

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Steering Committee

October 24, 2017 5:30pm Brick School Meeting Room

In attendance: Rick Katzenberg- Chair, Gordon Leedy, Community Development Director; Simon Corson-Planner, Community Development; Bruce Berry, Department of Public Works Director; Anthony Ciampoli, Support Division Lieutenant / Prosecutor, Amherst Police Department; Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner, Nashua Regional Planning Commission; Jared Hardner, Amherst Conservation Commission; Wes Robertson- Amherst Conservation Commission; Patrick Daniel, Recreation Commission Chair; Chris Buchanan, Lieutenant, Amherst Fire Department and Historic District Commission; Chris Shenk; Judy Shenk; Susan Durling; Jeff Buckler; Carolyn Mitchell; Paul Maloney; Heike Vogt

Chairman Rick Katzenberg handed out an agenda and asked the attendees to introduce themselves. The group included residents, town staff, and staff from the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. There was representation from many Town stakeholder groups including the Community Development Office, Police Department, Department of Public Works, Historic District Commission, Conservation Commission, and Recreation Commission in attendance.

Rick discussed the proposed transition from the Safe Routes to School Committee to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Steering Committee. He began by describing the past work of the Safe Routes to School Committee and brought attention to the additional sidewalks the Committee has recommended for implementation. The recommended sidewalks are prioritized. The most important area is on Boston Post Road from Bean Fields to Homestead Road, a sidewalk would allow Middle School and High School children and parents to walk safely on a heavily traveled section of road. The second most important area is a loop from the Town Hall to Jones Road to New Boston Road to Boston Post Road. This is known locally as a popular walking route within Amherst's Historic District. The third priority is from Middle Street to Joshua's Park on Courthouse Street. Following this explanation of the Safe Routes to School Committee's objectives, Rick made a motion to transition the group to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Steering Committee. Vote passed unanimously.

Rick spoke about developing a mission statement for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Steering Committee. The purpose of the statement would be to clarify the responsibilities of the group. A mission statement would help a potential new member understand the Committee's role.

Gordon spoke about the process of creating a trail, bicycle and pedestrian master plan. He shared that Community Development is collecting survey responses and organizing bicycle and pedestrian data from STRAVA. Gordon stated that robust community engagement sessions would happen in the winter following the holiday season. Gordon explained that having a Master Plan and an active group of citizen advocates would put the Town in the best position to get funding for multimodal transportation projects.

Simon made a brief presentation about the trends in survey results and STRAVA data. So far, survey responses point to Boston Post Road as the most common place respondents felt unsafe walking and biking. The STRAVA data shows high numbers of users in the village and

south of the village. Simon opened a discussion about how to best solicit more survey results. Patrick talked about doing a hand out during the Halloween event on the Town Green. Paul Maloney suggested sharing the survey at the Town Dump. Wes Robertson noted the importance of using social media.

There was discussion about the best strategy to garner support for multimodal transportation projects. Susan Durling spoke up about how the Town's rural character should not define the approach towards transportation projects. She continued by noting there are currently no sidewalks on Boston Post Road connecting the High School and Middle School with neighborhoods in the area. Susan shared that the Town's Master Plan regarded Amherst as rural throughout, but lacked meaningful conversation about traffic volume. There was more discussion about the planning process in Town.

Jared Hardner spoke about setting the goal of achieving a small win, meaning implementing a project proposed by the Committee. This small win could showcase the potential for multimodal transportation networks in Town and garner more broad support in the future. Several others shared their support for this approach.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.