

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

8:00 AM

Recreation Center, Room 12

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Councilor Steve Hooper
George Foskett
Dave Whaley
Paul Bocko

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks, Recreation
& Facilities

Members Not Present:

Judy Sadoski

1) Welcome & Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

2) Approval of Minutes – March 12, 2019

Mr. Foskett moved to approve the minutes of March 12, 2019, which Mr. Bocko seconded and the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board carried unanimously.

3) Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon said the final page of the meeting packet shows the finance report, which does not list yet the \$1,500 invoice received and paid for Bartlett Tree services. The budget will reflect this invoice in April. Regarding mulch, the landscape contractor is scheduled to conduct spring clean-up. Mr. Bohannon agreed it is difficult to get mulch down between the last frost and daffodils sprouting. Mr. Bohannon will remind the landscape contractor of the mulch work.

4) ArborScope Training – Bartlett Tree

Chair Winsor welcomed Frank Grano (in person), the local Bartlett Tree representative, and Christ Breedlove (by phone), who is part of the solutions team and led a presentation on the ArborScope software. Mr. Breedlove provided a virtual tour of the ArborScope website for Ashuelot park to demonstrate the core functionality and answer any questions. Mr. Bohannon is the administrator for this website and is responsible for adding and filtering permissions for members.

Mr. Breedlove demonstrated the different functions of ArborScope most relevant to this Board. There are YouTube tutorials for everything he discussed on the ArborScope site. He highlighted the following features of the software:

- A basic Google base map displays markers for all trees inventoried in the park. Staff can add labels, change map views, and drop location pins using the mobile site while walking through the park.
 - There is no mobile application but the mobile site is optimized for most features; Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari are the most reliable browsers, and Internet Explorer is incompatible.
 - When looking at the base map, there is a legend demonstrating trees in good, fair, poor, or dead conditions. The legend can be changed to prioritize the trees you see. In this way, filters can be applied so the map only demonstrates a subset of trees to view, for example, pruned river birches.
 - This level of information and filtering capabilities are available to anyone with an ArborScope login for this park.
 - In map view, there is a help desk option where users can contact the ArborScope team with questions, which might be forwarded to the local representative, Mr. Grano.
 - In general, the software is updated regularly to be consistent with industry standards.

- From the map view, users can access detailed information about every tree, by clicking on the individual tree markers.
 - Tree details listed include: basic tree attributes, date inventoried, number of trees in the grouping, common and scientific names, taxonomy, height and age class, assessed value, and management recommendations (like pruning), among others. Additional information might be listed for each tree such as its risk rating, defects, pest problems, and other qualities of the tree.
 - Each tree detail might list management recommendations, which if marked as complete will then be listed under a work history tab. All history is archived and no trees are deleted from the database so the landscape can be tracked over time.
 - Anyone walking through the park can scan the QR code on a tree to view tree details and submit current photos with captions; photos are compiled on the tree's details page.
 - This technology can be used for more than inventorying trees. Other assets in the park can be mapped and tracked, such as dedicated park benches and the gazebo.
 - Mr. Grano can share the image files for the QR codes, which can be used to develop interpretive signage. Simple, basic black tags with the QR codes are also available.
 - Public access to the QR codes and related information can be embedded on the City website.

- With tree details and other assets for the park collected in ArborScope, different reports can be generated to assess trees and the park:
 - Valuable reports include species factors (desirability), condition factors (health), and location factors. These factors can be combined and calculated to provide a desirability score and asset value for each tree. These values can change as the status of the tree changes over time; for example, when a tree has outgrown the canopy and is healthier, the value would increase.
 - Custom reports can be generated, for example, to show a species performances index and value. These reports can quickly demonstrate the status of a specific species in the park.
 - Reports and shape files are available if the City's GIS staff want to map the park. Quick summary reports and maps are available for download.
 - These reports can be used to develop graphics and charts helpful for public engagement.

- ArborScope facilitates tracking work history of the trees over time.
 - The software can list recommendations history, outdated recommendations, and completed work history. Details will reflect the management dates and who did the work/edits.
 - Invoices can be uploaded to reflect management for a specific tree.
 - The software also allows administrators to edit multiple trees concurrently and update the work on those batched trees; for example, if there is a group of pruned birches by the river.

The Board agreed this presentation was very helpful. This software will better engage the public with the arboretum, enhance education possibilities, streamline asset management, and promote park management. Mr. Bohannon will continue working with Mr. Grano and Mr. Breedlove to add representative users to the system (for example one user with access from the Friends) as well as to develop a plan for QR code signage for the trees most accessible to the public. The Board expressed gratitude for the presentation and continuing work.

5) **Friends**

Mr. Foskett reported that the Friends have submitted final information for 501(c)(3) status to the Attorney General. He anticipated the process being completed before the April meeting, which is essential for the friends to increase the cost of cobbles; donors need the resulting federal ID for donors to claim deductions. At the April meeting, the Friends planned to work with Mr. Bohannon to develop a list of Friends' priorities for the upcoming year. Mr. Foskett reported other updates for the Friends:

- The Next Level Church volunteers are welcome and Mr. Bohannon will communicate that.
- The Old Homestead Garden Club is anxious to prepare the area around their bench for cobbles. Ms. Matthews is also the liaison to help the Roteract volunteers.

- There is still concern about Knotweed, especially where it blocks view of the dam on the Starbucks side. Mr. Bocko recalled a Knotweed eradication experiment adjacent to Horatio Colony Nature Preserve using a black fabric instead of chemicals. Mr. Bocko and Mr. Bohannon agreed approaches without chemicals require significant labor. Mr. Bohannon has some resources on Knotweed that he will share with Mr. Foskett.
- One goal the Friends have to is develop the area between the Old Homestead Garden Club's bench and the shed.

6) Park Discussion

a. Bat Houses Request

Councilor Hooper requested Chair Winsor's permission for the student leading the project, Ingrid Evans, to present a short report at the May meeting. Chair Winsor agreed. Councilor Hooper noted Ms. Evans will graduate this term and has included next steps and a future vision in the report. The goal is to find funding before she graduates to purchase the bat house kits online. Peter Poanessa will make a modest sign for the houses.

b. Landscape Design Information

Mr. Bohannon reported that he contacted a few landscape designers and one already replied offering a lower cost than he anticipated. A landscape designer approached Mr. Bohannon about public art in Hickey-Desilets park and he realized they could be helpful at Ashuelot park as well. Mr. Bohannon hopes they will help with public art and other projects at the park; he has already shared good ideas.

7) New Business

Tom Haynes is a member of the Conservation Commission, which recently started an outreach program. He was present at the meeting and will continue visiting to act as a conduit between this Board and the Commission to partner and develop educational outreach programs.

8) Next Meeting Date – Monday, May 13, 2019

Due to conflicting meetings, the Board agreed to meet outside their normal meeting date. The Board will meet next on Monday, May 13, 2019 at 8:00 AM.

9) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:07 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker