

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

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

**Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

**8:15 AM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Drew Bryenton, Acting Chair  
Todd Horner, Vice Chair  
Jan Manwaring  
Michael Davern  
Rowland Russell, Alternate (remote)  
Charles Redfern, Alternate (remote)  
Councilor Ed Haas

**Staff Present:**

William Schoefmann, GIS Technician  
Jesse Rounds, Community Development  
Director

**Members Not Present:**

Janelle Sartorio, Alternate  
Samantha Jackson, Alternate  
Autumn DelaCroix, Alternate  
Dillon Benik

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Bryenton called the meeting to order at 8:22 AM.

**2) December 13, 2023 Minutes Approval**

Chair Bryenton tabled the minutes. Provided membership updates (see below).

**3) Safety and Outreach Working Group**

**A) Bike Lanes in Downtown Project**

Chair Bryenton took the opportunity to address the committee with some of the items Mayor Kahn had relayed to him in their conversation and as to why the topic of downtown bike lanes as they pertain to the downtown infrastructure project would be coming up again soon. Chair Bryenton stated the Mayor told him he'd asked downtown business owners and constituents what was on their mind with regards to downtown and many said, "everything was fine", second most heard response was "they'd not thought about it and would need to get back to him" and third most heard response was "anxiety over separate grade bike lanes and human/bike interactions". A major concern was for pedestrians colliding with bicyclists using the separate

grade facility between parking and the sidewalk. Chair Bryenton thought that might indicate that people are using the facilities but also the Mayor would be interested in developing some guidelines or rules around usage of those facilities.

Chair Bryenton asked if anyone else had any thoughts. Acting Vice Chair Horner stated he had a few thoughts. He continued that the Rail Trails or separated trails there really seems to be not a lot of issues with as the dynamics of interactions are different, people are not crossing from parking into sidewalk space (separated by bike facilities) on the trails is the primary difference. There is an example or track record of bicyclists and pedestrians without any sort of signage or guiding ordinance and coexisting peacefully and without incident. Acting Vice Chair Horner continued he thought it was really important to keep that in mind when discussing the bike lanes and how it “may” pose a threat to safety. His second thought was around the true threat to pedestrian safety being motor vehicles not yielding in the second lane of traffic. He continued he’s had many close calls as a pedestrian where the second car was unable to see him as he walked out in front of the first car in a two lane traffic scenario. He stated if there were a true concern for pedestrians, the priority would be to look at the interaction with motor vehicles. He also thought it was still important to consider how to make bike lanes as safe as possible but the issue with bikes and pedestrians appeared to be a “red herring”.

### **B) Memo to Mayor/City Council**

Dr. Rowland Russell shared that he finished the letter the day prior due to being ill. He did not believe it had been sent. He asked the best way to share. Mr. Schoefmann suggested distributing the letter for individuals to review outside the meeting unless someone wants to make a motion to move forward after the acting chair has reviewed.

Chair Bryenton said the idea was to get it into the hands of city council sooner rather than later. He stated he would be fine with Dr. Russell sharing it online during the meeting for the committee to view. Dr. Russell said he created it using talking points and Acting Chair Bryenton actually drafted it some time ago. He emphasized the priority is safety for both pedestrians and cyclists as well as enhancing multimodal transportation infrastructure. He avoided protected bike lanes and focused on using multimodal transportation wherever possible. The letter highlighted the committee’s support of a design that widens sidewalks, created protected areas, maximized safety, and calmed motorized traffic. He discussed how he included trees in terms of replacing and expanding where possible and emphasized in the letter that it is the construction that is responsible for the loss of trees; not the bike lanes.

He pointed out the five bullet points highlighting the benefits of multimodal design concepts such as improving local economy, increasing property values, reducing expenses, creating a welcoming downtown regardless of age or ability, helping to address climate change, improving the experience of motorists, and helping to connect as a community. He also shared an infographic with data supporting bike lanes that was included in the letter. He showed the committee two additional tabs that were included that listed resources and referenced The

Complete Streets Resolution the city council accepted a couple of years ago as well as funding resources.

Chair Bryenton complimented Dr. Russell saying he thought he did a great job reiterating the points the BBPAC has been making the past few years. He stated he would be comfortable copying it into a letter, but wanted to make sure folks feel comfortable as it is from all members of BPPAC, not just the chair.

Councilor Haas asked if there was any text or bullet point that addresses the interaction between bicycles and pedestrians. He said he believed people fear the bicycles more than they fear getting hit by a car and suggested a bullet point to highlight that. Dr. Russell said the data was included in the infographic and said he thought it might be sufficient to cite that in addition to having the infographic.

Mr. Horner said he believed that this would be an issue that the BPPAC will need to revisit as the project proceeds. He thought if the goal of the letter was get some talking points and thoughts that have been under discussion at BPPAC in front of city council than he believed the current letter did that. He did believe that BPPAC was going to need to come up with some more focused talking points specific to that issue.

