



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
February 14, 2023

1 Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan (remote), Wendy Rannenberg, Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk,
2 Michael Merra, Rick Katzenberg, Frank Montesanto – representative from the Amherst
3 Conservation Commission, George Bower (remote), and Tom Christensen.
4 Staff present: Eric Slosek – DPW Director (remote), Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary
5 (remote)

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7 Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

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9 **6. January 10, 2023 minutes – *The Committee took up this item at this time.***

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11 **Wendy Rannenberg moved to approve the meeting minutes of January 10, 2023, as**
12 **presented. Seconded by Michael Merra.**

13 **Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried.**
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15 **1. Warrant Article 30: AMS/SHS School Campus Project**

16 **a. Warrant Article 30**

17 **i. Discussion about warrant article communications**

18 **ii. Saturday before voting March 11 transfer station staffing**

19 **iii. Voting day March 14 booth staffing**
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21 The group discussed the existing signs that can be used for this Warrant Article. Chris
22 Buchanan explained that this will be the third attempt for the School Campus project warrant
23 article. The article this year is worded regarding a Capital Reserve Fund and not about the
24 Middle School/High School.
25

26 Tom Christensen stated that the article itself is very vague. Wendy Rannenberg noted that one
27 person at Deliberative Session asked where this was to be located and Selectman Bill
28 Stoughton did a great job describing the details. She noted that the group should get the word
29 out through the regular channels.
30

31 In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, George Bower stated that the fact that this
32 warrant article speaks to a Capital Reserve Fund does not change the verbiage or description
33 that should be used.
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35 Rick Katzenberg stated that he would work to get a crew of people ready to stand at the
36 Transfer Station with signs prior to Town Meeting. Chris Buchanan noted that he has created
37 a poll for people to indicate when they can participate at the polls on the day of Town

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Meeting. DPW Director Eric Slosek asked that the group fill out a form for campaigning at the Transfer Station, prior to doing so.

b. FY2024 Congressionally Designated Spending Opportunity

Chris Buchanan explained that Senator Shaheen's Office has invited the Committee to resubmit the School Campus project for federally designated spending through the legislature. There is a webinar tomorrow at 11:15am, and he has sent out an invite to the group. The application would need to be submitted by March 10th. The feedback from last year was that this is a great project but would be better with more engineering and a 20% match. He asked that the Committee discuss if it wants to apply for this funding again, and the scope that should be applied for. He explained that, if the larger School Campus project including the bridge was applied for, and Warrant Article 30 passes this spring, the application for this funding could state that the Committee seeks to raise approximately \$140,000 as a local match. This would only amount to approximately 8% of a project that includes the bridge but is still better than nothing. He would not recommend pursuing 100% federal funding for this project at this time and noted that that would be a much more competitive process.

Rick Katzenberg asked about submitting an application for the project, without the bridge. Chris Buchanan stated that this would be a smaller project that would likely allow for a 20% match, if the Warrant Article is approved.

Chris Buchanan noted that he recently received information regarding ARPA funds. Additional ARPA funding may be available for the School Campus project, but this will not be known until March, after this application is done.

Wendy Rannenberg stated that she believes federal funding for the larger project, including the bridge should be sought. It is likely the Town will never be able to afford the cost of the bridge, approximately \$1M, without federal funding.

Tom Christensen noted that there does not seem to be any way to cross the bridge safely at this time. The safety issue needs to be a critical message.

George Bower explained that safely crossing the bridge dramatically opens up the potential number of users for the proposed side path and the facilities around the schools. The impediment to getting back and forth to the schools from 90% of Town is that bridge. There is approximately only half the value to this project, without pursuing the bridge.

In response to a question from George Bower, Eric Slosek stated that the Boston Post Road bridge is not scheduled to be replaced for quite some time. The bridge is currently rated a 6-7 on a scale of 0-9. Eric Slosek explained that he is planning to ask the Board of Selectmen about a Town-wide study of bridges and water crossings to determine what can be done to transition the Town more toward preservation versus replacement.

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In response to a question from George Bower, Chris Buchanan stated there should be a question asked during the webinar tomorrow regarding if this federal funding opportunity allows for volunteer or Town labor hours to count toward the local match.

