

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, July 9, 2019**

**8:00 AM**

**Recreation Center, Room 12**

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks, Recreation,  
& Facilities  
Tom Mullins, City Attorney

**Members Not Present:**

**1) Call to Order**

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

**2) Rules of Procedure Adoption**

The City Attorney was present at the meeting to explain the rules of procedure for legislative bodies, which this Board is. As a public body, this Board is obligated to comply with NH RSA-91A, which is the Right to Know law. He explained this legislative body is different than volunteer groups like the Lions and Rotary Clubs that are accustomed to less transparency as a private entity; as such, many new members of the Committee might find the differences confusing. The City Attorney highlighted the parts of these rules of procedure relevant to this Board:

- Board member should not conduct any business via email, short of replying to a meeting reminder from staff or to share a document with Board members to discuss *not via email* but at the next public meeting.
  - Similarly, if Board members congregate outside meeting time (e.g., at a restaurant), a quorum is automatic at the first discussion of Board business.
  - Board members *can* be phoned in for meetings, *but they do not count as a quorum*. The quorum is only based on who is physically present in the room.
- This Board is legislative and does not fundamentally impact the public or make decisions on behalf of the City, such as the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which makes higher risk decisions and settles disputes. This Board serves a more advisory capacity to Council, to help guide and advise the City with regard to policies and procedures that apply to the Ashuelot River Park.
  - As a legislative public body, this Board must comply with certain requirements: meetings must be noticed publically at minimum 24 hours in advance, the meeting must be accurately captured in meeting minutes, and meetings must be open to the public, who

can record the meeting video/audio and participate in the meeting discussion at the Chair's discretion. Members of the public should not be treated like Committee members; they cannot vote on matters or make decisions.

- If there is no quorum for a meeting, no audio or written record will be captured. If a quorum is not reached by 15 minutes after the meeting start time, the minute taker will depart the meeting. If quorum arrives after the minute taker leaves, it is unfortunate, but Board members should come to meetings with an expectation to be on time.
- The Board was advised to avoid creation of subcommittees, which must act as a public body similarly, with quorum.
  - As an exception, Board members can, for example, conduct individual research outside meeting time and report that information to the Board at the next meeting, *not via email*, which can prompt a series of replies that create a quorum. The "reply all" option is effectively known as the quorum button.

Mr. Foskett recalled phoning in Board members to reach a quorum in the past. He asked if there were problems to prompt this change and if there is a way to create exceptions to this rule. The City Attorney has no control of this because it comes from RSA-91A. If this Board feels strongly about having appropriate exceptions, they can draft a letter to City Council recommending they request that the NH legislature allow quorum by phone, specifically for less formal volunteer groups, like this one. Mr. Bohannon noted similar concern from the Human Rights Committee. Councilor Hooper suggested keeping the City Manager, Chair Winsor, and Mr. Bohannon informed of any individual research work outside of meetings.

Chair Winsor recognized Suzy Krautmann, who will soon be an active member of this Board. She asked if members could share links to informational/relevant websites via email. The City Attorney said that could be appropriate as long as there is no conversation or decisions via email. He suggested for all circumstances, to bring any business before the Board during publically noticed meetings.

Chair Winsor asked how these rules of procedure apply if Board members are in the park with Mr. Bohannon and discuss work that needs done. The City Attorney is comfortable with individual conversations with staff, as long as those conversations do not promote other discussions outside the meeting. The Chair has a broad right to communicate with Mr. Bohannon. The City Attorney also confirmed that Mr. Bohannon could send emails notifying Board members of upcoming events.

Ms. Sadoski moved to adopt the rules of procedure, which Mr. Foskett seconded and the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board carried unanimously.

### **3) Approval of June 18, 2019 Minutes**

Ms. Sadoski moved to approve the minutes of June 18, 2019, which Mr. Foskett seconded and the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board carried unanimously.

### **4) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that the bill for the landscape contract is in the mail and he will pay it when it arrives. Mr. Bohannon will follow-up with Bartlett Tree to find out when they plan pruning work, which

typically occurs in late June/early July. Mr. Foskett asked if they will cut any trees. Mr. Bohannon replied no; they will only cut trees with the Board's expressed permission, after a mistake was made last year.

**5) Report from the Friends of the Arboretum at Ashuelot River Park**

Mr. Foskett reported the following:

- The Friends name has changed to The Friends of the Arboretum at Ashuelot River Park. This change reflects the Friends' focus, which has always been the arboretum and not the full expanse of the park.
- The Friends continue waiting for a federal ID number from the IRS to start collecting cobble payments and provide donors with the opportunity for tax deductions. All other approvals are complete and the Friends hired a CPA to help.
- The Friends discussed the need for a water spigot and Mr. Bohannon said one will be installed at the main connection.
- There was a June event on decision-making around the West Street Dam. Mr. Foskett reported that the participants were divided on a solution. He pointed out the important fact that removing the dam will change the aesthetic character of the park and can diminish important wetland species upstream; though some dam removals (e.g., West Swanzey Dam) have had beautiful results as vegetation returns.
- The Friends discussed the ongoing need for volunteers to take maintenance ownership of parcels in the park, such as work Councilor Hooper recently completed. On July 8, approximately 30 students from the KSC Links program volunteered and accomplished a lot despite the afternoon heat. Mornings are generally preferred for this work, but that was not possible in this instance.

**6) Park Discussion**

**a. Park Clean-Ups: July 8 (1 - 3 PM) & August 22 (9 AM - 12 PM)**

See above for details about the July 8 clean-up. Freshmen students from KSC will volunteer on August 22. Board members are always welcome to attend these events and help manage the volunteers.

**b. QR Codes**

Mr. Bohannon will follow-up with Frank at Bartlett Tree. Mr. Bohannon and Chair Winsor have agreed to split the cost of 100 signs that include the QR code and species name; buying in bulk this way results in a substantial discount. Doing so, the college and park will acquire 50 signs each, which Bartlett tree will install sometime in the fall.

Ms. Sadoski moved to allow Mr. Bohannon permission to purchase 50 QR code signs in addition to the 50 that Keene State College will purchase. Mr. Bocko seconded the motion, which the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board carried unanimously.

**c. Public Art**

Mr. Bohannon recalled Joel, the landscape designer interested in creating public art for the park; he creates granite pieces. Ms. Sadoski recalled and Mr. Bohannon confirmed that the City has granite

available for purchase following demolition of the old Public Works building at 560 Main Street and the recent removal of part of the library foundation. Mr. Bohannon was unable to speak with Joel after this item was agendaized and will invite him to a future meeting. He is still interested in the arboretum and pergola redesign. This agenda item served to remind the Board that Joel is still interested.

**d. Bat Houses**

Councilor Hooper reported that all four bat houses are assembled and ready to install on the wooden poles, which are also complete. Mr. Bohannon will coordinate with Councilor Hooper and Ms. Evans to help staff identify locations and install houses. Councilor Hooper said that white nose disease seems under control and bat populations are rebounding. The houses should be installed this fall for winter hibernation and Councilor Hooper hopes there will be ongoing projects with bats, in partnership with Antioch, which the board agreed will be important for the longevity of the project.

**e. Conway School Proposal**

Mr. Bohannon reported that the Trustees approved the Board's recommendation to submit a proposal to the Conway School of Landscape Design and Mr. Bohannon will submit an application. If the City is chosen by the school, it will be a great interactive experience for the Board and park to move forward over the next 50 years. Mr. Bohannon was still unsure on who would lead the project from the school but said individuals there are very enthusiastic about the park. The funding was a non-issue for the Trustees because funds remained from the irrigation project, which will pay half the cost, and the other half will come from the Board's 2020 budget.

Because of the focus on climate resiliency in the park, Mr. Bocko suggested that Antioch students could contribute to this project in some way for education purposes or implementing the new landscape design. Mr. Bohannon and Mr. Bocko will work together further on this.

**7) New Business**

**8) Next Meeting Date - August 13, 2019**

Mr. Bocko will be absent.

**9) Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:49 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker  
July 9, 2019

Edits by: Kristy Morrison & Katie Kibler