

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

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

**Tuesday, July 20, 2021**

**8:00 AM**

**Recreation Center,  
Room 22**

**Members Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation & Facilities

**Members Not Present:**

Judy Sadoski  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:04 AM.

**2) Acceptance of June 8, 2021 Minutes**

Ms. Krautmann mentioned that the name Gina Hamblet should be changed to Jeanna Hamblet. She made a motion to accept the minutes of June 8, 2021 with that correction. Mr. Bocko seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported no new updates with regards to the budget, noting that the Bartlett Tree invoice hadn't come in yet. He mentioned that upcoming discussions will take place with regards to the replanting program budget and purchases for the fall plantings.

Ms. Mathews asked for clarification on the difference between landscaping and replanting. Mr. Bohannon answered that landscaping is a general term and refers mostly to mulch, which they are not doing this year, and things like fertilizer.

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

Ms. Mathews reported that The Friends has a new member, Laura Andrews, who was brought to them from Antioch University via Mr. Bocko. She is helping to recruit partnerships for The Friends.

Ms. Mathews next reported on some financial matters. They had their first treasury report and Ms. Mathews noted that they would like to keep their PO box so all cobblestone work communication can be contained to one avenue. She stated that \$550 worth of checks from 2011 had been found and had never been cashed. They were found along with forms for cobblestones and it is unclear if the bricks were ordered or not. They are working to resolve that issue. Ms. Mathews went on to state that the estimate for their insurance policy came in at \$406 and other upcoming charges include their PO Box and 501c3 fees. They did receive a donation of \$1,000 which she believes was meant for a specific project and will look into that.

She spoke of Art in the Park happening on Labor Day weekend, mentioning that The Friends will have a table under the main tent and will do some type of fundraising; although, they are still working on what exactly the fundraising will consist of.

With regards to partners, Laura Andrews got in touch with Walpole Bank and they are aiming for a work day on August 7<sup>th</sup>, which will coincide with timing of the ladies of Delta Gamma at 10:00am. Ms. Mathews asked Mr. Bohannon if they could have a load of compost come ahead of time for that day so they could have folks transport the compost to the beds with wheelbarrows.

Ms. Mathews next reported that they are working on the soil sample they received from UNH. Leslie Casey informed the board that a report analyzed the three big nutrients of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, as well as other elements like calcium and magnesium. The pH, calcium, magnesium and organic matter came back fine. Phosphorus came back high and it was recommended that they do not add anymore. Nitrogen and potassium need to increase. The report gave them options for both organic and conventional fertilizer. Ms. Casey felt the most efficient and easiest way to balance things back out for most of the plants would be to get about 250lbs of conventional fertilizer that is just nitrogen and potassium. She noted that she got the number 250 from a mobile app that calculates square footage of your beds and translates it into acres, so you know how much fertilizer to order. Ms. Casey also added that they will need a well calibrated spreader to make sure the potent fertilizer is evenly distributed.

Chair Winsor asked if the fertilizer was strictly for the beds. Ms. Mathews and Ms. Casey replied yes, they only collected samples for beds and wouldn't be using it for anything else.

Mr. Bohannon asked if they'd like assistance from the advisory board with the project and Ms. Mathews replied that they would appreciate help once they find and order the right fertilizer. Mr. Bohannon suggested working with Agway to order the fertilizer. Ms. Krautmann suggested The County Extension as another option.

Ms. Mathews then spoke about the invasive species meeting that needed to be rescheduled. She reported calling the Cooperative Extension office on Park Ave in Keene and was told Matt Kelly is their invasive species expert. He is away until the end of July, so she plans to call back when he returns and try and get him involved and hopefully set up a new meeting with the advisory board. Mr. Bohannon noted that it was unfortunate the meeting was canceled and stated a rescheduled meeting in early August would be a good time. He added that the Conservation Commission is still on board to make sure the meeting happens as well.

Ms. Mathews reported that they need to solve the water issue in the park, noting that they only get one watering out of a big barrel, so there needs to be a better solution. She mentioned that Chuck Sweeney had recommended a hand pump in the river; however, she stated that would be difficult to expect people to do because the volunteer base is mostly a retired population. She went on to state that the sprinkler system doesn't reach the back beds and the beds along West Street, closest to the railing. She showed Mr. Bohannon a sprinkler map she had found and they planned to talk separately to explore if it was an updated map or not, and to try and come up with a solution to the water issue.

Chair Winsor asked if the concern was having a faucet and it being misused. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, and stated that they are connected to city water so the bill would be exponentially high if the faucet were to be misused. Chair Winsor suggested a snap valve, which no one could tamper with.

Lastly, Ms. Mathews reported that they are currently watering 8 shrubs and perennials. Their next project will be the corner by Mascoma Bank, where there are plans for some signage, and they want to do some plantings there this fall.

**5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation**  
**A) Invasive Species**

Mr. Bohannon stated if they are able to connect with Matt Kelly from Cooperative Extension they will plan the Invasive Species meeting for some time in August.

He reported checking in with Bartlett Tree with regards to the Amur Cork tree. His contact there informed him that the tree is present, but it is not on the invasive species list and there is no concern related to overpopulation within the park.

Chair Winsor asked if there had been any evidence that the species is starting to spread. Ms. Mathews stated that when Sam Jaffe walked through the park he spotted the species all throughout the back of the park. Chair Winsor suggested they keep an eye on it for any sign of spreading but would hate to cut it down because it's a very valuable tree.

Mr. Bohannon added that on the back side of the pergola they had removed a very small patch of an invasive species and it has returned with vengeance. He was unsure of the exact name but

described it as a short bamboo looking species. Ms. Casey stated she removed some of the species recently and noted that it is difficult to clear. Mr. Bocko suggested they find out what it is so they can investigate what it does and how to take care of it.

### **B) Pollinator Gardens**

Ms. Mathews reported that everything in the pollinator garden had survived, mentioning that it is in the sprinkler line so it gets sufficient water and is doing well. She added that the plants they are planning to put in by Mascoma Bank will be a seasonal pollinator garden as well.

### **C) Education**

Mr. Bohannon reported that Steve is looking to come back on the board as a council member and the mayor is going to be appointing him in the near future. He has been in touch with regards to the bats and other education components and they are aiming for a fall education session.

Mr. Bocko mentioned that Antioch has a bat program scheduled for August 14th from 6:00-8:30 PM. The event is family focused and they are planning to have some craft tables and a walk to look for bats.

Ms. Mathews asked about the turn out the first time Antioch held a similar event. Mr. Bocko replied that between 15-20 people showed up and there was a limit during that time because of the pandemic. He added that this time there is a limit of 35 people because of limited craft supplies.

Mr. Bohannon asked how the Parks and Recreation Department could help. Mr. Bocko stated that they will need 3 tables and possibly a tent. Mr. Bocko reported that they will be putting together a flyer with their co-sponsor Horatio Colony Nature Preserve and having people register via Antioch University. Mr. Bohannon suggested they give him their flyer and the Recreation Department will post it to their social media outlets.

Mr. Bohannon inquired about a timeline for working with one of the Antioch classes. Mr. Bocko reported that there's a gap year when the Environmental Interpretation Class is taught, which means, unfortunately, it won't run this coming fall or spring. He did ask the teachers if they could get 1 or 2 students to do signage as a project and is waiting to hear back. Mr. Bohannon wondered if there would be interested students if a stipend was offered. Mr. Bocko stated that would likely work and suggested the Recreation Department could pay the work study match. That way Antioch could possibly set it up as a work study position, which would be a great experience for a student. He added that he would check with Antioch on that and obtain numbers.

Ms. Mathews asked what the student in that position would be doing. Mr. Bocko replied that they would do signage, look at what is out there and make a proposal. Ms. Mathews suggested invasive species and pollinator plants be the focus and requested that the student meet with The Friends to discuss that.

Mr. Bohannon showed a map of Robin Hood Park that students from Antioch had done in the past. He stated that it showcases how great the park is with history, descriptions, pictures and poems. He envisioned the student(s) creating something along those lines in addition to the signage work, noting they typically do high quality work.

Chair Winsor asked Mr. Bocko if he thought that would be appropriate. Mr. Bocko stated he envisioned more signage but the pamphlet Mr. Bohannon showed could definitely be possible. He stated it would be a nice combination to have the map/pamphlet and strategic sign placement, to avoid an overwhelming amount of signs.

Ms. Mathews suggested a kiosk with a nice map by the entrance into the Jonathan Daniels Trail. Mr. Bohannon stated Pathways for Keene had money that they had to spend before the end of August and he tried to get them to build a kiosk on the Jonathan Daniel's trail; however, they voted it down because it wasn't the direction they were looking to go in. He added that the kiosk is high on his radar.

There was brief discussion about how the tree tags need to either be moved or they need to create stepping stones to direct people to the trees. This would allow people to scan the tags without stepping on any plants.

Ms. Mathews wondered if an artist could add sculptures or pieces of art to the gardens. Mr. Bohannon reported that there had been interest, prior to completion of the Master Plan, to do something along those lines. He suggested they could talk to artists at Art in the Park to gauge interest, and noted that they have an art program with the city. He explained that the artist would have to donate the piece and provide funds for a maintenance plan. Chair Winsor and Mr. Bohannon agreed the park could use some art.

## **6) New, Other Business**

Chair Winsor asked about the progress on the asphalt at the park in the back lot. Mr. Bohannon stated that the Putnams have hired someone to look at the design and he has a meeting with them coming up to get a sense of their plans. He noted that eventually they will need to bring the plan to City Council if they apply for a Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant.

Ms. Mathews asked if there was a design on paper yet. Mr. Bohannon answered that there are preliminary designs from students at the Conway School back in 2014; however, he believed a lot of that had changed.

Ms. Krautmann stated it seems like The Friends could use some funds and wondered if it was too early to go in front of 100+ Women, or at least get the proposal ready. Ms. Mathews stated she would write something up and attend with Ms. Krautmann.

Ms. Krautmann also mentioned the idea of having a brewery at Art in the Park to make some money. Mr. Bohannon stated they'd have to go before City Council for that so there wouldn't be enough time before this year's event.

Another idea Ms. Krautmann mentioned was the Wine and Tavern doing a brewery event in July, and wondered if they could have a Folks march through town and the parks and tie it into the brewery theme. She explained that you sponsor the walk and it generates money. Mr. Bohannon stated they could possibly get that planned for next year. Ms. Mathews suggested they do an Ashuelot park walk. Mr. Bohannon mentioned it has to be a certain distance and they could give some sort of prize at the end. Chair Winsor suggested Robin Hood park would be a good location as well.

It was noted that The Friends is not financially stable enough to raise money through the Casino yet but it is something to think about in the future.

Mr. Bohannon reported that on August 24<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:30am Keene State College students will be in the park. He mentioned that he'd collaborate with Ms. Mathews to figure out a project for them to take on and will keep it fairly low key. There will be no more than 25 students and adult's total.

**7) Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 8:00AM**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Additional edits by,  
Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office