

FINAL

**PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY AUGUST 4, 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; Clifton Below (Alt); Thomas Martz (Planning Board)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sarah Crysl Akhtar; Alex Belenz (Alt)

STAFF PRESENT: Rebecca Owens (Associate Planner)

1) CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:04 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 was appointed to serve as a regular member representing Ms. Akhtar.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: July 7, 2020

Minutes approved without amendment.

***Mr. Heistad MOVED to approve the minutes as presented.
Seconded by Mr. Kelleher.***

Roll Call Vote: Members voting in favor included Chair Smith, Mr. Heisted, Mr. Below, Ms. McCormick, Mr. Kelleher, Mr. Schnur, and Mr. Martz. None voted nay.

****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 shared that the City has a contract with VHB to develop a streetscape plan for West Lebanon which would include roadway updates. Chair Smith asked what the timeline is for the plan, and staff indicated that the question will be passed on. Ms. Owens identified a new project at 258 Heater Road for 44 housing units proposed by Lebanon Housing Authority. It will include transit stop, sidewalk and accessibility and some bike storage improvements. She mentioned that the 343 Mount Support Road, or Marek, development application has been continued to August for review by the Planning Board.

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

- City Council – Erling Heistad

Mr. Heistad reported that the Class VI Roads Committee will have its first meeting this week. Mr. Smith is the chair by default of past involvement however Steven Wood has expressed interest in assuming the role. Chair Smith noted that he expects the first agenda to focus on roads to the east of Route 120.

- Planning Board/CIP - Thomas Martz

Mr. Martz indicated that CIP subcommittee work of the Planning Board has been scheduled for CIP budget proposal review.

- Police Reports - Alan Schnur

Mr. Schnur reported that the June monthly City Manager's report showed one ped-bike crash and that VNews reported there was bike-vehicle, hit-and-run, crash in July, at the Bank St. Extension and Pumping Station Road rail trail crossing. Ms. Owens added that as interim safety measures in advance of receipt of police report findings from the July crash, she met with the new Assistant Public Works Director, Everett Hammond, and they are looking at crosswalk striping enhancements, vegetation management for visibility, and lit signage; a pedestrian crossing bollard was also placed in the crosswalk. Mr. Schnur said that he is working to analyze EMS data from Fire Department staff.

- Mascoma River Greenway Coalition - Colin Smith

Chair Smith said that kiosks have been installed on the Greenway however they have been subject to vandalism and he asked members to help report when they see such issues. He also relayed that Mr. Belenz is working on evaluation of the Greenway survey results.

- State of NH Updates - Alex Belenz

No updates.

- Class VI Roads – Colin Smith

Reported until Council updates.

- Rails to Trails - VACANT

Chair Smith informed members that City staff has been collaborating to address strategies to fill the void of the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail group, as its membership has dissipated. Ms. Owens said that she met with Rick [Desharnais] of the Recreation and Parks Department and that there is one bridge in particular in the Lebanon NRT section that is failing and which would cost approximately \$9,000 to re-deck. A deadline to apply for state Trails Bureau grant assistance passed this year but the City may contact the state to inquire about other opportunities and is aware that recruiting the Twin State Trailbusters snowmobile club's support for workdays and grant support has been and should continue to be an important aspect of NRT maintenance. Chair Smith noted that the City has a maintenance agreement with the state and that traditionally Lebanon Public Works has done mowing and ditching. Ms. Owens said that she will obtain the agreement and help reach out to the Trailbusters, which Mr. Below recommended. Mr. Schnur asked if the Friends of Lebanon Recreation could take on responsibility for handling NRT donations. Ms. Owens responded that that is a potential next step as communicated by Lebanon Recreation and further, to address Mr. Kelleher's suggestion to communicate NRT volunteer needs with local trail running, running, mountain bike and similar groups, that doing so would make sense after a familiar and well-positioned entity like the Friends of Lebanon Recreation is established as the face of the initiative. Ms. Owens shared that Ken Warren, one of the last Friends of the NRT members, also recommends a long-term strategy for how to handle parking at NRT access points, given the increased use of popular

connections; she said that perhaps a better online map could help show people the variety of parking options.

