

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

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

**Tuesday, September 14, 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:**

Councilor Stephen Hooper  
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 August 10, 2021 Minutes**

Ms. Krautmann made a motion to accept the minutes of August 10, 2021. Mr. Bocko seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that there were no new invoices and noted there will be minor expenses reflected in the budget for the next meeting, including the Bartlett Tree invoice, Buckthorn bags payment, and invoices from The Friends.

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

Ms. Mathews reported that The Friends sold two stones during Art in the Park, plus someone sent in an extra \$25 donation. She mentioned that a lot of people showed interest in the park, mentioning how great it looked, and took pamphlets home with them. They ended up receiving a little over \$150 in donations for plants.

She mentioned that The Friends made a connection with the president of Monadnock Artists Association, who is interested in having Plein Air Painting events next year. Mr. Bohannon stated that in the past they did a Plein Air Painting event as a fundraiser for the Art Association at the chapel, and it went very well.

Ms. Mathews then reported that 7 new people signed up to volunteer at the park and that she has begun tracking volunteer hours and interactions. Beginning August 7<sup>th</sup> of this year, they have had 32 people working in the beds, including Delta Gamma ladies, Old Homestead, the Friends, and Links, totaling an estimated 61 volunteer hours. She mentioned the number is likely underestimated and she will continue to keep track of this information for grant data and reporting.

Ms. Mathews informed the board that Matt Kelly, the new forester in Cheshire County, recently met with The Friends for an hour and a half and discussed invasive species. He recommended they form partnerships, with organizations such as the Cheshire Conservation, and noted that he would stay involved as well.

Next, Ms. Mathews reported that they tried the bagging mechanism on a glossy buckthorn. She noted that the bags are made for one stem and their invasive species is a multi-stem, so the bags didn't fit properly and 2 ties were required to secure them. She mentioned that the baggies have language that identify them as a buckthorn baggies covering an invasive, stating they should remain on for 1 year.

Ruth Smith, head of UNH Master Gardeners, had visited the park recently and gave them a new Master Gardener named Robin Abbott. They will also be getting Joy Ackerman. Ms. Mathews noted that they will have a separate group from The Friends made up of Master Gardeners. She added that Ms. Smith also provided them with 2 signs for the park that say "UNH is working here".

Mr. Bohannon suggested they put one sign on the shed and then the other at the kiosk when it arrives.

Ms. Krautmann mentioned that she may have another Master Gardener for Ms. Mathews and would pass the information along.

Ms. Mathews then mentioned that she saw Roundup in the shed and wondered who might be bringing that in, noting that it's illegal.

She then reported that The Friends ordered plantings from Prairie Moon, which would be arriving within the week. They ordered 18 plants for a total of \$98 and also purchased 6 or 7 plants at a total of around \$170 from Wild Seed Project in Portland, Maine. She estimated that they have about 33 plants to plant and about \$10 remaining to spend. Ms. Mathews noted that members of The Friends would be going to Nasami Gardens in Deerfield, MA to spend the \$320

of the National Garden Club money on shrubs, and would love to be able to buy more plants while there. She made a motion that the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board allow representatives from The Friends to purchase no more than \$1,200 worth of plants at Nasami Gardens. Ms. Krautmann seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ms. Mathews stated the next official park workday will be held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and will start with a bird walk led by Steve LaMonde at 7:30 AM, with a focus on fall migrants. They will also be planting bulbs and laying down compost. Ms. Mathews added that they hope to talk Mr. LaMonde into volunteering again in the spring. The bird walk will be open to the public and The Friends will advertise. Mr. Bohannon asked Ms. Mathews if she would like the Recreation Department to help advertise the event and she welcomed the assistance.

There was short discussion on how shredding leaves and redistributing them back into the beds is the best way to go this fall. Mr. Bohannon stated he would talk to a contractor to see if they could do that work. Ms. Krautmann asked if it would be a one-time process or would it need to be done several times since leaves would be continuously falling during that time of year. General consensus was to shred and redistribute the leaves in November. Ms. Casey wondered if the City would pick up the leaves before they get to them for shredding and Mr. Bohannon stated the City's annual leaf pick up takes place for a 2-3 week period in November, and the Parks and Recreation crew will do the parks and cemetery areas at that same time, so they should be all set.

Mr. Bohannon stated EIM (Electronic Imaging Manufacturer) has 8-16 employees who will come work in the park on September 24<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM. Ms. Mathews suggested they could possibly have them do compost.

Ms. Mathews stated the CT River Conservancy are having their "Source to Sea Clean-up" and wondered why the advisory board wasn't listed on their poster. Chair Winsor stated the Conservancy works with the City to clean up trash in and along the river, and the City supports them with trucks, etc. Ms. Mathews suggested it may be a good way to get their name out there in the future.

Lastly, she mentioned that what appeared to be sprinkler head pieces were found in the park. She had left the pieces at home but stated she would bring them in for Mr. Bohannon to see that week.

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

This topic was covered previously in the meeting. Ms. Mathews mentioned a video she was sent regarding knotweed. The video showed the process of burning the knotweed and then layering over the area with cardboard and compost. She noted the process would be very labor intensive and not viable for the park. Mr. Bocko agreed. Ms. Mathews stated she will continue to make connections to try and solve the issue for next spring. Mr. Bocko stated Antioch could be a

partner in the work on invasive species as a work day. Ms. Mathews and Ms. Casey stated they will start tagging the Invasive species as they garden.

**B) Pollinator Gardens**

Ms. Mathews stated they are expanding the pollinator gardens.

**C) Education**

Mr. Bohannon and Mr. Bocko revisited the idea of the board providing match money for a work study position, which would allow an Antioch student to work on educational components. Mr. Bocko stated that he hadn't yet received any interest in the position and noted that Antioch asks for some overhead with a certain number of hours. Mr. Bohannon stated for the next meeting he will review the budget and make a proposal to the board related to this topic.

Ms. Mathews asked if education would include things besides signage. She further explained that she has been getting requests for workshops and wondered if there's any money in the budget if she were to find someone to put on lectures. Mr. Bohannon stated they could likely fit that in the budget but it would need to be minimal.

Ms. Krautmann stated she contacted some people in the public schools last June about doing some education and hasn't heard back. Ms. Mathews stated the logistics make it difficult to work with schools in the park and onsite programming usually works better. Ms. Krautmann mentioned that the middle school can access the park by walking, as well as some other schools, without having to bus anyone. Ms. Mathews added that outdoor education in the park is a great vision for the future and good goal. Mr. Bohannon stated the hurdle will come from transporting the children off of school property, even prior to the Pandemic that was a hurdle. Ms. Mathews suggested they do it on a Saturday morning and parents could bring their kids.

Mr. Bocko mentioned that the Bat Bonanza on August 14<sup>th</sup> went very well.

**6) New, Other Business**

Chair Winsor asked Mr. Bohannon about the meeting with Ken Stewart. Mr. Bohannon stated he is working on obtaining details and timelines from Mr. Stewart. A new landscape architect had been hired to work on the site design. He mentioned that the application pieces for an LWCF grant had been started, but there was not much else to report at the time.

Ms. Krautmann wondered if they could do something similar to the bat walk but Halloween themed for kids. Mr. Bocko stated he'd have to check on staffing and mentioned it is getting late in the season to do a bat walk.

Chair Winsor stated he recently visited Boothbay Botanical Garden and recommended it to the board, as it had great ideas for the park including sculptures, trolls, etc.

Ms. Mathews stated they would really like to see a sculpture in the park and mentioned an individual that she could approach with the idea of doing a great blue herring.

Chair Winsor stated the Rachel Marshall area would be a great spot to have sculptures as well.

Mr. Bohannon reminded the board to keep in mind that public art is very time consuming. Chair Winsor stated this may be part of a second phase in the master plan.

Mr. Bocko suggested maybe an art teacher could do the project with students.

7) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:06 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

Additional edits by,  
Katrnya Kibler, Clerk's Office