

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

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

**Tuesday, October 12, 2021**

**8:00 AM**

**Recreation Center,  
Room 22**

**Members Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Paul Bocko  
Dian Mathews  
Suzy Krautmann  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation & Facilities

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Stephen Hooper  
Ruzzel Zullo  
Judy Sadoski

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.

**2) Acceptance of September 14, 2021 Minutes**

Mr. Bocko made a motion to accept the minutes of September 14, 2021 as presented. Mr. Haynes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon directed the board's attention to the budget in their packets, noting that it had been updated but he had not yet received receipts from The Friends native plantings purchases. He stated that out of the \$1,500 hundred granted, The Friends spent \$859. Additionally, Bartlett tree was recently in the park and will be providing a bill soon. Mr. Bohannon added that the invoice will be a bit higher than anticipated due to the pruning of more trees. Next, he went over the status of the trust fund currently at \$497,759 at a principal, noting that they work off 10% of the income.

**4) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum**

Ms. Mathews reported that work had slowed down and that the tasks they are focused on next are spreading compost in the beds, planting bulbs, cleaning out the loft in the shed and finding a mouse deterrent. She listed the lineup of bulbs she chose as 50 Allium, 100 Brodiaea, 100 Erythronium, and 40 Camassia. Additionally, Ms. Mathews stated they need to find a way to protect the Mountain laurels and Rhododendron by the OHGC bench from the wind.

Next, Ms. Mathews reported that they are making a map of all plantings done this season and have been diligently marking everything as they go. She noted that all plantings thus far had been native. They purchased shrubs, perennials and groundcovers totaling \$859, out of the \$1,500 they had been granted by the board to spend. She added that the bulbs purchased were around \$120.

Ms. Mathews reported that Barry and Doris LeClair are working on creating a spreadsheet for all stones planted since 2010. She noted that there were several stones that were out of order, causing them to check and correct old lists.

They are also compiling a list of all volunteer groups who worked at the park in 2021, with the goal of creating a calendar for planning and scheduling purposes. Additionally, they are tracking persons and number of hours for grant writing.

Ms. Mathews reported that, over the winter, they are hoping to establish a coalition to work on elimination of invasive species in the park. Groups they plan to contact include the Conservation Commission, Ashuelot River Local Advisory, Cheshire Cooperative Extension and the CT River Conservancy. Ms. Mathews mentioned a new invasive species called the spotted lantern fly.

She stated that the early morning bird walk with Steve LaMonde went well and they even added the 115<sup>th</sup> bird to the Park's list, a Swainson's Thrush. 8 adults and 3 children participated and Mr. LaMonde expressed interest in doing a spring bird walk. Ms. Mathews mentioned possibly obtaining kid binoculars to keep at the Recreation Department for people to check out when needed.

As far as education, Ms. Mathews stated she'd like to start education talks on topics such as pollinators, native plantings for a NH garden and the "Leave the Leaves" presentation. Lastly, she noted that The Friends will be completing a program to become a certified pollinator friendly garden. The program is 4 steps for \$10, with the option to purchase a \$30 certification sign when completed.

**5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation**

Mr. Bohannon directed the board's attention to the Ashuelot River Park ARP Project spreadsheet and pointed out expenses thus far. He mentioned item #4 titled More Seating and stated Keene Monument will be installing 3 benches in the near future, noting labor shortages held them up a bit.

Ms. Mathews brought up tree roots being impacted and wondered if they could add signage to the kiosk with a message to be mindful of root protection zones. She also mentioned adding stepping stones up to the tree markers to help people avoid stepping on plantings.

Mr. Bohannon suggested buying 12X12 concrete pavers from Home Depot for stepping stones. Ms. Mathews stated she would walk around the park to survey how many pavers they would need.

Discussion ensued about the trailhead and welcome Kiosk at the Jonathan Daniels trail entrance. Mr. Bohannon noted that the kiosk alone will be around \$5,000, \$7,500 if they go wider, and that they are looking to emulate the Walldogs kiosk at Railroad Square and the Ashuelot Park entrance kiosk at Emerald Street. Main features would include an arch with trail name and signage with room for a trail map and other education pieces. Mr. Bohannon stated he would talk to Peter Poanessa and have him design a kiosk and bring it back to the board for approval. He informed the board that the stretch of land there is in bad shape and the drainage is horrible, noting that they may need to work with a contractor to accomplish making the entrance a main focal point. He added that he is working with Mr. Bocko to obtain funding and set up an Antioch student to work on the signage and educational components. Ms. Mathews requested that she be involved. Chair Winsor summarized that the next steps would be talking to a contractor with regards to drainage and then planning the kiosk design and exploring cost.

#### **A) Invasive Species**

Short discussion ensued with regards to eliminating knotweed in the park. Ms. Mathews suggested chopping and clearing it, followed by laying tarps and covering the tarps with 4 inches of compost. She stated they could add signage to let everyone know what was taking place. Mr. Bohannon mentioned having goats come in, stating it would cost around \$1,000 for the weekend, but they'd need to be ready to go once the goats leave. Ms. Mathews agreed, stating after the goats eat the knotweed and scour the root systems, it's important to immediately cover the area with tarps and throw down the compost. Mr. Haynes asked for clarification on when this process would take place. Ms. Mathews answered that it would occur in the spring so they could get the knotweed right as it is beginning to grow up. Chair Winsor stated the invasive species topic will need to be discussed in more depth.

#### **B) Pollinator Gardens**

Ms. Mathews stated pollinator gardens are an ongoing item that do not need to be discussed each meeting.

**C) Education**

Ms. Mathews asked about funding for speakers. Mr. Bohannon stated they could likely make room for that in the next budget as they won't be spending all of the replanting program money. Ms. Mathews stated she would find out the rate of speakers she had in mind and bring it back to the board.

**D) Bio Blitz**

Mr. Bohannon stated the Bio Blitz is an event that the NHRPA sponsors to get departments to be more environmentally conscious. The idea is to have the community explore outdoor parks in Keene and document pollinator gardens and pollinators as a contest. Ms. Mathews was very excited about this event and fully on board to plan it for next year. Mr. Haynes stated he would discuss it with the Conservation Commission and see if they would be equipped to be involved.

**6) New, Other Business**

Chair Winsor inquired about leaf collection timing in the park. Mr. Bohannon stated he put it on Mr. Sweeney's radar to plan with his staff and that the goal is to mulch the leaves and repurpose them back into the beds.

Mr. Bohannon reiterated that he is working with Mr. Bocko to bring on a student and believes they can fit it into the budget and it will be matched by Antioch University. Mr. Bocko noted that it has been difficult to find students to work but he will begin advertising as soon as funding is confirmed.

Ms. Krautmann stated she has someone interested in creating a sculpture for the park. She suggested the board do a walk around and choose a few locations where they would like the art placed, and then they could allow artists to pick from those spots.

**7) Adjournment – Next Meeting Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 8:00AM**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:09 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director