

City of Keene
New Hampshire

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

8:18 AM

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

Members Present:

Samantha Jackson, Chair
Dr. Rowland Russell, Vice Chair
Jan Manwaring
Michael Davern
Councilor Edward Haas
Autumn DelaCroix
Diana Duffy, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Jesse Rounds, Community Development
Director
William Schoefmann, GIS Technician

Members Not Present:

Dillon Benik
Charles Redfern, Alternate
Janelle Sartorio, Alternate

1) Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Sam Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:18 AM.

2) Approval of Minutes

Councilor Ed Haas noted that his name was spelled incorrectly. With no further corrections or comments, Councilor Haas moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Rowland Russell and with unanimous approval, the minutes were accepted.

3) Safety and Outreach

A) Memo and Letter to Mayor/City Council (recap)

Mr. Will Schoefmann said Mr. Jesse Rounds presented the letter during the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee (MSFI) meeting. Chair Jackson added the MSFI accepted it and that it seemed to have been positively received.

Ms. Diana Duffy suggested a naming system given the increased requests for letters. Councilor Haas asked if someone wanted to find the letter where would they need to look for it. Mr.

Schoefmann stated it would be in the MSFI minutes packet. Dr. Russell clarified and said that the letter would be in the place that accepted the letter.

B) Downtown Bike Lane Rules

Councilor Haas was hoping to get in front of the project by at least putting out guidelines that could become ordinances at some point and with an immediate goal to get it into the form of a brochure. This would also connect with Mr. Charles Redfern's activities. He is hopeful that at least one person will be able to go to MSFI tonight or at least next month to share that the BPPAC committee is working on it. His goal is to indicate that there are safety guidelines that will be promulgated such as protecting pedestrians and protecting bicyclists as best they can. He offered to write up a version of what this could look like. He has already circulated some early ideas but would like to get more feedback. He would be happy to create a version to bring back to the committee next month for review and a decision on how best to proceed.

Chair Jackson recognized Dr. Russell. Dr. Russell said Lebanon had guidelines the BPPAC had previously looked at and liked. He suggested using that as a starting point or model. Chair Jackson stated that many of them follow the state guidelines and adjust or add as it becomes necessary to do so to not overregulate.

Councilor Haas shared that he went through the lists of bike cities on the League of American Bicyclists and other sources to try and find cities comparable to Keene with the same kind of downtown arrangement, traffic, sidewalk dining, bike lanes, etc. The one town he did find that was similar was in Missoula, Montana. Councilor Haas said he just recently received a communication from the city planner in Missoula. He will get that out to everyone so that it can formally be in the packets. He explained that many of the other cities he looked at have generic rules they follow but defer to the state or are towns that have very few similarities to Keene. He noted Provincetown is often mentioned but has very narrow streets with a bike lane and a single lane of traffic that is all one-way. Cambridge is another city with great bike lanes, but it is significantly larger than Keene. Keene has a unique challenge. The desire is to have something suitable for Keene's specific downtown situation.

Dr. Russell asked if anyone had been to Lebanon to see how they had structured it. Councilor Haas said he has been to Lebanon, but it never occurred to him. Dr. Russell suggested using Google Street View to look at it. Councilor Haas shared that most of the state guidelines focus on trails and such and vehicle behavior on the roadways. For bike lanes that are part of sidewalks, he stated that it requires looking at some of the big cities even though that may not apply to Keene's circumstances. Councilor Haas said he would get up to Lebanon and get pictures of their own to use along with the Google Street View. Mr. Schoefmann wanted to share before they explored too far that the city manager and mayor set up a task force committee to develop rules for the bike lanes that Ms. Duffy is on and their first meeting is set to happen at 11 am.

Dr. Russell suggested and believed it was worth mentioning in any public messaging that Ms. Duffy is on the task force and that the BPPAC will be coordinating their information with them to not be seen as competing. Mr. Schoefmann shared that he is the staff liaison for the task force and will be there. Chair Jackson asked if there was a particular name for the task force. Mr. Schoefmann responded that he is not sure that it is a task force, more so a managers' committee. Dr. Russell asked who else was on it.

Ms. Autumn Delacroix brought up a concern regarding bike lane protection and how the bike lanes often cut out when there is an intersection resulting in limited to no marking. She noted that those are the most dangerous places and the lack of marking just increases the danger. She suggested anyone advising to keep that in mind.

Ms. Duffy said her email showed that the name of the committee was the Bicycle Lanes Policy Committee and the kickoff meeting was scheduled for March 13th at 11 AM. She added that representatives from Stan Tech are expected to be there to provide information to help inform their discussions.

