

ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 8, 2015

8:00 AM

Rm 12, Recreation Center

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Andrew Bohannon, Parks & Recreation
Director
Nancy Burridge, Finance

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Jamie White, Alternate
Susan Thielen

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes – October 14, 2015

Chair Winsor noted a correction – under “Other” on page 4, in the last paragraph, it sounds like his dogs were the topic, and it should clarify that the dogs were Chip Osbourne’s.

Ms. Spear-O’Mara made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2015, as amended, which was seconded by Ms. Sadoski. The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 0.

3. Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon reported that there is no status change on the current budget. He continued that he received the invoice yesterday, for weeding and fall clean-up, and has yet to go through it to verify that he stayed within the contract, and talk with Mr. Johnson (the contractor).

Chair Winsor asked if his contract ends December 31. Mr. Bohannon replied no, it is a two-year contract. Ms. Burridge asked questions about the billing, and discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon and Ms. Burridge agreed that they will talk about it. Mr. Foskett asked if it is correct that the budget is for \$7,900 but his contract is only for \$5,000. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, they determined that he put in a low bid for all of the City facilities.

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

Mr. Foskett reported that there was no quorum, and thus, no meeting. He continued that he went to the nursery and bought the Mountain Laurel and his son helped him plant the five plants.

5. Trust Funds Report – Nancy Burridge

Ms. Burrridge reported that there are two trusts: the Ashuelot River Park Trust and the Ashuelot River Park Memorial Trust. She distributed copies of a handout. She gave information about the money in each, and what the income balance is versus the principal. She read the “Excess Principal” section of the resolution about the Ashuelot River Park Memorial Fund, which states that the Trustees may expend excess principal, and any interest thereon, “for the future development and improvement” of the park. She continued that an example is the irrigation system. The Trustees felt that would be an appropriate expense. Mr. Foskett replied that the cost of the irrigation system might wipe out the whole fund. Ms. Burrridge replied that that is possible. Discussion continued.

Ms. Burrridge gave more information about the other trust, and read its purpose out loud. It is for “funding for unusual of special maintenance items.” She continued that the intention is for this fund to not be used for typical maintenance or to subsidize the Parks & Recreation Department budget. It also says the expenditures must be “limited to the area identified in the attached map.” The map is not in the packet and discussion ensued about it. Mr. Foskett stated that it sounds like the irrigation system would match the intent of this fund. Ms. Burrridge replied yes - they need to remember, though, that they can only request to use the income, and cannot touch the principal. Every year, 10% of income earned in the year goes back to the principal. Discussion ensued about the numbers, and how the ARPAB’s annual budget is determined with this.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he told the Trustees he would put together a package regarding the irrigation system and bring that to the Trustees before the decision is made of who will do the work, so they have an idea of the range. Mr. Foskett replied that they have two projects to consider – the irrigation system, and the improvement of the path from the Jonathan Daniels Trail sign. Mr. Bohannon replied that he is working with Chuck Redfern on the latter. They cannot count on the Recreational Trails grant program but might be able to work with Pathways for Keene (PFK). Discussion continued. Ms. Sadoski stated that she re-joined the PFK board.

Ms. Sadoski asked if the Trustees can expend the principal plus the interest in the Ashuelot River Park Memorial Trust. Chair Winsor replied yes. Ms. Sadoski asked if there is a reason to keep both trusts. Ms. Burrridge replied that the Memorial Trust is sitting there, not being used for anything. She spoke briefly about how there are about 50 trusts in the City and how their uses vary. Discussion continued as Ms. Sadoski, Ms. Spear-O’Mara, and Mr. Foskett asked more questions about the purpose of the Memorial Trust and why or why not to have two trusts for the park. Ms. Burrridge replied that the original intent was to purchase the property, and the intent was to spend it then have it go away, and have the other trust be ongoing.

Discussion continued about the ARPAB’s budget. Ms. Burrridge explained how the 2016 budget is calculated based on FY2015 earnings minus the 10% back to the principal. She continued that they do not have to use all of the money in the 2016 budget – they can use the same budget as last year and have a bit of a cushion for other uses, if they want. Mr. Bohannon agreed.

Mr. Foskett brought up the project of improving the walkway. Mr. Bohannon drew a diagram to show the area they are talking about improving. The Trustees approved the expense up to \$1,200 and it must be done by the end of the year, or else the money stays and he would have to ask them again in the spring and that would come out of next year’s budget. Chair Winsor asked Ms.

Sadoski if she thinks PFK is interested in funding this. Ms. Sadoski replied that she doubts it – they would see it as a City trust fund project. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bohannon drew another diagram, of the other, more substantial project of building a new trail section from a location in the park all the way to the hospital. He stated that due to factors such as the need for a lot of construction access, the project would cost about \$80,000 to \$100,000 and no one has committed to that money yet.

Ms. Sadoski asked if they could use the income of the Ashuelot River Park Trust for the extension of the Jonathan Daniels Trail. Mr. Foskett replied that he does not think so. He continued that he thought that the two trusts were for the arboretum and that is outside the arboretum. Ms. Burridge replied that they would have to look at the map. Mr. Bohannon replied that the trail discussion has been on the radar for a while.

6. Park Discussion

a. Ashuelot Green Space

Mr. Bohannon reported that they are making decent progress. He continued that a former student from Conway has a professional job with a firm in Greenfield and is continuing with the project. They have met with her twice and will meet again in early January. The focus is on the playground. He does not have a diagram yet. He gave information about what will be included, noting that the focus is on incorporating natural play into the whole landscape. There will be very little pavement. He explained the vision for an ADA-compliant, natural playground with features that children enjoy and that the insurance company would accept. He spoke of the benefits of such a playground. In January or February he can show the ARPAB detailed plans.

Ms. Sadoski asked if the plan incorporates boats' and kayaks' access to the river, which is key. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, and drew a diagram of where vehicles could drive down a dirt road to drop off their boats by the water, although the parking is in a different place. This dirt road runs parallel to Ashuelot Court. Discussion ensued about the private road and what it would take to make it a city road and that it would be tough.

Discussion continued about the playground and other elements of the Green Space plan. ARPAB members expressed excitement. Mr. Foskett asked if the Green Space group is still planning to donate it to the City. Mr. Bohannon replied yes. Mr. Foskett asked if they will finish developing it before giving it to the City. Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not know.

b. Irrigation System

Mr. Bohannon reported that the Trustees gave approval for putting out the bid and he will return to them with the results. He continued that he will have an update on that process at the next ARPAB meeting. Mr. Foskett asked if they should discuss now how to pay for it. He continued that if there is no need have the Memorial Trust, maybe they should vote to use those funds and any shortage, if there is one, can be taken from the interest account in the other trust. Mr. Bohannon replied that the ARPAB could make a recommendation but the Trustees of Trust Funds would ultimately decide. Discussion ensued about the ARPAB's recommendation, regarding which Trust(s) to request using and how and why. Mr. Bohannon stated that when he comes back with quotes, that will help this conversation. He guesses that the quotes will be

between \$25,000 and \$40,000. Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied that it makes sense, then, to hold off on a recommendation. Ms. Burrige stated that she understands their hesitance to use up the Memorial Trust, but to her, the irrigation system seems like a good use of it. Chair Winsor stated that they will table this topic until they get proposals.

c. Pathway

Mr. Bohannon reported that hopefully the work will get completed this year.

7. Board Membership

Mr. Bohannon reported that Mr. Foskett was reinstated for a second term if he is willing. He continued that this, technically, is Chair Winsor's last meeting, but as long as the Mayor is inclined to not fill the position he can stay on longer. Chair Winsor replied that he will live by the bylaws but he will be willing to help in whatever ways he can. Mr. Bohannon asked if he would be willing to return once the window is gone, which he hopes is as short as possible. He continued that he will clarify everything with the City Clerk.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara asked about the City Council representative. Mr. Bohannon replied that the Mayor is in the process of appointing someone and hopefully they will find out soon. He continued that they may not have a full board at the January meeting but can go from there. Ms. Thielen is resigning and that is another spot that needs to be filled.

8. New Business

Mr. Bohannon reported that in January the ARPAB needs to discuss and approve a budget and send it to the Trustees.

Mr. Bohannon reported that he just found a grant opportunity for \$1,000 for a pollination project. He continued that they can investigate whether or not they would qualify for this. He will send out all of the information to the group.

Mr. Foskett asked about the proposed hydro power project at the dam. He continued that the Friends were horrified to learn that if that happens they would lose water going over the dam. They do not want this project to just sneak in. Mr. Bohannon replied that he regularly reminds the Acting City Manager of the ARPAB's position. He believes there are still studies being completed but he will keep them in the loop. Mr. Foskett asked if this can be an agenda item. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will try to get someone to come talk about the project. Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied that they can ask Bob King. Chair Winsor stated that the ARPAB wants the dam saved. Mr. Bohannon replied that they can write to the City Council saying that. He continued that the City Council is in transition with five new members starting in January. Ms. Spear-O'Mara asked for this topic to be on the ARPAB's January agenda. Chair Winsor agreed.

9. Next Meeting Date – January 12, 2016

Hearing no other business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker
reviewed by Andy Bohannon