



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
April 13, 2021

1. Meeting Venue

Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Rick Katzenberg – Vice Chair, Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk, Tom Christensen, and Patrick Daniel.

Staff present: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner and Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary

Also present: Sam Fortier, and Shannon Chandley

Chairman Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 7:05pm, 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:

April 13, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

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; Tom Christensen – alone; Patrick Daniel – alone; and Rick Katzenberg – alone; all present.

2. Federal Infrastructure Funding

Chris Buchanan explained that the federal infrastructure initiatives are still fairly nebulous. Anywhere from 1-3 bills could come of this. One bill looks to be an update to the surface transportation legislation. The scope of this is yet unknown. The US House of Representatives has called in Congress to solicit any projects of value. This period of solicitation is set to end on April 26, 2021. He noted that Rick Katzenberg has contacted various people within the US Delegation. Included in this is a discussion with Senator Maggie Hassen and the Congressional District 2 Congresswoman, Ann Kuster, regarding Amherst's philosophy of incorporating multimodal projects into already scheduled road construction and the cost-effectiveness of this approach. There are two projects of consideration that exemplify this principal, if there are funds to do so: 1) the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail, which stretches 16 miles across 6 towns; 2) the Baboosic Greenway, which incorporates the current TAP application.

Rick Katzenberg explained that the message needs to be that the historic requirement for towns to contribute 20% matching funds can no longer happen. It is impossible for rural communities to contribute this much to these projects, especially due to COVID-19 deficits. If a 20% match is required, these projects will not happen. This is especially true in rural communities with no tax base. He noted that the pitch is to eventually reach the Buttigieg office to try to make this new program different from those in the past and make them funded 100% or close to that by the government. This way projects can be started quickly, and jobs can be created quickly.

Chris Buchanan explained that the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail runs from Nashua, along Route 101A, through Amherst and Milford, and into Nashua. The Baboosic Greenway starts at Bedford High School, runs along the B&M Railbed, incorporates a NH DOT 10-year project, runs by the Amherst schools, and connects Buck Meadow to the Souhegan Valley Rail Trail. Much of this project already exists, but there are gaps that need to be filled.

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Chris Buchanan explained that the timing and parameters for these possible bills are unknown. Any project would need congressional attention immediately.

April 13, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Rick Katzenberg stated that it will be up to Hassan and Kuster's offices if the surrounding towns will try working together to get these projects funded.

Shannon Chandley explained that the group could try reaching out to the congressional delegates to see what they recommend.

3. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Chris Buchanan stated that the NRPC Technical Transportation Advisory Committee has received the Town's application. He explained that he, Eric Hahn, and George Bower will make a brief presentation to the Committee on Wednesday at 12:30pm. This presentation accounts for 10% of the applicant's scoring.

4. 2021 Warrant Article

The group discussed communication and outreach efforts for the Warrant Article. They discussed mini kiosks along high volume routes of the proposed side path, lawn signs, and pamphlets. Chris Buchanan reminded the group that it cannot electioneer or campaign, but it can raise donated funds for informational purposes. He noted that the two graphical elements that should be used on the informational items – a map of the original scope project, minus the TAP fund items, and the photo of the kids walking down the busy street near the High School.

5. Public Trails on Private Land

Chris Buchanan explained that there was a meeting between this group and the Amherst Land Trust to discuss how to advance this initiative. There were preliminary conversations held with two of the landowners located along the railbed.

6. Other Initiatives

a. Strategic Planning

The Committee will work more on this after Town Meeting.

b. Souhegan Valley Rail Trail

Chris Buchanan explained that CSX's application to purchase all of Pan Am's rail real estate holdings was rejected by the Surface Transportation Board. CSX will now have to reapply as a major merger. This is a similar application but takes a longer time to complete. The input period for this application ends July 9, 2021.

c. Amherst Street Sidepath

Chris Buchanan stated that Eric Hahn, DPW Director, has indicated that there will be a meeting this week, April 15, 2021, with homeowners along the Amherst Street section that is slated for road reconstruction. This project is in its final planning stages and construction should begin within the next couple of weeks.

Chris Buchanan noted that the Board of Selectmen recently heard a presentation from NH DOT regarding the reconstruction of a bridge over Route 101 on Amherst Street. He

April 13, 2021

APPROVED – 5/11/2021

explained that one of the Selectmen brought up the possibility of creating new bike/ped facilities along the road during the course of the project.

d. Eversource Trail

There are no additional updates at this time.

e. Old Manchester Road

There are no additional updates at this time.

7. Approval of Minutes – February & March

This will be addressed at the next meeting.

Rick Katzenberg moved to adjourn at 8:04pm. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristan Patenaude

Approved: May 11, 2021