Mr. Jesse Rounds jumped in and said in speaking with the Mayor early in his term, the mayor expressed concern about the bike lanes and pedestrian interactions. Mr. Rounds said one of the problems that he thinks people are seeing is that there are no specific rules as far as anyone can tell about how bikes would operate in the space between the parking lane and the sidewalk. One of the things he had talked to the Mayor and the city manager about was getting members of BPPAC and members of the Energy & Climate Change Committee (ECC) into a non-quorum group to talk about rules they could propose to then take to the Mayor. The goal being to create rules that would increase the comfort of the public so to feel safe using those spaces. Mr. Rounds would explore whether a non-quorum group is possible.

Mr. Redfern added that the ECC has formed sub-groups called working groups. He explained his understanding was that there can be members of the official committee, but not enough to form a quorum of that committee on that working group. He suggested talking with Ms. Mari Brunner. Dr. Russell wanted to point out that the safety workgroup under this committee has been looking at those rules. He is not sure it would require forming a new group, but more expanding the existing group. There are already three members participating in that group.

Councilor Haas asked if there were existing rules for the rail trails that they could build on. Ms. Jackson said there are rules about the class of e-bikes that can be on them. Mr. Schoefmann added that the major prohibition was for ATV and that was for any trails within Keene. Chair Bryenton decided to move the discussion for the working group to February. Chair Bryenton made a motion to adopt Dr. Russell's letter as is. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jan Manwaring. With no discussion and all in favor, the motion was approved.

Ms. Manwaring offered to invite people from the ECC to the BPPAC for the purpose of giving a report. Mr. Schoefmann will talk with Ms. Brunner and Mr. Rounds on what might work best.

**4) Downtown Bike Racks**

Mr. Schoefmann shared two maps, one from 2019 and one from 2008. The maps highlight the location of bike racks. He is unsure and would be hard-pressed to know if all of the highlighted bike racks are still there. If the committee has ideas of areas where bike rack need to be placed or areas where they have been removed, please let him know. He can utilize the map to guide the conversation with the Highway Department.

Councilor Haas asked about bike racks outside of downtown. Mr. Schoefmann said that is not something the committee has focused on historically. Councilor Haas said he is thinking of places bicyclists go regularly and have to fish to find someplace to lock up.

Ms. Jackson added that the key things are making the racks visible and making sure people are aware of where they are. Mr. Davern suggested using social media to publicize that information. Chair Bryenton noted that most of the bike racks are seasonal. He believed the rack maps to be optimistic and suggested an audit. Mr. Schoefmann said an option would be to take the image to highway and ask them to ensure the highlighted locations in the map have racks.

Mr. Redfern asked Mr. Schoefmann if he knew the year that it was required that new construction place bike racks. Mr. Schoefmann was not sure of the year, but said he knew it was in regulation that it should be considered.

Chair Bryenton said when he looks at the 2019 map, he sees a big gap between Railroad Street and Gilbo Ave where racks are missing or not visible. Mr. Schoefmann agreed to update the map and also add some suggestions for additional locations.

**5) Regular Project Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann shared that they got the report out from Safety and Outreach with the letter. The second public concerns meeting for the Transportation Heritage, Phase 1 Eastern Ave 101 was yesterday. Stantec, the consultant, did report-outs with the engineering department on the concerns (screening, drainage, and people on the property). Mr. Schoefmann explained the three options needed to address the needs statement would be to improve the rail trail section, put infrastructure on the Marlboro Street extension or not do anything. It was important to make sure those were evaluated as those are important steps required for the federal and state funding they have received. Chair Bryenton asked if it was at a point where it would be useful for BPPAC to weigh in. Mr. Schoefmann responded that it was not at that point yet.

It was asked by Mr. Horner if there was risk that the project would not move forward because of abutters. Mr. Schoefmann said while possible, he had fingers crossed that it would not be.

Councilor Haas suggested finding property owners nearby who see no issue with the rail trail running behind their property who might be willing to offer a support letter. Mr. Schoefmann suggested including that support letter.

6) **Volunteer Opportunities**

A) **Crosswalk Yield Counts**

It was noted by Ms. Jackson that in previous discussions they had considered performing the counts at the intersection by Ashuelot. Mr. Horner said 30-50% of the red lights have someone who runs it at that intersection. Acting Chair Bryenton suggested tabling this until membership is worked out.

B) **Trails Cleanups**

Dr. Russell said they did not get to it as they could not find the right weekend. If the snow melts, he and Scott Wilson will go out and do it themselves. The Green Up Keene will be the next large clean up. Chair Bryenton said his family has been doing cleanups near where they live. He asked if there was any awareness by Southwestern Community Services of the sleeping bags and supplies that they hand out or if there was any effort to collect them. Ms. Manwaring suggested reaching out to Craig Henderson, Southwestern's community outreach worker.

