In Attendance: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk, Patrick Daniel, Rick Katzenberg, and Carolyn Mitchell.

Also in attendance: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Minute taker.

1. **Meeting Venue Change**

Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm., with the following statement. As Chair of the Amherst Bicycle & 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 Executive Orders 2020-05, 2020-08, 2020-09, and 2020-10, 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 848 8921 7369, or by clicking on the following website address:

https://zoom.us/j/84889217369 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.

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.

Roll call attendance: Chris Buchanan – alone; Rick Katzenberg – alone; Patrick Daniel – alone; Judy Shenk – with Chris Shenk; Chris Shenk – with Judy Shenk; and Carolyn Mitchell – alone.

1. **Public Comment –** none.
2. **Public Trails on Private Land**

Chris Buchanan explained that he spoke with Sally Wilkins, of the Amherst Land Trust, regarding the document. Sally Wilkins invited the group to the next Amherst Land Trust meeting. It will be scheduled at some time in the next month or so. He explained that the next step is to finalize this document, as there are a number of trail projects waiting on its completion before they can be moved forward.

1. **Project Status**
   1. **Boston Road Sidepath (Proposal)**

Chris Buchanan explained that the Boston Post Road sidepath proposal was the first project that the group explored, but found it too complicated to complete within a year. In the meantime, the Amherst Street sidepath project became available and was pursued. He explained that the Boston Post Road sidepath is proposed to run all the way from Mont Vernon to Merrimack – the entire length of Boston Post Road in town. The first phase will focus on the section of Boston Post Road roughly in front of the Souhegan High School. He would like for the Committee to determine the scope of the proposal.

Chris Buchanan stated that there are estimates from Continental Paving that can be examined for a basic understanding of the project: From Homestead Road, heading north, this phase of the project could end at:

Simeon Wilson Road – 2,300 linear feet, $73,600 ($32/linearft), $101,200 ($44/linearft)

Souhegan River – 3,200 linear feet, $102,400 ($32/linearft), $140,800 ($44/linearft)

Thornton Ferry II – 4,300 linear feet, $137,600 ($32/linearft), $189,200 ($44/linearft)

River Road – 5,200 linear feet, $166,400 ($32/linearft), $228,800 ($44/linearft)

Chris Buchanan explained that these figures do not take into account the additional costs of surveying, curbing, and a water crossing at Honey Pot Pond. He explained that the funds for the culvert are not necessarily the Committee’s responsibility to raise, but, the crossing must be completed as part of the project. The water crossing could cost as much as the total project. He suggested that the group look to raise the funds necessary to complete this section of the sidepath, and consider the water crossing separately.

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan explained that the Town will start it’s budgeting process for next year in the next month or so. The Committee will have about seven or eight ways to consider funding this project, including: through a warrant article, having it included in the DPW budget, a capital reserve fund, private fundraising, etc. He would like for the Committee to first focus on what the scope of the project should be and how much it costs.

Rick Katzenberg suggested that the first phase go to Simeon Wilson Road, as it keeps costs the lowest while also supporting the goal of keeping kids safe.

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Chris Buchanan explained that the water crossing over Honey Pot Pond will require a DES permitting process and a structure to cross the area. DPW is currently looking into other possible crossing options.

In response to a question from Carolyn Mitchell, Chris Buchanan stated that there is currently a culvert in this area. There are three options for the water crossing: nothing, an engineering permitted structure, or a cheaper option. For the cheaper option, DPW Director Eric Hahn is currently looking into examples of modular bridges, that could serve the area temporarily until an improvement to this crossing can be funded over time.

Carolyn Mitchell mentioned that the Amherst Conservation Commission (ACC) builds wonderful bridges. It might be worth asking them if they have any ideas for the crossing.

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan explained that the costs listed above only cover the preparation of the asphalt and new asphalt for that section of road. It does not include intersection improvements, water crossing, curbing, etc.

The group agreed to meet with the DPW and ACC regarding the water crossing and possible short-term and long-term goals.

Patrick Daniel suggested that the Community Development Office might be helpful in this project as well.

Chris Buchanan noted that he spoke with Recreation Department Director, Craig Fraley, regarding the fact that the city of Keene recently procured bridges from the town of Londonderry to repurpose for pedestrian bridges. Keene will be contacted to see if this type of infrastructure reuse could be an option for the future in Amherst.

In response to a question from Wendy Rannenberg, Chris Buchanan stated that the bridge over the Souhegan River along this route is not on any schedule for improvements, as far as he knows. Usually these types of bridge projects are included in the State DOT’s 10-Year Plan; this bridge is not currently on the 10-Year Plan.

Chris Buchanan explained that the Committee could ask for the surveying of this project to be completed, if there are extra funds in the Town’s budget between now and June. It will be helpful to have the surveying completed, as the design of this project will depend heavily on the right-of-way. Carolyn Mitchell questioned if the surveying could possibly be done by someone in Town as a pro bono service.

Chris Buchanan explained that the intersection at Boston Post Road and the entrance to Souhegan High School was given an “F” grade by NRPC on its Metropolitan Transportation Plan. In the past, a traffic signal has been proposed for the intersection, but he does not believe this is warranted. This went on the town ballot a few years ago and was rejected. The intersection does still need improvement. Constructing a side path through the intersection would require modifications, and there is a question as to who would pay for these changes. The group discussed that this could be en entity such as DPW, or the School districts.

Chris Buchanan asked for a volunteer to write about the significance of Boston Post Road as a corridor in Town and for transportation functionality. Patrick Daniel agreed to help write this.

In response to a question from Chris Shenk, Chris Buchanan explained that the purpose of the proposed lengths of this phase of the project is to improve multimodality in Town. The vision for this project is long-term, but a smaller scope must be chosen for now.

* 1. **Eversource Transmission Lines & Public Access to Buck Meadow, Parkhurst Place, SHS, AMS, Bean Fields, Horse Hill Nature Preserve (Merrimack)**

Chris Buchanan explained that the project proposal for this has been submitted to Eversource. He also spoke with the Merrimack Conservation Commission, and the Committee is invited to attend the Commission’s next meeting, Monday at 6:30pm via Zoom.

**c. Coordination with Milford for Amherst Street**

Chris Buchanan that he spoke with Lincoln Daley, Milford Community Development Director. Lincoln Daley stated that Milford is still scheduled to reconstruct their portion of Amherst Street in 2021. The hope is that the sidepath treatment proposed in Amherst will be continued past the town line into the Oval. The Milford portion of this sidepath could be pushed back a year, due to COVID-19. A meeting will be set up between the Milford DPW and Amherst DPW to look at treatment options and designs. The Committee can be a part of this conversation, if it so chooses.

**d. Town request for restriping NH 122 between Courthouse Road, Birch Park, Midblock Crossing on 122**

Chris Buchanan explained that he spoke with Bill Watson, Planning and Community Assistance Administrator at State of New Hampshire DOT regarding three items: the restriping of Route 122 between Courthouse Road and Route 101, an additional midblock crossing between the Purtell easement and Joshua’s Park, and a trail of through points in the DOT right-of-way along Birch Park and southward.

Chris Buchanan explained that Craig Fraley has been trying to contact DOT District 5 since 2017, to no avail. In speaking with Bill Watson, Chris Buchanan was told to contact District 5 to have a conversation about these items. It was explained that this request should come as a united front from Town staff. Chris Buchanan suggested that different Town staff members could be responsible for each project, but that there needs to be a coordinated effort on behalf of the Town staff.

Chris Buchanan noted that the Board of Selectmen voted to pursue the restriping project 5-0 back in January. A letter was sent from the Town to the DOT regarding this project, to no avail. Chris Buchanan stated that he would like to met with Craig Fraley, Eric Hahn, and a member of Community Development to organize a way to best communicate with DOT on these projects.