Councilor Haas asked Ms. Duffy, depending on how the Policy Committee went, if she would be willing to attend the MSFI at 5:30 pm that night. Councilor Haas asked Mr. Schoefmann if he had all the information Councilor Haas had forwarded to him. Mr. Schoefmann confirmed and said he would do his best to try and bring it up and see about forwarding it to that group. Mr. Schoefmann shared that Todd Horner was named to that policy committee along with the city engineer, and Brett Rusnock.

C) Bicycle Promotion City Sign Board- Banner

Councilor Haas shared that when he saw that Keene had received the silver award from the league, he started conversations with the city manager and the parks director to try and advertise that, especially with bike month coming up. If nothing else, he wanted to at least have the banners that go up on the kiosks. Councilor Haas asked Mr. Andy Bohannon if he had anything to add.

Mr. Bohannon said it will be important to get those up at the beginning of May as the Kiwanis Club has their bike rodeo. The bike rodeo takes place on the first Saturday in May. Councilor Haas suggested getting them up in mid-April for advertising and promotional purposes. If the committee approves it, he would like to continue working with Mr. Bohannon and the city planner to get that done. Mr. Schoefmann suggested coordinating and adding other Bike Month events to the banners to help increase awareness of the local events and activities. Dr. Russell urged Councilor Haas to connect with Local Crowd Monadnock as she always does something in May around bicycles. With enough lead time, he believed that she could do something to promote the activities and may also be a source of information as well.

Ms. DelaCroix voiced support for adding more events to increase the capacity of the advertising. She shared that she believed that Linda Rubin was opening back up at Frisky Cow and suggested

another community ride. Chair Jackson offered to reach out to Mr. Todd Horner to get information on the contacts he had used for the organization of the community ride. Mr. Bohannon wanted to add a word of caution that vehicles are traveling about thirty miles per hour when they pass these signs and so brevity is king to making sure that people can read and understand why the banner is there and what it is advertising. Mr. Davern suggested that the kiosks would be better for the details. The committee was in support of Councilor Haas moving forward with the marketing/advertising.

Chair Jackson asked who oversaw the banners on the lights. Mr. Schoefmann explained those are controlled by the downtown group and the Keene City Rotary Club. He shared that they would require money.

4) Regular Project Updates

Mr. Schoefmann explained that he included the maps regarding the bike racks. The time is coming (late April) for the Department of Public Works (DPW) to put those out. He was unsure if the committee had any feedback about out-of-the-ordinary places. The discussion was tabled for the time being.

Mr. Schoefmann explained that once the Bicycle Lanes Policy Committee meetings, they should get more information on what the charge is for that committee.

He also updated that information from the public meetings on the Transportation Heritage Trail, Phase 1 from Eastern Ave to New Hampshire 101, was submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT). Mr. Schoefmann explained that they are waiting on the NH DOT to review additional information from the consultant. He was expecting a thirty-day turnaround time as that is typical. He should have more information to relay to everyone in April.

Councilor Haas suggested coordinating the bike racks with the downtown streetscape. He wondered at what point the BPPAC should come forward with a recommendation for their recommendations of bike rack locations. Ms. DelaCroix shared that she sat in on the MSFI meeting last week and it was clear they were aware of the need and were planning on more bike racks.

5) Old Business

A) Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan

Mr. Schoefmann shared that they have a CIP allocation for the bicycle-pedestrian master plan. They are weighing a couple of options. In the past, they had worked with the Southwest Regional Planning Commission. The city is encouraging them to go through that submission process. It will be out to bid in the fiscal year, which is July 1. There is a draft in the google drive and Mr. Schoefmann offered to send that around to members.

Mr. Buerle thanked the committee for letting him sit in on the meeting. He shared that he is interested in the process by which this community makes decisions because the comprehensive master plan process is kicking off and is a massive process. It is a ten-year plan, but he explained that they are thinking out 15 years. The consideration in mind is what is the evolution of Keene and what does that look like in 10-15 years. It is considering all the pieces that will contribute and mobility and multimodal are a definite theme in that. It is easy to get wrapped up in the details of where the bike rack goes. The master plan is well above that. The processes that they want to invite the BPPAC to are not necessarily chances to advocate for the element you are working on. He invited them to think of it as broad, brush strokes that will allow a framework to then build out the things that are specific to the BPPAC's topic area. He is interested in the issues that are on people's minds. He shared that the committee and the public will be invited to weigh in on the input into the development of the comprehensive master plan. He believed that the BPPAC's commitment and expertise would be valuable at numerous points in the process. In conjunction with Jesse Rounds, they have designed what will be an open and transparent process and they would love for the committee to use their networks to encourage people to participate in surveys and workshops.

Ms. Jan Manwaring said one of the things that she feels very strongly about is the fact that in the next ten years, 30% of Keene's population will be seniors if it is not already. There is a decent portion of those seniors with sight issues and she hopes to see that included in the master plan. Mr. Bohannon suggested thinking about the discussions and work that the University of New Hampshire has done and how to advocate for that and those initiatives in the master planning.

