



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
March 09, 2021

1. Meeting Venue

Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Rick Katzenberg – Vice Chair, Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk, Tom Christensen, George Bower, Carolyn Mitchell, Wendy Rannenberg [7:23pm], Patrick Daniel [7:23pm], and Simon Sarris.

Staff present: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner.

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:

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

March 9, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

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; Tom Christensen – alone; Simon Sarris – alone; George Bower – alone; Carolyn Mitchell – alone; and Rick Katzenberg – alone; all present.

2. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant

Chris Buchanan stated that the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to support the Town's application for this grant earlier this evening and will be writing a letter of support as well.

Chris Buchanan explained that the TAP Program requires a 20% match for the award. There are various projects listed within the application and estimates associated with each, for a total of slightly under \$1M. The funding available is roughly \$800,000 (80%), leaving approximately \$200,000 for the Town to raise. Some of the streets on the application are slated for road reconstruction. This will allow for the DPW's budget for these already scheduled roads, \$195,000 for Carriage Ln, Davis Rd, Main St, School St, and \$150,000 for Jones Rd and Mack Hill Rd, to be partly utilized. The proposed treatments will be different for these sections and the full 100% cannot be used for the municipal proportion of the award. However, this leaves the Town with approximately \$250,000, of which some portion can be leveraged towards the Town's 20% of the project. If the Town is awarded the grant, funds will not need to be raised past what is already available. The Town will possibly save almost \$11,000 to do almost \$1M worth of infrastructure.

George Bower explained that some of these funds are budgeted but not allocated. This is the Town's budgeted portion, so the 20% does not need to be in hand, but simply funds that are pledged for the future. He noted that there might be questions from the public regarding the \$75,000 Warrant Article not covering the Town's 20%.

Chris Buchanan explained that the Town has enough funds, even without the Warrant Article, in order to complete this project if the TAP Grant is awarded.

Simon Sarris stated that, even if the Warrant Article fails, it will not impact this Grant, if the Town is awarded it.

George Bower explained that the Town is piggybacking these multimodal projects on top of already expected road reconstruction. This is a smart approach to build onto existing construction projects to save money across the board.

March 9, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

Chris Buchanan stated that Amherst Street, from Courthouse Road to Birch Park, has been removed from this project. The DOT has explained that if approval is not obtained from each private landowner, the application will fail. This part of the project was estimated for \$11,000 of restriping. Chris Buchanan also explained that these funds will be used for creating more connections in the School Campus project area, if the grant is awarded.

Chris Buchanan explained that the application is due March 19, 2021. He would like the group to vote to support it.

In response to a question from Carolyn Mitchell, Chris Buchanan explained that the School Campus project will all be built within the right of way. Surveying and engineering will be done if the grant is awarded. The Town does not have the right to build on the private properties along the route. Simon Sarris noted that the DPW will do public outreach to these landowners, if the project moves forward.

George Bower noted that the Master Plan talks of linking the school areas together, and this project hopes to do so. He hopes that the landowners near the schools would be willing to write letters of support for these projects.

Patrick Daniel and Wendy Rannenberg joined the meeting.

Simon Sarris moved to support the TAP Grant application as proposed in this meeting. Rick Katzenberg seconded.

Roll call: Chris Buchanan – aye; Chris Shenk – aye; Judy Shenk – aye; Tom Christensen – aye; Simon Sarris – aye; George Bower – aye; Carolyn Mitchell – aye; Patrick Daniel – aye; Wendy Rannenberg – abstain; and Rick Katzenberg – aye. 9-0-1; motion carried.

3. 2021 Warrant Article

Chris Buchanan explained that the Warrant Article looks to raise \$75,000 for multimodal improvements.

Simon Sarris stated that he didn't get a huge response from the social media posts. He believes this vote may be more complicated in terms of getting people to understand the purpose. He believes the best thing the group can do is to keep people updated regarding the TAP Grant status, and tie in messaging that the funds from the Warrant Article will be used for similar projects around Town. This Warrant Article is much harder to articulate to people than the last one.

Rick Katzenberg stated that he believes the TAP Grant and the Warrant Article should be kept separate.

March 9, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

Simon Sarris stated that the message should be that the Capital Reserve Fund is needed for rolling funds to continue to work on projects. However, people also need to be informed of the large School Campus project that everyone has been wanting for such a long time.

Wendy Rannenberg stated that she just presented to the PTA. She explained to them that there is a Warrant Article to create a Capital Reserve Fund with \$75,000. She then showed them a map regarding the School Campus project and the complexity of it. She explained that the funds are needed for the group to continue to seek grant funding. If the funds aren't needed for a project because a grant is awarded, they will be set aside to be used for future projects in the Committee's pipeline. The PTA is willing to pass on information for the Committee.

George Bower stated that the group shouldn't underplay the vote on the Warrant Article in terms of the grant application process. The vote will happen right around the time that the application is under review. A commitment from the community is very important in this process. This vote could demonstrate the commitment from the community regarding multimodal infrastructure in terms of the grant.

