



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
June 14, 2022

1 Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Wendy Rannenberg, Chris Shenk, Judy Shenk,
2 Rick Katzenberg, and Tom Christensen (remote)
3 Staff present: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote)
4

5 Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He noted that there was participation
6 from Committee members both in-person at Town Hall and remotely via Zoom.
7

8 **1. Recap: Sidepath Opening Ceremony**

9 Chris Buchanan stated that the opening ceremony for the sidepath last Sunday went well.
10 Wendy Rannenberg stated that there were approximately 50-60 people who attended the
11 event.
12

13 Wendy Rannenberg stated that four benches for the sidepath have been ordered but have not
14 yet been received. The Historic District Commission has given its approval of these benches.
15 She needs to go back to the Board of Selectmen to have them approve the proposed locations.
16

17 Tom Christensen stated that he saw a pattern of litter along Amherst Street while using the
18 sidepath. He believes most of this was thrown from cars and not from people using the
19 sidepath.
20

21 Wendy Rannenberg noted that some of the bikes used along the path are e-bikes and there was
22 previously some question as to if these are allowed on the sidepath. Chris Shenk stated that
23 this is likely not an issue unless the bikes have a throttle on them. Chris Buchanan stated that
24 the Town has no policy on this item. The State policy is to allow Class 1 and 2 e-bikes.
25

26 **2. Upcoming grant opportunity: Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant
27 Program**

- 28 • **Register to attend the "how to apply webinar" on Jun 13, 2022, 01:00 PM**
29 [https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_PbMkfXJORK6AXr6E](https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_PbMkfXJORK6AXr6EA5bsKg)
30 [A5bsKg](https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_PbMkfXJORK6AXr6EA5bsKg)

31 Chris Buchanan stated that the details for this grant opportunity have been published. The
32 grant seems to align its goals directly with what the Town has been working toward. There is
33 one suitable area for this grant funding, the Village project, because this grant is for Complete
34 Street implementation. The Town is quite qualified for this, and he has a strong feeling that
35 the Town could be awarded the grant. This application is due September 15, 2022, with
36 funding possibly available as soon as January. The grant is funded 80/20. This is a \$1B
37 opportunity each year for five years. The minimum construction grant cost is \$5M. The Town

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would need to come up with additional roads for this project. These would likely need to be contiguous to the other proposed roads in this project. It is unclear yet which additional roads could be used for this application. The local matching funds of \$1M can be raised for this purpose, but more than likely already budgeted road funds would be leveraged as this local match. If the grant is not awarded, there is no obligation on behalf of the Town, and the roads will continue to be rebuilt as previously planned. There is \$600,000 of municipal funds already allocated for this proposal, but an additional \$400,000 will need to be found to reach the \$1M match amount. Stormwater management could also be included in this.

Also, bids are being evaluated for the engineering of the Village project to create materials which would be helpful as part of this application. Two companies have applied to bid on this project at this time. One of the Amherst Nashua Regional Planning Commissioners (NRPC) is attempting to get the Committee grant help through the NRPC.

Chris Shenk suggested including Milford in this grant proposal, regarding extending the sidepath into Milford. Chris Buchanan stated that he would reach out to Milford regarding this idea.

3. Baboosic Greenway easement process update

Chris Buchanan stated that the Committee is currently speaking with 11 different parcel owners along this route. Of the 11 parcels, there seems to be universally positive support for the project. There could be a meeting with Merrimack regarding if they have any interest in this project. Bedford is currently working to purchase a section of the route in their town. There is some discussion regarding making the Bedford and Amherst pieces contiguous. This project is moving along well at this time. If approval is given by these 11 parcel owners, this could represent 50% of the Town's portion of this route.

4. Discussion: BPAC comment on two proposed developments

Chris Buchanan stated that he recently submitted comments from the Committee regarding proposed developments along the Hazen property, and Pond Parish/Grater Road. He submitted those to the Planning Office for review by the Planning Board.

5. NRPC Project Solicitation and GACIT Ten Year Plan

- [https://www.nashuarpc.org/transportation/mpo/fy2025-2034 ten year transportation plan project solicitation.php](https://www.nashuarpc.org/transportation/mpo/fy2025-2034%20ten%20year%20transportation%20plan%20project%20solicitation.php)

Chris Buchanan stated that NRPC is requesting projects from each municipality to be included in the Ten-Year Plan. Currently, part of the Baboosic Greenway is included in the Plan. He will be meeting with the NRPC Commissioner reps Will Ludt, Jason Hennessey, and Danielle Pray, tomorrow regarding this item. He asked the Committee to consider if the entire Greenway should be submitted, or if the project should be submitted in pieces. The State would take any segment and make it a crushed stone rail trail with bridges, etc. The Ten-Year Plan is often procrastinated on, but due to the influx of federal transportation funding, these items will likely be getting pushed through much more quickly. Chris Buchanan stated that the due date for inclusion is in September.

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Rick Katzenberg suggested determining which section of the Greenway the Town has the least chance of funding on its own and include it in the Ten-Year Plan. Chris Buchanan stated that some of these projects would likely include the bridge over the Souhegan River near the schools, a 12'x12' box culvert under Route 101, and any water crossings.

6. Amherst Master Plan - Discussing inclusion of the Multimodal Master Plan

- <https://www.amherstnh.gov/bicycle-pedestrian-advisory-committee/pages/amherst-multimodal-master-plan>

Chris Buchanan stated that one member of the Master Plan Committee stated at the last Master Plan Steering Committee meeting that he specifically does not want the Multimodal Master Plan included in the Amherst Master Plan. This member also said that the Committee advocates for taking private land, which is not actually included in the Multimodal Master Plan. The member also stated that this plan is not rural in character. As the author of the plan, Chris Buchanan stated that he finds this insulting, as he spent five years researching and writing the plan specifically citing the Federal Highway Administration's Rural Design Guide and adapting systematic safety principles to rural designs. It would be prudent to have people attend the next Master Plan Steering Committee meeting to address this claim. All federal grant applications require inclusion of the town's Master Plan section regarding transportation infrastructure. If this section is not in the Master Plan, it will be almost impossible to be awarded a grant. Regarding the taking of land comment, he believes the member was referencing the Amherst Street sidepath, during which zero land was taken. It is illegal for a municipality to take land for a sidepath, only the State has that power. Not only is the Committee not advocating for this, but it is also illegal. There was some pushback against this member's claims, but it still needs to be addressed directly.

Town Administrator Shankle noted that the Planning Board is the group to approve the revised Master Plan for the Town.

7. FY2023 Congressional Designated Spending Request

Chris Buchanan stated that if anyone is able to write a letter to Senator Shaheen's Office on this topic, it is important to do so. There is a template that can be used to draft this letter. Hopefully there will some news on this request in July.

Rick Katzenberg asked if the Conservation Commission (ACC) ever updated its Trail Guide. He suggested that the Committee consider creating a couple of its own brochures for distribution. Chris Buchanan noted that the ACC created a new website to update with information.

Chris Buchanan explained that he received communication from DOT regarding restriping the section of Amherst Street from Courthouse to Birch Park. The proposed design was incorrect. This section will likely be painted in the fall. He is in communication to make sure that the design is corrected.

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126 **8. Approval of Minutes – May 10, 2022**

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128 **Wendy Rannenberg moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 10, 2022, as**
129 **presented. Seconded by Judy Shenk.**
130 **Voting: 5-0-0, motion carried.**

131
132 **Rick Katzenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05pm. Seconded by Wendy**
133 **Rannenberg.**
134 **Voting: 5-0-0, motion carried.**

135
136 *Respectfully submitted,*

137
138 *Kristan Patenaude*

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140 *Minutes approved: July 12, 2022*