

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

8:15 AM

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

Members Present:

Drew Bryenton, Chair
Todd Horner, Vice Chair
Jan Manwaring, Member
Michael Davern, Member
Dr. Rowland Russell, Member
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Autumn Delacroix, Alternate
Sam Jackson, Alternate

Staff Present:

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation,
Cemeteries and Facilities Director
Kürt Blomquist, Public
Works/EMD/ACM

Members Not Present:

Andrew Madison, Councilor
Dillon Benik, Member
Dr. Chris Brehme, Alternate
Janelle Sartorio, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Drew Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM. Roll call was made. It was noted that Mr. Charles Redfern will be sitting as a member.

2) Approval of April 12, 2023 Minutes

Chair Bryenton asked for corrections for the April 12th minutes. Dr. Rowland Russell requested the title Mr. be corrected to Dr. With no other edits, Chair Bryenton requested a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Todd Horner moved to approve the minutes from April 12th, 2023 and the motion was seconded by Mrs. Jan Manwaring.

3) Jeff Speck Workshop Opportunity

Mr. Horner informed that Mr. Roger Weinrich, owner of Good Fortune, reached out to him last week informing him that Mr. Weinrich had reached out to Mr. Jeff Speck. Mr. Speck is a walkability expert and speaks and works around the world. As the city continues to consider what should be done about public space and infrastructure in the downtown area, it would be

great to bring someone with Mr. Speck's experience and insight in to consult on the project. Mr. Horner had a preliminary call with the Mayor and City Manager and both seemed supportive, but Mr. Horner shared that it was made clear that fundraising will be required in order to support Mr. Speck's fee of \$12,000. While substantial, this includes a downtown walking tour with key decision makers, a reception before the event with key stakeholders, a public session with members of the general public and a follow up breakfast session the following morning with key decision makers.

Alternates Janelle Sartorio and Sam Jackson joined the meeting.

Both Mr. Weinrich and Mr. Horner think his time and expertise is well worth the investment. They added that his presentation and recommendations would not be cookie cutter as he would tailor them specific to Keene. Currently, Mr. Horner is in fundraising mode. The Keene Downtown Group is sponsoring the event and kicking in \$1,000. They are launching a campaign on the Local Crowd Monadnock and they will be kicking in \$1,000. The Monadnock Co-Op has agreed to match up to \$2,000 in donations. Mr. Weinrich is also starting some fundraising with local businesses. He has already conversed with The Works, who are willing to donate and have also agreed to cater the event.

The idea is to approach the city to match dollar for dollar of what they can raise from the community. Mr. Weinrich was able to get on the Finance, Operations and Personnel (FOP) committee agenda. He and Mr. Horner will be attending their meeting this Thursday evening to ask for their contribution of that \$5,000.

Mr. Redfern asked if they had considered an appearance on radio shows with Chris Coates or Dan Mitchell. Mr. Horner said they had discussed reaching out to Dan Mitchell. Mr. Horner shared one challenge is Mr. Speck's schedule in that the only day he has available for the foreseeable future is June 12th. This creates a situation where they are fundraising and promoting the event at the same time.

Mr. Horner asked the group for assistance and help in identifying organizations or businesses that might be willing to kick in smaller amounts of money. He also requested members' assistance in getting the word out about the Local Crowd Monadnock campaign and of the event itself.

Mr. Horner explained that if this group might consider voting to support the event, he could utilize that in promoting and trying to garner support from the FOP committee this Thursday. Chair Bryenton asked if the Mayor and City Manager were supportive of the event and potential match. Mr. Horner said he thought they were supportive, but that they wanted to see community and city council support as well. Chair Bryenton asked if Mr. Horner had any pulse of where the city council stood. Mr. Horner shared that he would gather that from the Thursday meeting. Mr. Kürt Blomquist joined the meeting.

