



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian  
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED  
May 10, 2022

1 Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Wendy Rannenberg, Chris Shenk, Judy Shenk,  
2 George Bower [7:06pm.], and Tom Christensen (remote)  
3 Staff present: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote)  
4

5 Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 7:03pm. He noted that there was participation  
6 from Committee members both in-person at Town Hall and remotely via Zoom.  
7

8 Chris Buchanan noted that the Committee needs to discuss its organization and nomination of  
9 officers this evening as well and will do so prior to approval of the meeting minutes.  
10

11 **1. FY2023 Congressional Directed Spending Application –**  
12

13 Chris Buchanan explained that a federal funding opportunity came to light in late March for a  
14 100% federal funding application. This is for earmarked funds through Senator Shaheen's  
15 office. The Town submitted an application for approximately \$1.7M for infrastructure funding  
16 that would fund the school campus project as well as a Souhegan River crossing to the  
17 Senator's office. He is waiting to hear about updates on this application. The application noted  
18 a provision that, if the project needs to be kept under \$1M which is likely, the proposed river  
19 crossing could be eliminated from the application.  
20

21 *George Bower entered the meeting at 7:06pm.*  
22

23 Wendy Rannenberg stated that she posted on the Amherst Community Facebook page asking  
24 anyone interested to send letters of support for this project to Senator Shaheen's office.  
25 Approximately a dozen people have offered to do so, and she will send them a draft letter to  
26 use.  
27

28 Chris Buchanan stated that the Town of Milford also submitted an application for a different  
29 fund through the same office for the Amherst Street sidepath completion in Milford. He noted  
30 that his letter of support also offered support to that project. He suggested sending letters of  
31 support within the next week, as projects moving forward should be chosen in May.  
32

33 **2. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program - Upcoming 80/20 vision**  
34 **zero grant opportunity**

35 Chris Buchanan explained that this is a new grant opportunity as part of the infrastructure bill.  
36 This grant program has an 80 federal/20 local split, but strictly looks to fund vision zero or  
37 sustainable safety projects. This includes a majority of the projects listed in the Committee's

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

Master Plan. These deal with mitigating dangers on the roadway for vulnerable users based on specific engineering principles, such as shared streets. This is a great opportunity for the Amherst Village proposed project. There was a webinar last week for municipalities to understand more about the grant, which he will send to Committee members. He believes that the grant likely expects that many municipalities do not yet have a multimodal master plan and may use this funding for the creation of those plans. Amherst already has this type of a plan in place and has a current project within the Village that deals with these very concepts. This grant will be an annual process, with the first application likely being due this summer for work to be completed next year.

Chris Buchanan noted that the Town recently posted the RFP for the engineering work for the Village area. This should be started after July 1, 2022, when the funding becomes available. This will likely take many months. It is unlikely that the engineering will be complete fast enough to use for this round of grant funding. A grant application should have a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen.

Tom Christensen noted that there is often fanfare when the Committee applies for a grant, yet there is not often information given to the public that a majority of the grants applied for are not received. These people may incorrectly believe that these grants are all being received by the Town. Chris Buchanan noted that he is unsure if there is anything that can be done to assuage the critics.

The Committee agreed that this should be discussed again at the next meeting when more is known about the grant and the potential application.

### **3. Amherst St. Sidepath Opening Ceremony - Discussion and updates**

*This item was tabled to later in the meeting.*

### **4. Amherst Village Design Engineering Updates**

Chris Buchanan stated that he worked with DPW Director Slosek to create an RFQ for this project. Language from other municipalities in the country, such as Vail, Colorado, were reviewed in this process. The due date is May 26, 2022.

### **5. Old Manchester Road – Advisory Shoulder Updates**

Chris Buchanan explained that there was a public meeting for residents last month regarding this proposed project. The meeting seemed to go well and there was near unanimous support.

George Bower noted that a few residents expressed personal concerns versus factual information. Some seemed unclear about the project's purpose. People generally seemed to approve of the project but would like more specific details on how the treatment will be applied. There is one curve and one hill along the road that need to be addressed, as they do not have great sight distance. Along the eastern end of the street, there are three intersections that make the treatment more difficult, though not impossible, to do. He is not convinced that there should be 100 yards without a path that is then picked up after the intersections. DPW

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

may put together the actual plan, but he and Chris Buchanan will meet with them to discuss specifics. The speed of traffic is a concern along the street and, while the project should help, this problem will not go away. Most of the traffic is local and there are ways to deal with it through enforcement, or possibly narrowing the width of the lane by about a foot. A proposal will be created and shown to the Board of Selectmen, before meeting again with the residents. This is an opportunity to collect data along the road before and after any changes are made. The road is proposed to be completely reconstructed in a couple of years and the outcomes of this project could influence that. He noted that there were approximately 20-22 neighbors at the meeting. There was one resident from a nearby road who asked when the treatment will be available for his road.

Wendy Rannenberg stated that, if this project helps reduce speeds along the road, it may be a treatment that others in Town will ask for along their roads.

Judy Shenk noted that there was a post on the Manchester Moves page regarding someone who organizes a group of children that bike together to school in all kinds of weather. She would like to see something similar to this in Amherst. Tom Christensen stated that he is involved in this project and believes the organizer would be happy to get something similar started in Amherst. There are adults helping lead and trail the group.

The group discussed markings and signs for the Amherst Street sidepath. Chris Buchanan noted that the counters purchased using grant funds from the Bean Foundation have been ordered.

#### **6. Projects to identify for NRPC infrastructure project list**

Chris Buchanan explained that NRPC is having a meeting tomorrow for project solicitation for their 10-year infrastructure process. Getting a project on the list is vital for grants. The group currently has two projects on the list: the Boston Mail Rail Trail between Birch Park and Walnut Hill Road to be funded for 2026, and the route from Amherst Street to the Souhegan High School broken into three sections. The group discussed inviting NRPC to its June meeting to speak about this process.

#### **7. Regional Baboosic Greenway Meeting - A meeting among Amherst, Bedford, and Merrimack representatives to discuss the development of the Baboosic Greenway. No date scheduled yet.**

Chris Buchanan noted that Bedford has purchased part of this route and is actively working to build out some of its segments. He met with some of the people involved and there is interest in collaboration between the towns, including Merrimack. Most of Merrimack's small portion is already owned by the town or has easement access. The group discussed a meeting between the three towns. It was noted that possible locations would be discussed with the groups.

#### **8. Souhegan Valley Rail Trail - CSX Acquisition of Real Estate**

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

Chris Buchanan noted that NRPC will be sending a request to CSX to ask if it has interest in partnering with the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail project.

**3. Amherst St. Sidepath Opening Ceremony - Discussion and updates**  
*The Committee retook this item.*

Chris Buchanan stated that the ribbon cutting, and opening ceremony event has been changed to June 12, 2022, at 12pm. Rick Katzenberg has been working to plan this event. This is planned to be a 10-minute event on Spaulding Common to thank those involved, dedicate the path to Carolyn Mitchell, and complete a brief walk. Carolyn Mitchell was instrumental in the Blue Bus program, and this will be provided for shuttle services during the event, if needed. There is hope that some high schoolers will be able to play music before the event, and there may be ice cream involved. DPW Director Slosek and certain Selectmen will likely be there.

Wendy Rannenberg stated that she, Tom Christensen and DPW Director Slosek met with representatives from Bartlett Common regarding placing a bench in front of the property. Multiple locations were suggested, including landscaping. The Bartlett Common board voted not to allow placement of a bench. No reason was given. A note was sent to the chairman asking for reasons in order to move forward, but no response was received. The Board of Selectmen have made it clear that benches should not be placed in front of resident's properties, even if on Town land, if residents are opposed to it.

Wendy Rannenberg stated that there are few spots along the path that are not in front of residents' properties or in the Historic District. Patrick Daniel lives along the path and has submitted a letter to allow for a bench to be placed in front of his property. This letter and a picture/specs of the proposed bench were forwarded to the chair of the Historic District Commission. A personal reply was received from the chair stating that he finds the proposed bench to be inappropriate and stating that a granite bench would be better. Responses were not received from the rest of the Commission. A bench still could be placed in that location, but the Selectmen may not wish to move forward without approval from the Historic District Commission. This is yet unclear.

Wendy Rannenberg explained that funds donated for benches to be placed around Town were recently accepted by the Board of Selectmen. There is funding for four benches. One is to be in Carolyn Mitchell's memory, which could be placed in front of Patrick Daniel's property. She and DPW Director Slosek met with Patrick Daniel to discuss the bench in terms of sight lines and tree roots and there do not seem to be any issues. Marty Warren, of the Amherst Garden Club, has given suggestions for plantings to be placed around the bench. There is enough funding to place a couple of shrubs next to the bench as well.

Wendy Rannenberg explained that another bench is being donated by the NH Wellness Foundation, also with the intent to place it along the sidepath. She discussed the possibility of placing it at Spaulding Common with DPW Director Slosek, but it is unclear if this will be a possibility.

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

Another bench was donated to be placed at Joshua's Park, and the last bench is also proposed to be dedicated in Carolyn Mitchell's memory. This latter bench could potentially be placed in Buck Meadow along a path that Rick Katzenberg is trying to have built from Parkhurst Place into the area. This needs more discussion with the Recreation Department, which is finalizing its master plan for Buck Meadow this week.

Chris Buchanan suggested that Wendy Rannenberg try to get onto the next Historic District Commission agenda to further discuss this item.

Wendy Rannenberg noted that she is working with a high schooler for his senior project on forest bathing. Forest bathing involves finding a spot in the forest to sit and be mindful of one's surroundings. She is working to help him find a location to place a bench as part of the project.

Tom Christensen stated that he would send along information about a Leopold bench design. Wendy Rannenberg stated that she has spoken to people in Town who are in charge of maintaining the wooden benches. These people have had large problems with managing the benches near the Library and actually cover them over the winters. Chris Shenk stated that is depends a lot on what materials are used to make the wooden benches.

The Committee discussed its organization.

Wendy Rannenberg noted that she is technically only an alternate to the Committee.

*Wendy Rannenberg sat in place of Rick Katzenberg.*

**Judy Shenk moved to nominate Chris Buchanan as Chair and Rick Katzenberg as Vice Chair. Seconded by Chris Shenk**  
**Voting: Chris Buchanan - aye, Judy Shenk - aye, Chris Shenk - aye, Tom Christensen – aye, Wendy Rannenberg - aye, and George Bower – aye; 6-0-0, motion carried.**

**9. Approval of Minutes - February 8, 2022**

**Wendy Rannenberg moved to accept the meeting minutes of February 8, 2021, as presented. Seconded by Judy Shenk.**

**Voting: Chris Buchanan - aye, Judy Shenk - aye, Chris Shenk - aye, Tom Christensen – aye, Wendy Rannenberg - aye, and George Bower – aye; 6-0-0, motion carried.**

**Wendy Rannenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm. Seconded by Chris Shenk.**

May 10, 2022

**APPROVED**

212       **Voting: Chris Buchanan - aye, Judy Shenk - aye, Chris Shenk - aye, Tom**  
213       **Christensen – aye, Wendy Rannenberg - aye, and George Bower – aye; 6-0-0, motion**  
214       **carried.**

215

216       *Respectfully submitted,*

217

218       *Kristan Patenaude*

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220       Minutes approved: June 14, 2022