A. Update on Lebanon Middle School path and crossing project

Ms. Owens showed an aerial photograph view of the area over the Public Works building parking lot on Dartmouth College Highway and the existing Ruth Shepherd Trail, with connects to the Northern Rail Trail. The document provided limited detail including the proposed route for a 6-foot wide dirt path that the City would clear vegetation for to create a route to the DPW parking lot. From the lot, the route would turn into a dedicated shoulder space for pedestrians and cyclists to traverse on the DPW driveway to the main road. At that point, the route would turn into a new/proposed signalized crossing to Moulton Avenue. The route would then turn into a new sidewalk on the east side of Moulton, adjacent to LMS. She elaborated that the path will not involve use of heavy equipment and part of the switchback design is to limit the grade change to less than 5 percent on average, for greater accessibility, as well as to avoid wetland impacts and permitting.

Committee members voiced questions about visibility, signage and lighting in the wooded portion of the route, and whether cyclists should be asked to walk the route. Chair Smith responded that it may not be realistic to limit cycling on the path and that while lighting was considered for the prior Safe Routes to School design, the school operating hours would primarily coincide with daylight hours. Mr. Below implied that solar powered LED lighting could be coming to the City soon and might be apt for the project area. Chair Smith asked staff to keep the Committee apprised of potential Council action dates and site walks for the project, if the sidewalk plan is available, and whether it addresses an outstanding condition of occupancy approval for LMS to have an accessible sidewalk route to the building entrance.

Mr. Kelleher left the meeting at approximately 8:00pm due to loss of connectivity.

Ms. Owens said she will follow up on questions and that the main short-term project needs include approval from NHDOT for the crossing and a reaction to be shared with City Council as to whether the Committee supports the project. The purpose of a formal motion would be to help inform the Council when it is asked to authorize project funding, later this year.

Ms. McCormick suggested that the LMS path project could be an opportunity for communications about safety. Mr. Below speculated if LMS has seen issues with the paved switchback path that ascends from LMS to its playing fields and noted that that path and the proposed new path are both in areas with at least some supervision via the buildings adjacent to them.

Mr. Martz MOVED that the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Advisory Committee recommends City Council authorization of funding for the Lebanon Middle School path project including installation and maintenance of: a new path from the Northern Rail Trail to the Public Works property; a new signalized crosswalk over Route 4 with safety measures such as but not necessarily including a pedestrian refuge; and new sidewalk on Moulton Avenue from the crosswalk to the existing sidewalk; as well as address of an accessible pedestrian facility from Moulton Avenue to a primary entrance for the school. Seconded by Mr. Schnur.

Roll Call Vote: Members voting in favor included Ms. McCormick, Mr. Martz, Mr. Below, Mr. Heisted, Mr. Schnur, and Chair Smith. None voted nay.

***The MOTION was unanimously approved (6-0), with a post-vote indication of favor for the motion provided by Mr. Kelleher.**

Mr. Martz inquired if this project should be brought into the CIP budget review. Mr. Below clarified that this project would not be CIP because the recent Hillcrest Acres drainage improvement project cost was lower than had been budgeted for, resulting in residual existing budgeted funds that could be applied to the path project. Mr. Smith added that the original Safe Routes to School project proposal had widespread support from the adjacent neighborhood. Mr. Heisted praised school and City leadership for prioritizing this project.

B. Route 10 resurfacing

Ms. Owens stated that the City received a project notice from the NH Department of Transportation about a roadway resurfacing project for Route 10, which the City had been aware of, but the notice invited feedback. The project is 2.9 miles between Maple Street (Lebanon) and Mink Brook (Hanover). She has coordinated with the Town of Hanover and regional planning commission, which is doing a corridor plan for Route 10, to ensure that feedback to NHDOT would be aligned. She proposed that staff drafts a response to NHDOT for Committee review and that it would 'aim high' in requests to improved space allocation for non-vehicular use in the shoulder. Such improvements could include a travel lane diet from the standard 12-foot width, for more paved and packed gravel space to the right of the white fog line, extending the packed gravel space and/or doing so as well as paving it, ensuring guardrail replacements do not constrain shoulder space, obtaining width from impaired culvert replacements, and similar measures. She said that according to one NHDOT contact, Recreation falls under the Social and Economic mitigation impacts that a municipality can highlight and that even if certain improvements fall outside the acceptable funding scope for resurfacing, bringing them to the state's attention in the response could help trigger other funding like rehabilitation programs.