Dr. Rowland Russell asked Mr. Horner if he needed help planning. Mr. Horner responded yes and thanked him for the offer. Dr. Russell asked if he had approached bike shops yet and suggested Mr. Horner do that. Mr. Davern offered to reach out to both shops and the Monadnock Cycling club, to which Mr. Horner thanked him.

Mr. Mike Kowalczyk shared that in general, Dan Mitchell seems to be opposed to bike infrastructure. He thinks it would be a good thing to get on his show and possibly sway him. He also suggested Chris Coates and John McGauley.

Chair Bryenton asked if Mr. Horner wanted a motion or a letter. Mr. Horner requested a letter from BPPAC supporting the agenda. Mr. Bryenton put forth a motion stating, "BPPAC supports Jeff Speck coming to Keene to discuss improvements in walkability and multimodal transportation solutions and encourages the City of Keene to support a financial contribution of \$5,000 for the visit".

With unanimous support from the committee, the motion was approved. Chair Bryenton thanked Mr. Horner for his work on this topic and event.

4) Downtown Infrastructure Project Update

Mr. Blomquist stated he thought those were all great ideas and that the committee should pursue them. He informed the committee that on Monday, May 15th, 2023, at 6PM in Council Chambers, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure (MSFI) committee starts their special review of the downtown projects and one of the decisions the chair has identified is multi-use facilities. Mr. Blomquist suggested members reach out to Councilors.

Mr. Blomquist provided some background information on what options are on the table for the committee. Mr. Schoefmann said Monday is a key decision point and urged everyone to show up.

Chair Bryenton asked for clarification on his understanding that this was a fairly binary decision of whether to include or eliminate the infrastructure and that this committee was a subset of City Council, but that they had potential to influence City Council.

Mr. Blomquist supported his understanding and added that it would require 8 votes to overturn the committee's recommendation.

Mr. Redfern suggested Mr. Horner ask the committee to explain the exact routes they are purposing and to hold them accountable for the fact that the alternatives really have not been properly researched, identified or planned. Mr. Schoefmann added he thought that it really has not been well thought out.

Mr. Andy Bohannon noted three points. First being that the University of New Hampshire study focused on bringing bikes downtown and the council accepted that.

Secondly, because of that report the city received \$35,000 from the rotary club for wayfinding/amenities signs to get people to downtown and council accepted that \$35,000.

Thirdly, they accepted a donation from Pathways of Keene of \$30,000 to help build the infrastructure of the trail system. He questioned what it says to an organization that has donated over \$700,000 to the City, By shutting the trail system down into the footprint. In his opinion, if he was a donor and heard this, it would be disappointing and unfortunate to say the least.

Mr. Schoefmann said it is on the people of the committee to mobilize support.

Chair Bryenton asked for any other questions or comments. He asked if folks had councilors in mind for who to contact. Dr. Russell offered to reach out to Antioch. Mr. Schoefmann suggested reaching out to Keene Pride.

Mr. Redfern asked if the biggest sticking point was parking. Mr. Blomquist responded that parking is always an issue, but the thirteen lost spaces will likely be made up. It is an argument being used but is not a primary driver.

Mr. Russell circled back to Mr. Bohannon's discussion of funding in support and pointed out that another to add to the list is the transportation heritage trail and all the funding being used for that.

5) Project Priorities

Chair Bryenton welcomed Ms. Autumn Delacroix and Ms. Sam Jackson to the conversation and said this portion is a great opportunity to understand the priorities of the group.

Mr. Schoefmann explained the BPPAC project priority assessment tool and how he came up with his pre-ranking.

Chair Bryenton asked Mr. Schoefmann if the ID and the BPPAC numbering were the same as last year. Mr. Schoefmann stated there were some that were consolidated, which likely affected the numbering.

Cheshire Rail Trail is grant supported with TAPP grant funding along with some congressionally directed spending. Once a project agreement is completed, they will amend it with the congressionally directed spending. Mr. Redfern said he believed that should remain a high priority.

The Roundhouse T Widening is a project looking at sidewalks between Emerald and School. The project proposes widening them to 8-foot sections rather than the current 6-foot section. The group rated that as a low priority.

The Jonathan Daniels Trail Maintenance includes drainage, brush clearing, tree cutting, grading and stone dust resurfacing. Mr. Blomquist said it is slated to happen in summer depending on estimates. The group agreed to keep that as a high priority.

Mr. Schoefmann explained that Cheshire Rail Trail North/ Stone Arch Bridge is in the third phase. Mr. Blomquist explained that both bridges will likely be built at the same time in the future and the crossing over Swanzy Factory Road will be done sometime after. Mr. Schoefmann explained the committee should be ready to help support if those opportunities arise. This has been placed on a historical registry so creating a subcommittee might be a way the committee can support this endeavor.

Mr. Redfern shared that in writing grants, he has been getting questions from donors asking what the money is going to and what is the order of the phases. He suggested remaining as flexible as possible in the specifics of the grant writing. Mr. Schoefmann explained that the bridges were conceptualized as phase two. The Swanzy Factory Road portion would be phase three.

Mr. Mike Kowalczyk shared that they are making significant improvements to those trails. The committee agreed to keep that as a high priority.

The Cheshire Rail Trail Swanzy Factory Road is planned for further down the road. Chair Bryenton suggested that this be placed as a medium priority. Mr. Schoefmann explained there are a couple of things that need to happen for this to be considered a usable project. It was agreed to keep it as a medium priority.

The Cheshire Rail Trail Victoria Street Extension is down off of Marlboro St. There have been thoughts over the years to connect Victoria to Marlboro to address the fact that Victoria is industrial and surrounded by residential. It was suggested and agreed to keep that project as a medium priority.

The Appel Way Assessment and Maintenance was suggested as a low priority.

The Marlboro Line Trail is an old concept with low priority as it is fragmented. It was explained that this is a right-of-way system owned by Antioch.

Mr. Kowalczyk said he is starting to get asked about the Keene to Nashua line that comes off Carpenter Street. It is not a lot of momentum, but he is starting to get some questions. He does not think it is going to go anywhere anytime soon but wanted to bring it to the attention of the committee.

6) Old Business

A) Public Art and the Trails Update

Dr. Russell updated that he is still waiting to get go ahead from city. In the meantime, they are meeting at May 10th at 5pm to do an inventory of possible mural and potentially sculptural sights as well.

B) Volunteer Opportunities

i) *Earth Day (recap)*

Mr. Redfern shared the tabling went well, but thinks more promotional material is definitely needed for future.

ii) *Greenup Keene/ Trail Clean Up (recap)*

Dr. Russell shared that only 3 people showed, but they picked up 13 bags of garbage.

iii) *Bike Friendly Community*

Mr. Schoefmann will look at the application and try to segment out material and items that need background or research to bring it to the next meeting.

7) Regular Project Updates

A) Safe Streets for All Grant

Mr. Schoefmann shared he has a meeting with Mr. Jesse Rounds later today and can share status later.

8) New Business

Mr. Redfern mentioned Mr. Peter Ponessa and Dr. Russell were planning a fixture for the Rail Trail. Dr. Russell explained that Mr. Ponessa is quite busy, but he will reach out to him for an update for next month.

9) More Time

A) BPPAC Website

Mr. Schoefmann got a request for the original bike plan from 1996 and is still trying to find that. He plans to ask Ms. Rebecca Landry for editing permissions to move forward with other website changes.

B) Wayfinding/ Amenities: North and South Bridge Signage

C) Bike/ Pedestrian Counts

D) Kiosk Map Updates

E) Covered Bike Parking Demonstration Opportunity

Mr. Schoefmann shared there is not a lot of traction from the city with this. Mr. Schoefmann suggested reaching out to other area organizations.

10) Adjournment

A) Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2023

There being no further business, Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:43 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff