



**Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian  
Advisory Committee**

Meeting Minutes - APPROVED  
May 12, 2020

**1. Meeting Venue Change**

Please be advised that the Amherst Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee will be meeting online via Zoom. The meeting will be held at 6:00pm on May 12, 2020.

In order to participate in the public ZOOM meeting, please click the following link to join:

<https://zoom.us/j/92508113216>

Or by telephone: (929) 205-6099

Webinar ID: 874 7033 4432

Meeting attendees: Chris Buchanan – Chair, Rick Katzenberg – Vice Chair, George Bower, Eric Hahn (Non-Voting Advisory Member), Tom Christensen (Non-member Volunteer), Judy Shenk, Chris Shenk, Patrick Daniel, Carolyn Mitchell (Alternate), John Harvey (Alternate), and Wendy Rannenberg (Alternate).

Staff present: Natasha Kypfer – Town Planner, and Kristan Patenaude – Minute taker.

Also present: Will Ludt, Chair of the Heritage Commission.

Chairman Chris Buchanan called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

**2. Will Ludt – B&M Trail**

Will Ludt, Chair of the Heritage Commission, briefed the Committee on a potential project. He explained that the Heritage Commission is considering doing the groundwork for possible grants to build either an exact or ¾ replica of the old Baboosic Lake train stop on the B&M Trail, at the corner of Embankment Road and Walnut Hill Road. He plans to meet with all potential town and civic partners on this project. The Heritage Commission is interested in this project as a way to bring lives lived and the town's rich heritage to the forefront.

Will Ludt explained that the B&M piece of the railroad ran from Milford to Manchester for about 26 years. It went directly through the heart of Amherst. He stated that the community now has the option to enhance this trail. He showed the group a 1906 topographical map and explained that Amherst had three rail stops at that time. The Ponemah Street and Amherst Street stations are both well documented, but there are no known photos of the Baboosic Lake stop. He showed the group an example of a similar structure that the replica could be modeled after. This replica would be a 9'x16' structure,

May 12, 2020

DRAFT

all open, with benches at the rear. When hiking on the B&M Trail, one can see remnants of the original structure about 30-40' off the trail. The potential open station design comes from the B&M Historical Society. He shared a cost estimate for the replica, of approximately \$4,400, plus materials. If the replica is made to a ¾ model, it would cost slightly less. He believes the spot would be a great location for a small respite, or lunch, during a hike, while continuing to keep the town's heritage alive.

Chris Buchanan thanked Will Ludt for his presentation. He is excited about the project and hopes that it pans out.

The group discussed the exact location of the proposed replica. Will Ludt stated that he believes the location would be on town property.

In response to a question from Will Ludt, Chris Buchanan explained that the trails around Walnut Hill Road that lead out to Baboosic Lake converge onto private property. The Committee is currently looking to create a document that will aid in having conversations with private property owners about public trails on their land. The B&M Trail has many splits that will each need to be addressed as parts of the larger puzzle. He explained that this particular segment of the trail is now in the DOT's ten year plan. Although this is currently delayed, at some point the state has allocated \$856,000 to improve the B&M Trail from the Bedford border to Baboosic Lake Road. It is not clear how or what will be done yet. The Committee will also continue to do what it can municipally.

In response to a question from Patrick Daniel, Will Ludt stated that the grant funds being sought will be for the structure itself only.

### **3. Workshop and Document: Public Trails on Private Land**

Chris Buchanan stated that the Committee held a workshop on April 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the creation of a document to provide information to private landowners for public access trails on their land. Four members of the group, two members and two non-members (Chris Buchanan, Wendy Rannenberg, Tom Christensen, and Kristan Patenaude), were assigned the task of drafting the document.

In response to a comment from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan summarized a document from John Harvey explaining that there are a variety of options that can be pursued with private landowners. The optimal preference would be to procure a permanent non-lapsing easement, but there must be other options available for consideration.

Tom Christensen explained that he was overwhelmed during his research by the volume of information available on the topic. He believes that the possibilities are complex and it could be difficult to determine how to best approach some situations.

May 12, 2020

**DRAFT**

Wendy Rannenberg suggested that the Committee could seek help from the Amherst Land Trust (ALT). The ALT has many easements on a number of properties in town and has expertise on how to approach landowners.

George Bower stated that he's been on the ALT for 20 years. The group acquires land through easements and has expertise in writing those easements. It is important to get into the minutia of what the easement language means and to protect the landowner's interests.

Rick Katzenberg stated that he likes the idea of an FAQ document for landowners, either written or audio/visual.

Chris Buchanan stated that the team of four people will continue to work on the draft document, and will then send it to the rest of the Committee for review. He hopes that the Conservation Commission (ACC) and/or ALT might then also review the draft.

George Bower explained that the biggest challenge will be in coming to an agreement between the landowners and the users of the trail. The ALT always uses a lawyer in finalizing easement language, usually Tom Quinn. It is important to get the document well-structured and to understand the timeline involved with getting the document finalized and signed.

Wendy Rannenberg suggested that the Committee make sure that the town doesn't hold the easement, but a third party instead. George Bower stated that this sometimes work, but that if the town is paying for the easement then a third party can't hold it.

Will Ludt commended the ACC and Recreation Department on their effort to get buy-in from the public and abutters during their recent acquisition of the Buck Meadow property. He stated that Jared Hardner did a great job setting expectations for abutters on potential land use.

#### **4. Amherst Street Sidepath Updates**

##### **A. Updates from DPW**

DPW Director, Eric Hahn, stated that the Board of Selectmen currently has a real concern regarding the town budget being sustainable during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a possibility that large projects, such as the Amherst Street road reconstruction, will be postponed. He will continue to plan and layout the side path design.

Chris Buchanan stated that, if the delay occurs, the Committee should clarify to the Board that the side path needs to be built whenever Amherst Street construction does occur. The construction should never occur at a different time than when the side path is built. While he is disappointed, it is important to do what is right for the town.

May 12, 2020

**DRAFT**

In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan stated that the warrant article was written to be non-lapsing for a number of years, and thus the funding for it won't disappear at the end of this fiscal year.

George Bower explained that, if Congress' infrastructure bill to provide funding to local communities passes, the town could be eligible for an 80% federal grant match for this project.

In response to a comment from Patrick Daniel, Eric Hahn explained that the Board of Selectmen has already approved to extend the contract for Continental Paving until June 2021. This should alleviate some concerns regarding any increased cost to the project, if it is delayed.

#### **B. Coordination with Milford**

Chris Buchanan noted that a delay in the side path might also lead to greater efficiencies for the Milford end of the project. He explained that the Milford Planning Board had a high level of interest in carrying through the side path design from Amherst into Milford. Milford may also seek total reconstruction of the roadway in their town, but the earliest this would be considered is for 2021. Thus, a delay may lead to greater efficiencies in the total project.

Eric Hahn stated that he would reach out to the Milford DPW Director regarding this.

George Bower stated that a delay would be disappointing, but it would also lead to increased time to plan and design the side path.

Eric Hahn explained that he, Mike Riccitelli, and Eric Slosek are often out on Amherst Street trying to define the design of the roadway and side path. One way to keep costs down is through efficient design.

In response to a question from Chris Buchanan, Eric Hahn stated that he's not sure if the reconstruction of Old Manchester Road will also be delayed as part of the potential spending freeze. He explained that Old Manchester Road is slated to get a 2" overlay currently. This may offer the opportunity to create a painted advisory shoulder on the road as a temporary solution, until the road is completely reconstructed.

Chris Buchanan and George Bower agreed to walk the road in order to look into the potential for an advisory shoulder

*Natasha Kypfer exited the meeting.*

#### **5. NH DOT 122 & 101 On ramp/Off ramp work notice**

Chris Buchanan explained that the ACC received a letter from DOT regarding scheduled roadwork, September 2020, at the on/off ramps of Route 101 and 122. This effort is conservation focused mitigation. There is an entrance to the B&M Trail near this area

May 12, 2020

**DRAFT**

that could use improvement. He questioned if there is an opportunity to look at this area to see if any changes can be made to this access point during this roadwork.

Eric Hahn stated that he believes this roadwork is only environmentally mitigation focused, dealing with endangered species, etc.

Chris Buchanan stated that a potential argument could be to remove humans from these environmental areas by changing the way they access them. There is an opportunity to improve the access from the road to the base of the trail, but the group would have to argue that this is part of the environmental mitigation effort.

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

Chris Buchanan explained that NRPC has asked him to develop a corridor study with information already collected, in order to take this potential rail trail project to local landowners.

In response to a question from Tom Christensen, Chris Buchanan explained that the 101A corridor project is an NRPC initiative and that the Committee will be involved as a multimodal leader. The B&M Trail project is within the Committee’s purview and will be a chief item for the group to pursue. The first step in this project will be to complete the private landowner document.

## **7. Grant and Other Funding Opportunities**

Chris Buchanan stated that the Committee has more projects than it has funding to complete. The group needs to look at creative funding ideas.

John Harvey explained that he is creating a grant document that speaks to how citizens could donate their land, property, or goods. Ideas, such as “Name a brick/bridge/land” could then be considered a charitable donation to the town. The town has a US Code 26 170(c), which works similarly to a non-profit 501(c)(3). This would be the equivalent of giving a gift to a government agency. He would like to add this document to the Committee’s toolkit of items to use.

Chris Buchanan stated that this idea offers unique opportunities. This would allow people to contribute to the Committee’s mission in a specific way. This is a very attractive way to accelerate certain projects.

John Harvey explained that, using this idea, people could then donate to various town projects all at once. Rick Katzenberg agreed that potential projects could then be posted on the town’s Facebook page in order for interested parties to make donations.

George Bower stated that any contribution to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee would need to be spent during the fiscal year or would be returned to the General Fund. In order to get past that, the group would need to establish a revolving trust fund via a warrant article in order to accumulate funds over years.

May 12, 2020

DRAFT

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216 **8. Other Updates**  
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218 **Carolyn Mitchell moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 16, 2020.**  
219 **George Bower seconded.**  
220 **All in favor.**  
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222 In response to a question from Carolyn Mitchell, Chris Buchanan explained that he is  
223 putting together a project portfolio, similar to what was done for the Amherst Street  
224 project, for the segment between the Souhegan River and Homestead Road. This can then  
225 be used to submit for federal grant projects and to move forward with other funding  
226 possibilities.  
227

228 In response to a question from Rick Katzenberg, Chris Buchanan explained that, once the  
229 portfolio is completed the preparations into engineering for the project can begin, and  
230 DPW will put it in the queue.  
231

232 Chris Buchanan explained that his intent is to finish the portfolio as soon as possible, to  
233 submit it for grants with approval from the Board of Selectmen. The deadline for one of  
234 these grants is June 16<sup>th</sup> and, if that attempt fails, the Committee will need to look at other  
235 ways to fund the project.  
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237 **Rick Katzenberg moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm. Wendy Rannenberg**  
238 **seconded.**  
239 **All in favor.**  
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245 *Respectfully submitted,*

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247 *Kristan Patenaude*  
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250 Minutes approved: June 23, 2020