Mr. Below provided numerous references that could be attached to the response, including an official regional bike map on which Route 10 is a route, a circa 2012 Route 10 report that included measurements of roadway widths, address of the turn lane across from Sagem Village, and identification of culvert opportunities, a prior Transportation Enhancements program application for Route 10, and the 1993 Lebanon Master Plan's goal to widen shoulders on Route 10 and establish an agreement with Hanover. He believes 80 percent of the road can have such improvements for about 20 percent of the cost of a project that would include culvert repairs as well, such that a small increase in the resurfacing project's budget could have considerable positive impact. Ms. Owens said that the 2012 Master Plan has similar references. There was discussion of NHDOT's recent Route 4 resurfacing project and how it used existing dirt along the road shoulder and paved it, as the dirt was already pretty compacted, and doing similarly on Route 10 should result in minimal additional cost. Mr. Heisted agreed that Route 10 is suitable as a bike route, particularly due to a comfortable gradient on average.

C. Communications Plan Update

Ms. McCormick reported that she is working with Mr. Belenz and Mr. Schnur on suggested Ped-Bike webpage updates for the City website. Mr. Schnur reiterated that he thinks a link from the City FAQ to ped-bike information could be useful but asked if staff can obtain top webpage 'hits' for the City and ped-bike pages to help direct improvements. Ms. McCormick indicated uncertainty about how to adjust prior objectives to create back-to-school communications. Chair Smith commented that with more parents driving their students to school due to limited bus capacity, overall traffic may increase.

Mr. Kelleher re-joined the meeting at approximately 8:20pm.

5) OTHER BUSINESS:

- Educ./Encouragement – Refer to the Communications Plan Update.
- Bike Friendly Community – Ms. Owens reported that the original application from 2017 has been obtained and while the 2021 application questions are not available yet, and are being updated to consider COVID, the working group and staff can collaborate using a shared 2020 application outline.
- CIP 2020-2026 – Ms. Owens provided an update that due to City budget limitations at this time, several CIP project proposals have not been moved to the next review round, including Hanover Street Reconstruction, Park Street Reconstruction and Miracle Mile sidewalks, though for the latter, previously approved funds for the transit stop relocation and pedestrian facilities will be carried over. Proposals with ped-bike elements that are still under consideration include Spencer Street Reconstruction, Slayton Hill Roundabout, and the Complete Streets Implementation/Multimodal Plan.
- Other
 - Ms. Owens said she will email members with an offer from an e-bike tour vendor to rent e-bikes for a ride on the Northern Rail Trail.
 - Ms. Owens summarized a quick-turnaround request from Public Works for Planning/Ped-Bike feedback about City roadway manual striping for shared lane (sharrow) and bike lane or shoulder markings. She coordinated with Chair Smith and Public Works to help identify the appropriate markings for each road and recommended that such coordination occur earlier in the year each year now that there is a map showing which roads have which markings. New designs in streetscape projects and wear and tear mean that adjustments can and should be made on a regular basis.
 - Ms. Owens recommended a future agenda item to discuss Lebanon's winter road and sidewalk maintenance, including adjustments necessary for COVID-related accommodations. She showed the Committee a webpage on the Public Works website with the City's related policy statement and contact form. Chair Smith observed that the webpage does not have information on which routes are priorities for snow removal.

6) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & FOLLOW-UP NEEDS:

- Review of Route 10 draft letter to NHDOT (Ms. Owens)
- Share information for e-bike ride on NRT (Ms. Owens)
- Winter road and sidewalk maintenance (all)
- 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)
- Explore a central document repository for the Committee (Ms. Owens)
- Review Mascoma River Greenway survey findings (all)

7) ADJOURNMENT:

A Motion by Mr. Kelleher to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by Marie McCormick.

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Prepared by Rebecca Owens, Planning Staff