Chris Buchanan stated that the also spoke with Sally Gunn, at NH DOT, regarding the restriping project, who told him that approval of the Complete Streets Advisory Committee would be necessary. This Committee is disbanded; it was replaced by another Committee, but the coordinator for it, Larry Keniston, retired and the Committee will not meet again until a new coordinator is hired.

Wendy Rannenberg suggested that Community Development manage all three of these potential projects, in order for there to be only one point of contact for DOT. Nastaha Kypfer agreed to work on this item.

**e.**  **Old Manchester Road**

Chris Buchanan explained that construction is complete on Old Manchester Road. He believes this road would be a great candidate for an advisory shoulder. It would be cheaper to put in an advisory shoulder, than a double yellow line. This project would need Board of Selectmen approval. Chris Buchanan explained that he would first like to meet Eric Hahn and George Bower to do the appropriate analysis of the proposal. There is a two month window before this road will be striped, in order to try to get this project done.

Chris Buchanan suggested a warrant article idea regarding changing Pig Farm Road from the Class 4 Road into a Class A trail. This was recently done with Old Main Road, via warrant article.

1. **NH DOT 10-Year Plan (to be submitted in August, no other updates)**

Chris Buchanan explained the proposed items to be submitted for the next DOT 10-Year Plan are: the B&M Rail Bed from NH 122 to Mulberry Lane, B&M Rail Bed from Mulberry Lane to Merrimack Road (Forestview Cemetery), and NH 122 Sidepath (SB 707). These items will be submitted this month and graded by DOT next month.

**6. “Souhegan Valley Rail Trail” Project**

Chris Buchanan explained that this project will begin on August 18th. NRPC is seeking to organize a coalition of members of the public from the six communities this proposed rail trail would go through. A preliminary draft of the project proposal/corridor profile is complete; the final draft will be submitted next Tuesday.

**7. Grant and Other Funding Opportunities**

Chris Buchanan stated that he, Simon Sarris, and George Bower have plans to approach the Board of Selectmen to discuss possible funding opportunities for the Committee. He would also like to loop in the Ways & Means Committee, and CIP Committee. It is hoped that this discussion regarding how to fund infrastructure improvements can be held before the next Board of Selectmen meeting, August 24th.

**8. Other Updates**

* 1. **Updates from DPW**

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan explained that there are a few tangible ways for the Town to begin movement on the Amherst Street sidepath project. The Town is currently legally committed to the project; the Board of Selectmen approved a bid for surveying and monumenting along the road. This will occur within one month.

Chris Buchanan explained that he is also working on a Route 101 fatal and incapacitating crash website. This will incorporate data from 1975-present, and will allow a user to click on a crash site and see a picture of the accident and story of the crash. This is being created in response to the fact that the NH DOT has submitted its proposal for improvement along this section of Route 101. There is no sidepath and no type of physical separation proposed. Nothing from the Corridor Study has been incorporated. The current proposal is for a 10 mile passing lane along Route 101.

Chris Buchanan stated that Zachary Swick, of the Southern NH Planning Commission, reached out regarding insight on connecting the towns of Bedford and Amherst regarding multimodal facilities. Bedford currently has a proposal to have a sidepath constructed along the entirety of Route 101. A great point of collaboration between the two towns could be regarding the B&M Rail Trail, which could run from Goffstown to Bedford to Amherst to Milford.

**9. Approval of Minutes**

The group agreed to review minutes at its next meeting.

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Chris Buchanan stated that there’s no specific effort currently to write an article for the Amherst Citizen regarding the delay of construction on Amherst Street. Rick Katzenberg agreed that there should be information about the delay on the Committee’s websites and also an article in the September issue of the Citizen. Wendy Rannenberg noted that this article could also include information on the upcoming Boston Post Road project proposal.

Natasha Kypfer noted that she will send around a recording of the Innovative Bicycle and Pedestrian webinar put on by AAA of New England.

**The meeting was adjourned at 7:16pm.**

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kristan Patenaude*