

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA

Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 8:00 AM
ZOOM Invite, Online Meeting

- Due to the COVID State of Emergency, this meeting will be conducted using the online meeting platform, Zoom. The public may view the meeting online at www.zoom.com and click on “Join A Meeting” then enter Meeting ID 819 7366 0123
- To listen to the meeting, please dial (646) 876-9923 and when prompted as a participant, enter Meeting ID 819 7366 0123
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Members:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Judy Sadoski
Paul Bocko
Suzy Krautmann
Ruzzel Zullo
Dian Mathews
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Acceptance of April 13, 2021 Minutes
3. Finance 2021 Budget
4. Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum
5. Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation
 - a. Invasive Species
 - b. Pollinator Gardens
 - c. Education
6. Request From Ashuelot Rediscovery & Boat Building Festival
7. Request From Antioch University – Bee Study
8. New, Other Business
9. Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 8:00 AM

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

8:00 AM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Judy Sadoski
Paul Bocko
Suzy Krautmann
Ruzzel Zullo
Dian Mathews
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Guests

Mike Ward
Leslie Casey

Members Not Present:

Chair Winsor read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM. Roll Call was taken.

2) Acceptance of March 9, 2021 Minutes

Judy Sadoski made a motion to accept the minutes of March 9, 2021 as presented. Thomas Haynes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) Finance 2021 Budget

Mr. Bohannon reported that he, Chair Winsor, Ms. Krautmann and Mr. Haynes had recently walked through the park and went over upcoming projects. With regards to the beds, they observed plenty of mulch remaining from previous years and don't feel new mulch is needed. With the organic practices the committee is looking to implement, Mr. Bohannon suggested picking up sticks and heavy debris but leaving the leaves and mulch, and then shredding the leaves and incorporating them back into the beds in the fall. He went on to state that they could skip the landscaping this year by using the new organic methodology, and instead put that money towards new shrubs and plants. He invited the board to share comments or concerns.

Dian Mathews asked for clarification on what they would be doing with the beds. Mr. Bohannon replied they would be using a steel rake to loosen up the mulch. Ms. Mathews stated a general pick up of branches would likely be sufficient. She then asked about the budget funds for landscaping and wondered if they could be used to buy horticulture size shrubs. She made note that her garden club fund of \$1,000 could be used towards some of those shrubs but anticipates the fund being used up quickly.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the landscape money could be shifted as the board sees fit and agreed with purchasing established shrubs at a larger size. He went over the current budget listing \$3,000 for landscaping, \$1,500 for shrubs, \$1,500 for bulbs, \$3,185 for Bartlett Tree to complete their tree pruning, and \$1,000 in the miscellaneous category.

Leslie Casey asked if there are discounts for non-profits or municipalities. Chair Winsor stated the best option would probably be purchasing from a wholesale nursery and mentioned that the City of Keene has done work with Millican Nurseries in the past.

Paul Bocko mentioned some errors in the budget columns. Mr. Bohannon took note of the errors.

Chair Winsor clarified that if they don't mulch that money could be used for shrubs, and Mr. Bohannon replied that that was correct.

Suzy Krautmann asked about reusing existing plants from other locations and adding forsythia. Mr. Bohannon stated that is still a possibility. He further explained that there are rhododendrons tucked near the Rachel Marshall area that are completely hidden and could potentially be moved to another area of the park. He added that forsythia would provide some color.

Ms. Mathews stated that forsythia are beautiful but don't attract many pollinators. She suggested a service berry which would be colorful and attract pollinators. Additionally, they bloom first in the spring and are what people in New England used to look to, like they now look to forsythia, which is a good educational opportunity. She agreed with relocating the rhododendrons and also recommended purchasing Fitzwilliam rhododendrons.

Chair Winsor commented that those rhododendrons are very large and Ms. Mathews responded stating they would have to cut the rhododendrons and wouldn't let them grow too big. She suggested they try to stick with natives to start and then add non-natives afterwards.

Leslie Casey suggested hydrangea arborescens, which stay a modest size, look attractive and have pollinators year long. She also mentioned lilacs.

Chair Winsor re-directed the board to focus on the budget and revisit plant discussion at another time.

Mr. Bohannon stated he's hearing they may want to leave \$1,000 in landscaping and add more money into the replanting program for shrubs and bulbs. He reiterated that they could shift money were they see fit and added it would be appropriate for the board to match Ms. Mathews garden club grant.