In response to a question from Chris Shenk, Chris Buchanan explained that former DPW Director Eric Hahn stated that the Boston Post Road bridge is too narrow to have a proper facility put on it, as it exists today. He examined a notion of having a cantilever built on the eastern side of the bridge to create an 8' wide treatment for people. It was determined that this was not practical, and it would be likely cheaper to have a prefabricated bridge placed across the river.

George Bower stated that the Selectmen control the disposition of funds from the unassigned fund balance at the end of the year. If a group of peers is going to again go forward and put together a grant application that seeks funding for the Town, the Selectmen should get on board and find a way to come up with extra funds that could be applied to the match.

The group discussed if the project will be submitted with or without the bridge. George Bower stated that the 20% match is a standard federal match, but this is not required. There are projects that get funded with no local contribution, but there are lots of projects that have no local contribution that get no earmark funds. The Committee has history of the Town supporting this type of work, and this point is made in the application. That is also a big part of the reason that the application was so favorably received last year.

George Bower moved to authorize the Board of Selectmen to submit an application for the congressionally approved funding for the School Campus project. Seconded by Wendy Rannenberg.

Discussion:

There was discussion to amend the motion to specifically include language regarding the Boston Post Road bridge.

George Bower moved to amend the motion to authorize the Board of Selectmen to submit an application for the congressionally approved funding for the School Campus project, including the Boston Post Road bridge. Seconded by Wendy Rannenberg.

Chris Buchanan stated that he spoke to VHB Engineering who has already completed preliminary engineering for this project, but this included a greater extent than the application requires. He asked about the possibility of reducing this engineering down and was told it would cost approximately \$1,000, including some right of way research. He encouraged the Committee to recommend to the Selectmen that up to \$1,500 be expended for this engineering work.

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George Bower suggested utilizing the engineering work that has been done on the larger network and position this as part of the Town's work toward this network, as opposed to just segments of the network. If the group can extract from the overall network costs, this piece for the bridge and the School Campus project, it will paint a great picture. The Committee needs the cost estimate for the segment and the preliminary engineering for the segment. The Committee agreed.

Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried unanimously.

George Bower moved that the Committee authorize the expenditure of up to \$1,500 from the Capital Reserve Fund and recommend the expenditure to the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of providing preliminary engineering information for the application. Seconded by Wendy Rannenberg.

Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried unanimously.

c. FY2024 Congressionally Designated Spending webinar, 2/15 at 11:15am

This item was previously addressed.

d. Consider vote: whether to support town application for FY2024 Congressionally Designated Spending opportunity

This item was previously addressed.

2. Baboosic Greenway North-03

c. Philanthropic and public fundraising opportunity – *The Committee took up this item at this time.*

Chris Buchanan stated that an anonymous philanthropist is willing to donate thousands of dollars for this particular project but does not want to be the only donor to do so. The Bean Foundation offers capital fundraising monies available to projects in Manchester and Amherst, with the capital fundraising limited to 3%-4% of the total project cost. A prospective capital donation from the Bean Foundation could be an equal match to that of the philanthropist. This would be a good opportunity to secure the philanthropy funding. It would require that an application be submitted to the Bean Foundation prior to April 1st.

Judy Shenk moved that the Committee apply to the Bean Foundation funding. Seconded by Michael Merra.

Vote: 6-0-0, motion carried unanimously.

In response to a question from George Bower, Eric Slosek stated that the project cost for the federal application may need to be amended, due to increases in costs. Eric Slosek stated that he will reach out to Hoyle Tanner, who did some of the engineering work on Boston Post Road, to ask what types of increases are being seen for these kinds of projects.

Chris Buchanan noted that this increase may already be included in the VHB Engineering work.

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a. Restriping request status

Eric Slosek stated that he spoke with the DOT project manager for the bridge rehabilitation project for the Baboosic Lake Road bridge over New Hampshire Route 101. That project manager essentially closed the door on the restriping project but left open the possibility of restriping the bridge only. He spoke with the contractor who will be doing the work on the bridge, and the most recent plans from DOT do not include any striping, as previously discussed. He sent the project manager an email reiterating that this is actually two separate projects, as there seemed to be some confusion regarding this project and Amherst Street sidepath. He explained that the CMAQ application is to construct a physical separation/sidepath in that segment, but this separate project is a restriping request which specifically looks to remove an existing line on the northern side of this segment and restripe it to accommodate pedestrian travel over the bridge headed westward towards Milford.

Eric Slosek stated that there was a previous agreement with Eric Hahn signed in August 2021, which he forwarded to the project manager, signed by the State and Town Administrator Shankle for pavement markings. This specifically states a bike lane and does not reference a pedestrian lane. This agreement would require the State to install this lane initially, in conjunction with the soon to be commencing construction project. The Town would then further maintain the area.

Previous emails seem to suggest there was agreeability to this project and willingness on the State's part to entertain the idea. The State specifically asked for a sketch of the project and indicated that engineered plans were not necessary.

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Eric Slosek stated that, as this is a State road, the Town cannot be the one to install this restriping.

b. CMAQ status

Chris Buchanan noted that the Committee will likely not receive word back on this until March.

Eric Slosek stated that the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) met last Thursday. He was unable to attend and was unaware that CMAQ applications were going to be presented by towns that applied during that meeting. Amherst did not make a presentation at that meeting. He subsequently reached out to NRPC to ask if this would affect the Town's application. NRPC assured him that the Town is still in the running and that this should not affect the application. TTAC meets the second Thursday of every month.

c. Philanthropic and public fundraising opportunity

This item was previously addressed.

d. Consider vote: whether to apply to Bean Foundation to be matching donor for fundraising with philanthropist for capital expenses

This item was previously addressed.

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3. Survey request status

This item was not directly addressed at this time.

4. Village Streets Study communications update

a. FAQ

b. Online survey

c. Second public input meeting, 1st week in April

Michael Merra explained that there was a public meeting in October at Wilkins School regarding the potential grant opportunity for this project. There was a sense after the meeting that a better job could have been done at informing the community, especially people who live in the Village, as to what the grant is for. In Thanksgiving or early December work began on public information documents and a mission statement, and FAQs have been created. This document is ready to go to the Selectmen for review and will be sent out in conjunction with a survey that is being crafted with Mobycon. Hopefully this documentation can also be placed on the Town website.

Chris Buchanan stated that the next public meeting will likely be in early April. The intent of that meeting will be a second opportunity for people to provide public input. The online survey is an online version of the exact same experience. All of this is focused around identifying specific places in the Village with certain infrastructure attributes that people like or dislike.

Rick Katzenberg welcomed Frank Montesanto as the Committee's new representative from the Conservation Commission.

5. Other business

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, George Bower stated that it will be appropriate to discuss the zoning warrant articles once it is determined if any of them pass Town Meeting. The changes proposed by the Planning Board and a citizen petitioner will make the layout and construction of bike/ped paths much more difficult across private land.

The group discussed that there will be a clean-up day in Town this spring.

Chris and Judy Shenk exited the meeting.

Chris Buchanan noted that Frank Montesanto is taking over John Harvey's role for the Conservation Commission. He noted that the Committee will not meet in March. In April, the Committee will vote for Chair and Vice Chair. He suggested meeting with Frank Montesanto to discuss the possibility of an RTP, State-managed trail grant. The threshold for the RTP program is very low and easy to get funding from. This would still include an 80/20 match. There is an opportunity through this grant to fund an access way from Baboosic Lake Road

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257 down to the rail bed. This would require some coordination between the Committee and the
258 Conservation Commission.

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260 Eric Slosek noted that he received a call from a resident who has some experience with
261 converting rail beds to trails. He is interested in helping the Committee, if possible.

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263 **6. January 10, 2023 minutes**

264 *This item was previously addressed.*

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266 **Wendy Rannenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08pm. Seconded by Michael**
267 **Merra.**

268 **Vote: 4-0-0, motion carried unanimously.**

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270 *Respectfully submitted,*

271 *Kristan Patenaude*

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273 *Minutes approved April 11, 2023*