

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

**ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 8:15 AM  
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

Members:

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Ruzzel Zullo, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne  
Steve Hooper  
Paul Bocko  
Suzy Krautmann  
Dian Mathews

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Alternate:

Thomas Haynes

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of May 9, 2023 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum
5. Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation
  - a. Rachel Marshall Area
  - b. Kiosk Information
  - c. Bartlett Tree
6. New, Other Business
  - a. Pollinator Palooza – June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1-3 PM
7. Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 8:15 AM



1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

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4 ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD  
5 MEETING MINUTES  
6  
7

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

8:15 AM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Ruzzel Zullo, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne  
Suzy Krautmann  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate (Voting)

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Stephen Hooper  
Paul Bocko  
Dian Mathews

8 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**

9  
10 Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM. He designated Mr. Haynes as a voting  
11 member for the meeting.

12  
13 **2) Approval of April 11, 2023 Minutes**

14  
15 Ms. Krautmann made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2023 meeting. Vice Chair  
16 Zullo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

17  
18 **3) Finance Report**

19  
20 Mr. Bohannon reported that the trustees approved the budget.

21  
22 **4) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum**

23  
24 Leslie Casey reported that the Friends have started to clean up the park and monitor it for weeds.  
25 They had a couple work days. Mike Breshears gave the Friends a “shout out” in The Keene  
26 Sentinel’s ELF publication. He reported that the Friends would be working at the park at 9:00  
27 AM on the first Saturday of the month and were looking for volunteers. No volunteers showed  
28 up. Chair Winsor suggested having a recurring request for volunteers in the ELF publication.  
29

ARPAB Meeting Minutes  
May 9, 2023

30 Ms. Casey reported that using a tarp and mulching were helping with the weeds, although  
31 knotweed was coming up around the edges of the covered area. She wondered about using a tarp  
32 to cover the area on the other side of the bridge, where the Friends hand pulled bittersweet. She  
33 reported that the park is looking good. The soil is getting healthier. There are more worms in the  
34 soil. The plants seem happy. She expressed that the Friends are off to a good start this season.  
35 The trees are doing as well as they expected.

36  
37 The Friends pulled the barberry shrubs from along the bridge. Rainey Carlson lopped off some  
38 branches from a large barberry shrub near the entrance of the park, near the conifers, to see what  
39 the structure would look like without the shrub there. The Friends are considering removing the  
40 stump and root and replacing the shrub with an ornamental conifer. They are considering what to  
41 do with the bed near the handicap parking along the wrought iron fence by the Mascoma parking  
42 lot. There is a Jerusalem artichoke and some ornamental grasses in the area. There are a lot of  
43 vertical elements and then a squat conifer shrub that is past its prime and looks out of place.  
44 They would prefer it be removed. The rain garden is a work in progress. They have ordered  
45 plants for it. Chuck [Sweeney] has returned and may be working on getting it ready for planting.  
46 Ms. Casey noted Ms. Mathews planned to “man” a table at an upcoming volunteer recruitment  
47 fair.

48  
49 Councilor Chadbourne arrived at 8:23AM.

50  
51 Ms. Krautmann asked whether a tree on the adjacent property, possibly Mascoma’s, that is bent  
52 over into the park is dangerous. Mr. Bohannon said he would take a look.

53  
54 Mr. Haynes asked whether there was any follow-up on the vandalism the Board discussed at the  
55 last meeting. Ms. Krautmann responded that she reported the vandalism to Eric Kress, [Franklin  
56 Elementary School principal,] who reported it to Forrest [Bencivenga, a teacher at the school].  
57 Ms. Krautmann said that she and Ms. Mathews dismantled the damaged sculptures and put the  
58 pieces in the shed. It remains to be seen what pieces need replacing. She said that the school did  
59 not announce the vandalism to the students who worked on the sculptures. Chair Winsor said he  
60 told one of the students’ moms. The school plans to replace the damaged pieces eventually. Mr.  
61 Bohannon said his department would offer financial support for repairing the sculptures. Ms.  
62 Krautmann said she would let Ms. Bencivenga know. Ms. Krautmann suggested installing  
63 security lights or cameras. Mr. Bohannon indicated that the City is discussing security for all its  
64 parks. Mr. Bohannon said three sculptures remained. Mr. Kress told him students might be able  
65 to work on the sculptures on an ongoing basis.

66  
67 Ms. Casey reported that the Friends’ first park cleanup day coincided with Green Up Keene day.  
68 They will try to schedule the first cleanup day next year on Green Up Keene day again. The first  
69 week of May is a prime time to get volunteers to help with weed management.

70  
71 Rainey Carlson arrived at 8:27 AM.

72

73 Chair Winsor skipped ahead to agenda item 6 (New, Other Business) to accommodate a guest,  
74 Alyssa Bender, youth services manager for the City of Keene. Ms. Bender announced that, for  
75 the third year, they are hosting a Mental Health Awareness Day event in July. They want to  
76 expand the focus of this year's event from mental health to general wellness. Everglow and Yoga  
77 Space will be there. She would like to hold the event at Ashuelot River Park this year. The event  
78 was at Fuller Park last year, so they could coordinate with Movie under the Stars. There is more  
79 space to hold an expanded event at Ashuelot River Park. It is a more open, inclusive, vibrant  
80 space. There is better foot traffic. Only community members will be allowed to have tables,  
81 where they can provide information about resources in the community. Ms. Bender asked if the  
82 Board would like to be part of the event. It will be a day for positive energy, for people to get  
83 resources if they need them, and for focusing on wellness and mental health. The Mayor will  
84 declare it Mental Health Awareness Day.

85  
86 In response to a question from Ms. Casey, Ms. Bender said the event would take place on Friday,  
87 July 14, likely from 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM. In response to a question from Chair Winsor, she said  
88 each participant would set up a table outside and have a self-care activity or another activity that  
89 would help the participant organization and others. They would also have yard games.

90  
91 Ms. Krautmann wondered if there could be guided hikes through the park. Ms. Bender said yes.  
92 Mr. Bohannon noted the Serenity Center Recovery Rally would be the day after the event and  
93 would include hikes. The two events are totally separate.

94  
95 Ms. Casey wondered if there could be a painting area, noting that Ms. Mathews is a  
96 watercolorist. Ms. Carlson said that was a great idea. She also noted how important gardening is  
97 to mental health. Chair Winsor said the Board is very supportive of the event. Ms. Bender said it  
98 is very important for mental health to stay active doing what you love, and the event would focus  
99 more broadly on various ways to provide self-care. Ms. Krautmann wondered if the library could  
100 host a story walk or story hour. Chair Winsor invited Ms. Bender to the June meeting to see if  
101 the Board has anything else to contribute.

102  
103 Returning to the subject of the Friends, Ms. Carlson reported that she received a call from  
104 George Foskett, advising her that the Kiwanis Club has funds available to support the Friends.  
105 Mr. Bohannon echoed that they are looking for a project to support. He said he gave them a list  
106 of projects. Ms. Carlson suggested they could support work on the Rachel Marshall area. Mr.  
107 Bohannon said they want to support a specific project. He suggested they could donate a bench  
108 in memory of Brian Matson, who was a Kiwanis Club member. Mr. Bohannon said he is meeting  
109 with them later in the day and would discuss potential projects for the park with them. Mr.  
110 Bohannon said Mr. Haynes was instrumental in a significant project at Goose Pond, and another  
111 \$10,000 might help the project significantly. There are many potential projects. He wondered if  
112 they could support more art in the park.

- 113  
114 **5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation**  
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116 **A) Rachel Marshall Area**

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Mr. Bohannon said Mr. Bocko wanted further consideration of creating a bird sanctuary with observation areas. Chair Winsor said that was just one idea. Ms. Carlson suggested installing nesting boxes. Chair Winsor noted there is a lot of potential for the area. Mr. Bohannon wondered if there are target species. He can speak with a local Boy Scouts troop about working on a simple project. Chair Winsor said he saw an osprey at Swanzey Lake. Even bald eagles are returning. Ms. Carlson said there are heron in the area. Ms. Krautmann said there are ducks.

Mr. Haynes noted Antioch University used to have a bird club, and if the club is still operating, students might be able to work on ideas or even a project for a bird sanctuary. Chair Winsor wondered about building an osprey platform like he saw in Rhode Island. Ms. Casey noted there might be an opportunity to get resources for eliminating the glossy buckthorn shrubs, as their berries are poisonous to birds, and replace them with native shrubs with good berries for the birds. Mr. Bohannon suggested the Audubon Society might have grants available. Ms. Casey said she would look into it. Mr. Bohannon noted what a good educational tool a bird sanctuary would be. He further noted that a bird sanctuary would meet the master plan. He wondered if the Keene Middle School's woodshop class might be able to do a project. He suggested they could make a donation to its Learning Lab.

#### **B) Kiosk Information**

Chair Winsor said Mr. Bocko put together a really well-written history of the park. A timeline has also been put together. He said he is counting on Steve Hooper to get some photographs from the Historical Society. Otherwise, the content for the kiosk is almost ready to submit to Peter Poanessa, who will lay everything out and provide them with a proof to review. As soon as he gets written materials from Ms. Mathews, he can get everything to Mr. Poanessa.

Mr. Bohannon said Mr. Poanessa installed the kiosk over the weekend. Ms. Carlson wondered if it was installed too close to a tree and suggested the tree would need additional trimming. Mr. Bohannon noted there might have been a misunderstanding between him and Mr. Poanessa about where to install the kiosk. Mr. Bohannon said the tree could be trimmed or removed and some adjustments made to some rocks and plantings, if necessary. Ms. Carlson noted that some large branches of the tree have already been removed. Several individual discussions about the placement of the kiosk ensued.

#### **C) Bartlett Tree**

Mr. Bohannon had nothing new to report.

Ms. Carlson reminded Mr. Bohannon to send her Beth Brantley's email address. Dr. Brantley is a research botanist or something similar for Bartlett. Ms. Carlson wants to talk to her about a couple trees in the park.

160 **6) New, Other Business**

161

162 **A) Pollinator Palooza – June 22, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**

163

164 Ms. Casey reported that the Friends are putting together posters and other materials for a table at  
165 the event.

166

167 Mr. Bohannon noted that Amanda Littleton with the Cheshire County Conservation Commission  
168 put this event on for the first time last year. The event will be bigger this year, with more  
169 vendors, as well as plant sales. His department is providing some tables for the event, but Ms.  
170 Littleton and the Commission are organizing the event.

171

172 **B) Keene Serenity Center Recovery Rally – July 15, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

173

174 Mr. Bohannon said the Serenity Center is looking for partners for the rally. They will have a  
175 recovery walk through the Ashuelot trails. Southwest Community Services, Cheshire Medical  
176 Center, and the library will also be in the park.

177

178 He noted local organizations have started returning to holding events in the park. They promote  
179 the purpose of the park. The events do not impede the gardens in the park. There is more positive  
180 foot traffic. Ms. Carlson said the Friends are trying to keep the area behind Mascoma free of  
181 knotweed, so people can't hide out there. She noticed a chain link fence there was broken, then  
182 down, and now gone. Mr. Bohannon noted it was on private property. He said he would notify  
183 the property owner, in case it was an act of vandalism.

184

185 Chair Winsor said the Keene Senior Center contacted him about giving a presentation about the  
186 park. He said he would work with Mr. Bohannon on a presentation about the history of the park.  
187 This is a good way to do outreach about the park.

188

189 Mr. Bohannon advised the Board that the City Council is reviewing City meeting times. The  
190 Council may want all City meetings to be scheduled after 5:00 PM on weekdays or on weekends  
191 in order to accommodate more public participation. He thinks committees will have some  
192 flexibility to adjust meeting times, but it isn't clear. He asked for feedback from the Board to  
193 bring to the City Council. Councilor Chadbourne said the issue might have come up because  
194 many constituents expressed how upset they were that some of the public meetings about the  
195 Downtown Infrastructure Project were scheduled in the middle of a weekday. She noted most  
196 Councilors can't sit on this Board because of the morning meeting time, but because she is a  
197 professional gardener, the time works for her. Mr. Bohannon indicated the Board might have to  
198 change its meeting time.

199

200 Ms. Carlson said she doesn't think the Board's meetings generally attract a lot of citizens. She  
201 and Ms. Krautmann expressed that the Board should be able to schedule meetings for a time that  
202 works best for the Board, and a post-5:00 PM meeting time does not work well for the Board.

ARPAB Meeting Minutes  
May 9, 2023

203 Councilor Chadbourne noted many employers, like C&S, are very pro community and give  
204 employees flexibility to attend City meetings. Chair Winsor noted post-5:00 PM is rough for  
205 retired people. He asked Mr. Bohannon to let the City Council know that the Board does not  
206 want to change its meeting time. Councilor Chadbourne said she believes the City Council’s  
207 intent is not to target regular committee meetings but only special project meetings. She will  
208 convey the Board’s position to the City Council.

209  
210 Hr. Haynes said there is going to be a bird walk at Goose Pond on Sunday, May 28. He said a  
211 press release would be going out. Anyone interested in going can sign up with Mr. Bohannon’s  
212 department.

213  
214 Ms. Carlson suggested the Board check out the Rachel Marshall area to see the environment and  
215 the birds in it. Mr. Bohannon will see if any studies have been done in the past. Chair Winsor  
216 said he thinks Keene State College did a wildlife study at some point.

217  
218 **7) Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 8:15 AM**

219  
220 There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:04 AM.

221  
222 Respectfully submitted by,  
223 Wendy Chen, Minute Taker

224  
225 Reviewed and edited by,  
226 Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

227



**Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board  
2023**

			PROPOSED		
			Budget	Actual To Date	Difference
Landscaping		\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	
Replanting Program					
	shrubs	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	
	trees	\$ 5,000.00		\$ 5,000.00	
Bartlett Tree - Pruning		\$ 7,000.00	\$ -	\$ 7,000.00	
Miscellaneous (not contract)		<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>	
<b>Total*</b>		\$ 15,500.00	\$ -	<u>\$ 15,500.00</u>	

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