



## **ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 8:15 AM  
Recreation Center Room 22

Members:

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

Staff:

Carrah Fisk Hennessey, Director of Parks and Recreation

Alternate:

Thomas Haynes

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of August 13, 2024 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum
5. Project Tracking
  - a. Bird Ecology Project
  - b. Budget Development
  - c. Master Plan Implementation Discussion
6. Recent Events
  - a. Monadnock Conservancy Anniversary – October 5, 2024
7. New/Other Business
  - a. Story Walk
8. Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 8:15 AM

1 City of Keene  
2 New Hampshire

3  
4 ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD  
5 MEETING MINUTES  
6  
7

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

8:15 AM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

**Members Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Steve Hooper  
Ruzzel Zullo  
Suzy Krautmann  
Dian Mathews  
Kelly Cook

**Staff Present:**

Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Director of Parks &  
Recreation

**Members Not Present:**

Paul Bocko, Vice Chair  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

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9  
10 **1) Welcome & Call to Order**

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12 Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM. A guest from the Friends of the Ashuelot  
13 River Park Arboretum was present: Leslie Casey.

14  
15 **2) Approval of July 9, 2024 Minutes**

16  
17 Revisions: (1) list Kelly Cook as a member, not a guest; (2) Ms. Carlson's first name should be  
18 spelled as Raynee; (3) line 58, "Whitley" should be changed to "Whately."

19  
20 A motion by Ms. Cook to adopt the July 9, 2024 minutes as amended was duly seconded by Mr.  
21 Zullo. The motion carried unanimously.

22  
23 Chair Winsor mentioned his intention to invite Ms. Carlson to help with a presentation in  
24 September on the history of Keene State College's campus, particularly outdoor education.

25  
26 **3) Finance Report**

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28 Ms. Fisk-Hennessey reported that there were no changes since the previous meeting. Andy  
29 Bohannon, Deputy City Manager, was helping the professional herbicide applicator to get started  
30 in the Park (as well as Ladies' Wildwood and Pat Russell Parks). The Friends advised that  
31 herbicide should not be applied along riverbank where native plants were growing thanks to the

32 Friends' diligent work. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey said she would try to get that instruction to the  
33 herbicide professional, who Chair Winsor said is trustworthy, with more than 30 years'  
34 experience in vegetation control services. Ms. Mathews asked whether the City provided the  
35 professional with a list of areas to treat. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey thought the herbicide professional  
36 would look around and identify areas needing treatment. Ms. Casey said the buckthorn along the  
37 dam could be treated.

38

39 **4) Report From Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum**

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41 Ms. Mathews shared the following updates from the Friends of the Ashuelot River Park  
42 Arboretum:

- 43 • The Old Homestead Garden Club (OHGC) had been using the Park as a feature of what  
44 they do. The Friends advised the Club that this practice should not continue unless the  
45 Club takes a more active role in Park upkeep. The President of the OHGC listened and  
46 formed a committee of members who will care for the bed next from the corner by  
47 Starbucks to the electric shed. OHGC members would work in the Arboretum with the  
48 Friends on certain Fridays. The Friends would teach inexperienced OHGC members how  
49 to properly perform certain tasks, like weeding, so no native plants are removed on  
50 accident. The Club also expressed interest in helping with the pollinator garden planning  
51 and planting.
  - 52 ○ This work would help the OHGC to apply for grants for various projects. For  
53 example, there is a State Garden Club award that could help with the pollinator  
54 garden. Ms. Mathews is the Awards Chair of the OHGC, and was advising them.
- 55 • The Friends would have a community ad in the Monadnock Shopper News on Fridays if  
56 there is extra space available in that section. For example, the week before the meeting,  
57 there was not enough space remaining to include the ad.
- 58 • Three very experienced and energetic new gardeners had joined the Friends. With new  
59 volunteers and new members, there had been some very active and productive days of  
60 work in the Park, with upwards of 10 workers. This was promising because the  
61 volunteers were experienced, which allowed for more efficiency and productivity.
- 62 • Since the Pollinator Palooza, the Friends dug up all of the ornamental grass next to the  
63 water box and replaced it with ground cover from Julie's Garden at Maple Lane Farm.  
64 Senna (unsure of the plant/species) was planted in the bed next to and around the corner  
65 from first bench.
- 66 • Other activities:
  - 67 ○ Nearly every garden bed had been attended to this year, including weeding,  
68 pruning bushes, removing branches, and more to help the Arboretum look neat.  
69 The cobbles in front of the benches were also weeded and swept. As the Friends  
70 work throughout the Arboretum, they are clearing the cobbles so they can be seen.