Chris Buchanan noted that there is a risk of the Committee talking about the TAP Grant only because it's confusing to the public. It's hard to manage the communication regarding the School Campus project in terms of the Warrant Article and the TAP Grant.

Simon Sarris agreed that he wants to speak about projects and goals of the Committee, and how to achieve them instead of mentioning TAP in particular. His biggest concern is people going into vote on the Warrant Article and not understanding the School Campus project goal.

4. Strategic Planning

Chris Buchanan explained that the Board of Selectmen would like the Committee to be involved in the Strategic Planning process.

Natasha Kypfer presented on the Strategic Planning process to the group. She explained that the group should first identify its mission and values. The group can then look at historical trends and perform an environmental scan. A SWOT analysis can then be completed to capitalize on the group's strengths and opportunities, whilst minimizing weaknesses and threats. The group should next endeavor to identify its internal and external goals and their associated strategies. Finally, the group would look at the budget impact of these items. The Board of Selectmen would like BPAC to put this document together so that residents can look to it in order to answer questions and refine details.

In response to a question from Tom Christensen, Natasha Kypfer stated that it will take time to compile all of this information and complete the process.

March 9, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Natasha Kypfer explained that each year in September/October Town departments present their Strategic Plans to the Board of Selectmen. The ACC has been involved in this process as well.

Rick Katzenberg stated that he likes the planning process but has some concerns about laying out all of the Committee's projects before having funding for any of them. Wendy Rannenberg stated that she believes there may be a way to create a plan without calling out each specific project.

Chris Buchanan explained that the group could be strategic about some projects that are more developed ideas than others.

In response to a question from Tom Christensen, Natasha Kypfer stated that the template being used by all of the other Town departments is a great start for the Committee to use.

Wendy Rannenberg questioned how the Strategic Plan fits into the CIP process. Rick Katzenberg noted that this should also all fit into the Master Plan process. Natasha Kypfer stated that she would continue to update the Committee on the process.

5. Other Initiatives

a. Souhegan Valley Rail Trail

Chris Buchanan stated that CSX has offered to purchase all of Pan Am's holdings. The public input period lasts for some, currently unclear, amount of time. He believes the Committee should submit a letter to the Surface Transportation Board that it would like to see a rail trail along this route. This item will be included on next month's agenda.

b. Amherst Street Sidepath

Chris Buchanan stated that construction is slated to begin possibly the first week of April. There will be a meeting with adjacent landowners at some point to discuss the project.

c. Eversource Trail

There are no additional updates at this time.

d. Old Manchester Road

There are no additional updates at this time.

e. Public Trails on Private Land

Chris Buchanan explained that a proposal for the section of the B&M Trail behind the Shenk's house (Amherst Street at Thatcher Lane to Boston Post Road near Mulberry Lane) has been completed and sent to the Amherst Land Trust's representatives (Wendy Rannenberg and Patrick Daniel) for review. There are five parcels involved in this proposal, two of which are owned by the Shenks.

George Bower explained that the Amherst Land Trust is looking for information on the

March 9, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

Committee's projects and what is needed to support them. The Land Trust would also like to know what questions landowners might have regarding these projects. The Land Trust is meeting next on March 21, 2021. Typically, the Land Trust has worked as an advocate for landowners in Town. It is essentially a non-profit that is not affiliated with the Town. The Land Trust works with landowners and community groups to apply technical and legal resources to get projects completed. The Land Trust is unsure if it would be representing the Committee or the landowners in this process; it cannot do both.

Chris Buchanan stated that it may be more advantageous for the Land Trust to approach the private landowners to explain the process and represent them, almost as a mediator.

In response to a question from Chris Shenk, George Bower explained that the Land Trust has the ability to put together an agreement with a landowner stating that it is contingent upon the other portions of the trail being added to it that can be executed in the future. There is no agreement between the landowner and the Town, due to the contingencies involved. This is the benefit of working with the Land Trust, which has similar goals to the Town.

f. Bridge over Souhegan River (Private Fundraising or CMAQ Opportunity)

Chris Buchanan noted that this could be an opportunity for private fundraising. It will not be possible to incorporate any type of multimodal facility along the existing bridge, per DPW.

g. Municipal Portion of NHDOT Ten Year Plan Project (Private Fundraising Opportunity)

Chris Buchanan noted that \$170,513 needs to be raised by 2026 to rehabilitate a portion of the abandoned B&M Trail, in order to access the State funding.

Chris Buchanan explained that, once the TAP Grant process is complete, he would like the Committee to go back to the Board of Selectmen to request an account to be created for private donations for the Committee. It would make sense for this to be a project fund, with possible specific project funds within it. The group can discuss this more at the next meeting.

6. Other Updates

7. Approval of Minutes – February

This will be addressed at the next meeting.

Rick Katzenberg moved to adjourn at 8:47pm. Wendy Rannenberg seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

TOWN OF AMHERST
Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

March 9, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

252 *Kristan Patenaude*

253

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255 Approved: May 11, 2021