

TOWN OF AMHERST  
Heritage Commission

June 8, 2023

**APPROVED**

In attendance: Will Ludt, Chair; Conor Frain, Lisa Montesanto, Tom Grella – Board of Selectmen  
Ex-Officio, Linda Zuerndorfer  
Staff in attendance: Kristan Patenaude – Recording Secretary (remote)  
Also present: Chris Buchanan, Chair of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Chris  
Shenk, Judy Shenk, and Tom Christensen, Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee members

**1. Roll Call to Order**

Will Ludt called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:**

**2. “Throw Back” Thursday – Amherst Heritage**

Will Ludt stated that Tom Grella has been working to get the Commission a site walk of the mineral springs off Spring Road. Tom Grella explained that there is a small stream with water bubbling out of a pipe in this location. Will Ludt noted that this was a destination during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Commission agreed to try to tour this location in August.

**3. Potential for the Re-naming of Several Trails in Amherst – Chris Buchanan**

Chris Buchanan, Chair of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, explained that one of the group’s main projects is the Baboosic Greenway, a regional initiative that will hopefully someday span five towns and run across two railbeds to make a shared path. The branch through town is the Manchester-Milford Branch. It was constructed solely to drive a competing railroad company out of business, but never turned a profit for the railroad. Eventually, it was decommissioned, and the ties and rails were pulled in 1930. The NH DOT took over the route and held it until the 1980s, when it was split into individual parcels which were absorbed into other parcels in the towns. It will likely take decades to get all parties along the route to agree to a shared easement. Parcels that do not wish to participate have to be bypassed. The Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee, along with other entities in other towns, are seeking to piece together the route.

Chris Buchanan explained that much of the route in question would run from Bedford into Amherst. There is a roadside portion along Amherst Street that runs into Milford to the Granite Town Rail Trail, which then runs to the Massachusetts border. Another portion in Amherst runs to the south, which could one day connect to the School Campus project. Currently, the NH DOT has awarded the project \$1.9M in funding to expand approximately three miles. A 20% match will be fundraised for. It will take several years to secure the matching funding. The State funding comes in two phases. It would extend a roadside treatment along Amherst Street/Boston Post Road to Walnut Hill Road along the railbed, with some potential deviations along that route. Approximately 0.7 miles of this will be along the roadside. Near Birch Park, there would be a ramp that would lead down to the railbed.

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45 In response to a question from Will Ludt, Chris Buchanan stated that it is unclear what fiscal  
46 years this would occur in until the Governor reviews the proposal this summer. The funding will  
47 not be available earlier than 2025 and could expand until 2029. This is proposed to be a shared  
48 use path. The Committee has put together a draft document with language regarding what will be  
49 allowed on the path. It is not intended for ATVs or snow mobiles.

50  
51 In response to a question from Tom Grella regarding potential water crossings, Chris Buchanan  
52 explained that water crossings have tripled in cost since 2018. He explained that there is one  
53 water crossing along the route and a boardwalk is proposed in that area because it is not very  
54 large.

55  
56 Chris Buchanan explained that the current State 10-Year Plan named this project the Baboosic  
57 Greenway. Amherst owns portions of the railbed already. The Conservation Commission  
58 maintains part of that route along what is called the B&M Trail. It seems logical to call the route  
59 now what it will be called when it is built. This could be useful for fundraising and utility. The  
60 B&M Trail name does not necessarily represent the history of the route accurately. The  
61 Conservation Commission asked for the Heritage Commission's opinion on this.

62  
63 Will Ludt stated that he likes the name Baboosic Greenway but would like to also pay homage to  
64 the B&M (Boston & Maine) side. He suggested Baboosic Greenway-B&M Trail. Once the name  
65 is lost, it will be lost forever.

66  
67 Conor Frain asked how parts of the Greenway will be delineated. He suggested that this could be  
68 the B&M segment of the Baboosic Greenway, as it will stretch through a number of towns. Some  
69 local place names could be incorporated to allow for better place finding.

70  
71 Chris Buchanan explained that the Greenway is proposed to run southward from Amherst Street,  
72 crossing Boston Post Road, under Route 101, with some easements to the south already in place.  
73 He agreed that the entire project could have one name, with ways to identify locations and the  
74 history of specific segments. This could include historic markers along the way.

75  
76 Will Ludt asked about including an existing abutment located behind Shaw's in Milford into the  
77 route. Chris Buchanan noted that this would likely cost approximately \$6M.

78  
79 Chris Buchanan stated that he would like to see naming conventions for the route created, such  
80 as heritage-based or donor-based. This plan needs to be finalized between now and 2026. The  
81 project will be called the Baboosic Greenway by the State. In terms of renaming a portion of the  
82 route through the Conservation Commission, this can be done as the groups see fit.

83  
84 Lisa Montesanto stated that she would like to consider this item further. She noted that she  
85 would not like to lose the B&M Trail name. She asked why this was decided to be called the  
86 Baboosic Greenway. Chris Buchanan explained that this was the name given due to the  
87 significance of Baboosic Lake along the route.

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The Commission agreed it would like to consider this further.

Chris Buchanan noted that the Baboosic Greenway is a hidden gem in Town and suggested all walk it at some point.

#### **4. Curran Property – Support for Historic Resources**

Will Ludt stated that the Commission needs to work with the Conservation Commission regarding how it will contribute to the mill area on this site. A new trail may cross near this site. Hopefully this can be made into an educational location along the trail.

#### **5. Recommendations for Heritage Commission Off-site**

The Commission noted that it will visit the mineral springs on Spring Road in August. Will Ludt stated that he would like to revisit Melendy Farm on the Space Force Station site.

Will Ludt asked that the Commission review the Rules of Procedures document in order to have a discussion in August.

#### **6. Roundtable**

Will Ludt stated that he received an email from Peter Lyon, Chair of the Board of Selectmen, regarding installing LED lights along the Green area. This should not change the color of the lights and should not have much glare. There will be a presentation to the Historic District Commission next week on this proposal. He suggested that Heritage Commissioners attend, if possible.

Will Ludt explained that last night's Planning Board meeting dealt mostly with the Jacobson proposal on Christian Hill Road. He spoke to language in an RSA regarding the need for developers and the Planning Board to consider planning lots to fit in with the existing landscape. There could be natural and historic resources in the area, and these should be considered. Lisa Montesanto stated that there are stonewalls throughout the property and a huge sugar maple that must be over 100 years old. She has noted these items to the Planning Board. Will Ludt noted that it would be nice if the properties could be developed to fit in with the landscape and heritage features of the site. He has asked the Planning Board to consider similar language on other proposed developments but has not heard back from them.

Will Ludt noted that there will not be a Heritage Commission meeting in July.

#### **7. Minutes May 11, 2023**

**Conor Frain moved to approve the meeting minutes of May 11, 2023, as presented.**

**Seconded by Lisa Montesanto.**

**Vote: 3-0-2 [W. Ludt and T. Grella abstaining].**

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134           **The meeting was adjourned at 7:12pm.**

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136   *Respectfully submitted,*

137   *Kristan Patenaude*