicate with Ms. Carey after she discusses with members of HC tonight about their interest. He said they only meet every other month so he would communicate with her over email. Mr. Schoefmann stated they should define the charge for the subcommittee and it can be very helpful. Chair Benik asked how they should define what the charge of the subcommittee is.

*Mr. Schoefmann proposed that the subcommittee charge can be to conduct outreach, garner public support and help the City with research about the trails.*

Members agreed with Mr. Schoefmann's description of the charge. Mr. Horner asked what the status and timeline of the Transportation Heritage trail is. Mr. Bohannon replied that the first round of initial funding hits in 2024 which will be focused on design (\$64K); in 2025 they will begin construction for the Eastern Avenue extension and the abutments for the span; the following year, in 2026, they will focus on the span and the construction, with additional funding in 2027. He said the FOP sees it again this Thursday night and then they will take a final vote on March 19<sup>th</sup>, however, they do not fund it until the year that the project is slated to start. He said in two years the project will be revisited and it can be moved forward or back. Mr. Horner stated that this project is still competing with other projects and Mr. Bohannon replied that is correct, however, the greater Robin Hood Park and pool is a new idea and is in the CIP for 2027. He stated that it could change by that time. Chair Benik asked why the pool has become a priority. Mr. Bohannon said there were some significant leaks in the pool in 2017-2018, so they had a consultant review it and they determined it as a priority based on that evaluation.

4) **Old Business**

**-Wayfinding**

Mr. Horner said he has not had a chance to coordinate with Mr. Bohannon about the wayfinding project, however, he summarized some of his thoughts about wayfinding approaches (he passed around a handout). He said one of the ideas is a simple intervention like signs that communicate with people about how far it is to walk somewhere or bike somewhere to convey that it is a practical communication option in many cases. He stated that this platform can allow them to test out certain locations before placing more permanent signage. Mr. Horner said this is only addressing one component of wayfinding approaches that they have already discussed and he is not presenting it as a comprehensive solution but instead as a part of a wayfinding strategy to communicate with the public about walking and biking more. He said it might be useful to coordinate a sign designer template that can apply to areas outside of Keene, for example, creating a unified brand for signage up and down the trail corridors.

Mr. Dufresne stated that companies can become sponsors of signs if they are thinking of placing specific businesses on the signs. Mr. Horner said the middle ground could be the sign stating that it is a five minute walk to a cup of coffee with a sponsor logo underneath. Mr. Bohannon proposed that if they have signage in a location that says "five min walk to down town" and then the QR code pulls up a map of shops on an app that would be a good idea. Chair Benik said he likes the idea of putting the time to locations on the signage. The back of Mr. Horner's handout includes a timeline for rolling out this project by the end of the summer and outlines the steps they would take to get there. Mr. Schoefmann said it would be good to start at some highly used access points along the trails, for example, Eastern Avenue. Mr. Bohannon said he thinks they should go all in this summer as they have been talking about this for a while. He stated that he agrees with Mr. Horner's timeline as he is worried if they just do certain sections they will not get it all done. Mr. Bohannon said he already got some kiosk pricing, but he likes this idea and there may be businesses out there that would want their names on the signs and help fund them. He said he likes the time concept as well

instead of using miles. Mr. Bohannon asked if the costs are associated with the www. walkyourcity.org platform and Mr. Horner agreed. Mr. Horner replied that the QR code is set up for Google maps but it could be customized. Chair Benik asked what the dimensions are of the signs and Mr. Horner said they are 12x12 and can be mounted with a big zip tie.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he needs to get some pricing together and he would love to work together with the committee to meet the deadlines. Chair Benik said the heat maps will be helpful in placement. Mr. Schoefmann said that he will update the Google Drive so all members can access it. Mr. Dufresne suggested keeping the signage simple instead of including names, they can state “8 minute cycle to shopping” brought to you by company names. Mr. Brehme noted that they do not recommend using company names on the signs as the businesses change over time. Mr. Bohannon stated that some of the bigger companies had contacted him years ago about working together on wayfinding but it never came together.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he will bring some ideas back to Mr. Brehme and Mr. Horner next month. Mr. Brehme said they can also think of using KSC students again in August as a way to orient students better to the campus and the City. Mr. Horner said it would be great to have a student perspective on where they go.

- Bike Counts

Mr. Schoefmann said he will work with students to conduct spring counts in May instead of BPPAC members so they can free time up for the subcommittee work. Chair Benik agreed with that plan.

5) Project Updates

(Note: BPPAC Master Plan Documents available on google drive)

Master Plan- Mr. Schoefmann said he is in talks with Mr. Mack at Southwest Regional Planning Commission about finishing up the MP in 2021 and as soon as he knows more he will let the committee know.

Bike racks- Mr. Schoefmann stated that if members have feedback on where they would like to see bike racks put out this spring, to please email him so he can forward that information over to the Department of Public Works.

Arts and Culture Corridor- Mr. Horner stated that there should be cross-communication between the heritage trail project and the Arts and Culture corridor as it goes right through that area and part of that project includes putting train cars in the corridor. Mr. Bohannon said that the Arts and Culture Corridor is focused on where the Monadnock co-op starts and ends at about School Street, it has been sketched through by a designer and they are talking about putting lighted arches through Railroad Square. He said the path will stay intact but there will be revisions of Railroad Square.

West Street-Complete Street- Mr. Schoefmann said he will coordinate bike counts with Mr. Brehme and KSC students and then schedule them for May.

Transportation Heritage Trail- Mr. Schoefmann stated that they discussed this today and came up with some action items.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he received notification from Mr. Lussier regarding work on South Bridge regarding cracking to one of the surface approach seams; NH DOT will do some patchwork as it is not structural and they should not have to close the Bridge.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he attached the letter to the Councilors to the back of the packet.

6) **New Business**

Items to be included for next meeting:

-Wayfinding

-BPPAC/HC collaboration- Mr. Benik asked what times would work well for Mr. Horner and he replied Wed-Fri after 5 pm would work. Chair Benik said he will loop everyone in. Mr. Brehme noted that he is also interested.

Mr. Horner stated that is helping organize a cycling related film screening part of the Monadnock International Film Festival, Saturday, April 25 at 4 pm. He said it will include a post film discussion and the director of the film will be Skyping in. Panel will include a professor from KSC as well as a Brattleboro cycling advocate. He said it will take place on KSC campus but the location is still to be determined. He will use that opportunity to plug cycling related activities so it would be great to have the flyer and sign up.

Mr. Davern said there is also a Travel film festival at Stonewall Farm on April 20.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that there is a fundraiser at the YMCA for Peddling for Prevention that people can sign up for.

Mr. Bohannon said that the Bike Park will be open by the end of the summer and will be logging by the end of the month. Mr. Davern stated that they hired a professional trail builder to build it. He noted that there is a webpage with the designs on the Northeast Mountain Bike Association (NEBMBA), Keene/Brattleboro Chapter website.

7) **Adjournment**

Chair Benik Adjourned the meeting at 9:15 AM.

**Next meeting date – April 8, 2020**