



Town of Merrimack, New Hampshire

Community Development Department

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Planning - Zoning - Economic Development - Conservation

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MERRIMACK BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN WORK GROUP

DRAFT MINUTES

Tuesday, November 4, 2014

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

Others Present: Assistant Planner Donna Pohli.

1. Call to Order.

Desirea Falt called the Merrimack Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Work Group (Group) meeting to order at 7:30pm in the Matthew Thornton Meeting Room.

2. Review Individual Maps.

The Group discussed Bob's version of a marked up Town map to indicate sections of town where sidewalks should be constructed either along the frontage of the lot or within that section of Town if the applicant chose the payment-in-lieu option. Bob's map also indicated where the initial priorities for sidewalks to be located are (Rt. 3, Continental Blvd, Baboosic Lake Rd, Rt. 101A).

Nelson had the idea to use the Souhegan River as one of the boundaries rather than using Amherst Road which could cause confusion as to what side of the road the project is versus which section of town the sidewalk is constructed in. A compromise could be that Amherst Road to the south is one section rather than splitting Amherst Road down the middle. The Group decided that Bob's map was a good starting point as a visual to bring to the Town Manager and Town Council but that a draft watermark should be added to clarify that it is just a preliminary depiction.

The Group decided that the Town Center and Baboosic Lake Road to Madeline Bennett Way would be priorities to fill in the gaps to create a full sidewalk. The north end of town may not have as much foot traffic as the Town Center, and that the south end of town may be the least of the priority areas in the long run. Nelson felt that the priority should be to fill in the gaps of existing sidewalks first.

3. Discuss Letter to Town Council.

Desirea will edit the letter and send it to the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager for their advice and will ask for an appointment on a work day between 9am and 1pm so that other Group members and staff can also attend. Nelson wondered if there were any examples of payment-in-lieu of sidewalks with a Town split into sections in New Hampshire to cite in the letter rather than other states. When Nelson asked why a Town Council representative was not attending the Group's meetings, Bob responded that the invite was extended but that it seems no Town Council representative was sent.

4. Draft Questions for HEAL NH, Active Living Coordinator.

The Group was reminded that Nik Coates of HEAL NH, would attend the December 9, 2014 meeting to answer any questions the Group has. It was determined that the Livable Walkable Toolkit seems too complex and would be an enormous undertaking. Therefore, the Group needs to simplify it. The Group decided it would be better to go through the Toolkit process in greater detail and then ask Nik next month how to go about simplifying the process. The Group agreed that they would each draft questions on their own time and bring them to the December 9th, 2014 meeting.

5. Discuss Livable Walkable Toolkit.

The Group wants to use the existing sidewalk map and other existing materials such as the Conservation Commission trail maps as part of the assessment process. Alastair will circulate the research data (includes sidewalks, wide shoulders, etc.) he has already compiled on his own regarding Rt. 3 to the rest of the Group. He will do further research on Baboosic Lake Road, Continental Boulevard, and Manchester Street.

Bob shared that the site plan regulations could possibly require bike racks at commercial projects in the future. Alastair will take photos of the Dover/Durham example of the bike lane painting and road widths to share with the Group. Desirea pointed out that more education would need to occur for both bicyclists and motorists if certain lane layouts were installed. Bob and Desirea also want to catalog trail systems as well, but not necessarily add infrastructure. The idea is to connect trails to sidewalks such as Bill Wilkes' idea behind the Atrium site. Bob felt that the Group should still consider loops and that each loop would need a parking area like Horsehill Nature Preserve has.

Desirea felt that a workshop for the data collection, etc. was not necessary and that in general the first page of the toolkit spreadsheet could be handled without seeking public input. The scorecard workshop is further explained in Appendix A. Nelson wondered when the Group should start getting the community involved. It was determined that after the data has been collected, a workshop could be held to get the community's input on what action steps should occur. Desirea went through the scorecard process and survey. It was determined that in a survey, questions could be drafted similarly to the Safe Routes to School survey. But rather than "Do you walk to school?" and "What prevents you from walking to School" the questions could involve convenience stores, restaurants, etc. The Group realizes it may not be realistic to expect small convenience stores in the residential areas west of the Everett Turnpike. Nelson also reminded the Group that we do not want any legal issues regarding spot zoning.

6. Other Items of Concern.

Nelson brought the NRPC map indicating locations of crashes involving bicyclists and crashes and asked Donna to make smaller copies of it to have available.

7. Minutes—October 14, 2014.

The minutes from the October 14, 2014, meeting were approved, as submitted, by a vote of 3-0-1 on a motion made by Nelson Disco and seconded by Bob Best. Alastair Millns abstained.

8. Adjourn.

The November 4, 2014 meeting of the Merrimack Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Work Group was adjourned at 9:01pm, by a vote of 4-0-0 on a motion by Bob Best and seconded by Nelson Disco.