



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
January 12, 2021

1. Meeting Venue

Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Rick Katzenberg – Vice Chair, Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk, John Harvey (Alternate), Tom Christensen [7:19pm], George Bower, and Patrick Daniel.

Also present: Peter Lyon, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and Sam Fortier.

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

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

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are: Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone #929-205-6099 and password 886 2806 4434, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/88628064434> that was included in the public notice of this meeting.

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

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

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

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

January 12, 2020

DRAFT

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

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

Chris Buchanan – alone; Chris Shenk – in the room with Judy Shenk; Judy Shenk – in the room with Chris Shenk; John Harvey – aye; Patrick Daniel – alone; George Bower – alone; and Rick Katzenberg – alone; all present.

Chris Buchanan introduced Sam Fortier to the group. Sam Fortier explained that he runs and bikes in Town. He is a civil engineer who designs trails and sidewalks and is interested in helping on the Committee.

2. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant Announced

Chris Buchanan explained that the BPAC's Warrant Article is designed to fund 1/3 of the proposed school sidepath project but can also be used to help the Town securing matching grant funds. The deadline for the letter of interest for the TAP Grant is February 5, 2021. The minimum limit for the TAP Grant this year is \$400,000. Chris Buchanan stated that the BPAC will need to look at raising the scope of the proposed project in order to meet this minimum limit. The maximum limit for the TAP Grant this year is \$1.25M. The grant requires at least a 20% match by the applicant.

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan stated that he has reached out to the DPW Director with details on the grant.

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Chris Buchanan stated that he spoke with NRPC about the grant and that the likelihood of receiving the TAP Grant without matching funds is poor. The letter of interest is due in early February but the BPAC won't know if matching funds are approved by voters until March. NRPC explained that the letter of interest should demonstrate that the Board of Selectmen/Town is interested in the project and willing to commit funds, if the Warrant Article passes. The fact that the BPAC had a successful Warrant Article that passed last year will work in its favor towards the grant. The grant may not be awarded until as late as June

In response to a question from Peter Lyon, Chris Buchanan explained that applying for the grant is a three-step process: 1) letter of interest with a map of the proposed project area, 2) a member of Town staff must attend a mandatory pre-application meeting hosted by DOT, 3) application submission.

Tom Christensen joined the meeting at 7:19pm.

January 12, 2020

DRAFT

Chris Buchanan explained that the application must be for one project, but that this project can have separate components in different places. The project should contain one vision but can have multiple components to it.

The Committee discussed that the wording of the letter of interest could include safe routes to schools, in an effort to combine a similar sidepath project near the Clark/Wilkins schools.

George Bower noted that the Multimodal Master Plan could be the project itself. It has a number of pieces to it but is a singular vision. The Multimodal Master Plan is well-defined and has already been adopted by the Board of Selectmen and Town. Elements of it have already been funded and will be under construction by the time this grant is being awarded. There was also an engineering study completed in 2006 which looked at the multimodal connections between the Village and the schools. All of these plans come together to form a complete system. The system looks to create a connection between two primary centers in Town: the Village and the schools. This system could also be expanded to the Buck Meadow Conservation & Recreation area to connect another activity center in Town. He believes it is rare to see this much planning completed, and that it allows the BPAC many arguments to present for the grant.

Tom Christensen suggested that the words from the Multimodal Master Plan document could be transferred directly into the letter of interest.

Peter Lyon stated that the Board of Selectmen will need to give its approval if this letter of intent seeks to increase the scope of the project, and thus, the Warrant Article, by an amount that greatly exceeds the previously noted \$75,000 match.

George Bower explained that, even if the grant is awarded to the Town, the Board of Selectmen will still need to vote to accept it. The value of this sort of grant is that it will significantly reduce the cost and burden to the taxpayer for this sort of project. He believes the grant application could look at \$600,000-700,000 worth of projects in Town, at a significant value to the Town.

Peter Lyon stated that he does not disagree, but an application for that much money would require much more than the previously agreed upon \$75,000 match as part of the proposed Warrant Article. This extra money would either need to come out of the DPW's existing budget or be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Chris Buchanan stated that the BPAC proposed three main priority projects to the Board of Selectmen about a year ago: 1) the Amherst Street sidepath, 2) the school campus sidepath project, 3) the Village Special Roadway project (incorporating the previously scheduled Davis Lane, Carriage Lane, and Main Street road reconstructions). There is an opportunity to include this third option in the grant proposal as the Town is already proposing reconstruction on these roads. This could help to offset the cost of this project and the burden to taxpayers dramatically.

January 12, 2020

DRAFT

George Bower stated that there are two other small projects that could be included in the scope of this grant application: 1) the restriping of Amherst Street towards Birch Park (~\$10,000-12,000), 2) connecting the Amherst Street sidepath to Joshua's Park. Both of these amounts, while small, would help push the application toward the \$400,000 minimum.

Chris Buchanan noted that the Amherst Street restriping is still being discussed with DPW and DOT.

The Committee discussed that the proposed Village Special Roadway project would easily cost the extra amount needed to hit the minimum \$400,000 limit. Chris Buchanan noted that the time limit to spend the grant funds, if awarded, is two years.

Tom Christensen left the meeting.

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Chris Buchanan explained that the BPAC must submit a plan, vision, map, schedule, and dollar amounts of the project as part of the letter of interest. Chris Buchanan explained that incorporating a project that is part of already scheduled road reconstruction could save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Committee discussed trying to meet with DPW regarding potential projects to add to the scope of the grant application, and then possibly trying to meet with the Board of Selectmen as well.

3. 2021 Warrant Article

Chris Buchanan explained that the Warrant Article was presented at the public hearing on Monday night. The Ways & Means Committee and Board of Selectmen both fully support the Warrant Article. The Deliberative Session will be held on February 3, 2021. The Committee discussed creating marketing materials to educate people prior to the Deliberative Session.

4. Other Initiatives

a. Souhegan Valley Rail Trail

Chris Buchanan noted that the group had its first meeting on January 5, 2021. CSX has announced its intention to purchase all of Pan-Am's real estate holdings. NRPC reached out to CSX to gauge its interest in having a rail trail created and the reaction was neutral/positive.

b. Amherst Street Sidepath

There is no update at this time.

c. Eversource Trail

There is no update at this time.

d. Old Manchester Road

Chris Buchanan explained that no action will be taken on this until just before spring.

January 12, 2020

DRAFT

5. NHDOT Statewide Ped-Bike Plan

Chris Buchanan stated that the NH DOT is working on a statewide Pedestrian Bicycle Plan. There are several Amherst projects there are being included in the statewide vision of this plan, including: B&M Trail, 122 sidepath/SB707 (from Birch Park to the Hollis-Brookline High School), Amherst Street sidepath, Route 101 (from Baboosic Lake to the Bedford Fire Department), and the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail.

6. Other Updates

John Harvey made a presentation regarding discretionary easements. He explained that this type of easement could be used as another tool in BPAC's toolbox. Discretionary easements are part of the State's RSA 79-C. He is working with Town Administrator Shankle to get this type of easement approved for use in Town. This would allow private landowners to allow public access on their land for 10+ years, as long as public benefit can be proven. These easements can be on land of any size, that has the potential for being developed, and has no current structures on it. The Board of Selectmen will decide how to tax these easements, if approved. This tax can range between the current use amount and up to 75% of it. Owners can claim hardship in the future as a way to remove the easement. The Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC) would use this type of easement to pursue parcels that are in the highest value habitat areas.

John Harvey proposed paving the canoe port, located on Boston Post Road, as an additional connector with the proposed school sidepath.

George Bower explained that the proposed paving material, recycled asphalt pavement (RAP), should never be used in a watershed area, or in an area where traffic could transmit it because of its high toxicity. There is a high concentration of carcinogenics in RAP and it is considered among the most toxic compounds found.

7. Approval of Minutes - December

Chris Buchanan noted that he had said during the December meeting that donations can be made directly into Capital Reserve Funds. This is untrue. Donations can be made directly into the main account and designated for a specific purpose. George Bower explained that the best way to handle donations would be to create a Revolving Fund, so that any donations are not swept back into the General Fund at the end of the year.

**Patrick Daniel moved to approve the meeting minutes of December. Rick Katzenberg seconded.
All in favor.**

The meeting was adjourned

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*