B) Downtown Bike Racks

Mr. Schoefmann shared the map of previous bike rack locations. He explained that in the past, they have had one located underneath the Wells Street garage, courtesy of the parking enforcement department's allocated space for bike racks. There is potential to see if they are willing to do that again. One of the racks that is listed under the City Hall parking deck is private and associated with the Housing Authority building.

Traditionally, there is one out in front of City Hall. Dr. Russell suggested isolating the private ones on the map by making them a distinct color. He asked if Prime Roast still had one. Ms. Duffy said they no longer have it. Dr. Russell suggested that as a possibility. Ms. Delacroix mentioned that many of the bike racks in Keene are designed for children's bikes and are too small for large adult bikes or e-bikes to attach to. Mr. Schoefmann explained that DPW has many U-shaped racks that can be bolted to the ground. The downside is that it takes hardware and causes wear and tear to the cement on the sidewalks. He suggested producing the locations that the committee wants to see for him to take to the highway department and create a plan for the racks.

Mr. Bohannon responded to Ms. DelaCroix's earlier comment stating that the U racks that the city has purchased are standard bike racks and are universal for all bikes. He cautioned on placing

bike racks out right now as they may not be there when the downtown design happens. He suggested thinking strategically about how and where the committee wants to advocate for racks. It would be ideal to advocate for them in the project scope and certainly with the addition of bike lanes, a rack will be important. He urged choosing locations that will be good for before and after the reconstruction occurs. Mr. Davern suggested placing racks at the terminus of the rail trails where they hit Main Street. He also suggested coffee shops, bars, and major restaurants as good locations and suggested being mindful of where people are going to want to ride their bikes. Ms. DelaCroix suggested a rack or two in Central Square. Mr. Schoefmann suggested the possibility of doing a rack census two times over the summer. It was suggested to compile a list to share.

6) New Business

A) Items to be included for the next meeting.

Some topics mentioned to be included for the next meeting include safety and outreach topics minus the memo and downtown bike lanes. Dr. Russell shared that he reserved the usual area that this group and Pathways have done for Green Up Keene. Since so many of the groups participate in Earth Day, Mr. Redfern and Dr. Russell will pick some potential dates to start the organization and scheduling process.

7) More Time

A) Volunteer Opportunities

Dr. Russell shared that the area of cleanup for the Green Up Keene event runs from the North Bridge to Emerald Pocket Park and then down Winchester Street. Last year, they cleaned up thirteen bags. He shared that many areas had not been adopted.

Mr. Redfern shared that BPPAC can share the table with Pathways. Mr. Schoefmann suggested using the next meeting to determine when and where they need coverage during the event and scheduling/creating a sign-up for coverage.

B) Public Art and the Trails Update

Dr. Russell said he did not have any specifics but shared that Friends of Public Art met with Mr. Randall Walter from 310 Marlboro. There is a lot that he must do along there including the ramp that will go up from Marlboro Street to the Rail Trail. The art that will be done on that building should be viewable. At the back end of his property, he has a right-of-way to do a stairway from the back end of his property up to the rail trail that would be used by all those people but pedestrians walking down that way could use the stairway too. Dr. Russell shared that Mr. Walter is excited about all of that and said that there will be a lot of art, sculptures, and paintings. Friends of Public Art is collaborating with him on some of that.

C) Kiosk Map Updates

Mr. Schoefmann said that he should have a draft for Mr. Bohannon towards the end of the month.

D) Downtown Bike Racks

See above.

E) Old Stone Arch Bridge Safety Improvements

Mr. Schoefmann did not have anything new to report there.

F) BPPAC Website

Mr. Schoefmann shared that with the Silver Award from The League of American Bicyclists, they have some material to post on the website. He will try to get some material together to send to the communications director to see about getting it up. He has limited editing and adding privileges so he must push it up the line. Councilor Haas and Dr. Russell highlighted the need to rope communications in to increase accessibility to all the web resources.

Mr. Redfern shared that Todd Horner is going to be the Executive Director of the Southwest Regional Planning Commission, which is great because he has an affinity for bicycling and is a big advocate.

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

Mr. Jesse Rounds shared that the city realized that it needed to have a unified voice. DPW has a particular goal at the intersection in terms of accessibility and non-motorized access, which he thought BPPAC has supported in the past. Mr. Rounds stated that DPW will spearhead the letter. That is not to say that BPPAC does not have a role in this going forward. He does not know if NH DOT is going to pay for the bridge across 101, but they have at least encouraged them to keep going down that path of asking them.

8) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Jackson adjourned the meeting at 9:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Will Schoefmann, Community Development Staff