

FINAL

**PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY JULY 7, 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); Thomas Martz (Planning Board)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sarah Crysl Akhtar

STAFF PRESENT: Rebecca Owens (Associate Planner)

1) CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

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

A Roll Call of Board Members who participated remotely is listed above. Clifton Below and Alex Belenz were appointed to serve as regular members representing in place of Ms. Akhtar and the Northern Rail Trail representative, respectively. Mr. Martz introduced himself as the new Planning Board representative to the Committee.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 2, 2020

Amendments: Several amendments to Police Reports, on page 3, were provided by Mr. Schnur, as relates to the dates, statistics and specification of pedestrians versus pedestrians-bicyclists in sum. For future minutes drafts that involve a summary of such information, Staff agreed that Mr. Schnur will be asked to provide preliminary review of draft minutes prior to the posting date.

***Mr. Heistad MOVED to approve the minutes as amended.
Seconded by Mr. Belenz.***

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

****The vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (8-0).***

3) OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

4) STUDY ITEMS:

A. Updates from Other Boards

- Planning Office - Planning Staff

Ms. Owens gave an update on 343 Mount Support Road, the Marek, an active development application under review by the Planning Board. The project has several elements that the

Committee had commented on and which have been addressed in the most recently filed plans. She showed the Committee presentation slides from the applicant's June 8th presentation to the Planning Board, to point out locations and similar details for road crossings, transit stops, outdoor and indoor bike storage, recreational facilities and trail access, highlighting that the Committee's feedback was directly resulting in amendments to the proposed design and that the updates relate to requirements proposed for modification in the City's Site Plan Regulations. In particular, the applicant indicates that there will be one bike storage space or comparable storage, such as flexible storage units for at least 50% of the units, with the potential for future updates to add more as demand necessitates. Ms. Owens stated that the Planning Board Development Regulation Sub-committee has expressed uncertainty about the palatability of such requirements, and that this project demonstrates the feasibility of implementing them.

Mr. Kelleher asked if by having more formal access from the Marek to the trails, there could be an undesirable increase in foot traffic. Mr. Belensz responded that given the nature of the trails, it is not likely that many users will seek cut-throughs or increase activity in an impactful way. Mr. Below supported the idea of having increased trail access and utilization of recreational opportunities in the woods. He also noted that there is a similar concept of flexible storage space, whether or not designed to be, at the Emerson Apartments, where spare/unused covered parking spaces are often used for bike parking.

Ms. Owens reported that Planning and Recreation staff continue to coordinate with The Richmond Companies, which owns Miracle Mile Realty, to improve transit access and now, potentially, improved trail access from the plaza. She has asked Public Works, at the request of Miracle Mile Realty, to provide a preliminary concept for a more formal pedestrian-bike access from the Mascoma River Greenway to the plaza. Since there is an existing informal gravel access located on the plaza property, the first goal is for the City to establish official public access that in turn reduces the property owner's liability, as such recreational uses provide such coverage per the NHRSA statutes. A local lawyer prepared a draft agreement that all parties will review. If approved, the access can be published on maps etc. and the agreement would give the City the option to improve the access. The second goal is to improve the spur's accessibility since the grading is a very steep slope. Public Works staff has indicated that such improvements would require a considerable engineering effort, including drainage and survey work as well as curbing, rail, and surfacing modifications, and a next step might entail an inquiry for funding to accomplish that design and construction costs. Chair Smith responded that he is interested in having the Committee review any concepts for this access.

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

- City Council – Erling Heistad
Mr. Heistad reported that the Class VI Roads Committee has one member left to recruit and that the City Council recently approved discontinuance of Foch Avenue and Fellows Hill Road. He shared that Lebanon Police Chief Mello spoke to City Council about policing policies and that the presentation was notable.

- Planning Board/CIP - Thomas Martz
Mr. Martz recalled that there have been six meetings of the Planning Board Development Regulation Sub-committee and that most of the meetings have focused on ped-bike related amendments. Other subcommittee work of the Planning Board that is scheduled for this summer includes CIP budget proposal review.

- Police Reports - Alan Schnur

Mr. Schnur reported that for May the monthly City Manager's report showed zero ped-bike crashes which is different from the general trend for May to have the greatest number of incidents. He shared that ped-bike fatalities are higher than usual on the whole in NH, however. Ms. Owens added that she is still working to obtain EMS data from Fire Department staff.