Mr. Bocko stated invasives are a challenge and suggested they allow money for that category in the budget. Chair Winsor asked if there's a city employee who could perform spraying in the park for invasive species. Mr. Bohannon stated there are two licensed team members who could perform that task. Mr. Bocko asked if Mr. Bohannon had touched base with Elizabeth McCann from Antioch University, stating she was willing to help with invasives. Mr. Bohannon apologized that he hadn't followed through with that yet.

Mr. Bohannon reviewed the updated budget based on changes made during their discussion. The new budget read \$1,000 for landscaping, \$1,500 for shrubs, \$1,500 for bulbs, \$1,500 for invasives, \$3,185 for Bartlett Tree pruning and \$1,000 for miscellaneous, for a total of \$9,685.

Mr. Bocko moved to approve the budget as presented. Ruzzel Zullo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation

- a. **April Work Outing** – Mr. Bohannon stated that he'd been in close contact with interact clubs and they know exactly what they will be doing for the work outing. He went on to say that everything is set to go aside from waiting for some shipments and gathering tools and materials prior to the event. They are planning on 30 kids each day from 8am to 3pm and Mr. Bohannon requested commitment from any members willing to help at the event.

Chair Winsor asked about obtaining wood chips for the trails on the Rachel Marshall side of the park and Mr. Bohannon replied that they will be getting those as part of the materials.

Chair Winsor suggested they could plant a tree on one of the days for Earth day. Mr. Bohannon wondered what kind of tree and where it could be planted and stated he will work with Bartlett Tree on those details. Chair Winsor suggested planting it across the bridge in the Rachel Marshall area.

Mr. Haynes and Chair Winsor confirmed that they would attend all 3 event days. Ms. Krautmann and Ms. Sadoski stated they will be able to help. Mr. Bocko confirmed he would be there on Tuesday, April 27. Ms. Mathews stated members of The Friends will be able to help as well.

Mr. Bocko asked if they will be planting shrubs and if they will be doing anything with invasives on those working days. Mr. Bohannon stated the

plan was to plant about 6 shrubs but he will need to touch base with Ms. Mathews on exactly what will be planted or re-planted.

Mr. Bohannon reminded everyone that the Rachel Marshall trust fund is also available to them to implement the master plan. He stated it could be utilized for things above and beyond their aforementioned budget.

Invasive Species - Chair Winsor stated they need to come up with a strategy to deal with invasive species. Ms. Mathews agreed and suggested they have a specific meeting to discuss that topic given that it's such a major issue. Short discussion ensued with regards to cutting and spraying or tarping invasives.

Mr. Haynes suggested that they could begin identifying and mapping out the invasives with the kids during the work outing days. Chair Winsor agreed with that idea.

Leslie Casey reminded everyone about proper disposal of invasives.

- b. **Pollinator Gardens** – Mr. Bohannon reiterated that they need continue to be conscious about planting pollinators within the arboretum. He mentioned John Therriault from the Conservation Commission who has done work with Bee City USA and is interested in helping them with this. He suggested they also set aside a meeting for education and discussion around this topic.

Ms. Mathews stated she has a contact from a Caterpillar Lab group who are interested in doing a walkthrough of the park to help with pollinators, especially those that are specific to New Hampshire moths and butterflies.

- c. **Education** – Mr. Bohannon stated this agenda item is to make sure they stay within their mission and try to provide educational opportunities for the public within the park.

Mr. Haynes stated invasive species could be an opportunity for education, mentioning mapping out the species during the work outing and educating on identification and best practices.

Mr. Bocko stated he is planning another education program on bats for Antioch University in August, which will compare habitats at the park and then at the Horatio Colony Nature Preserve. He also mentioned the idea of doing nature walks with the community so they can see exactly what's being done in the park. Mr. Bocko stated he is happy to help with any of those programs.

Ms. Krautmann stated there was a middle school science teacher that was involved in some education in the past and wondered if that was still

occurring. Mr. Bohannon replied that they are working with a middle school teacher and will be providing camp like experiences around Keene, but mainly based in Robin Hood Park.

Chair Winsor stated they are hoping the horticulture program takes off at the career center and they can eventually make that connection as well.

5) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum

Dian Mathews mentioned that she spoke to the caterpillar lab group about the idea of a larvae hunt and those details are in the works. She provided an update on the Workforce Opportunity planting project, stating that they planted peat pots with seeds which will be distributed to the kids. The kids will then grow them on their own and come together to plant them in the park sometime in June.

6) New, Other Business

Chair Winsor mentioned that Dave Whaley had resigned from the advisory board. He sincerely thanked him for his services and wished him well.

Mr. Bohannon stated Ruzzel Zullo is now an official member and welcomed him to the advisory board.

At the next meeting Mr. Bohannon stated they will need to address a proposal letter from Mill Hollow Works. They are looking to do a boat building festival and would like to use the park for that event in July. Mr. Bohannon stated they typically say no to events of that size; however, something of that nature does fit the master plan. He can invite them to the next meeting if needed.

Ms. Mathews mentioned that people have to walk into the beds to access the tags that Bartlett Tree put on the trees. She wondered if they could start looking at each tree and designate a place where people can walk so no one is walking over plantings. Chair Winsor suggested they could put a stepping stone so people can get close enough without causing any damage.

There was no other new business.

7) Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 8:00 AM

Chair Winsor reminded everyone of the next meeting on Tuesday, May 11 at 8:00am. He adjourned the meeting at 9:04 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Ashuelot Rediscovery & Boatbuilding Festival
July 2021, Keene NH
Mill Hollow Works, LLC
Proposal Revision 3.23.2021

Throughout the month of July 2021 in Keene, Mill Hollow Works will run the Ashuelot Rediscovery Boatbuilding Festival, culminating in a Float-Your-Boat event at the end of the month. This community-wide family boatbuilding program first teaches woodworking skills to adult & child teams by building a small canoe-like boat from locally sourced wood, non-toxic materials, using hand tools - and then promotes an interest in the ecology and history of the Ashuelot watershed through exploration of the Ashuelot River through Keene.

The Craft School at Mill Hollow Works, a mission-driven business, works to improve lives through the crafts and resourcefulness of New England's old Yankees. Through a diverse curriculum of courses including Carpentry, Woodworking, Boatbuilding, Homesteading and more, we are reviving the skills crucial to self-reliance and personal dignity that used to be handed down from generation to generation. We curate our curriculum based on fostering three core values: A Sense of Self, a Sense of Place, and a Sense of Connection (to our community, region and planet).

Every weekend throughout the month of July 2021 we'll work with groups of Adult/Child teams to build our purposefully designed Jellyfish style boats either at our shop - at 149 Hurricane road in West Keene - or at a remote location, if we can find one, with access to the Ashuelot. We have a goal of building 24 boats (one boat to a team). The Jellyfish is a small, flat-bottom canoe - about 14 feet long and two-and-a-half feet wide. It is big enough for most adults to use alone with a kayak paddle, two smaller kids can use it as a tandem canoe, and it's small enough to be a young person's first solo boating experience. Made of local white pine, common deck screws, and some water-based non-toxic glue, Professional Boatbuilder and Instructor Wade Smith specifically designed this little boat for teaching boatbuilding to kids, in a short time, and with no plywood, epoxy, fiberglass, or toxic sealants. Designed while he was running the Boatshop at Mystic Seaport Museum to grow their educational curriculum, Wade has subsequently overseen the building of over 250 Jellyfishes through this unique program. We will offer this as a no-cost program to participants and have partnered with Keene Housing Kids Collaborative, a 501C3 organization, to help us find and integrate families into the boatbuilding portion who would most benefit. KHKC have also agreed to be our fiscal sponsor allowing for tax-exempt donations of materials and resources (lumber, PDFs, paddles).

At the end of the month, we will launch all the boats on the Ashuelot River during a big Float-Your-Boat Day Celebration (Personal Flotation Devices and paddles provided along with expert paddle instruction). New England rivers like the Ashuelot were once the lifeblood of the towns that grew up along them - including Keene. They were the transportation routes of Native Americans for thousands of years; they made colonial agriculture possible, and they were the power of the American Industrial Revolution. But now, as in so many other cities, Keene has largely turned its back on this irreplaceable natural and cultural resource. We will enable and encourage the responsible use and exploration of the Ashuelot as it flows through the backyards of our community connecting us to our industrious past - when life depended on the health of waterways, working with tools, and building things.

There is no better way to see the health and history of a place than to travel its waterways, and for people for whom the word "river" conjures only images of shopping carts thrown off bridges, the news is often good: the cleanliness of the water, the diversity of wildlife that rely on the river, and the small but dedicated community of people who use the river, brooks, canals, and ponds - are all there to see for anyone introduced to it. The more the community sees the river as an oasis, the healthier the river - and the community - will be. In one month, we will introduce the Ashuelot Watershed, in its context, as one of 38 major tributaries of the Connecticut River Watershed - the lifeblood of over eleven thousand square miles of New England - to a

new generation. The kids of our region will decide the future of our city - meaning they are the caretakers of our rivers, our wetlands, our resources. It's essential that they have a connection to these resources, that they view the land and river as theirs to preserve and cherish.

