

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

January 16, 2018, 6:00pm, Brick School Meeting Room

In attendance: Rick Katzenberg, Chair; Simon Corson, Planner, Community Development; Judy Shenk; Chris Shenk; Chris Buchanan, Lieutenant, Fire Department and Secretary, Historic District Commission, Susan Durling, Carolyn Mitchell; Mark Bender, Milford NH Town Administrator; Patrick Daniel, Recreation Commission Chair; Matt Waitkins, Senior Transportation Planner, Nashua Regional Planning Commission; Jared Hardner, Conservation Commission; Jeff Buckler; Paul Maloney

Chairman Rick Katzenberg called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Rick began by asking for discussion about the proposed mission statement. Chris Buchanan read the current verbiage out loud: *The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee's Mission Statement is to facilitate a town-wide network to enhance and encourage safe, multi-use transportation for connectivity, recreation, and health through the development of strategic and actionable plans.*

Jared asked what the word “network” referred to. Chris B. explained the intent was to describe a transportation network. Jared suggested the language, “a town-wide multi-use network”. Patrick Daniel supported this change. Several other agreed this change made the mission statement easier to understand. There was further discussion about changing the language in the statement to match the intent of the Committee. Jared made a motion to approve the Mission Statement as edited. Pat seconded. All aye. The approved version of the Mission Statement was read aloud: *The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee's Mission Statement is to facilitate a town-wide multi-use network that enhances and encourages safety, connectivity, recreation, and health through the development of strategic and actionable plans.*

Rick asked Chris B. to share some opening remarks. Chris spoke about taking a holistic approach rather than a project-based approach. Chris suggested that everyone on the Committee comes with an idea, or project they would like to see implemented. However, the best approach is to establish a community-wide mission first, and pursue specific projects later in the process. Chris also shared that the group should engage the public throughout this process.

Rick asked the Subcommittee Chairs to summarize the discussions they had following the last Committee meeting. Patrick, serving as the Chair of the Trails Subcommittee, shared that his group discussed the 8 to 80 initiative that the Recreation Department has adopted. The 8 to 80 initiative directs government leaders to create and provide recreation activities for people that are eight years old and eighty years old. Patrick said he led a visioning activity about identifying the, “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of trail-related bicycle and pedestrian planning. The “who” is people 8 to 80 years old. The “what” is a network of multimodal trails within Town that also can serve as connecting with trails from other towns. The “where” is to focus the trails on points of interest or activities within Town using existing or new trails. The “when” is to be determined. The “why” is to create mobility throughout the Town in a safe environment that is not just for recreation. The “how” is to involve and engage public opinion through surveys, door to door conversations, mailings, and Town events like the 4th of July Celebration.

Rick interjected to ask if the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” process makes sense to the Committee. Several people spoke in support of this process.

Patrick shared the group discussed a need to start formulating a strategic plan for our vision. During this subcommittee meeting, a question was asked about how bicycle and pedestrian transportation fits in the Town current and upcoming Master Plan. The group also talked about a document that the Amherst Conservation Commission and Chris Buchanan worked on in 2012.

There was a discussing about how projects prioritized in a bicycle and pedestrian master plan could be funded. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program and Recreational Trail Program (RTP) were mentioned by Matt Waitkins and Simon Corson.

Judy and Chris Shenk were not present for the last Roads Subcommittee meeting. Chris B. acted as Chair, the group discussed the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of road-related bicycling and pedestrian planning. Chris mentioned that the Roads group came to similar conclusions as the Trails group. The “who” is all audiences following the 8 to 80 framework. The “what” is to provide a safe environment for multi-modal road designs that the Town could build during routine road reconstruction. The “when” is to incorporate into the master plan with the probability of implementing specific projects. The “where” is town-wide with data-based prioritization.

Simon explained that the projects that have been awarded CMAQ or RTP funding have provided data to support their applications. The Planner continued that data includes a variety of sources like STRAVA, or a group of elderly women discussing their transportation needs. Matt Waitkins added that successful project applications also reference a recommendation that appears in a planning document.

Chris B. said the “why” is to create multi-modal mobility throughout the Town in a safe environment. The “how” is to integrate the best practices of bicycle and pedestrian planning in the *Transportation Chapter* of the Town’s Master Plan. Chris B. suggested a menu of road options be included.

Several people asked questions about the Conservation Commissions inventory of trails. Jared explained that there is a list of trails on the Town website, under *Discover Amherst*, and *Conservation Commission Recreational Trails*. On this page, there are brief descriptions of the trails including their length and level of difficulty. Jared stated that the Nashua Regional Planning Commission also maintains a map of trails in Amherst. This map can be found by going to the Town website, under *Departments, Community Development, and Live Maps (GIS)*.

There was conversation about what to do next as a Committee. Simon suggested having a formal discussion about the Committee’s mission with the Board of Selectmen. He also recommended members of the Committee to continue to reach out to residents to gather input. Several people suggested that the group identify key destinations, priority segments of road and trail to provide more clarity of purpose. Chris Shenk said if these areas were identified and articulated by the Committee, the group’s outreach efforts would be more effective. Several agreed that having a defined vision is important when having conversations with the public.

There was consensus that the Committee would like to tabulate the data that has been collected and create a strategic vision that goes beyond the Mission Statement to include specific areas and destinations of interest.

Rick adjourned the meeting at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Simon Corson