



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes – APPROVED (1/12/2021)
December 8, 2020

1 **1. Meeting Venue**

2 Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Rick Katzenberg – Vice Chair, Judy Shenk,
3 Chris Shenk, John Harvey (Alternate), Tom Christensen, George Bower, Carolyn
4 Mitchell (Alternate), and Simon Sarris (Alternate).

5
6 Staff present: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, Kristan Patenaude – Minute taker.

7
8 Chairman Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 6:04pm, with the following
9 statement. As Chair of the Amherst Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, I find
10 that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19
11 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to
12 Executive Order 2020-04, as extended by various Executive Orders, this public body is
13 authorized to meet electronically.

14 Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to
15 this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order.
16 However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:
17 Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities
18 by video or other electronic means:

19 We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

20
21 All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this
22 meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and,
23 if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #929-205-
24 6099 and password 870 0800 8244, or by clicking on the following website address:
25 https://zoom.us/j/87008008244 that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

26
27 Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

28 We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the
29 meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions
30 have also been provided on the website of the Planning Board at: www.amherstnh.gov.

31
32 Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there
33 are problems with access: If anybody has a problem, please call 603-341-5290.

34
35 Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

36 In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and
37 rescheduled.

December 8, 2020

APPROVED

38 Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.
39 Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their
40 presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this
41 meeting, which is required under the Right-to- Know law.
42

43 **Chris Buchanan – alone; Chris Shenk – in the room with Judy Shenk; Judy Shenk –**
44 **in the room with Chris Shenk; Carolyn Mitchell - alone; Tom Christensen – alone;**
45 **John Harvey – aye; Simon Sarris – alone; George Bower – alone; and Rick**
46 **Katzenberg – alone; all present.**
47

48 2. Proposed 2021 Warrant Article

49 Chris Buchanan explained that the initial proposal for this Warrant Article was made to the
50 Board of Selectmen on October 26, 2020. The Ways & Means Committee heard the
51 presentation for this Warrant Article on November 23, 2020. The Board and Committee will
52 vote soon to support/not support all of the proposed Warrant Articles. The group should now
53 begin to try to communicate the complicated concept of this Warrant Article to voters. He
54 explained that this will be a challenge. The Warrant Article contains language about
55 establishing a Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) and it needs to be communicated that the purpose
56 of this CRF is to establish a side path along the road near Souhegan High School. The
57 practical application for these funds is to either fund 1/3 of this project or use to funds towards
58 20% of a potential matching grant.
59

60 In response to a question from Simon Sarris, Chris Buchanan stated that the Ways & Means
61 members who were present last year understood the Warrant Article idea, but the new
62 members were confused regarding how the Warrant Article worked in conjunction with a
63 potential grant. Some of the members wanted more information about the grant and the
64 associated possible minimum project cost. Unfortunately, this information is not currently
65 available. Some of the members also seemed confused about the side path project itself,
66 although they agreed they would prefer not to have kids walking along that road.
67

68 The Committee discussed the wording of the Warrant Article and the included wording about
69 seeking to fund the CRF with an amount each year for the next three years. Simon Sarris
70 stated that he preferred to communicate to voters that the Committee will continue to go after
71 grants and solicit donations before asking voters for more money.
72

73 George Bower explained that the concept of a CRF is that the impact of a project is spread out
74 over a number of years. This is the same process that the Town currently uses to fund fire
75 trucks. Voters need to understand the target project and the estimated cost of the project that
76 they are being asked to fund.
77

78 Rick Katzenberg stated that this is a very popular project that most know about. He stated that
79 the Committee should be precise in communicating its strategy and the time it will take to
80 complete it.
81

December 8, 2020

APPROVED

82 Simon Sarris expressed concern that the group's other side path project has not yet been
83 completed and, thus, there is no example to point to. He suggested that, for year two, the
84 Committee could communicate that it will be asking local businesses for donations to help
85 with the project, before asking for additional CRF amounts.

86

87 In response to a question from Tom Christensen, Chris Buchanan stated that the Warrant
88 Article is written that the funds will be spent on multimodal infrastructure in Town and that
89 the Board of Selectmen will be the agents of the fund.

90

91 Chris Buchanan suggested that the group gather a list of possible questions and well-defined
92 answers for them. The group needs to communicate that the CRF will be a place to hold funds
93 for multimodal infrastructure. The included CRF language allows the funds to be expended
94 for other projects, but the intention will be to use the funds for this specific project.

95

96 Judy Shenk suggested that the group should emphasize why this project is the first project on
97 the group's list. She also suggested that the group work to publish the schedule for the
98 Amherst Street side path construction, in order to add transparency to the process.

99

100 Rick Katzenberg suggested that the group communicate to all interested stakeholders,
101 including the soccer club, graduates of SHS, parents, etc.

102

103 Chris Buchanan explained that he has scheduled time for two public work sessions, for
104 Committee members to discuss possible communications items related to the Warrant Article:
105 December 10, and December 22, at 7pm.

106

107 **3. Public Trails on Private Land**

108 Chris Buchanan stated that the Amherst Conservation Commission recently completed a new
109 trail that connects the B&M Rail Trail to the Pond Parish area.

110

111 **4. Souhegan Valley Rail Trail**

112 Chris Buchanan explained that CSX has announced its intentions to purchase all of Pan Am
113 Railway's real estate holdings. The US Surface Transportation Board is the federal board that
114 has regulatory authority over this transaction. There will be a time for public comment on this
115 transaction. He suggested that someone from the Committee should submit a letter in support
116 of a rail trail within the right of way and the associated project. The Board of Selectmen could
117 then be asked for their support of the letter.

118

119 Chris Buchanan explained that someone has suggested that the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail
120 change its name to one that evokes imagery of a rail with trail concept. This suggestion has
121 been pushed back on, as there has already been some amount of marketing done for projects
122 under the existing name.

123

124 *Rick Katzenberg exited the meeting.*

125

December 8, 2020

APPROVED

126 **5. Project Status**

127 **a. Amherst Street Sidepath**

128 Chris Buchanan explained that the DPW has communicated that the survey work is complete
129 along Amherst Street. Nearly all of Amherst Street has a 66-foot-wide right of way. The road
130 itself is generally situated in the middle of the right of way and is approximately 35 feet wide.
131 This allows for generous space for the side path project to work within. There are some areas
132 that are narrower than this, but no area is too narrow to accommodate the plan as presented.

133

134 **b. Boston Post Road Sidepath (Proposal)**

135 This project was already discussed earlier in the meeting.

136

137 **c. Eversource Transmission Lines & Public Access to Buck Meadow,
138 Parkhurst Place, SHS, AMS, Bean Fields, Horse Hill Nature Preserve
139 (Merrimack)**

140 There is no update at this time.

141

142 **d. Old Manchester Road**

143 Chris Buchanan explained that the Board of Selectmen heard a presentation on this project
144 from DPW Director, Eric Hahn. There was a generally positive reception to the idea. The
145 Board asked Eric Hahn to schedule a public meeting for information on the project. This
146 hasn't yet happened.

147

148 **e. Amherst Village Multimodality Project**

149 There is no update at this time.

150

151 **6. Other Updates**

152 Chris Buchanan stated that he was contacted by a civil engineer who is interested in
153 volunteering for this Committee. However, this person is unable to meet at the general 6pm
154 meeting time. He asked the Committee members if they would consider moving the meeting
155 time to 7pm. The Committee members present were in general agreement. Chris Buchanan
156 explained that he would reach out to any members not currently present.

157

158 **7. Approval of Minutes**

159 **John Harvey moved to approve the meeting minutes of November, as amended [add
160 Carolyn Mitchell's name to the attendees.] Chris Shenk seconded.**

161 **All in favor.**

162

163 **The meeting was adjourned at 6:59pm.**

164

165 *Respectfully submitted,*

166

167 *Kristan Patenaude*

168 Minutes approved: January 12, 2021