

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

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

**Tuesday, December 14, 2021**

**8:00 AM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Councilor Stephen Hooper  
Judy Sadoski  
Ruzzel Zullo  
Paul Bocko  
Suzy Krautmann  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation & Facilities

**Members Not Present:**

Dian Mathews

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

**2) Acceptance of November 9, 2021 Minutes**

Ms. Krautmann moved to accept the minutes of November 9, 2021 as presented. Mr. Bocko seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon made a correction to the report stating the total should reflect a \$500.00 deduction for the public art project. He added that he hadn't heard back from the individual and will reach back out to her to obtain the company information and move forward with ordering the supplies. Ms. Krautmann stated the individual's quote will cover supplies for clay and firing.

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

Ms. Mathews was not present so Chair Winsor read through her report. First up it was noted that the Friends will not be meeting in December and that they got the legal go ahead for an insurance policy and application. Their treasurer has agreed to be the Friends applicant for the

Wonder Casino grant. Mr. Bohannon mentioned that, for that grant in particular, when you receive the check you also need to simultaneously give them a check equal to one third of the earnings.

Next, Chair Winsor reported that Ms. Mathews learned that NH received AARP Community Challenge grants and she will be looking to apply for the park.

Chair Winsor reported that the Friends are attempting to make seed bombs.

Mr. Bohannon stated he attended a webinar related to pollinator grants hosted by the Cheshire County Conservation office and he sent all of the information to Ms. Mathews. He talked to them about what the Friends and the board are looking to do and they love the idea. He and Ms. Mathews will work on that grant, which is due February 1<sup>st</sup> and is a matching grant up to \$1,500.

**5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation**

**A) Leaf Collection**

Mr. Bohannon stated they are taking all the leaves, shredding them, and putting them at the maintenance garage located at 520 Park Avenue. They will be held there and ready for mulching come spring.

**B) Public Art**

Ms. Kratumann repeated that Mr. Bohannon will purchase materials for the public art project. She anticipates the art will be ready for spring. Mr. Bohannon stated they should keep in mind that the work is being done by school children so there may or may not be delays depending on what happens with the school year.

**C) JD Trail Entrance**

Mr. Bohannon stated he has been in contact with Peter Poanessa, who is very busy and hasn't yet had time to get back to him. He reminded the board that at the corner of Emerald and the Ashuelot Rail Trail, Mr. Poanessa did a recent trail sign with a map and bench, and that is the look they are going for.

Councilor Hooper asked if Mr. Poanessa's work is volunteer and Mr. Bohannon answered that his work is paid.

6) **New, Other Business**

Eloise Clark from the Asheulot River Local Advisory Committee (ARLAC) informed the board that they are updating their management plan and wanted input from the board on anything related to the park that should be incorporated into the plan. She also asked how recent their master plan is.

Mr. Bohannon stated in May/June of 2020 the Conway School of Landscape Design completed their climate resiliency plan, which can be found on the Parks and Recreation website. Mr. Bohannon noted that he will send Ms. Clark the link.

Ms. Clark asked if there was anything else she should be aware of. Chair Winsor mentioned concern about the dam but added that there was no new information as to what is going to happen there.

Ms. Casey suggested Ms. Mathews should reach out to coordinate about invasive species removal, such as knotweed and bittersweet along the bank and near the dam. Ms. Clark mentioned that there's a lot of buckthorn as well, and added that she did an inventory and documented it all. Ms. Casey stated allowing invasive species to flourish gives people the idea that it's normal, so they don't want to miss out on an educational opportunity.

Ms. Krautmann asked what the ARLAC is in charge of. Ms. Clark stated it was chartered by the state in the early 1990's to set up local advisory committees for lakes and is under DES. She further explained that when permits/projects come in, they are involved with that aspect and also involved with annual cleanup of Ashuelot River, and discussions regarding dams as well.

Ms. Krautmann wondered if they could find an education grant to keep the dam and utilize it. Mr. Bohannon stated in the past it was proven not to generate enough flow to create electricity. Ms. Casey added that to remove the dam would negatively impact upstream ecosystems. Mr. Haynes added that the RI School of Design had put together an extensive project with their students showing how to keep the dam up in different ways. He noted that it was a great study with visuals to help people see different alternatives.

Mr. Bohannon stated he believes fiscal year 24 or 25 is when the City will revisit the dam process, and noted that they have a lot of money to remove it but zero money to keep it. He stated he will look for the study to see if he can find it.

Chair Winsor thanked Ms. Clark and stated she is welcome any time.

Councilor Hooper stated he hadn't been in the parks recently to see if any bats had come in but will continue to monitor and update.

Mr. Bocko stated he had a few Antioch students interested in doing the Antioch signage but they are just graduating and scheduling didn't work out.

Mr. Bohannon reported that they are working with an Antioch student related to blue space therapy. He explained that blue space is anything water related and the student will be guiding hikes in the Keene area, targeting 20 to 50 year olds, to create a connection to nature. He stated they will be pushing out more information in the near future as they are hoping to open registration in January, and mentioned that the student created a video to introduce the subject to everyone. Mr. Bohannon added that it's a great program for them as it's very different and an excellent programming partnership with Antioch. He went on to state that the community definitely wants programs like this and it's great that they can deliver and have people understand the resources they have. Mr. Bocko added that he could bring the information to the Active Living work group.

Mr. Haynes announced that they are doing another walk in February led by Matt Kelly, the new county extension forester, which will take place on Saturday February 5<sup>th</sup> at Goose Pond. He added that they are looking to possibly do a trail maintenance workshop where they bring volunteers in to learn how to do basic trail maintenance work.

Ms. Sadoski asked about the space near the park that was recently grassed over, inquiring about what is happening there. Mr. Bohannon stated the owners are looking to develop that private land but are still pondering details, noting there is not much information to report at the time. Ms. Clark stated in the past the group presented the idea of creating a natural outdoor play area, farmers market, and possibly greenhouse. They had a design but were still looking for monetary investors. Chair Winsor stated at one point there were plans for a condo complex in that area, so this alternative direction is much better for the park.

## 7) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:37 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director