

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

8:00 AM

Rm 12, Recreation Center

Members Present:

Arthur (Bud) Winsor, Chair
Jenna Spear-O'Mara
George Foskett

Staff Present:

Andrew Bohannon, Parks & Recreation
Director

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Judy Sadoski
Susan Thielen
Jamie White, Alternate

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes – September 8, 2015

Mr. Foskett made a motion to approve the minutes of September 8, 2015, which was seconded by Ms. Spear-O'Mara, and passed by a vote of 3 to 0.

3. Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon reported that he did not include this in the packet because it has not changed. He continued that he has seen the contractor in the park doing work. He thinks he is waiting and doing it in two lump sums, one at the beginning and one at the end.

Mr. Foskett stated that he wants to buy some mountain laurel at Maple Hill Nursery. He continued that they talked about the Dave Putnam area looking "pretty grim" and the rhododendrons did not take. Mountain laurel may be hardier. He asked if he could get reimbursed out of the \$500 for "miscellaneous." Mr. Bohannon replied yes, as long as a motion is passed here. He asked if this is a good time of year to plant it. Mr. Foskett replied yes.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara made a motion for the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board to recommend allowing Mr. Foskett to purchase mountain laurel and be reimbursed from the \$500 in the "miscellaneous" line item of the budget. Mr. Foskett seconded the motion.

Chair Winsor asked how many mountain laurel plants. Mr. Foskett replied three or four. Chair Winsor asked if anyone had further comments. He stated that this would be money wisely spent.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Bohannon stated that Ms. Spear-O'Mara had sent them a list of pollinators. He asked if this is a good time to plant those, too. Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied that it depends on which plants. Discussion ensued. Mr. Foscett stated that he will plant the mountain laurel himself but that is all he is taking on now. Chair Windsor replied that they will help him. Mr. Bohannon asked Mr. Foscett to ask the people at the nursery about when to plant the pollinators.

4. Report from Friends of the Arboretum at Ashuelot River Park

Mr. Foscett reported that the Friends met at 4:00 PM after the last ARPAB meeting. He continued that they talked about the Keene State College (KSC) students doing work in the park through the LINKS program, which was supposed to be on October 9, but unfortunately, it rained heavily. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Foscett continued that Sue Silver is the Branch Manager for Mascoma Bank (next to the arboretum) and is also a Friends member. He continued that they planned on meeting with a representative from the bank to discuss the snowplowing situation and possibly doing some thinning of the area between the arboretum and their building. That person canceled. Ms. Silver met privately with them. The bank talked with the person who does the plowing and they will no longer pile snow in the handicapped parking space or the flower bed.

Mr. Foscett continued that the Friends also discussed the weeding situation. Mr. Bohannon followed up on that. Some of the areas that were not looking good were taken care of.

Chair Windsor asked if the September meeting happened after Art in the Park. Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied yes, but Mr. Foscett was not at that meeting. Brief discussion ensued about Art in the Park, which was successful. Mr. Foscett asked if Art in the Park gave a donation this year. Mr. Bohannon replied no.

Mr. Foscett stated that the next Friends meeting is tonight.

5. Park Discussion

Mr. Foscett stated that they have talked about the irrigation system a lot. He continued that at the last meeting Mr. Bohannon did not have a price and was going to look into it. He would like to know more about the trust, which he assumes is public information. He wants to understand the mechanics of it. Ms. Spear-O'Mara agreed. Mr. Bohannon suggested having Nancy Burrigge come to the next meeting and explain the trust. The group agreed.

Mr. Foscett asked if the students from LINKS will reschedule for the fall. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, they are trying to find another date for this fall, but it might actually be spring or summer.

Mr. Foscett stated that they talked about widening the trail. He continued that that is a big deal. That would require a contractor, he assumes. Mr. Bohannon replied that he thinks the City could do it. He continued that he will talk with Chuck Sweeney to see if they want them to contract it out. The bid for park maintenance came in less this year than what the City's budget was. Is it appropriate for him to ask the trustees for that work to be covered with the excess budget? Mr. Foscett asked if the person who is doing the work in the park this year would have to do this

work. Mr. Bohannon replied no, that person is not qualified. He continued that they could hire someone else, or maybe City staff could do it and be reimbursed for materials.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara made a motion for the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board to recommend using the balance of the budget for widening the trail from the parking lot to the main trail. Mr. Foskett seconded the motion.

Chair Windsor clarified that they want to use the surplus money, that which was not used by the main contractor, to widen the path.

The motion passed by unanimous vote. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will take this to the trustees. They may or may not agree. He will let the ARPAB know.

a. Ashuelot Greenspace

Mr. Bohannon reported that he is meeting with people from Ashuelot Greenspace next week, including the Conway School student who was hired by Ken Stewart to continue to work on the project. He continued that she will make a presentation to the City. At the next meeting he will have an update. Mr. Foskett asked if the presentation should come to the ARPAB first. Mr. Bohannon replied that it is mostly about transfer of property. He continued that he will bring all of the information to this group and keep them in the loop.

b. Bartlett Web Service

Mr. Bohannon asked what the decision was on this. Chair Windsor replied that he thought they voted on this, to go forth. Mr. Foskett replied that it was a \$1,500 contract, \$500 a year for three years. Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not recall signing anything. Chair Windsor replied that he does not think they have seen it. Mr. Bohannon stated that it was through the donation that came from the Friends. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon will double check on this. Chair Windsor replied that Mr. Bohannon can call him if they need to speak with Frank from Bartlett Tree. Mr. Bohannon replied that he knows they paid for the tree trimming. But regarding the web contract, Finance received it and asked about it. He will follow up on this.

c. Irrigation System

Mr. Bohannon stated that he looked through records and found quotes from three landscaping companies, all within the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range that they have been talking about. He continued that what will be important moving forward is that he has to find out whether the City will pay for the water or if it would come from the trust. His gut tells him that it will be operational from the City and that the trust will not cover this annual expense. He thinks it would be about \$2,500 to \$4,500. That could easily be added to the operating budget. They will want support from the ARPAB for the increase in the line item. This is something for the ARPAB to consider. He will have more information after he speaks with the trustees next week. Mr. Foskett replied that it is clear that the park suffered greatly this year.

Mr. Bohannon stated that now is the time to do this. He continued that if the major event is Art in the Park they can do work in the spring and have everything all set for Labor Day. Mr. Foskett replied that he would like to see where they would put the sprinkler heads. Mr. Bohannon replied that there will be a map. Mr. Foskett replied that they wish they had done it

earlier because some of the beds did not get hit. Mr. Bohannon replied that that would be part of the bid process. He continued that there are multiple people who want this contract. Keene is fortunate to have some very good irrigation folks.

d. Other

Mr. Bohannon stated that Beyond Pesticides is a national organization that works with municipalities to create more natural environments for parks with natural pesticide control practices. He continued that with Beyond Pesticides and Osborne Organics, they set up a workshop on October 27 for City employees, school staff, the general public, and other recreation departments. It is a one-day professional development training. Part of the agreement is that they will take soil samples from two parks - Ashuelot River Park and Fuller Park. They would like to try some more organic practices within the park.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied that that is awesome. She asked for more information about the schedule on October 27. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will send out the agenda and information. Discussion continued. Ms. Spear-O'Mara spoke of the increase in pollinators when pesticide use decreases. Mr. Bohannon replied that the conversation was mostly focused on RoundUp and they moved beyond that when they proved they do not use it much. It is more about the herbicides they use. Chair Windsor spoke positively about the person from Osborne Organics and shared briefly about how Mr. Osborne became inspired to find natural methods for park maintenance when his dogs developed cancer due to pesticides. He continued that he is pleased Mr. Bohannon moved forward on this because it will be a big benefit.

6. Board Membership

Mr. Bohannon spoke of membership vacancies and encouraged ARPAB members to make recommendations to the Mayor, regarding new members. They would like members with some background knowledge. Ms. Spear-O'Mara asked if there is someone who is familiar with the Master Gardener organization. Chair Windsor suggested talking to Carl at the UNH Extension. Mr. Bohannon added that they need a representative from the City Council, too. The election is coming up. Discussion ensued.

7. New Business

None.

8. Next meeting – November 10, 2015

9. Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker