



[www.southhadley.org/bikewalk](http://www.southhadley.org/bikewalk)

## **Bike/Walk Committee Minutes | Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 6:00pm via Zoom**

### **Roll Call**

Andy Rogers, Recreation Director; Jim Buckley, Larry Dubois, Lucia Foley, Marilyn Gass, Jake Woodruff

Absent: Ruth Camuse, Caroline Martin

Guests: Ben Ayres, Master Plan Implementation Committee; Rebekah Cornell, Conservation Administrator; South Hadley Police Chief Jennifer Gunderson

### **Approval of Minutes**

Marilyn made a motion to approve minutes of January 10, 2023 as amended, which was seconded by Jim and approved unanimously, with Jake abstaining as he was not at the meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Treks/Events**

##### ▪ **February 26, 2023—Ledges Trek—Sunday at 1:00pm**

The Trek was led by Caroline and Ruth, and an updated Ledges map with an additional Trek route was added on our web page by Lucia. Due to recent snowfall with some iciness beneath the new snow a Trek weather/conditions advisory was posted online at 9:45am, alerting participants to bring boots, poles, and snowshoes if available.

##### ▪ **March 2023**

No Trek scheduled.

##### ▪ **April 22, 2023—Bynan Earth Day Trek—Saturday at 1:00pm**

Rebekah Cornell said that she and Conservation Commission Vice Chair Bill DeLuca will lead the Bynan Trek and she is reaching out to Kestrel to see if they have someone who can assist with vernal pools. An address for GPS and details about parking will be needed. Rebekah will forward information for PR to Andy next week. Larry suggested participants be advised bring trash bags to gather refuse along the way during the Trek. Rebekah has two 'grabbers' she can bring for picking up trash.

##### ▪ **May—TBD**

May is Bay State and National Bike Month. BWC held a bike event in 2022 and we will consider options next month.

### **Master Trail Brochure**

Rebekah Cornell anticipates having the master trail map brochure ready for review by the end of March. Andy noted that there will be an online resource to accompany the printed piece.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Guests:**

##### ▪ **Rebekah Cornell, Conservation Administrator**

Some information about planning for the upcoming Earth Day Trek on April was provided (see Trek notes above) and Rebekah reported that the master trail brochure is nearly done. She said it is possible there might some grant

money might available to support improvements at Fred Smith Park by the Old Firehouse Museum and suggested reaching out to Diane LaRoche, who is involved with the Falls Neighborhood Association to explore a possible community engagement session. Lucia will contact Diane.

▪ **Ben Ayres, Master Plan Implementation Committee**

Andy suggested that Bill Simard might be able to work with a Community Seating project group to identify technical needs and implementation procedures.

In connection with Master Plan items assigned to Bike/Walk, Jake asked about the status of Lithia Springs parking and access, what opportunities might exist to connect through the new Skinnerwoods condo development on Route 116, and the status of Woodlawn Plaza projects. Andy said Town Planner Anne Capra has indicated that work has been ongoing to be able to utilize the 'hiker parking lot' on Route 116 and arrange access to Lithia Springs without going on private property. Rebekah noted that plans are underway to reopen the hiker lot with some signage added to alleviate concerns of neighbors. A bridge over Elmer Brook will still be needed. Bike/Walk members should pay attention to regular meetings and hearings—if anyone hears of anything related, they can let other members know to attend. While the Plaza Apartments and new Rocky's store at Woodlawn Plaza experienced some financial setbacks during Covid, things now seem to be moving in the right direction.

▪ **South Hadley Police Chief Jennifer Gunderson**

The \$1400 remaining is a **SHPD Bike Safety Grant** through the Department of Highway Safety can be utilized for **Bike/Ped safety and enforcement**, including items that can be distributed. In the past, police have handed out high visibility bands and bike helmets, and they are looking for new ideas for distribution through various events to reach a wider range of groups across the community. Jake, who is a biker, suggested **re-chargeable lights**, which would be especially helpful for those who use bikes to commute. It was suggested these might be given out via raffles at public engagement meetings and events. Chief Gunderson noted that other communities have provided **reflective vests**. Those items and/or **Reflective bands and lights for walkers** could be available through the Senior Center for those who go out early in the morning. Andy suggested outreach with **youth/adult bike helmets** to families participating in Holyoke YMCA afterschool programs at Plains, Mosier, and Middle Schools. Gunderson said items must be ordered and distributed quickly, and suggested getting in a small supply of lights, which are more costly.

In response to ideas for safe bike rides since South Hadley has no off-road 'rail trail,' the Chief suggested Lithia Springs, though Jake noted the route can be challenging. River-to-Range is reasonably flat and connects to Town Farms on Rt. 47, but there are also challenges there. She will give it more thought and check with some officers who have lived here a long time. Jake said it's tricky to find a place to bike in South Hadley that feels safe, noting that what will work depends on the skill levels of riders, making it difficult to plan a road ride. Gunderson said that traffic on weekends when people are taking boats to the river can be problematic, too. Marilyn suggested that the college could be involved and might allow a bike Trek on their property. Andy noted that there is no current plan for a Bike/Walk path around the Ledges due to concerns about stray balls and safety as the course runs right up to the property line.

Larry inquired about a possible activity to demonstrate the functions of new pedestrian crossings recently installed on Route 202 and Route 33 to provide an opportunity for volunteers and/or officers to explain to drivers how the lights work. Larry inquired about grant funding for signage or other markers to warn drivers of upcoming crosswalks. Gunderson noted that the DPW would need to see what could be done to comply with code and other regulations.

The Chief responded to a question from Marilyn about department morale that they believe there is good support in South Hadley. They have received positive and supportive letters from people in the community and the Town, through its representatives, provides budget support for the safety of both officers and citizens.

**Buttery Brook PARC Grant**

South Hadley plans to apply for a PARC grant for Phase II renovations at BATTERY BROOK PARK will include an accessible trail. Andy noted that a public meeting is being planned at the main Library to get community input on park designs.

**Upcoming meetings**

Andy has been notified by the Town Administrator that as the legislature has not yet extended the act allowing remote meetings after the end of March, a new Town remote participation policy will be distributed tomorrow in which remote participation for some members would be an option only if a quorum of members is present at a physical location.

Two Bike/Walk members would have difficulty attending a live meeting as they are physically unable to deal with stairs, and lack of a regular online option could reduce participation among many groups.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be scheduled at **6:00pm on Tuesday, April 11, 2023.**

A motion to adjourn was made by Larry, seconded by Jake, and approved by all at 7:58pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Lucia Foley, Member

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**Master Plan**

Actions for which Bike/Walk is the primary entity are:

- G1-1:** Development of brochures/trail maps, support for wayfinding **(ST)**
- G1-2:** Encourage families/school children to use/enjoy outdoor resources **(I)**
- G2-1:** Create master map for locating outdoor seating/gathering areas **(ST)**
- G3-2:** Develop commemorative bench program **(ST)**

Also, related action for Trek planning:

- G1-14:** Develop historic walks around town **(ST)**  
(Primary Entity-Historic Commission; Sub-Entities-Disabilities Commission, Bike/Walk)