

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes September 19, 2024  
Whipple Memorial Town Hall  
5:00 PM

PRESENT: Members John Bouton, Erica Brown, Vice-Chair Emily Campbell, Woody Canaday, Ed Condict, Kim Hallquist, Chair Russ Moore, and Grant Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Kim Hallquist, Recreation Director Putnam Kidder, Conservation Committee member Mark Vernon

CALL TO ORDER: Russ Moore called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He indicated a planned agenda of 30 minutes to explore bicycle trail designations and 20 minutes to discuss sidewalk repairs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes from the July 9, 2024 meeting were circulated. Upon motion by Woody Canaday, seconded by Grant Smith, they were unanimously approved.

MAIN STREET UPDATE: Russ reported on the water main project and its impact on the sidewalks along Main Street. Working with the contractor, the Department of Public Works will restripe the sidewalks affected by the paving. The contractor is responsible for repairing or replacing any water main line segments breaks and/or addressing any disruptions in flow before the final payment is made from the Water District. This 12 month settlement period projected to end by November 1, 2025 mitigates against the Town repairing or replacing sidewalks before that date in the affected area.

DISCUSSION OF BICYCLE TRAILS: Russ called on Grant Smith to discuss framing a vision for a bicycle trail system that might integrate downtown businesses and potentially use conservation land. Grant indicated that conversations with the Upper Valley Mountain Biking Association yielded a template for planning. Entry-level trails are most in demand, taking into account families and the need for ADA accessibility. Representatives from the New London Conservation Commission and Town Recreation Department indicated their openness to further discussion. Members of the public were then welcomed to provide comments on their wishes for and thoughts about bicycling in New London. Several speakers introduced the potential positive impacts of bicycle trails on tourism, economic development, and regional integration within the Upper Valley. Bicycling seasonality extends from after mud season to the end of October. The potential for bicycle trails to incorporate seasonal multi-use such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing also surfaced, even as the Conservation Commission indicated a preference not to introduce intensive mountain bike riding on popular walking trails. Several local areas, including the Webb Forest logging road and roads under the powerlines, surfaced as good potential sites for exploring landowner agreements for access. Closing this section of the meeting, Russ cited the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the Town, a “Complete Streets” approach

to streetscape planning, and the possibility of a working committee on this particular segment of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee's work.

**DISCUSSION OF SIDEWALK REPAIRS AND CONSTRUCTION:** At 5:43, Russ shifted the discussion to considerations of budgeting and sidewalk repairs and construction. Appointed by the Select Board, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has no direct funding mechanism. Individual requests for funding projects go to the Board of Selectmen for inclusion in the budget beginning July 1, 2025. Following presentations to the Select Board, funding proposals go to the Town Budget Committee, which begins its work in November. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee would do well to undertake its planning soon for any monies beyond the Department of Public Works budget for sidewalk repairs and construction.

Several members reported on a walk to evaluate sidewalk conditions, with intersections at Pleasant Street & Main Street and those at NH Route 114 & Newport Road receiving special attention. Russ reported on conversations with Public Works Director Sam Clarke about sidewalk conditions and funding for construction, renovation, rehabilitation, and maintenance of town sidewalks. For efficiency's sake, Sam will appreciate having one point person from this Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

In the Public Comment portion of the meeting, the Committee heard an appeal from a Robert Bowers, a New London resident, who urged immediately addressing pedestrian mobility issues around Woodcrest Village Assisted Living and the areas disrupted by the water main project, which he indicated has stalled sidewalk improvements for five years. He proposed repairing sidewalks not within the envelope of the water main project, citing the sidewalk from the Cleveland property on Main Street to Cougar Court and then on to Seamans Road as one potential area that could be addressed without interfering with the agreement with the contractors responsible for the water main. Bob requested that the Committee form a Sidewalk Subcommittee. The Committee's response to this request acknowledged the serious existing hazards posed by the current conditions posed by sidewalk. The Committee is working closely with Sam Clarke, Director DPW, to develop a plan to reconstruct and/or repair existing sidewalks. of Public Works should complete sidewalk work or whether it should go out to bid by private contractors also weighed as open questions in the Committee's thinking. The Committee opted not to form a subcommittee at this time as the entire Committee is engaged in exploring and addressing the improvement of downtown sidewalks. The Committee took the resident's concern under advisement.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Upon motion by Woody Canaday, seconded by Ed Condict, members of the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Bouton