74

- 75 ○ Cut back buckthorn shrubs along the Jonathan Daniels Trail. The buckthorn was  
76 bagged and zip tied, and the Friend asked the nearby group of homeless people to  
77 not remove the bags. The Friends intend to source replacement shrubs or ground  
78 cover from Nasami Farm Nursery in Whately, MA.
- 79 ○ Removed the invasive honeysuckle on the bridge side of the pergola. Frank  
80 Anderson (“Pepper”) as superintendent of the Parks crews would work on  
81 chipping the cut honeysuckle, and the Parks & Recreation staff would haul it to  
82 the Transfer Station. The Friends intend to source replacement shrubs or ground  
83 cover from Nasami Farm Nursery in Whately, MA.
- 84 ○ The Friends had removed a significant amount of Japanese knotweed along the  
85 riverbank. These sites have to be treated repeatedly over time to fully eradicate  
86 the invasive. The Friends created three knotweed drying piles that had grown  
87 quite tall, so a new pile was needed.
- 88 ○ Both buckthorn and bittersweet were removed from the area between the bed and  
89 the bridge, along the shoreline. Native plants had started growing in their place  
90 (e.g., irises).
- 91 ○ There is a separate brush pile that will be removed by the Parks & Recreation  
92 staff.
- 93 ○ The cobblestone inventory was complete, digitized, and should be included with  
94 the QR code on the kiosk like the Bartlett Tree inventory QR codes.

95  
96 Otherwise, the Friends would be assessing other work needed in the Arboretum. They were clear  
97 that the herbicide professional should not spray the native plants coming back in the Arboretum.  
98 The Friends also hoped that Mark Johnson—hired to cut perennials and remove debris from the  
99 landscaped beds—would replace mulch with loam instead of compost. Discussion ensued on the  
100 benefits of loam vs. compost, and which one is higher in nutrients depending on various factors;  
101 discussion also ensued about past challenges using low quality compost in the Arboretum.

102  
103 Further discussion ensued about the American elms in the Arboretum. Ms. Casey spoke about all  
104 the beds along the wrought iron fence. There, she said there were many maple and elm saplings  
105 that had been cut back for approximately 10 years. Because of the saplings’ position under the  
106 fence, there is no easy way to address them. The Board discussed potential options and agreed  
107 that spraying the impacted areas along the fence line with herbicide (by the professional  
108 chemical applicator) might be the best option, even though it would leave the roots to contend  
109 with.

110  
111 Chair Winsor asked if the Friends wanted him to spray fertilizer like he had in the past. Ms.  
112 Mathews said yes, and added that for the past three years, the Friends had left daffodil leaves to  
113 add more nutrients to the soil.

114  
115 **5) Project Tracking**

116 **A) Bird Ecology Project**

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118 Mr. Bocko was not present to report.

119

120 **B) Budget Development**

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122 No action was needed at this time.

123

124 **C) Master Plan Implementation Discussion**

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126 Completing the new kiosk sign was ongoing. Ms. Krautmann was visiting the Historical Society  
127 of Cheshire County to gather photos for the sign to share with the sign maker, Peter Poanessa.  
128 The Historical Society has a wonderful collection dating to 1927, including things like photos of  
129 middle schoolers or the mums brought in for planting each fall. These photos were not  
130 catalogued, and Ms. Mathews said that having them catalogued would allow for sharing a QR  
131 code at the Park. Ms. Krautmann agreed and noted what a significant effort that cataloguing  
132 would be, but she might help the Historical Society with this.

133

134 Mr. Hooper asked if there was a deadline for submitting photos and Chair Winsor said no, given  
135 that Mr. Poanessa was too busy to complete the sign at this time. Mr. Hooper explained that he  
136 spoke with Miranda Nelken about Indigenous art, but Ms. Nelken wanted to ensure that the local  
137 Abenaki tribes would approve of the art. Per Ms. Nelken's advice, Mr. Hooper contacted  
138 Abenaki Chief Donald Roger for approval, but he had not replied yet. Other Chiefs that Mr.  
139 Hooper contacted were very supportive. This would remain ongoing, and the Board agreed to  
140 continue this effort after the summer.

141

142 Discussion continued about the idea to hang a temporary banner in the park in the meantime,  
143 while the new sign is underway. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey said all of the Parks & Recreation summer  
144 programming had just concluded, so those crewmembers would have more time for this task.  
145 When he talks to Mr. Poanessa, Chair Winsor said he would ask about the potential for moving  
146 the sign.

147

148 **6) Upcoming Events**

149 **A) Art in the Park – August 31–September 1, 2024**

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151 The Friends would be working hard to ensure the Arboretum is beautiful before Art in the Park.

152

153 **B) Monadnock Conservancy Anniversary – October 5, 2024**

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155 Ms. Fisk-Hennessey reported that the City Council approved the site plan for the Monadnock  
156 Conservancy's new headquarters. The Board was pleased with this advancement as there could  
157 be educational opportunities between the Park and the Conservancy's site. The Conservancy  
158 asked Chair Winsor to lead a tree tour.

159

160 **7) New, Other Business**

161           **A) Japanese Knotweed Removal**

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163 Discussion of Japanese knotweed ensued above.

164  
165 Discussion turned to homeless use of the Park. Ms. Mathews chose to alert one person laying on  
166 the bench near Starbucks that she would be calling the Police. The homeless person conversed  
167 with Ms. Mathews about challenges regarding the use of Narcan in the case of an opioid  
168 overdose. The Board discussed the best approaches for homeless use of the Park, as well as  
169 concerns that someone could be hurt or deceased. The Board discussed leaving the homeless in  
170 the Park alone vs. when it would be appropriate to call the Police. Chair Winsor and Ms. Fisk-  
171 Hennessey agreed that homeless use of the Park is not the Park’s intended use, and it steers  
172 others from wanting to engage in positive activities in the Park; if it is ignored, the use is likely  
173 to increase. The Board also agreed to use caution, as it might not always be safe to approach  
174 someone, so calling the Police is the best approach.

175  
176 Discussion turned to signs at the Keene Public Library and needing numbers on the posts, which  
177 could be removed later if needed. Many of the existing posts must be removed and replaced in  
178 different locations. Ms. Krautmann suggested wrought iron numbers attached to the posts. Ms.  
179 Mathews recalled that Library staff (Amy & Gail) helped to site the posts originally, and the  
180 Library’s help would be needed to best determine the new post locations. Ms. Krautmann agreed  
181 to follow-up and let Chair Winsor and Ms. Mathews know about next steps.

182  
183 Discussion returned to the topic of fertilizer. Chair Winsor would be leading a “no phosphorous  
184 fertilization” workshop at Swanzey Lake on August 24 at 9:00 AM. This is primarily to help the  
185 residents around the Lake to understand how maintaining lawns can impact the Lake. Chair  
186 Winsor had worked with Pilgrim Pines and private landowners around the Swanzey Lake to help  
187 switch their thinking about lawns. The Board agreed that a similar exercise at Ashuelot River  
188 Park would be beneficial (if well-advertised). Ms. Krautmann asked if Chair Winsor had also  
189 worked with the Spofford Lake Association, as she thought it would be helpful to that whole  
190 community; Chair Winsor had not worked with them yet. The Chair was also considering a  
191 workshop around Wilson Pond. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey would find out about fertilizer use in the  
192 Ashuelot River Park and let Chair Winsor know what she learns.

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195       **8) Adjournment – Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 8:15 AM**

196  
197 The Board agreed to cancel the September 2024 meeting due to conflicting with the State  
198 Primary Election. There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:59  
199 AM.

200  
201 Respectfully submitted by,  
202 Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker  
203 August 20, 2024

204  
205 Reviewed and edited by,  
206 Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Director of Parks & Recreation, 8/30/24

**Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board  
2024 Adopted Budget**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual To Date</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Landscaping	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ 5,000.00
Replanting Program	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ 1,500.00
Antioch Bird Ecology	\$ 1,069.00	\$ 1,069.00	\$ -
Bartlett Tree - Pruning	\$ 9,985.00	\$ 9,985.00	\$ -
Invasive treatment	<u>\$ 1,500.00</u>	<u>\$ 1,328.51</u>	<u>\$ 171.49</u>
<b>Total*</b>	<u>\$ 19,054.00</u>	<u>\$ 12,382.51</u>	<u>\$ 6,671.49</u>

Bartlett PO 20240272	\$ 9,985.00
Raynee Joy Carlson - reimbursement	\$ 328.51
Antioch Bird Ecology	\$ 1,068.75
Gem Graphics Temporary Sign - INV 5266	\$ 102.00
VCS Invasive Treatment - INV 23663-0181324	\$ 1,000.00
	\$ -
	\$ -
	\$ -
	\$ -
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u><b>\$ 12,484.26</b></u>