

ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

8:00 AM

Room 12, Recreation Center

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
George Foskett
Judy Sadoski
Chuck Redfern (Late)
Steve Hooper, Councilor

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Parks Recreation & Facilities
Director

Members Not Present:

Jenna Spear-O'Mara

1) **Call to Order**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM and roll call was conducted. Guests in attendance were David Suther.

2) **Approval of Minutes – February 13, 2018**

Mr. Foskett made a motion to approve the minutes of February 13, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sadoski and carried unanimously.

3) **Finance Report:**

Mr. Bohannon reported the Committee's budget proposal was approved by the Board of Trustees in the amount of \$14,225. He said one of the things that came in after the approval was the quote to replace the lights. Mr. Bohannon reported that Hamblet Electric quoted 7 LED light fixtures at \$625 per light. He noted this amount was more than what was set aside for the budget and asked the Committee if they would like to take the amount from the approved funding or he could go back to the Board of Trustees to ask for additional funding in the amount of \$4,375. The lights are a one-time expenditure and are needed to improve the lighting. In addition, Mr. Bohannon noted there is a return on investment for LED lighting and a lot of positives associated with LED lighting.

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The Committee agreed to have Mr. Bohannon go before the Board of Trustees to seek approval for the additional funding for the 7 LED lights.

Mr. Bohannon reported the Board of Trustees approved the Committee's budget proposal because they have seen the work done by the Committee and realize that the infrastructure needs to be updated.

4.) **Friends of Ashuelot River Park Report**

Mr. Foskett reported that the Friends met in March and the discussion was primarily about the 501c3 non-profit status and the new brochure. The letter for the 501c3 has been completed and needs to go before the NH Attorney General for approval. In addition, Mr. Foskett said they were requesting to change the group name to the Arboretum at Ashuelot River Park. Friends has decided to attend any trainings that are required for non-profit status.

Mr. Foskett noted that the Friends discussed some issues that have occurred. He said that Barry LeClair and his wife take care of the area by the handicap parking, where the hosta beds are located and noticed the damage from plowing. Last fall, Mr. Foskett noted that he met with Mascoma Bank and tried to discuss how the plowing would be handled. Mr. Foskett said that Sue Silva from Mascoma is on the Friends Board and sent him an email that Mascoma would like to maintain a section of area in the park. Based on that information Mr. Foskett said that he recommends Mascoma take care of the area where the hosta beds are located.

Mr. Foskett reported the Homestead Garden Club has an area near Starbucks and informed Friends that two of their members have passed away and would like to request a granite bench be placed in this location with the names of the members.

Mr. Foskett said over the winter he wanted to determine the property line between the park and Mascoma Bank. He visited the site and found a stake in ground that he believes reflects the property line. Mr. Foskett stated that he would verify this information. Mr. Suther stated that City staff was reassessing the property lines and recommended that he contact City Planner, Will Schoefmann. Mr. Bohannon provided Mr. Foskett with Mr. Schoefmann's contact information.

Mr. Foskett reported that Friends discussed how the area around the Arboretum, the Homestead Garden area and the area around Dave Putnam's bench is in need of work. He suggested looking into putting the pollinators in these locations.

5.) **Park Discussion**

a.) Pollinator habitat

Mr. Bohannon stated the Committee heard the presentation from John Therriault and asked if the Committee wanted to move forward and find a location. The Committee agreed to move forward with Chuck Simpson to find a location.

b.) Lighting

Mr. Bohannon addressed the concerns with the activity in the park and stated that he is trying to figure out how to deal with the current situation so the public can enjoy the park without concern. Mr. Bohannon said as he drives by the park he always tries to focus on the gazebo. The one thing that he sees with the gazebo is that the front is blinded by the conifers. Mr. Bohannon stated that he thought of two ideas. First, trim back the conifers and open up the gazebo 360 degrees in order to help with visibility. Secondly, determine if the gazebo is still a prominent feature within

the park. Mr. Bohannon said the Committee could come up with ideas on how to feature that area. He suggested a pagoda where there would be shade but no cover. Mr. Bohannon said the City was trying to find ways to combat homelessness and have come up with ideas such as reducing the size of benches and developing areas that could not be used as shelter.

Chair Winsor said the gazebo is such a focal point for the park and at the origin of the park he never envisioned this conversation. He agreed with Mr. Bohannon's recommendation to make another feature in the same location as the gazebo. Chair Winsor noted that he does not want to see the gazebo go away but understands the attraction it has become.

Mr. Redfern stated that he thinks that gazebo remains an important feature and suggests relocating the gazebo so it is closer to West Street. He noted the gazebo would then be more visible and people in cars and those walking by can see the activity.

Mr. Foskett stated that he was always in favor of removing the gazebo and likes the idea of the pagoda. He stated that he disagrees with Mr. Redfern's recommendation and referenced the activity that has occurred in Railroad Square. In addition, he stated the gazebo has become an attractive nuisance.

Ms. Sadoski stated that she has always liked the gazebo but it presents issues around safety to the general public. She stated that she was not sure if moving it closer to West Street would decrease the activity.

Councilor Hooper stated that he frequents the park to photograph and he frequently sees folks using it as shelter. He stated this inhibits other folks in community from sharing the gazebo and that the gazebo is meant for the community at large. Councilor Hooper stated that he is in favor of whatever helps the public.

Mr. Bohannon said that he would have a conversation with Councilor Bart Sapeta, who is a Professor of Architecture at KSC to see if there was something the students could design in place of the gazebo. In addition, he said that he would contact Chuck Simpson. Chair Windsor suggested contacting The Conway School of Landscape Design.

Mr. Bohannon referred back to the lighting stating there are two additional lights in the park, one located behind the gazebo on the tower that is 20 feet high and another light by the toilet area. He said if the Committee is replacing the front lights than these lights should also be replaced. Mr. Bohannon said that he would talk with Butch Davis about trimming in those areas.

Councilor Hooper asked how much brighter these new lights be compared to the old lights. Mr. Bohannon replied that he would have the exact specs for the next meeting.

c.) Composting Toilet Report

Mr. Bohannon reported they brought in Joe Ducharme with Clivus to inspect the toilet. Mr. Ducharme was the one that built the toilet. Mr. Bohannon reported that Mr. Ducharme stated the toilet was not safe and needs to be removed. The condition of the toilet is deteriorating on the outside and inside.

Mr. Bohannon informed the Committee that he just received the inspection report and will let the City Council know the toilet will be removed. He noted the cost to remove the toilet would not come out of the Committee's budget. Councilor asked if there were thoughts of replacing the

toilet. Mr. Bohannon replied that he received a quote from Mr. Ducharme in the amount of \$65,000 to replace the toilet.

6.) New and Other Business

Councilor Hooper noticed across the bridge there is a plaque stating an area is a KHS experimental planting area. He noted the area seems to be all grown in and wondered if KHS might clean up the area or get rid of the plaque. Chair Winsor suggested contacting the Horticulture Club at KHS to see if they are interested in cleaning the area as a project.

Mr. Redfern shared an app with the Committee called Garden Answers. The free app is a plant identification technology for mobile devices built by gardening experts. Mr. Redfern suggested promoting ideas such as the app to make the park more educational.

7.) Next Meeting-May 8, 2018

8.) Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:56 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker