

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

6:00 pm

**City Hall, 2nd Floor, Council
Chambers**

Members Present:

James P. Duffy, Chair
Janis O. Manwaring
Sheryl A. Redfern
Robert J. O'Connor
Philip M. Jones

Staff Present:

City Attorney Tom Mullins
Assistant City Manager Elizabeth Fox
Parks, Recreation, & Cemeteries Director
Andrew Bohannon
Police Chief Kenneth Meola

Mayor Kendall Lane

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Councilor David R. Meader
Councilor Bettina A. Chadbourne
Councilor Terry M. Clark
Councilor Carl B. Jacobs
Councilor Randy L. Filiault

Chair Duffy called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

1. DISCUSSION – City Attorney – Panhandling

City Attorney Tom Mullins stated that some weeks ago there was a communication submitted by Councilor Filiault regarding panhandling in City. He continued that a request was made for his office to do some research and come back to the MSFI Committee for discussion. He discovered, and this is no surprise to anyone, that this is not an issue that centers in the law. It centers in the core of our society, which is unfortunate. It is a difficult issue to deal with. The City of Keene is not the only one trying to deal with the issues.

Attorney Mullins continued that he will give a short primer on legal issues associated with the issue, and Assistant City Manager Beth Fox will talk about the services that are available, and Police Chief Ken Meola will talk about statutory authority that may deal with the issue. One thing is clear from the legal point of view: you cannot ban panhandling outright. Chicago tried, and had to pay a lot through a class action settlement. Panhandling is protected under the First Amendment if done on sidewalks, in Central Square, or anywhere where you may find people congregating. First Amendment protections are at their highest regarding speech in public forums such as these. Courts look carefully at what municipalities try to do with speech issues in those forums. It is clear that an outright ban would be constitutionally suspect. It would require banning all solicitation, which is impractical and constitutionally suspect, as it would include

someone coming up to you to express their opinion or give you a pamphlet. Communities around the country that have been trying to deal with panhandling have discovered that the courts are split, regarding approaches. Everyone is wrestling with that. The City Attorney continued that he wants to underscore and highlight that at least from a societal perspective, this is an issue that is difficult to legislate. It raises questions that Ms. Fox will be talking about, about society in general. These are issues that go to the safety net issues, what services are available or not available for people. While there are people out there who may be abusing this process, there are others who are using this process because it is an avenue they have available to them that they might not otherwise have.

Elizabeth Fox, Assistant City Manager, stated that it is important to recognize that this region has many agencies and entities involved in trying to help people get housing, food, utilities, vehicles, or other needs. She continued that the community is fortunate that there is generosity and people try to establish a basic safety net for folks. Services for housing and case management include homeless outreach, Homelessness Prevention, shelter care, and Rapid Re-Housing. Those include case management. Four or five entities provide subsidized housing. There are some housing assistance opportunities for veterans and their families, and emergency and seasonal housing opportunities with Hundred Nights shelter. There are opportunities through the State for certain categories of people needing assistance, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients. There is the municipal welfare as the “catch all” for folks who do not neatly fit into or need more than what the programs offer.

Ms. Fox continued that for food, the Community Kitchen provides hot meals Monday to Friday and Sunday brunch, and pantry boxes two days a week, and the leftover food goes to Hundred Nights. That is an example of how the region has been successful in coordinating efforts to help folks. Hundred Nights also gives coffee and snacks during the day and a “tailgate dinner” on Saturday when the Community Kitchen is not open. HCS helps seniors through Meals On Wheels. St. Vincent’s runs a food pantry. The Senior Center serves lunch, and the Salvation Army has a food pantry. Clothing needs are addressed by several agencies, such as Linda’s Closet, the Salvation Army, and consignment shops such as St. James, which recently had a lot of wedding dresses. For utilities there is assistance from the Federal government administered by SCS, programs offered by Catholic charities, municipal welfare, the Salvation Army, and Veteran Services. There are some opportunities through the State Department of Health and Human Services for TANF recipients. For transportation there is the Friendly Bus, assistance from the Red Cross, and Monadnock Peer Support, and SCS Homelessness Prevention will assist people who need to return to their town of residence. Regarding medical assistance, the expanded Medicaid has opened up opportunities for many, and Cheshire Medical Center has opportunities such as a medical assistance program which helps with prescriptions. Many folks in this area are working to make sure people’s basic needs are met. There are resources available for people who need help in figuring out how to get help beyond these resources. Service Link is a great agency for folks to connect with to find assistance.

The City Attorney stated that he knows the committee and others are looking for specific tools. He continued that setting aside for a moment the causes and underlying issues with panhandling, which do need to be looked at, there is a question of how to specifically deal with the situation. It has come up in a couple contexts. People are mostly concerned about being approached by

panhandlers downtown, outside stores, restaurants, and banks. When he researched this, he found that Worcester, MA and some other municipalities have enacted ordinances that are similar to each other - he can tell that they took from each other to craft them. Worcester's attempts to reach out to panhandlers to determine what services were necessary and to get the community involved did not work, so they enacted an ordinance. The ordinance creates buffer zones. Worcester understood that you cannot ban panhandling, but they defined "aggressive panhandling" - following someone after they have indicated they do not want to interact, or physically blocking someone, or using aggressive language, and that kind of thing. He continued that the ordinance had another component which did not deal with the aggression but was situational. It says that you may not panhandle within 20 feet of an ATM or bank entrance, or of people standing in line for some reason (such as for a show or for public transportation). In those situations panhandling has a criminal penalty with some fines attached.

Attorney Mullins continued that almost immediately the ordinance was appealed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and went to the First Circuit Court of Appeals. It was before the First Circuit not about whether it is constitutional but about whether the trial court should have granted injunctive relief or not to keep it from being in affect. It colored the First Circuit's opinion. The appeals court had to determine under injunctive relief whether the petitioners (the ACLU) would prevail on the merits. It is a backhanded way of asking if it is constitutional. Justice Souter wrote the decision. He upheld the trial court, and basically said that it is constitutional. The ordinance is content specific. Generally ordinances, statutes, and rules that make a distinction among speech are difficult for the courts to sustain. You are already discriminating on the basis of speech. If you have an ordinance for a situation it has to apply to everyone. The First Circuit used a discriminating intent analysis. They asked if the municipality intended animus with respect to enacting the ordinance. That is a little different. Generally they do not look at intent. It is usually, "Does it discriminate against speech or not?" So in this case the court reached. They did not find evidence that Worcester intended to discriminate; they just wanted to protect public health and welfare. Worcester had identified a problem, panhandling - people had a legitimate fear of it happening at banks and ATMs. The court upheld the trial court's position. They appealed to the Supreme Court and have not yet heard whether the Supreme Court will hear it. He thinks they will because there is generally a split in the federal courts about how this type of ordinance should be treated.

The City Attorney continued that his opinion is: there are other municipalities that are considering ordinances similar to Worcester's, that are now waiting, which is a smart thing to do. There is this case and another case that came up not too long ago that has the same legal analysis underneath it: it is about determining whether a municipality can enact a speech regulation that really does discriminate on different types of speech. It is in regards to a whether a church that is allowed to have a sign saying "church" but not a sign giving directions to the church. The issue was whether the municipality could discriminate based on the content of the sign or the content of the speech (in the case of Worcester). Even if the Supreme Court decides not to hear the Worcester case, this other case will lay out a lot of the same legal principles. His suggestion is even if the MSFI Committee is inclined to enact that kind of ordinance, given the status of Worcester's case, it would not be prudent to do that. There are still some steps that can be taken.

The City Attorney continued that one situation panhandling comes up in is city medians, like at Monadnock Marketplace. Another municipality's ordinance prohibits the exchange of something into or out of a car by someone on the median. There is always the question of enforcement. If the Police saw it they could ticket. He does not know how effective it has been. He has heard conflicting reports – some say the ordinance is a deterrent; some say it is not. But it is at least a tool used by a municipality in the state. The ACLU decided not to pursue this. You have to keep in mind if you are going to prohibit something like that it prohibits *any* kind of passage to/from the car/street. It would prohibit the passing of pamphlets or leaflets or anything else. It is an all or nothing ordinance; you cannot discriminate and just say no to panhandling – the ordinance would apply to everyone. But that is why the ACLU did not challenge it. Another problem is that there is no discretion built into the ordinance – Lebanon tried to make distinctions of when it is appropriate or not. The ACLU sent them a letter saying that is not constitutionally okay because you have ambiguity. If the City Council were inclined to do something like this it would be the Concord ordinance they would look at. New Hampshire has other statutory authority for certain situations. He asked Chief Meola to speak.

Police Chief Kenneth Meola stated that they have had this discussion before. He continued that there are no laws that prohibit panhandling downtown. What they have heard is that people feel intimidated and targeted. Those are behaviors the Keene Police Department (KPD) can try and deal with. Intimidation by someone asking for money is not an offense. But if the person who is asked says no and the person who asked then follows and continues to berate and harass the person, the KPD can look at the disorderly conduct statute. They have not seen a lot of that happen. They recommend people call the KPD if they feel intimidated, so the KPD can talk to people about the dos and don'ts. Beyond that, it is tricky. The City Attorney gave a great explanation of constitutional issues. They talk about how to deal with this at Monadnock Marketplace. The median was not designed for people to congregate on it and it has no walkway to get to it. In order to give or take something to or from a car, from the median, you have to step into the roadway. That is a safety hazard. The KPD has been talking about prohibiting people from panhandling on that median. They could ask people to leave, and if they refuse, look at the disorderly conduct statute. They always want to educate first, enforce later. This strategy would apply in the Walmart area with the median, but not on the side of the road at Route 12 where it is a grassy area people have access to.

Chief Meola continued that his line of thought is in line with the City Attorney's: waiting to see what the Supreme Court decision is to give an idea of a template. They will always come out and deal with aggressive people. Foot patrols are increasing and they hope the presence of Police Officers has an impact. Officers go up and say "hey, we've gotten a lot of complaints. Tone it down or move along."

Chair Duffy asked if there has been an increase in reporting. Chief Meola replied no. Chair Duffy asked if panhandling is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. Chief Meola replied that he thinks it is decreasing. He continued that he cannot put a number on it but he has not had as many phone calls. He does not know what caused it to settle down. Maybe the increased Police presence, or maybe people stopped giving money so the people who were panhandlers are doing something else. The man who was often at the Monadnock Marketplace median has not been there in a while.

The City Attorney stated that he has material which he may have gotten from the Police Chief but does not recall. He continued that it is from the “Center for Problem-Oriented Policing” from 2015. It lays out some responses that other communities have tried with respect to the issues, and the legal issues associated with the approaches, and it is thought-provoking. He continued that he provides [the other handout – a photo of a sign] with a caveat. No one is suggesting the City Council take this specific approach. One thing talked about in the literature is community education. It is important for the community to understand that there are services available to assist people, and to understand that tax payer dollars go into that and they should be proud that they assist in that matter. Also they are trying to educate the community – “If there is no water in the well, you do not get any water.” The community shown in the photograph has tried to put signs out making it clear that giving to panhandlers is not solving the problem. The City does not advocate this approach but it is an example. Worcester put signs out asking people to not give money to panhandlers, before they enacted the ordinance, but the community was unhappy with the signs and Worcester removed that from their toolbox.

Councilor O'Connor asked for clarification about the disorderly conduct statute. He stated that the definition of “disorderly conduct” includes “blocking a sidewalk.” That is another tool. Chief Meola replied yes, he meant all the tenets of the statute, which includes blocking egress. Chair Duffy clarified that *intentionally* blocking a sidewalk is disorderly conduct, because some people block the sidewalk without realizing it. Chief Meola replied that that is correct.

Councilor Manwaring stated that she appreciates the number of services that Ms. Fox explained, but there are multiple problems with that. She continued that homeless people do not have an address. There are only two shelters in Keene and people are living here and there and everywhere. She has been volunteering at Hundred Nights and part of what they are trying to do is ask what people’s plans are and how safe they are. For many benefits, like TANF, food stamps, and Medicaid, you have to have an address. Her concern - and maybe this is the City’s and State’s problem - is that they are cutting services. There is one person doing outreach at SCS and one person at MCS and they were just told they now cover Sullivan County as well as Cheshire County. At Hundred Nights she has been working on mental health issues. They are running into the question of who is a resident. Hundred Nights says that they are willing to be an address for people, so someone could, for example, have food stamps sent to them at that facility. However, it does not make them a resident. She tried briefly to find out how many days you have to live somewhere in order to be a resident. She asked if anyone has that answer.

Ms. Fox replied that it is not a number of days, it is about the permanency of your residence, and she agrees that it is a real struggle for people who have not had a permanent home to access services through the state or even local government. She continued that Hundred Nights has done some things to help people with the need for an address even though it does not solve their residency issue. The answer is that it is not about number of days, it is about having a residence.

The City Attorney stated that they are identifying a problem with social services in NH, keeping in mind that many of these statutes are very old, instituted when it was rural and there was not a lot of movement and people in the community knew each other more. Unfortunately, over the years, as a statutory matter they have not been keeping up with the changes in demographics and

society and the mobility of people. New Hampshire imposes a lot of these burdens on the local communities, back to the downshifting they have been talking about. They expect the tax payers to pick up these services and communities are not illogically looking at who is in the community to look at how to allocate those scarce resources. A lot of this goes right back to where the City's authority comes from, which is the State. Until the State starts addressing these issues it will be difficult to answer that question of when it is appropriate or not for a community to provide services.

Councilor Manwaring stated that, that is her secondary concern – most of the folks she worked with at Hundred Nights had a mental illness and were not getting services or medication. She continued that she talked with folks at Southwest Community Services and they are really worried about the cuts in the budget. Case management may disappear and Service Link is on the chopping block, and that serves a huge number of people. She wonders if they should be saying to the State, “This is what we are seeing. Social services are not adequate.” Chair Duffy replied that [the reduction in social services] potentially creates more panhandling.

Councilor Jones stated that there is a rumor that panhandling is part of an organized business and people are being shuttled in from elsewhere. He asked if there is any truth to that. Chief Meola replied that he does not know. He continued that he knows some of the folks downtown who panhandle and he knows they are not part of an organized business. He heard someone comes from Concord and makes a lot of money but those are rumors. He does not have a good answer. Councilor Jones asked if the panhandlers are homeless. Chief Meola replied no. He continued that some that he has seen are folks he knows have residences in the city.

Councilor Jones asked if the advantages Ms. Fox listed are the magnet that is drawing indigents to the city. Ms. Fox replied that she does not think so. She continued that Keene is the center of the region and that is really the magnet. If you want to do many things that are essential for daily life, you go to Keene. There is no transportation available to other rural places. If you need the grocery store or Community Kitchen, for example, it is harder to do that in an outlying town.

Councilor Jones asked if Human Services comes under Ms. Fox's portfolio. Ms. Fox replied yes. Councilor Jones asked if the budget is under the City's control. Ms. Fox replied that they have to give assistance to folks who meet the guidelines the City has established for the program. She continued that for a while it seemed like activity was abating but now it is increasing again. Most of the work is rental assistance; expansion of Medicaid has helped with medications so they do not need to fill the gap as much there. Utilities are the second biggest issue they help with.

Councilor Jones asked for the definition of panhandling. Looking for goods to help themselves? What about Girl Scouts selling cookies? The City Attorney replied that it comes up in the context of downtown streets and sidewalks. He continued that ordinances about median strips do not talk about panhandling, they talk about the exchange of something between a car and person. But in Worcester's ordinance and others, they define “begging” or “panhandling.” He reads out loud from the ordinance: “asking for money or objects of values, with the intention that it be transferred at that time and at that place.” By that definition panhandling is a request for money

or 'objects of value,' but mostly money. Girl Scouts would not come under this if they were selling cookies on a sidewalk, but it would come up under ordinances about the median strip.

Councilor Jones stated that regarding Concord's ordinance, he thinks Councilor Filiault, in his letter, was more concerned with downtown panhandling. No, they do not like it on the median. But if you ban it from the median the panhandlers go downtown and they are more intimidating downtown. The City Attorney replied that he does not disagree. He continued that it is easier to avoid panhandlers when you are in your car, as opposed to walking by someone. The problem is that from a legal perspective, the one type that they do not see as troubling (panhandling from a median) is the one they can at least do something to try to fix. The other type, which is more troubling (panhandling downtown), is more difficult to fix. That is the legal status of it at this point. A lot of municipalities are hoping the Supreme Court provides guidance.

Councilor Jones stated that his biggest concern is that more panhandlers would come downtown. The City Attorney replied that they do not have to enact an ordinance like Concord did. He continued that to some extent this is covered under State statutes 265, 39, and motor vehicle statutes. Like the Police Chief was getting at, it is "unlawful to walk upon the adjacent roadway where sidewalks are provided." There is another statute regarding pedestrians, RSA 65:40, saying pedestrians are not allowed to stand on the "travel roadway" to solicit from occupants of vehicles, but the "travel roadway" is different. He is not suggesting to the City Council on how to proceed, just showing tools. Yes, people find panhandling most troubling on sidewalks and that is where it is most difficult to address. Councilor O'Connor stated that under RSA 65:40, too, a Police Officer can act when a person steps into the roadway.

Chair Duffy asked if any members of the public had questions or comments.

David Crawford, of 36 Marlboro St., stated that he has been downtown a lot because he lives there. He continued that one man is someone he knows is local and has been around a long time. He has no problem with signs in front of stores saying "do not solicit." He does not think it is illegal to say not to do it in front of your store. He agrees with Chief Meola that there has been less panhandling lately. What he does not care for is the message he has heard on the radio, that "[Panhandlers] use the money for drugs and alcohol." This is also the message of the sign the City Attorney showed. That seems like something to make it more palatable to dislike panhandlers. He does not like them but does not want to call them drug addicts if they are not. He does not think the man he has been seeing downtown is a drug addict. Mr. Crawford continued that he is concerned that people's rights are being taken away by degrees, like the [proverbial] frog in the boiling water.

Councilor Randy Filiault thanked the City Attorney. He continued that he agrees that it makes sense to wait to hear the Supreme Court's decision. He does not want to make up something new. He just wants something enforceable. Regarding the comments about panhandling decreasing, no, panhandlers are more aggressive now. Fewer people are complaining, yes, but he talked with a frequent shopper downtown who she says she will not complain anymore but just will not come downtown. He is finding this more with single women than with men. Panhandlers avoid him now. But with women or older people, especially coming from ATMs,

the panhandlers are much more aggressive. They know their rights when it comes to panhandling and they are not shy.

Councilor Filiault continued that while they wait for the Supreme Court's decision, the Police should provide more downtown patrols. He understands the budget is tight. If the Police Chief needs more funds he will recommend to his fellow councilors that they find that money. It is important to have citizens feel safe walking the downtown streets. A lot is perception. Yes, panhandlers are aggressive. But there are people who avoid downtown just by hearing about a problem. He thanked the MSFI Committee and City staff.

Mayor Kendall Lane stated that there is a significant, justified issue, particularly in the downtown area. He continued that the weather is getting warmer and people are spending more time outside and there will be more interaction between people panhandling and people hanging out downtown. Many panhandlers have substance abuse or mental illness issues and the State is reducing support and cutting back on mental health services. The issue of panhandling will not go away. It will increase, and Keene's obligation to be responsive will increase. He suggests that the problem will not be solved just with a legislative, knee-jerk reaction. Even if the Supreme Court says there is an ordinance that can be adopted that is constitutional, that probably all by itself will not solve the problem. They have to look at a comprehensive solution in the long run. Part of that will be education, and including signage to encourage people to not enable panhandlers is important. It has to be part of the solution.

Mayor Lane continued that the Police Chief talked about, correctly, the number of uniformed officers downtown increasing as the weather gets better. Chief Meola has been diligent and been very successful with increasing foot patrols. There may be other resources available to provide some uniform services in the downtown area that over time they need to look at. Clearly this is an issue they need to be concerned about, but he cautions people to not get hysterical about it. This problem did not start suddenly and will not end suddenly. It has been forced on the city by actions of the State. They need to monitor and address it and look at a comprehensive solution.

Councilor Jones stated that the Worcester sign [which reads: "Don't give in to panhandling. 93% of the money you give goes to drugs and alcohol"] lacks some taste. He asked if Mayor Lane if it would be helpful if the City had a media campaign that was not the sign that Worcester had, but is education via radio, newspaper, and social media, explaining to people that by giving to panhandlers you are enabling them and you are part of the root to the problem. Mayor Lane replied yes, people do not always know that they are increasing the problem by giving to panhandlers. He continued that Public TV could help with a PSA and run it periodically. They need to work with the downtown merchants to assist them, whether they put signage in shop windows, or develop a single, effective sign for the community so people understand the negative impacts of panhandling. That is part of the overall comprehensive solution.

Chair Duffy asked if any members of the public had questions or comments. Hearing none, he asked the committee for thoughts on a direction to take.

Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee meeting minutes,
April 22, 2015

Councilor O'Connor stated that right now there are avenues for the Police to take, with the RSAs on disorderly conduct and motor vehicles, and they can do to do increased foot and bike patrols.

Councilor Manwaring stated that she is wondering about putting it on more time so in, say, three months they can evaluate some of these initiatives or suggestions and see if they are having an effect.

Councilor Redfern stated that she expected they would be putting this on more time because they are waiting to hear from the courts. She continued that it makes sense to wait to hear what they say. She agrees about the signs.

Councilor Jones stated that he does not know if putting it on more time is okay, because that puts it on the list of "more time" items and it could be a long time before something happens here. He suggested asking the City Attorney if he wants the MSFI Committee to accept this as informational, or if he has more direction.

Chair Duffy stated that legislatively it is a slippery slope. He continued that he has no trouble waiting to hear about the Worcester court case. He asked if the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing information is available to others. The City Attorney replied that the website is at the bottom of the handout. Chair Duffy stated that it has enforcement responses, but also public education responses, social service treatment responses, situational responses, and so on and so forth. There are four of five areas besides an enforcement response, that they have been discussing as well - the lack of social services, and the fact that Keene is a magnet or not. Perhaps putting it on more time and looking at some of the ideas more thoroughly is a good idea. Could staff come back in a month or so and talk a little about this? He wonders what they can do. They have potentially the most ability to affect a change to make people safer downtown. He appreciates increased foot patrols but it is not good for people to feel unsafe. Maybe education, or a situational response, may help. There is safety in numbers. He said people feel better if they have friends with them. A woman walking alone has more to worry about than a man, here and all over the country. That is an issue that needs to be recognized, and deserves some sort of a response. They do not want folks feeling so unsafe they do not come downtown.