- Mascoma River Greenway Coalition - Colin Smith

Chair Smith reiterated interest in having Committee involvement with the Miracle Mile access to the Greenway. Mr. Belenz said that the Greenway survey would be closed the weekend of July 10th, to give time for a VNews letter to the editor to be noticed, and had over 840 responses. The Committee voiced regard for the high response rate as demonstration of strong community support for the Greenway.

- State of NH Updates - Alex Belenz

Mr. Belenz reported that the State Ped-Bike Plan project, which had been stalled in part due to an NHDOT staffperson's retirement, was slated to re-start and the consultant, Alta Planning, just received a contract extension.

- Class VI Roads – Colin Smith

No updates.

- Rails to Trails - VACANT

No updates.

A. Presentation on FHWA Bikeway Planning Guidance

Mr. Belenz provided a presentation to the Committee of the key content from a short course that he took from the Federal Highway Administration about best practices in bicycle facility planning and design. He included several examples of locations in Lebanon, such as Hanover Street, that would benefit from implementing the strategies identified in the course. Ms. Owens noted that CIP proposals under consideration include Hanover Street, and that the Committee may wish to revisit the FHWA strategies if the project advances. Mr. Belenz also identified some sample costs for various strategies, like the cost per linear foot of a multiuse path and the cost of Keene, NH's, recent bike lane installation. He said that the forthcoming transportation corridor plans from the Regional Planning Commission can present opportunities that apply the FHWA guidance and that there are tactical or shorter term projects that can be effective as well. One example was the issue of sewer grates as an obstacle to bicyclists in roadway shoulder design and that a review of roadway design standards in Lebanon could help address the issue.

Mr. Schnur asked if the strategies and FHWA assessment tools consider the growing trend of electric bikes as relates to increasing cyclist comfort on steeper slopes and to roadway user profiles in general. Mr. Belenz remarked that he has been enjoying use of an e-bike for efficient travel. Mr. Schnur also suggested that future presentations or application of the FHWA guidance in Lebanon provide detail comparing the outcomes and costs of a multiuse path project to a roadway project. Chair Smith observed that it was interesting to see how FHWA frames and understands design based on user groups or types. The Committee discussed that it would be worth highlighting this presentation on its webpage and in the 2021 Bike Friendly Community re-application.

B. Communications Plan Update

Ms. McCormick reminded members that the Communications Plan engagement for July had been planned for the Farmer's Market but that the Committee was going to look at potential Ped-Bike webpage updates on the City webpages instead. Ms. McCormick, Mr. Schnur and Mr. Belenz volunteered to help compile and vet feedback about the website and Ms. McCormick

asked members to send ideas directly to her. There was some additional discussion about potential changes, such as a recommendation to add a link to the City's FAQ about "Where can I find biking and walking information".

5) OTHER BUSINESS:

- Educ./Encouragement – Refer to the Communications Plan Update.
- Bike Friendly Community – Ms. Owens reported that the original application to work from needs to be located.
- CIP 2020-2026 – No updates.
- Other
 - Mr. Kelleher asked if there is a need and role for the Committee to promote increased wintertime bike riding. E-bikes were mentioned as a potential new facet for cold weather riding and the Committee discussed that a potential November communications piece could be on tips for riding in such conditions. Mr. Heisted said it would be worth caution to such cyclists about interactions with other users, like skiers. Mr. Schnur surmised that one aspect of encouragement to such riding would be to state that riding solo can be safer than other forms of transportation during times of pandemic. Chair Smith confirmed that half of the Greenway is plowed and the other half is groomed during winter snow conditions. There was discussion about providing a positive affirmation or statement directed to Public Works and City Administration of current City walkway clearing practices and to underscore the need to maintain or increase attention to such facilities in the coming year as the need to provide safe distancing options for those on foot or using transit likely continues.

6) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & FOLLOW-UP NEEDS:

- Compare bike storage provisions in Planning Board applications to draft regulations
- Review of Bike Friendly Community criteria for renewal of Lebanon's designation, due Spring 2021 (working group)
- Compare EMS data to police crash report data (Mr. Schnur)
- Review the Committee's webpages for updates (working group)
- Thanks to sponsors for Bike Rodeo-to-Go and helmets (Ms. McCormick, Chair Smith)
- Explore a central document repository for the Committee (Ms. Owens)
- Review Mascoma River Greenway survey findings (all)

7) ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion by Erling Heisted to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Marie McCormick.

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

****The vote on the MOTION was unanimously approved (8-0).***

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 PM.

Prepared by Rebecca Owens, Planning Staff