C) **Events**

There has been some collaboration between Pathways of Keene, MAST (Monadnock Alliance for Sustainable Transportation), and Mike's group MRRTC (Monadnock Regional Rail Trail Collaborative) for Earth Day set to occur on April 20, 2024. The groups are trying to get a booth together. Mr. Redfern suggested that it might be nice to have BPPAC members there to help out and if people are interested in having a table, could look into that.

Ms. Manwaring suggested interfacing with the public on Main Street. The goal would be to get Dr. Russell's infographic and something specific to bike/pedestrian interactions.

Mr. Redfern said if there was desire to be with Pathways or the other bike organizations, they would need to reserve it through the Monadnock Cooperative. Mr. Davern has a contact and will reach out. Topic will be put on the agenda for February.

7) **Old Business**

A) **Letter re: Route 101 Improvement Project/ Transportation Heritage Trail**

Mr. Redfern had a conversation with Kendal Lane, who was not in support of them being lumped together due to the likelihood that both projects will get denied due to overall cost. Another idea is separating the projects, but requesting that the work be done at the same time so long as each

project has been put into the ten year plan separately with their own individual funding. Pathways for Keene is saving funds to help support those projects.

Mr. Redfern asked Ms. Manwarning to add as she saw fit. Ms. Manwarning had nothing to add. Mr. Redfern clarified that it is not off the table- the strategy just needs to be modified. The Transportation Heritage Trail would need to get added to the ten year plan at the next cycle. Kendall Lane has talked extensively with Cindy Warmington. Her feedback to him was that they do not want cost bleed through. Mr. Redfern stated they would still need to follow the ten year plan process and there is a lot of planning that goes in between now and then for that.

Acting Chair Bryenton recognized Dr. Russell who noted that there is fair amount of data about property value increases along bike paths that can be cited. He added, Friends of Public Art is interested in adopting the concrete face of the bridge infrastructure at the beginning of phase one and would be proposing a stylized map of the old rail that converged in Keene. They thought that it would help address some of the public concerns about graffiti.

Chair Bryenton said they will stand by as Mr. Redfern reconfigures his strategy.

## **B) Membership Updates**

Acting Chair Bryenton wanted to provide an update. At this time, he and Mr. Todd Horner have timed out. They are allowed to stay on in an acting capacity. They will continue to do that as they are able. Mr. Schoefmann has submitted a recommendation to the Mayor that Ms. DelaCroix and Ms. Jackson be moved from alternate to full member and that Ms. Duffy and Jack Ahern be invited as alternates. He believed there was confusion and possibly some lack of communication with outgoing mayor to incoming mayor.

Acting Chair Bryenton had recently reached out to Mayor Kahn to see if he had reviewed the recommendation. He spoke with him last night and Mayor Kahn was not aware of this or that it needed his action. Chair Bryenton will get those names over to him for his review. A note- Andrew Jackson is no longer a councilor.

Mr. Horner asked if they planned to have elections next month. Acting Chair Bryenton said once he gets confirmation, they will send an e-mail out to the full committee for those interested in running.

During Acting Chair's conversation with Mayor Kahn, Mayor Kahn shared that during his conversations with downtown business owners and his inquiries as to their needs, concerns or questions, some themes arose. The most popular response was everything is fine. Second to that was that they had not really thought about it and would get back to him. Third most popular response was anxiety about separate bike lanes and the human/bike interactions. Chair Bryenton thinks this is a great problem to have because it means people are using the bike path and that the numbers of users have increased to the point that they are now having interactions.

Chair Bryenton shared that Mr. Kahn expressed interest in developing ordinances focusing on creating some guidelines or rules around how people use those bike lanes.

Mr. Horner said he thinks it is important to remember that there is already structure on the rail trails and there are really no issues there. He did note that the dynamics are somewhat different in that people are not crossing from parking space to a sidewalk. The rail trails not only serve as an example, but also as a track record of bike and pedestrian shared use with very little signage or ordinance and both coexist peacefully and without any issue. Secondly, he pointed out that the true threat to pedestrian safety is motor vehicles, especially vehicles in the second lane of traffic not yielding. Chair Bryenton agreed.

8) **New Business**

A) **Items to be included for next meeting**

9) **More Time**

A) **Old Stone Arch Bridge Safety Improvements**

B) **NHDOT North/South Bridge Signs**

C) **Kiosk Map Updates**

Mr. Schoefmann said he has a draft map update and requested Acting Chair Bryenton look on his way out.

D) **Public Art and the Trails Update**

E) **BPPAC Website**

F) **Downtown Infrastructure Project Updates**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Acting Chair Bryenton adjourned the meeting at 9:38 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff