

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

8:00 AM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne
Stephen Hooper
Ruzzel Zullo
Paul Bocko
Dian Mathews
Suzy Krautmann
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Judy Sadoski

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.

Mr. Bohannon announced that Mr. Hooper is now a member of the board and Bettina Chadbourne is their City Council representative.

Mr. Zullo and Mr. Hooper were present via zoom.

2) Acceptance of December 14, 2021 Minutes

Ms. Krautmann made motion to accept the minutes of December 14, 2021 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne and passed unanimously.

3) Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon reviewed the final budget for 2021 reporting a total of \$7,271.24. He mentioned that they were under budget, which is good, but means they may not have done as much as anticipated and that they also received grants thanks to The Friends. He suggested they reserve time to discuss the development of the 2022 budget at the next meeting. The report was informational and there were no questions.

4) Report From The Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum

Ms. Mathews stated The Friends did not meet in December or January as they took the opportunity to rest and recuperate; however, they will meet again in February. In the interim, she and Jane Parent are completing forms for a Director's/Officer's insurance policy.

Ms. Mathews mentioned that she attended a zoom on January 4th regarding the Cheshire County Conservation Fund grant. She filled out an application for her own yard and will assist with filling out one for the board as well, noting a due date of February 1, 2022.

Lastly, Ms. Mathews reported that she found a new seed bomb recipe that uses cat litter as a substitute for the key ingredient clay, which she has had difficulty finding. She explained the seed growing process to everyone and stated she has a variety of 10 different kinds of seeds which will be used in the park in various ways. She noted that the seed bombs in particular will be a fundraiser.

Mr. Bohannon summarized that the grant they are applying for is for \$1,500 and is a matching grant. He added that it can be used for something such as a rain garden or pollinator garden and can possibly include educational signage.

5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation

A) Leaf Collection

Mr. Bohannon stated the leaves have been collected and are in a pile out behind the cemetery, and the team is now working on ice operations. Chair Winsor reminded everyone that they collected the leaves for mulch as a way to create a more organic process in the gardens and parks.

B) Public Art

Ms. Krautmann reported that her contact has purchased the clay needed for the art project.

Ms. Mathews mentioned a recent write up in the paper about public art and the involvement of school kids, noting she thought it was a good idea. Ms. Krautmann added the tiny door project as another great idea. Ms. Mathews agreed and suggested they come up with something more park appropriate, such as tree-like doors or fairy gardens, since they don't have any buildings to stick the doors on. Mr. Bocko stated they could have the doors on trees and other elements of nature. Mr. Bohannon suggested enlisting Georgia Cassimatis who is with The Friends of Public Art and could be of great help. Ms. Mathews suggested they invite Ms. Cassimatis to a future meeting and Ms. Krautmann stated she would get into contact with her to start the conversation.

Ms. Krautmann brought up diversity and felt 7, for the 7 continents, would good number of doors to have. She suggested they do a treasure hunt and have the doors by a plant that needs to be identified. Members of the board loved that idea.

Mr. Bocko asked what is next now that the contact has bought the clay. Ms. Krautmann stated she has just gotten back to school and is getting situated so there are no further details to report out at the time. Mr. Bocko suggested they make sure she knows she has their support and maybe hold a meeting with her to listen to her process and see how they can help.

Chair Winsor stated in Swanzey they have a small loop around Mt. Caesar and someone constructed a chainsaw gnome as public art, noting that it adds so much to the trail.

C) JD Trail Entrance

Mr. Bohannon passed out a drawing from Keene Sign Worx showing a kiosk with the proposed dimensions of 72 inches wide. He noted that it would be 6 feet of space for them to display maps and educational signage, with a nice arch over the top. Mr. Bohannon pointed out that the price is very fair at \$4,500, which is in line with what he's paid for other kiosks, and knows Mr. Poanessa does great work. He mentioned that Mr. Poanessa is very busy so their project will be towards the back of his queue, looking at a possible May/June timeline.

Mr. Bohannon stated he will bring the budget for what remains in the project line to the next meeting and believes it's about \$14,000, which they can utilize for the kiosk project. He added that for the drainage issue it's difficult to get a contractor out at that this time of year, but he will continue to research.

Councilor Chadbourne asked for clarification regarding the project line budget. Mr. Bohannon stated it is a trust fund dedicated to the Master Plan for the old Rachel Marshall trust. They spent it down with the addition of the pergola last year, leaving about \$14,000. He added that the money is separate from the money they see within the budget in their packet.

Ms. Mathews brought up the dimensions of the kiosk and expressed that it will likely be tough for kids to use the kiosk at the proposed height. She also asked if they would be able to utilize both sides of the kiosk for signage. Mr. Bohannon stated it could be utilized on both sides if they wanted and they can definitely make it lower in height.

Mr. Zullo asked if the \$4,500 includes installation of the kiosk and Mr. Bohannon replied that it does.

Mr. Bocko agreed with making the kiosk an appropriate height for kids, especially if they have a space where they could display kid's art.

Ms. Casey inquired about where the sun hits the kiosk in that area, wondering about shadows the kiosk will cast over the gardens/plantings. Ms. Mathews and Mr. Bohannon stated the kiosk will get the morning sun.

Councilor Chadbourne expressed concern over weather elements destroying the signage. Mr. Bohannon stated the materials that go up will be a durable material to protect from weather elements.

Chair Winsor asked if they plan for a bench to go in that area as well. Mr. Bohannon stated they could certainly add one but will need to look at the space. He explained that the kiosk will go in Asheulot River Park to the right of the handicap parking lot, near the Jonathan Daniels trail.

Mr. Bohannon stated he will go back to Mr. Poanessa with regards to the height adjustment and suggested that maybe with the gap from increasing the height they could add “arboretum”.

6) New, Other Business
A) 2022 Meeting Calendar

Chair Winsor reviewed the meeting calendar for 2022 in the packet. Mr. Bocko made a motion to accept the proposed meeting schedule for 2022 and Ms. Mathews seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

B) Other Business

Mr. Bohannon stated a student came forward at Antioch University interested in doing some signage work. The Conservation Commission is not interested in an intern but there is an internship available through Antioch University with Mr. Bocko, and the student has some prior experience with signage work. Mr. Bocko stated the student has provided a cover letter and resume and now they will move on to next steps.

Ms. Mathews asked what kind of signage they will have the intern focus on. Mr. Bohannon stated it will be educational/interpretive signage, such as local invasive plant pictures with descriptions and maybe a QR code, or pollinators, native species, etc. Mr. Bocko suggested they first look at the Master Plan and then decide what the intern should do for signage. Ms. Mathews requested to have input. Mr. Bohannon stated it will be a project for all. He added that they would eventually like to go in a direction where they have signage throughout the park and not just in one spot.

Chair Winsor mentioned Mr. Hooper’s project with the bat houses and suggested they could have signage for that as well.

Ms. Kratumann asked if the City has a tent that could be set up easily in Ashuelot River Park. Mr. Bohannon stated to use tents there you have to work with the Recreation Department

specifically and the department does not own their own tents, they are rented through a tent company. Chair Winsor stated it's tricky because contractors have to do a dig safe ahead of time, the process is more detailed than many think. He added that pop-up tents, such as those used at Art in the Park, don't need to be staked so those are simpler.

7) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:53 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

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