



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
May 10, 2022

1 Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Wendy Rannenber, 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 Rannenber 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

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

47

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

53

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

59

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

62

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

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

65

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

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

70

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

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

74

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

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

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

92

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

95

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

101

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

105

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

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

113

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

117

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

123

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

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

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

127

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

129 *The Committee retook this item.*

130

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

138

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

146

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

156

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

164

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

May 10, 2022

APPROVED

169
170 Another bench was donated to be placed at Joshua's Park, and the last bench is also proposed
171 to be dedicated in Carolyn Mitchell's memory. This latter bench could potentially be placed in
172 Buck Meadow along a path that Rick Katzenberg is trying to have built from Parkhurst Place
173 into the area. This needs more discussion with the Recreation Department, which is finalizing
174 its master plan for Buck Meadow this week.

175
176 Chris Buchanan suggested that Wendy Rannenberg try to get onto the next Historic District
177 Commission agenda to further discuss this item.

178
179 Wendy Rannenberg noted that she is working with a high schooler for his senior project on
180 forest bathing. Forest bathing involves finding a spot in the forest to sit and be mindful of
181 one's surroundings. She is working to help him find a location to place a bench as part of the
182 project.

183
184 Tom Christensen stated that he would send along information about a Leopold bench design.
185 Wendy Rannenberg stated that she has spoken to people in Town who are in charge of
186 maintaining the wooden benches. These people have had large problems with managing the
187 benches near the Library and actually cover them over the winters. Chris Shenk stated that is
188 depends a lot on what materials are used to make the wooden benches.

189
190 The Committee discussed its organization.

191
192 Wendy Rannenberg noted that she is technically only an alternate to the Committee.

193
194 *Wendy Rannenberg sat in place of Rick Katzenberg.*

195
196 **Judy Shenk moved to nominate Chris Buchanan as Chair and Rick Katzenberg as**
197 **Vice Chair. Seconded by Chris Shenk**
198 **Voting: Chris Buchanan - aye, Judy Shenk - aye, Chris Shenk - aye, Tom**
199 **Christensen – aye, Wendy Rannenberg - aye, and George Bower – aye; 6-0-0, motion**
200 **carried.**

201
202 **9. Approval of Minutes - February 8, 2022**

203
204 **Wendy Rannenberg moved to accept the meeting minutes of February 8, 2021, as**
205 **presented. Seconded by Judy Shenk.**
206 **Voting: Chris Buchanan - aye, Judy Shenk - aye, Chris Shenk - aye, Tom**
207 **Christensen – aye, Wendy Rannenberg - aye, and George Bower – aye; 6-0-0, motion**
208 **carried.**

209
210 **Wendy Rannenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm. Seconded by Chris**
211 **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*

219

220 Minutes approved: June 14, 2022