



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
December 13, 2022

1 Meeting attendees: Wendy Rannenberg, Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk, Michael Merra (remote),
2 Rick Katzenberg, and Tom Christensen.
3 Staff present: Eric Slosek – DPW Director, Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote)

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5 Wendy Rannenberg called the meeting to order at 7:08pm. She noted that the Committee
6 would first discuss the Village engineering project update.

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8 **1. State 10-year plan and path from Courthouse Rd to Baboosic Lake Rd rail trail**

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10 **2. Matching funds available for private fundraising for above project**

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12 **3. Village engineering project update – *The Committee took up this item at this time***

13 Michael Merra stated that, after a public meeting on this project in October, it was clear that
14 there needs to be more information and a better understanding with respect to the safe streets
15 project as it relates to the Village. The Town has already budgeted \$500,000 for the repaving
16 of some of the Village streets. The town would qualify for up to \$2.5M in additional grant
17 funds for this project. A second public meeting was scheduled in December, but this was
18 delayed as the Board of Selectmen thought more time between the two meetings was
19 necessary. Michael Merra stated that he met with Chris Buchanan to decide what information
20 should be distributed and a timeline for this process. An FAQ document was created to
21 address some of the questions that arose during the public meeting. A comprehensive
22 document will be finalized shortly. This information will be placed on the Town's website,
23 after it is first circulated to the Committee. He gave some examples of questions raised during
24 the public meeting, such as: the village is perfect; why make any changes? Why is the town
25 considering applying for a grant? What type of traffic changes are going to be considered?

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27 Michael Merra stated that he and Chris Buchanan agree that it will also be important to
28 outline for the public what will not be occurring as part of this project, as many people
29 assumed it would look similar to the side path on Amherst Street. The FAQ document will
30 hopefully be completed by the end of December and then circulated within the Committee. A
31 survey will be released to residents in February regarding the Village and what changes
32 people are hoping to see.

33
34 Wendy Rannenberg explained that a resident addressed the Board of Selectmen last night
35 regarding concerns with traffic and noise in the Village. Board Chairman Peter Lyon stated
36 that he would address these concerns with the resident at a future time. Michael Merra stated
37 that these concerns are of interest, as they are some of what this project is trying to address.

December 13, 2022

DRAFT

Wendy Rannenberg also noted that the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) has placed traffic counters in the Village.

Town Administrator Shankle explained that the letter, from resident Doug Chabinsky, stated that he has spoken with a number of Village residents who have a number of concerns regarding speed, volume of traffic, traffic not stopping for pedestrians, through trucking, and the use of engine brakes. The letter stated that all of these items create a safety issue and degrade the quality of life for residents.

In response to a question from Tom Christensen, Michael Merra explained that a meeting in March will seek guidance from the Board of Selectmen regarding the proposed changes through this project and a possible recommendation for a grant application, which has a deadline of September.

Wendy Rannenberg noted that many residents requested a map with a full set of comments as to where items are proposed as part of the project. Mobycon has stated that this is something they can create.

Michael Merra exited the meeting at this time.

1. State 10-year plan and path from Courthouse Rd to Baboosic Lake Rd rail trail

Wendy Rannenberg explained that two items were accepted into the State's 10-Year Plan. There is a possibility to receive funding sooner for one of the items if the Committee applies for the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant.

In response to a question from Chris Shenk, Wendy Rannenberg explained that this grant proposal would be worked through NRPC. This segment is focused on an area from Courthouse Road to Birch Park. By 2028, the Town would need to come up with matching funds of approximately \$284,000.

Eric Slosek, DPW Director, explained that he recently attended a mandatory meeting for anyone who submitted letters for intent to apply for CMAQ, which the Committee did. The deadline for submitting applications is January 6, 2023, by 11:59 PM. This only gives the Town a few weeks to submit an application, and there is much to be done beforehand. This request needs to be brought to the Board of Selectmen, to determine if they would like to proceed. The town would then submit the application to NH DOT. The application would then be given to NRPC to manage it. An air quality analysis would need to be completed as part of this grant, as air quality is approximately 35% of the score for the application. The applicant would need to show how the project will improve air quality. The DOT will rank the project proposals and this ranking would be sent to a Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT).

In response to a question from Wendy Rannenberg regarding if this project is appropriate for the grant in terms of the air quality criteria, Eric Slosek explained that there are a number of

December 13, 2022

DRAFT

different projects that could be submitted for this funding based on the criteria. If the project can show a reduction in single person vehicle trips via bus routes or something similar, this could count toward improved air quality for the Town.

Tom Christensen noted that other communities could have an advantage on this criteria, as there may be known air quality problems and more potential for bus routes.

Eric Slosek explained that each regional planning office will rank the projects and send this to DOT. The different categories of projects will be ranked in kind. The Governor's Committee will then be considering all of the projects submitted in each category across all nine regional planning commissions across the State.

Wendy Rannenberg noted that this project does not offer much of a connection, in terms of a mitigation project that helps to get people somewhere. This is only a segment of a larger project which is not yet complete.

In response to a question from Judy Shenk, Wendy Rannenberg explained that the striping project along this same section of road is a separate project which is still planned to be completed.

In response to a question from Chris Shenk, Eric Slosek explained that the State accepts new submissions for the 10-Year Plan every two years. The State is also considering rotating between the CMAQ, and TAP grants every two years.

2. Matching funds available for private fundraising for above project

Wendy Rannenberg noted that there is a private donor in Town willing to match up to \$50,000 if the committee can raise the matching funds privately. Eric Slosek noted that any work done prior to awarding of the CMAQ grant will not be reimbursed. The overall project is estimated to cost \$1.237M, with a Town match of approximately \$247,400.

It was noted that the Committee could ask the Board of Selectmen for its thoughts at the upcoming Monday meeting. A special meeting would then be needed on January 5, 2023, to support the application.

Eric Slosek noted that the Committee will likely want to have letters of support for this project, especially from the Board of Selectmen.

Rick Katzenberg suggested that the Committee enable Chris Buchanan, Eric Slosek, and other Committee members to make a decision on this item within the next week. It is yet unclear if Chris Buchanan is intent on applying for the CMAQ grant or not.

Wendy Rannenberg noted that there does not appear to be a timeline for the generous donation if the Committee can find matching private funds. The Committee would need to consider fundraising and how to go about doing this.

December 13, 2022

DRAFT

Wendy Rannenberg noted that the Board of Selectmen reviewed the draft warrant articles at its last meeting. The Committee had requested an article for \$150,000, but the Board supported it only at \$75,000, as it was in previous year. She noted that wording was added to the draft article presented to state that the funding will be used specifically for work on the School Campus project. This is incorrect and that was pointed out to the Board. The wording has to be the same as the previous two warrant articles for this same request. The Ways & Means Committee tried to convince the Board of Selectmen to use some funding from the unassigned fund balance for this item, but the Board declined at this time.

3. Donation of funds for surveying

Wendy Rannenberg noted that the Board of Selectmen will meet on Monday to discuss final budget numbers and to accept a donation from the Shenks. This generous donation will be made generic for surveying and other associated incidental costs.

4. November 8, 2022 minutes

The Board agreed to table discussion of these minutes to a future meeting.

Rick Katzenberg noted that seniors, age 70+, can walk the Hampshire Dome Tuesday-Friday, from 10am-2pm for free.

**Rick Katzenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:58pm. Seconded by Judy Shenk.
Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried unanimously.**

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristan Patenaude*