



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

6 Baboosic Lake Road

Town Hall - Lower level - East Wing

Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

603 424-3531

Fax 603 424-1408

www.merrimacknh.gov

MERRIMACK BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN WORK GROUP APPROVED MINUTES Tuesday, July 15, 2014

Planning Board Members Present: Robert Best, Alastair Millns, Desirea Falt, and Alternate Nelson Disco.

Others Present: Public Works Director Rick Seymour, Planning and Zoning Administrator Jillian Harris, and Assistant Planner Donna Pohli.

1. Call to Order.

Chair Desirea Falt called the Merrimack Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Work Group (Group) meeting to order at 7:31pm in the Memorial Conference Room.

2. Project Scope and Funding.

Member Best wanted to bring to the Group's attention that there was communication between the Town Manager and Community Development Director indicating that the Town Council would not approve any expenditure (including matching expenditures) for the Bike/Ped plan to be created or implemented. Member Best expressed that a sidewalk plan is still needed per DOT to approve any sidewalk in their portion of D.W. Highway and that there are other options to address this important issue without Town funding.

Member Disco expressed his disappointment and wished the group could have gotten help from a professional group such as from NRPC. Member Best opined that the Group should try to see how far it can get without needing outside paid help.

3. Preliminary Goals.

The Group discussed that the priority is resolving the conflict with DOT so that Developers are not caught in the middle. Legal advice may be necessary before coming up with an official solution.

Director of Public Works Rick Seymour will contact the City of Nashua to find out the legal avenue they use regarding payment in lieu of sidewalks and get a copy of their regulations/ordinance to use as an example.

Chair Falt agreed that the priorities are the DOT situation and determining how to use payment in lieu of sidewalks more efficiently and then to branch out to discuss what to do in regards to active transportation. She listed goals of establishing study areas, gaining community participation, recruiting areas of need and determining the best action, identifying funding possibilities, and creating the formal document before starting implementation. The Group discussed using Bedford's Bike/Ped Plan as an example.

Member Best thought the Group should consider Planning and Zoning actions that encourage development in places the Town wants to increase walkability similar to performance zoning tactics.

4. Project Timeline.

The Group will break the process into pieces starting with simply reviewing documents and focusing on resolving the DOT's requirement for a plan. The goal was set to have a response to DOT by the end of the year, but that first, the Group should communicate further with DOT District 5 to understand what exactly they would require. Then payment in lieu of sidewalks will need to be set into place more efficiently which will require a comparison of what sidewalks cost to construct versus what the Planning Board captures from developers. Public Works Director Seymour stated that the sidewalk from Connell Plaza to Chamberlain Bridge was \$286 per linear foot which is the high-end and the bare minimum sidewalk would be closer to \$34 per linear foot. The Public Works Department will update the sidewalk map to include recent projects.

The time requirement of 6 years will need to be explored further so that the money is not lost before being used for sidewalks.

The idea of asking Town Council for their thoughts on payment in lieu of sidewalks may be a good idea as well as how the Group can spend the money for sidewalks from the payment in lieu fund. Staff will research how long the payment in lieu of sidewalks has been included in the Subdivision/Site Plan Regulations.

5. Data Review.

Member Disco announced to the Group that a law lecture series on the topic of impact fees is going to occur on October 15th in Derry.

Several members of the Group are reading the same book on walkability. Chair Falt will reach out to Nik Coates for other recommendations to read. She will also send out the Bedford Bike/Ped Plan for the Group to read individually.

The Group reviewed the existing sidewalk map from the most recent Master Plan Update and discussed where gaps existed along D.W. Highway.

6. Community Involvement and Outreach. .

Chair Falt will write invitations to different organizations that the Group decided on at its June meeting.

The Group discussed where bikeability fits into their priorities and it was decided that at the big picture bikeability will be included but that sidewalks are the priority.

Chair Falt discussed what Bedford had done for Community Outreach and suggested that this Group try some of the same tactics such as being present at the Farmer's Market, sending out surveys, conducting interviews, etc.

7. Legal Questions.

The biggest legal question is in regards to how to determine payment in lieu of sidewalks and how to work within the six-year timeframe.

8. Minutes-June 24, 2014.

The minutes of June 24, 2014 were approved with no changes, by a vote of 4-0-0, on a motion made by Member Disco and seconded by Member Millns.

9. Adjourn.

The July 15, 2014 meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm, by a vote of 4-0-0, on a motion made by Member Millns and seconded by Member Disco.