We need the town support for this project, and there's no better way to garner support and create momentum than by launching a crowd-funding campaign. The Local Crowd Monadnock has accepted our proposal to be hosted on their crowd funding platform as a campaign that aligns with their master plan and strengthens our city's economy. We are also particularly interested in a location: while we have a workshop at 149 Hurricane Road in Keene, we would like a location on the banks of the river where we could put up a big tent. Suggestions possible locations have included the lot owned by Public Service of New Hampshire (just west of Ashuelot River Park on West St. - between Starbucks and Dark Mark Tattoo - on the west side of the river, used by Melanson as a parking lot, and by people for recreational access to the river); or there is a "Public Recreation Area" indicated on maps on the property of the American Legion on Court St. (just above the stone arch bridge); or, of course, somewhere on the campus of Keene State College (I am an alumni of KSC).

We want to have the Float-Your-Boat Day a city-wide festival to highlight the importance of responsible land and river use, and to give thanks for our resources. We would love to incorporate the history of regional native peoples, ancient technology, and especially, teach about local wildlife and eco-systems found along the river. But we don't want to do it all - instead we want to build boats and create a fun, family-orientated, festival that serves as an educational platform for these other complimentary topics. We are in the early stages of reaching out to other conservation-focused organizations to include other educational components, kiosks, displays, and other festival elements such as River-themed scavenger hunts complete with prizes, art displays, games and music. We're also looking to partner with other groups to highlight the natural, environmental and historic importance of the Ashuelot River - particularly the stretch in Keene between the stone arch bridge on Court street, and the Keene State sports fields to the south.

The Mill Hollow Works, LLC mission:

Human beings need a sense of belonging and connection to be healthy; connection to their inner self, connection to where they live, connection to the world and to other people. Community grows out of these connections - and amplifies the best parts and goals of its members: generosity, inclusivity, safety, productivity, etc. A healthy community cannot flourish while any of its members don't have access to basic needs such as food, clothes, warmth, and shelter. We specifically launched Mill Hollow Works as a mission driven business that helps people help themselves by empowering self-reliance. Inspired by our own impoverished upbringing subsidized through the resourcefulness of our parents - employing the skills of our hands to grow food, make clothes, make our homes warm and dry - we believe these skills are the foundation of personal dignity and empowerment. Once an individual unlocks the ability to live in a state of self-reliance, free from the fear of not-enoughness, the best parts of themselves emerge. We provide an outlet and the infrastructure for local makers, builders and growers to become teachers and share the skills and knowledge that they have worked long & hard to accumulate.

Andrew Bohannon

From: Michael Akresh <makresh@antioch.edu>
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 8:15 AM
To: [REDACTED]; Andrew Bohannon; Alaina Bandanza; Paul Bocko
Subject: Bee Study along Ashuelot River

Hi Dian and Andy,

I am professor at Antioch University New England in Keene, in the Environmental Studies department. Paul Bocko at Antioch mentioned that I should reach out to you. I am working with an Antioch graduate student, Alaina (cc'd), on starting a new project examining wild bee diversity and abundance in fens and other wetlands in NH.

We were wondering if the Friends of the Ashuelot River would be interested in having any of the wetlands along the Ashuelot River surveyed for bees, and if so, if there were any funding available for this to help pay for Alaina's summer salary and needed materials (bee traps, insect pins/boxes, etc.) for this summer and/or next summer. We have actually reached out to the Keene Conservation Commission and the Keene Airport for funding as well. The Keene Conservation Commission generously will be giving us ~\$500, but we are hoping for more funds (~\$4,000 per site) for all of the lab work to clean, dry, pin, and look at the bees under a microscope to identify them. We were thinking of surveying the wetlands adjacent to the airport, but could also consider the wetlands in/adjacent to the Ashuelot River Park, if more funding was available and depending on the type of wetland that exists in the Park.

Please let me know what you think. We have an extensive scientific proposal of our work that we can send to you as well. Although we want to prioritize the bee work, if you have additional funding, there are other Antioch students that work with me that are experts in other insect taxa (moths, ants, butterflies, dragonflies) and could do other insect surveys in the park as well. However, we would be happy with any amount of funding that could supplement the funds already given from the Conservation Commission.

Thanks for your time, hope to hear from you soon.

Mike

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