

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

8:15 AM

KPRD Room 22

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Stephen Hooper
Ruzzel Zullo
Dian Mathews
Suzy Krautmann
Thomas Haynes, Alternate
Kelly Cook, Alternate

Staff Present:

Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Director of Parks,
Recreation

Members Not Present:

Paul Bocko, Vice Chair

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:17 AM. Roll call was conducted.

2) Approval of October 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Krautmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 8, 2024. Ms. Cook seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3) Finance Report

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that the only thing that is new is they submitted the reimbursement for Steve Hooper to get \$217.99 for the materials to build the duck house.

4) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum

Chair Winsor asked Ms. Mathews to give an update from the Friends.

Ms. Mathews reported that the Friends officially ended their year, and she has not yet officially counted the hours, but she will. She continued that the rain garden looks worse than it did a month ago; they really need help with remediation. There is a hole about five inches deep and increasing. It is near Starbucks and it is an eyesore. If anyone knows an expert, they need

someone to come in and tell them how to do remediation. Discussion ensued. Chair Winsor spoke about how they are meeting with Frank (Grano) on Monday; maybe he could help.

Ms. Mathews continued that the only other update is regarding the pollinator garden, but Karen Flavin will talk about that later in the agenda during the Master Plan discussion.

5) Project Tracking

A) Bird Ecology Project

Chair Winsor stated that Paul Bocko is not here to give an update. He asked Mr. Hooper for an update. Mr. Hooper showed and spoke about the birdhouse that Mr. Haynes built for ducks. He continued that Mr. Haynes did a great job and the birdhouse will last for many years, and he thanks the City for the support. He suggests they get more people on board to continue the birdhouses. He spoke about how he and Mr. Haynes will make a small birdhouse this winter for songbirds with the leftover materials. Locations for the birdhouses need to be decided. Discussion ensued.

B) Budget Development

Ms. Mathews stated that she has a question. She continued that normally, when someone (from the Friends) does work that involves money from the budget, they make the purchase and submit the receipt to be reimbursed. She has a problem with spending her own money on materials for a public park. She spoke about how the Cheshire County Conservation District owes her several hundred dollars for plants for the rain garden, and she would like to set up a different system. Discussion ensued. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that she will definitely need to do some research.

C) Master Plan Implementation Discussion

Karen Flavin of the Friends stated that she has two weeks left of the Master Gardener class she is taking. She continued that through that, she is doing a small group project on pollinator gardens. The Friends had talked about wanting to enlarge the small pollinator garden in the arboretum. It is part of the master plan. She has offered to be the Project Manager, and will present a timeline, funding, and resources, to the ARPAB so they can all plan ahead. Chair Winsor asked if the plan is to start next spring. Ms. Flavin replied yes, and discussion ensued. Ms. Mathews encouraged everyone to read through the master plan, specifically page 38, and see if they have other ideas, for when the Friends return with the report.

6) Upcoming Events

A) Permanent Sign Design/Development

Chair Winsor stated that Nicole Cullinane, Parks & Rec's graphic designer, did the temporary sign, which looks good. He continued that they need to sit down as a group with Ms. Cullinane and get this completed. Mr. Hooper had a good idea regarding how to incorporate the

indigenous piece. Professor Goodby has several photographs of (indigenous) artifacts found in the dig at the Keene Middle School, which can be used to show there were settlements along the river 12,000 years ago. Discussion ensued. Chair Winsor asked the ARPAB if they are okay with putting this off until after the holidays, and setting up a meeting with Ms. Cullinane in January. Discussion continued and the ARPAB agreed.

B) Mark Johnson Landscaping Contract

Chair Winsor asked if Mark Johnson has come to do the leaves. Ms. Cook replied no. Ms. Mathews stated that they had decided to do the compost portion of the project in the spring, and they allocated \$5,000 in the budget for this. She continued that Mr. Johnson kept talking about the compost being frozen, and how he could not do it until the pile was unfrozen. She is concerned that it will happen too late/not happen. Discussion ensued. Chair Winsor replied that they should get him through step one, which is the leaves. Then they can say they want to do the compost now, before it freezes. Raynee Carlson of the Friends asked if he had given a timeline of when he would do the leaves. Others replied no, and discussion continued.

7) New, Other Business

A) Bartlett Tree Direction (updated inventory including tree health)

Chair Winsor stated that he did not realize that the Bartlett Tree Inventory is ten years old. He continued that it is full of good information but is now out of date, and needs updating. Frank Grano will be in Keene on Monday and is willing to meet with a small group of folks regarding the arboretum – himself, Ms. Fisk-Hennessey, and hopefully someone from the Friends. They can show Mr. Grano some of the things they want him to address, and talk about updating the inventory. Discussion ensued about who is available and what time. They decided on 11:30 AM. Chair Winsor will let Mr. Grano know.

Ms. Carlson stated that she has a red bud tree that can go in the park if there is a place for it. Chair Winsor replied that he thinks they can set it aside and find a place for it. Discussion ensued about possible locations.

Chair Winsor stated that another item of new business is that at the next meeting, the ARPAB needs to move the slate of officers. He continued that the Mayor is letting him continue until the end of the year, but they are far beyond their term limits. He would like to continue his involvement in this community in some way, as it is one of the best things he has ever been involved in.

Chair Winsor asked if there was any other new or other business. Ms. Krautmann stated that the StoryWalk is great, with a new book. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if there is any update on the numbering of the StoryWalk posts. Ms. Krautmann replied that Amy, the Youth Librarian, is working on it.

Ms. Krautmann spoke about what she likes about the Distant Hill Gardens, such as their plant identification signs and other elements. Ms. Carlson expressed her thoughts about the size of the posts and signs in the garden (in the Ashuelot River Park,) and discussion continued.

Chair Winsor stated that another topic is figuring out what they can do for memorial trees, and not losing sight of that. He continued that there should be dedicated signs/plaques, which cost money, but they will have to figure that out. There is a sign with a list of trees that were dedicated to people, but which trees were they? He will look into that before Monday. Discussion ensued.

Chair Winsor asked if there was any other new/other business.

Leslie Casey stated that the Friends have been talking about how to get things like advice on topics, heavy equipment, technical work, an expanded pool of experts and resources, and how to improve the Friends' ability to get their needs to the City. She continued that the Friends often turn to the ARPAB for advice, but the ARPAB is an advisory board for the City, not for the Friends. Ms. Carlson added that the Friends' question is how to get the expertise they need. Chair Winsor replied that he supposes they need to look at the constitution/bylaws for the ARPAB and the Friends and see who does what. Discussion ensued about the role of the ARPAB, the role of the Friends, and the connection between the two. Ms. Casey spoke about how the Friends need advice and support regarding raising funds. Chair Winsor spoke about the history of the Friends and its funds. Discussion continued. The group voiced many unanswered questions about the Friends' trust fund and its history. Chair Winsor stated that he will look through (the documents) he has and see if he can find some answers.

8) Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 8:15 AM

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:14 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Carrah Fisk Hennessey, Director Parks & Recreation