

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, Parks, Recreation &
Facilities Director

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.

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. 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 8:00 AM. He adjourned the meeting at 9:04 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director