

Town of New London BPAC Meeting Minutes Summary

Date: August 21, 2025 5:00PM

Facilitator: Russ Moore, Chair

Recorder: Grant Smith

Attendees: Emily Campbell, Ed Conduct, Donald Eberly, Judith Ferreira, Woody Canaday, Grant Smith, Bebe Casey

Excused Absence: Erica Brown

Meeting called to order: 5:01 PM- Russ Moore

Russ provided brief introductory remarks including conveying sincere appreciation to Putnam Kidder, Grant Smith, Judi Ferreira and Woody Canady for setting up and staffing the Free Kid's Bike Tune-up Event at the Dept. of Recreation sponsored Strawberry Festival.

Ashley Seybold, Town Administrator, graciously took time from her busy schedule to introduce herself to the Committee. Although she was not able to stay for the remainder of the meeting she conveyed the importance of the Committee's work to our community.

Despite Putnam Kidder's very best efforts the video recording and computer projection functions of the AV equipment were not available for this meeting. The meeting was recorded in audio format only.

I. Sidewalk and Crosswalk Improvements

Key Developments

- Crosswalk Paint Delineations: Newly applied markings are sharp and clearly defined, representing a significant improvement in pedestrian visibility and safety. Newly installed mid-road pedestrian stand-up pylons contribute to traffic slowing. The yellow "piano key" crosswalk markings in Elkins Village are highly visible. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Sam Clarke and DPW for these improvements.

Sidewalk Reconstruction: The Town has committed to phased sidewalk upgrades from Siemens Road to Hannaford's, as outlined in the recent memo. This multi-year plan is viewed as a commendable investment in infrastructure.

- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): Sam has successfully integrated the full sidewalk plan into the CIP, including funding strategies, with the goal of accelerating implementation.

- Acknowledgment of Contributions: Sam and his team were again praised by Bebe for their efficiency, cost-conscious solutions, and overall excellence in execution. Their work is considered exemplary within the capital planning process.

II. Walkable New London Initiative

Strategic Opportunities

- **Planning Window:** Should major capital projects (e.g., DPW/police facility) not proceed in the upcoming fiscal year, a unique opportunity exists for the committee to advance small-scale pedestrian initiatives.
- **Community Support:** Strong interest has been expressed by local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and residents in developing designated walking routes.
- **Russ Moore and Mark Vernon (Conservation Commission)** toured the downtown area by foot to explore potential CC trailhead intersections with existing roads and streets. Woody Canady inquired as to which intersections or areas would this proposed trail be routed. Russ responded that this level of detail remains to be confirmed.
- **Infrastructure-Light Approach:** The initiative emphasizes existing, low-traffic, and relatively flat downtown routes, minimizing the need for major construction.
- **Community Engagement:** Plans include recruiting current walkers and new participants to provide informal feedback on route conditions and traffic patterns.

Russ shared a proposed project timeline and briefly described proposed routes:

Downtown Walker Recreational Loop: 3 miles

Conservation Commission Trailheads Naure Loop: 5 miles

Historic New London Trail: 4 miles

All Accessible Gentle Terrain Nature Trail (Messer Farm or similar): 1 mile

Way Station Concept

Proposed Location

- **Primary Site:** Behind the Chamber of Commerce information booth—chosen for accessibility, central access, and partnership potential.
- **Alternate Site:** Near the fire station/Morgan Hill area (part of a broader pocket park concept); however, concerns about parking and DOT approvals make this less favorable.

Design Features

- Benches, landscaping, directional signage, and a posted map (modeled after Pleasant Lake signage).
- Access to Main Street and Pleasant Street.
- Potential for seasonal attractions such as pop-up markets, art displays, and food trucks.
- Estimated Cost: \$40,000–\$50,000
- Funding Sources:
 - o Volunteer labor and materials (Conservation Commission, Kearsarge Trail Coalition)
 - o Private contributions (potential 1:1 match up to \$20,000)
 - o Town funding commitment (\$20,000)

Proposed Project Timeline:

BPAC Planning Work Session: September

Planning Board Presentation: October 28

Select Board Proposal: December 4

Warrant Article (if needed): December

Community Feedback Tools Development: November–February

Construction and Launch: Fall 2026

Proposed Opening Ceremony: November 15, 2026

Committee Involvement

- Active participation from all committee members is essential.
- While no formal vote is required, a shared commitment to the concept and execution is Critical

III. Bunker Road and Elkins Village Traffic Concerns

Ron Rakow, New London resident presented to the BPAC continued neighborhood concerns regarding motorist speed and the congestion of motorists, walkers, bicyclists, boaters and beach

goers in the narrow and winding roads in Elkins Village. Ron provided photos of several hazardous intersections. Bunker Road Safety Concerns- Residents of Bunker Rd Statements

Problem Overview

- Hazardous Intersections: Bunker Road/Pleasant Street, Elkins Road/Wilmot Center Road, and Lakeshore Drive are high-risk areas due to blind corners and speeding.
- Shared Use: Roads are used by pedestrians, cyclists, skiers, and motorists, creating complex safety challenges.
- Speeding: Commuters frequently travel at 35–40 mph, especially during peak hours.

Existing Measures

- Feedback Signs: Installed on Bunker Road after sustained advocacy; have reduced speeds locally.
- Crosswalk Signage: Effective near the beach, but less so near the Masonic Lodge.

Proposed Solutions

- Three-Way Stops: Recommended at all three hazardous intersections to:
 - o Reduce collisions
 - o Slow traffic in pedestrian-heavy zones
 - o Discourage cut-through driving
- Supplemental Measures:
 - Vegetation trimming to improve sightlines
 - Enhanced signage and enforcement
 - Traffic and speed studies required for implementation
 - Consideration of cost-effective alternatives like speed tables

Community Input

- A collaborative discussion with town officials is recommended to explore feasible options.

IV. Kearsarge Trails Coalition (KTC) Update:

Grant Smith provided the following information:

Organizational Progress

- **Board Formation:** Grant Smith formed Board of Directors has been established to guide the initiative.
- **Local Chapter Development:** Discussions are underway to form a regional New England Mountain Bike Association(NEMBA) chapter supporting multi-use trails. NEMBA representatives have already provided organizational and technical support to the KTC.

Benefits of NEMBA Affiliation

- **Turnkey Infrastructure:** Includes nonprofit status and insurance for volunteer efforts.
- **Marketing Membership:** Streamlined promotional tools; 50% of membership fees return to the local chapter, and 100% of direct donations remain local.

Conservation Commission Engagement

- The initiative was formally presented to the Conservation Commission.
- The Commission has offered three representatives to support ongoing efforts.

The next BPAC meeting will be Thursday, October 15th at 5PM Whipple Hall.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:28 PM