

Minutes

Bicycles, Walkways & Trails Committee Meeting – Virtual

Thursday April 1st, 2021 6:30pm

Katie Haley	David Kinsman	Ingrid Kellas	Ray Ryan	Victor Kellas
JD Lichtman	Holly Foster	Therese Mergen	Meredith McClurg	
James Tasse (from Bike Coalition of Maine)				

Haley called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Committee approved minutes from the meeting on Feb 18th, 2021.

James Tasse from Bike Coalition of Maine (BCM) introduced himself and he was invited to the meeting by Ingrid. James described the history and mission of BCM which focuses on making pathways and roads safer for both cyclist and pedestrians. BCM works with communities, municipalities and DOT on programing, policies and infrastructures. They provide road safety education, help communities with infrastructure planning and are advocates for bike safety legislation on the state level. James mentioned that MBC has two large annual events, Bike Maine and a Bike Swap. (The Bike Coalition of Maine website has announced that Bike Maine 2021 has been cancelled, and that they are still trying to find a Covid safe way to help Mainers swap/buy/sell their bikes.)

James reviewed the RERC and offered his feedback and advice. In general, he thought that it was a good plan. He agrees that Fryeburg can create its own brand identity (goal 1 in RERC) that includes an outdoor recreation economy because North Conway, the Saco River and the White Mountains are all so close. We discussed the local attractions and noted that Fryeburg does not many trails for mountain biking.

James asked if the town of Fryeburg has formally accepted the RERC as the official town plan. If it does become the official town plan this committee will need to be advocates for action related to the plan. Cooperation between public and private land owners will be key in developing new trails and sidewalks, increasing connectivity (goal 2 in RERC). James mentioned a tool called a License Agreement, that other towns have used to create partnerships with private land owners to allow public use of their lands. James will send a copy of this license agreement to Katie.

Then the committee had a discussion about the current DOT project in Fryeburg. Fryeburg received a grant several years ago to help create safe routes to school and from that there is now a new sidewalk from FA and Molly-Ockett to the Rec center. James had several questions about what is DOT's plan for downtown Fryeburg, ie parking, bike lanes, width of car lanes etc. James mentioned that front end angle parking in downtown is not safe for bikers and parallel parking or a bike lane with a parking buffer would be better. Katie said she thinks that DOT's plan includes parallel parking on main street. James said that BCM can help with providing the correct signage for roads, for example putting up Bike Share signs along River Road because there is not enough room for a dedicated bike lane. James emphasized that we need to take a look at the DOT plan so that we can collaborate with them soon to make sure the end

result includes considerations for safe walkways and possibly a bike lane. James also said that the town of Fryeburg is the customer for DOT and they are often willing to take the town's priorities into consideration. Katie said that she would try to get the plan and share it with James and that he can give more detailed recommendations. James ended with offering his support in any way that he can, including helping to plan a bike rodeo and installing the proper signs and crosswalks. This committee and the town can get assistance from the BCM and SMPDC as we go forwards and try to work with DOT.

Next the committee discussed areas in Fryeburg that need more connectivity. Together we brainstormed on how to connect Main Street and Weston's beach. At a minimum we can put up Bike Share signs on River Road (not enough room for dedicated bike lane). The idea of an off road ped/bike bridge was mentioned but that again has the challenge of working with private land owners, plus the cost of a bridge. This bridge could potentially be a 4-season bridge and if so we could work with local snowmobile clubs. However, many land owners allow access in the winter and not the summer because snow provides a layer of protection. Someone mentioned that Mt. Tom is owned by the Nature Conservancy and this is a feature of Fryeburg that adds to the outdoor recreation brand. Katie mentioned that the SMRPC is working on creating a road biking map of Fryeburg and eventually having a link to it on the town's website. Katie asked the committee if we want to invite someone from SMRPC to our next meeting and the group responded with a yes. Elm Street has a sidewalk that needs repair and could also be extended to the Mountain Division trail (MDT). James also proposed that Elm Street might be a good place for an edge lane road.

Katie reported to the group that she received an email from Senator Rick Bennett that says he is sponsoring a bill, LD #672, that will hopefully lead to the extension of the MDT from Sebago Lake to the NH border. The bill will look at the feasibility and economic impact of extending the trail. Rick is looking for letters of support from local citizens and communities that the trail will impact. The group agreed that we can write letters to show our support and spread the word to other locals and business owners in the area to also write letters. Katie will let the group know who to address and send the letters to.

Therese took notes during the meeting and she will send the minutes to Katie for review. Katie will send the draft minutes to the group and get out an agenda for the next meeting.

Next meeting will be Thursday May 6th at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33pm.