The City Attorney stated that regarding the comments that were made about putting it on more time for three months, at least one decision should be coming down before the end of the term - not Worcester's, but the other, which would have a direct impact. He continued that within three months they will have some guidelines of where the court is going on the issue of intentionality. The Police Chief has some initiatives. They can see how that plays out. A public education campaign is important. He suggests putting it on more time. In 30 days they might not have anything different to say - that is too short of a time to see about the other initiatives.

Chair Duffy stated that if something more immediate comes up they can take it off of time early. He continued that it sounds good to him.

Councilor Jones made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor O'Connor.

Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee meeting minutes,
April 22, 2015

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee places the topic of panhandling on more time.

Councilor Jones noted that the background notes say they will return to the topic in three months.

2. PRESENTATION - Ashuelot River Advisory Board

Arthur (Bud) Winsor, Chair of the Ashuelot River Advisory Board (ARPAB), stated that the ARPAB has had a very successful year managing the park. He continued that the trend is that volunteering is up. Several groups from the community have helped, such as the YMCA - they help every spring with planting. KSC Links comes in the summer to help on Community Service Day - both KSC students and community members help with a tremendous amount of work. Credit goes mostly to George Foskett, Chair of the Friends of the Arboretum at Ashuelot River Park, who helps organize the volunteers and projects.

Mr. Winsor continued that there is one big change the ARPAB made this year: if you call yourself an arboretum, you have to have a system of record keeping, an inventory, and a record of the value of what the arboretum has. The ARPAB and the City did that, by partnering with Bartlett Tree Service. Trees were inventoried through GIS surveys, and there is information about trees' genus and species, condition, hazards, value, and so on and so forth. It is a good tool to help maintain the park and help keep track of what they have there. Currently the value is about \$330,000. You would never guess that unless you took a close inventory. All of this information is currently in a book. They are working on putting it on the Internet so it will be available to everyone. It will be information on the tree and a QR code can be put on the tree that gives information about the tree, its value, and more. For example, a red oak would have a QR code that brings up a webpage on your smart phone with information about that tree, along with a link to Virginia Tech's website which has further information about red oak trees in general. They are excited about the inventory. The ARPAB is taking a field trip to the Tower Hill Conservancy in Worcester, trying to get information on best practices elsewhere so they can apply it to Ashuelot River Park. Mr. Winsor continued that the park is a huge area, and what the ARPAB manages is the 8 to 10 acres out front. They talk about other issues in areas of the park that are not the arboretum but they have focused in on the gateway of the park.

Mr. Bohannon thanked Mr. Winsor for all the great work he has done over the years. He continued that Mr. Winsor got them connected with Bartlett Tree. "They do that service down at the college. And through the Friends of the Ashuelot River Park they paid for that service for us." They will put it online. Once that is done they will have a public presentation, probably at the Keene Public Library, so people can see the inventory. If they get the opportunity they could come back and update the City Council on that. It is a wonderful resource.

Councilor Jones thanked Mr. Winsor and the ARPAB members for all of their work. He thanked Chair Duffy for asking for these reports because the MSFI Committee is learning a lot. Chair Winsor replied that their cooperative relationship with the Friends has helped, and he thanks Mr. Foskett for his partnership. He continued that now that the park is at least 20 years old it is time for some of those trees and plants to be pruned properly and the inventory identifies all of the issues so they can be more efficient.

Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee meeting minutes,
April 22, 2015

Chair Duffy stated that he was on the committee years ago. He continued that finding volunteers was difficult and it sounds like it is now amazing. He asked if there is anything the ARPAB needs the City Council's help with. Mr. Winsor replied that they can come out on volunteer days. The next one is May 30 with the YMCA students who need a little bit of guidance but do tremendous work.

Chair Duffy stated that the arboretum is beautiful. He thanked Mr. Winsor and the ARPAB members for all that they do.

The consensus of the Committee was to accept this verbal presentation as informational.

3. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker