

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY MAY 5, 2020
REMOTE MEETING – MICROSOFT TEAMS (CALL-IN ONLY)
7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colin Smith (Chair); John Kelleher (Vice-Chair); Erling Heistad (City Council); Alan Schnur; Marie McCormick; Alex Belenz (Alt); Clifton Below (Alt)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Zook (Planning Board); Sarah Crysl Akhtar

STAFF PRESENT: Rebecca Owens (Associate Planner)

1) CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM. A Roll Call of Board Members who participated remotely is listed above. Alex Belenz and Clifton Below were appointed to serve as regular members.

Review of meeting procedures and NH RSA 91-A “Right-to-Know” requirements. Chair Smith reviewed the executive order requiring public audio and video access and options for participation.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 7, 2020

Mr. Heistad MOVED to approve the minutes.

Seconded by Mr. Schnur.

Roll Call Vote: Members voting in favor included Mr. Smith, Mr. Heisted, Mr. Kelleher, Ms. McCormick, Mr. Schnur, and Mr. Belenz

**The vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (7-0).*

3) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

4) STUDY ITEMS:

A. Updates from Other Boards

- Planning Office - Planning Staff

Ms. Owens stated that the Planning Board sub-committee for review of draft Development Regulation amendments continues to meet and make progress in its review. Development projects in the Mount Support Road area continue. Ms. Owens discussed that voluntary response from applicants to staff comments on ped-bike improvements has been inconsistent, as such comments do not have clear premise in the site plan regulations. As a positive example of how developers respond when the regulations are clear though, 343 Mount Support Road is using an allowance for parking reductions to propose less than the minimum parking calculation. A related takeaway is that such large projects in general do not have to have so much parking and that there can be developer benefits for constrained sites in particular to propose fewer. Ms. Owens also noted that a contractor has been selected for Spencer Street improvements, which may include Ped-Bike modifications.

[Type here]

- Safe Routes to School - Planning Staff/Police Staff
No Updates.

- City Council – Erling Heistad
Mr. Heistad reported that the City Manager is working with Departments to revise budgets, anticipating a loss in municipal revenues, including potentially from property taxes. He also noted that the Airport received a grant.

There was some discussion on “shovel-readiness” for projects as relates to funding readiness. Mr. Below emphasized that the City Manager has requested Departments to identify shovel-ready infrastructure projects in the event that federal stimulus funding is released.

Mr. Schnur asked about improvements to the area new Lebanon Middle School. Mr. Below responded that there had been an old project that was discontinued (Transportation Enhancements). Ms. Owens noted that there is a regular coordination meeting between SAU88 and the City and that there have been recent discussions on a different effort with some similar elements, like a Route 4 crossing. Mr. Belenz said that there were some meetings on the topic at the end of 2019 including on the potential to include a new bike lane on one side but he has not heard updates recently. Mr. Schnur said this could be an appropriate shovel-ready opportunity. There was discussion about making the road safer for pedestrians and students biking to be out of the roadway when school is in session, in particular.

- Police Reports - Alan Schnur
Mr. Schnur detailed that according to the City’s March report, there was one more crash involving ped-bike users but the report shows the same total as February’s so there is a discrepancy. Ms. Owens will continue to follow up with the Police Department about the discrepancy and potentially on the crash locations, and has heard that part of the problem may be the recent conversion to a new state reporting system. Mr. Schnur said it will be interesting to see if there is correlation between more accidents and the COVID-19 circumstances as relates to more people getting out on bikes and walking than usual.

- Mascoma River Greenway Coalition - Colin Smith
Mr. Belenz indicated that the Mascoma River Greenway survey will probably be launched in June and that he will share the draft survey with the Committee for member review and feedback.

- State of NH Updates - Alex Belenz
Mr. Belenz reported that the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) will have a completed draft of the pilot corridor study on Route 120 soon. He also noted that the Mascoma River Greenway has been added to the State’s Rail Trail Plan website. The State’s recent rail trail survey focused on economic impacts of trail use in the winter and it may have confused some survey-takers, but Mr. Belenz says that they are working to do more surveys and to better clarify the purpose of each one moving forward.

- Class VI Roads – Colin Smith
Chair Smith has been re-appointed to serve on an Advisory Committee, which was recently reinstated by City Council. They are looking for citizen members to join prior to starting meetings.

- Rails to Trails - VACANT
No update.

- Planning Board/CIP Meeting - VACANT
No Report.

B. Communications Plan Update

- Planning Staff

Ms. Owens will prepare a draft May is Still Bike Month LebNews for the working group to consider. National Bike Day has been moved to the Fall.

- Working Group members

Members will complete the Valley News Letter to the Editor and sign as the Working Group. There had been some coordination with Hanover but as the focus of the content diverged between the two communities and there is limited text space, this piece will only be signed by Lebanon.

5) OTHER BUSINESS:

- Educ./Encouragement - Bike Rodeo-to-Go continues to be planned in coordination with the Recreation and Parks Department. The number of play packs required has increased to 400 because the packs go out on school bus routes. Ms. Owens is not sure if there will be enough items for every pack and Ms. McCormick asked if it might be possible to give one pack per family instead of per child. The Co-op and Police Department have been assisting, among other partners. SAU88 is promoting the packs in their newsletter and helmet requests will be separate from the packs.
- Bike Friendly Community – Ms. Owens reported that working group tasks have not been assigned yet. Mr. Kelleher, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Heisted volunteered to serve in the working group. Ms. Owens will share the completed 2017 application and blank 2021 application. Equity and inclusiveness are a new sixth category to the “Five E’s” of a BFC and that addresses not just users with mobility challenges or underserved populations but, as Ms. McCormick suggested, also other user types such as mountain biking and women’s biking clubs, all of which Lebanon has and which can be recorded in the 2021 application.
- CIP 2020-2026 – Ms. Owens is working on a proposal for a Ped-Bike Plan and is collaborating with UVLSRPC on the scope. The plan will incorporate local data from State studies like the pending Rail Trail Plan, to address what those higher level plans may not be able to identify local actions for. The plan may be done in multiple phases. Mr. Belenz has looked at and worked on similar plans and emphasized that one feature that appeals to him is to have a dynamic plan, based on Ms. Owens’s mention of an ongoing community feedback/map comment platform, that has room for future needs, like more electric micro-mobility. Ms. Owens said that one need for the plan is to have an outline of where key connections are to be ready when adjacent developments happen, to have a reference for what to require of those developments to support system linkages. This type of outline helps to commit the linkages to at least being considered, enhances the shovel-readiness of such connections, and expedites review of them so that the City and partners are not starting from scratch with each potential segment. Mr. Smith asked about next steps. Ms. Owens responded that the Planning Board has a sub-committee that will score CIP proposals and that projects are planned in a six-year pipeline with each CIP process. Mr. Schnur asked if it is possible for the current emergency to affect funding for a consultant. Ms. Owens suggested that part of the determination may have to do with what is considered to be critical infrastructure for the City. Mr. Below observed that prior plan draft content for the whole City can be used as a foundation for a more staff- and volunteer-based plan, with UVLSRPC assistance, in order to reduce budgeting for the plan, and also referred to Dartmouth College engineering student work to study a Greenway extension. Mr. Smith agreed that it would be good to close the loop on those past efforts and to have an alternative approach to

achieving such a plan if CIP funding does not come through in this cycle. He also concurred that Thayer students have done a good job on the Greenway as well as Etna Road studies. Mr. Heisted recalled a map with routes desired for improvements and repairs to pavement for actual function as designed and asked if the Committee can help by looking at this map again, including for consideration of Class VI roads such as from Old Pine Tree Cemetery Road to the Boston Lot area. Ms. Owens agreed about the value of community-based efforts to gather data in advance of a consultant-led plan. She noted however that formal plan can help standardize assessment of need and impact, and provide conceptual designs based on broadly accepted standards, whereas a grassroots effort may have more challenges with buy-in. Ms. Owens commented that it is one thing to have a vision and map but another to have a third party identifying standards and formalizing a plan that gets adopted and referred to. Mr. Smith concluded that the Committee should continue to stay apprised of the likelihood of funding and to consider alternatives, if necessary.

- Mr. Kelleher commended the City for an effective street-sweeping effort this spring, in contrast to some prior past years.

6) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & FOLLOW-UP NEEDS:

- Create guidance for, and create a Ped-Bike working group to, review of Bike Friendly Community criteria for renewal of Lebanon's designation, due Spring 2021. Topic to be added as standing Study Item for agendas (Ms. Owens and Mr. Kelleher)
- Valley News letter on pedestrian safety and considerations, including as relates to COVID-19 prevention (Mr. Schnur and Ms. McCormick)
- Draft LebNews on May is (Still) Bike Month, including to recognize local bike shops and their role as essential service in transportation sector (Ms. Owens)
- Outreach to sponsors for Bike Rodeo-to-Go Play Pack items for June 2 distribution with SAU88 and the Recreation and Parks Department (Ms. Owens)
- Explore a central document repository for the Committee, similar to Hanover's, to review articles of interest, to have a central reference to key study items (e.g., Communications Plan, Bike Friendly Community report card), and other non-decision and non-discussion content. Ms. Owens will ensure that any such resource does not duplicate the City's pending efforts to make public documents available on Laserfiche, and the format may be similar to LEAC's shared webpage 'in the cloud' on the Internet. (Ms. Owens).

7) ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion by Clifton Below to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Erling Heisted.

Roll Call Vote: Members voting in favor included Mr. Smith, Mr. Heisted, Mr. Kelleher, Ms. McCormick, Mr. Schnur, Mr. Below, and Mr. Belensz

****The vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (7-0).***

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 PM.

Prepared By,
Rebecca Owens
Planning Staff