

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

8:00 AM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Stephen Hooper

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM. Councilor Chadbourne and Mr. Bocko were present via zoom.

2) Chair Elections

Chair Winsor announced the first order of business to be elections for Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Mathews made a motion for Mr. Winsor to remain on as Chair. Ms. Krautmann seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Ms. Mathews nominated Mr. Zullo as Vice Chair. Mr. Haynes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Both Mr. Winsor and Mr. Zullo accepted their nominations.

3) Acceptance of January 11, 2022 Minutes

Ms. Mathews pointed out a correction on page 2, 4th paragraph, noting that the price of the grant they are applying for should be \$1,500 not \$15,000. She added that she applied for \$800 only. Ms. Mathews also noted a correction on page 4 where the kiosk casting shade was mentioned. She suggested that better wording would be “shadows the kiosk will cast over the gardens/plantings.” Chair Winsor stated on page 3 it should say \$4,500 not \$45,000 when cost of the kiosk is mentioned.

Mr. Haynes made a motion to accept the minutes of January 11, 2022 with the aforementioned amendments. Mr. Zullo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4) Finance Report
A) Budget Creation

Mr. Bohannon explained that the board needs to create a budget for 2022 and he will then take it to the trustees of trust funds for approval. He went on to state that they are a calendar year as opposed to a fiscal year and don't typically have a lot of activity until later in the spring season. He suggested they complete the budget process within the next month or so.

Mr. Bohannon stated he usually reaches out to Bartlett Tree before doing the budget process but did not have a chance to do so yet; however, they have been averaging \$4,000 with them in the past. He mentioned that there is always work to be done with a tree company but he can give them a budget that the board is not willing to go over. Given that information, Ms. Mathews suggested they reserve \$5,000 for Bartlett Tree. Chair Winsor agreed.

Ms. Mathews asked for clarification on the landscaping category in the budget and what that entails. Mr. Bohannon explained that mowing and trimming is done by the City and landscaping is the contract they had in the past for the bark mulch and the spring and fall clean up. He reminded them that they chose not to do that at all last year because of their long term commitment to the new program, where they save the leaves and then spread them in the beds. General consensus was to put \$1,000 aside for landscaping just in case there's anything they end up needing.

Mr. Bohannon mentioned that they need \$800.00 in their budget to match the grant application if awarded and suggested they put \$800.00 in miscellaneous for that purpose. Chair Winsor suggested they add \$1,000 to miscellaneous and there was no opposition.

Ms. Mathews stated last year they spent over \$3,000 on shrubs, bulbs and invasives. She suggested that they put \$1,000 for shrubs since they did a lot of shrub work already. After spending \$200.00 in the past on bulbs she requested that be increased to \$500.00. With regards to invasives, Ms. Mathews brought up purchasing tarps for knotweed and thus suggested \$2,000.

The total they'd present would be \$10,500 and Mr. Bohannon noted that if they don't spend it, it comes back. He added that it allows for a cushion which will be good to have with the public art projects on the horizon.

Mr. Bohannon praised the board for being good stewards of their budget, which has left them in a good place for 2022.

Chair Winsor confirmed the following proposed 2022 budget:

i) Landscaping: \$1,000

- ii) **Replanting Program**
 - (1) **Shrubs:** \$1,000
 - (2) **Bulbs:** \$500
 - (3) **Invasives:** \$2,000
- iii) **Bartlett Tree – Pruning:** \$5,000
- iv) **Miscellaneous (not contract):** \$1,000

Ms. Mathews made a motion to accept the proposed 2022 budget. Mr. Haynes seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

5) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum

Ms. Mathews stated the Friends did not meet in December or January so she had no report but did have some questions. She spoke to Barry LeClair, the cobblestone committee chair, who wanted to know if he could do something with the stones at the end of the Jonathan Daniel’s Trail by the granite posts. Mr. Bohannon stated they hadn’t looked at that area but when the time comes they will keep in mind to discuss it. Next, Ms. Mathews stated she applied for the Conservation Commission Opportunity grant under the under the auspices of the Advisory Board and under her auspices as the Friends. She went on to state that she applied for \$800.00 to create a rain garden over by the Starbucks gate. She inquired about obtaining compost for that project. Chair Winsor and Mr. Bohannon stated the City has plenty of compost that can be used. Lastly, Ms. Mathews stated they have 15 cobblestones and requested stone dust. Mr. Bohannon stated he would arrange for Ms. Mathews to receive stone dust.

6) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation
A) Educational Signage

Mr. Bohannon reviewed that Mr. Bocko found an Antioch University student, Kyle Bradford, who has done some work in the past with educational signage. Initially, Chair Winsor, Mr. Bocko and Mr. Bohannon met with Mr. Bradford and felt he would be a great fit for the educational signage project. Mr. Bohannon set up several meetings with Ms. Mathews and Chair Winsor to guide Mr. Bradford with the process. Mr. Bocko will be the liaison to chime in when necessary. Next steps are for Mr. Bradford to meet with Ms. Mathews and Chair Winsor individually and then the four of them will reconvene on March 1st to begin to formulate a plan. Mr. Bradford will then attend the April ARPAB meeting to present and receive input from the board. His internship ends in May so that will leave April for him to finish up after the board provides feedback. Mr. Bohannon stated Mr. Bradford has a solid understanding of the assignment and interactive capabilities and is looking to use a QR code on the signage and link it to a story map he plans to build, which is a simple GIS page. The goal is for people to experience the park and take it home and improve their own backyard. Mr. Bocko mentioned that Mr. Bradford has a good ecological background and knowledge which will be helpful throughout the process.

B) Book Walks

Ms. Krautmann stated that she received a call from a library trustee who mentioned the idea of doing a book/story walk installation as a memorial for someone who was prominent in the library, noting that the library has money from donations and a grant to do the project. Ms. Krautmann stated the board is tasked with coming up with where to place it and how many frames they'd like. Mr. Bohannon stated you can get the boards done vertically or with a post and a slanted diagonal read, which is what they have for the Jonathan Daniels sign. He recommended the latter as a better sign for kids and adults to be engaged with. Mr. Bohannon stated they can get 20 of the signs for \$4,500 dollars, which the grant from the library would cover, and they would likely have to cover the install fee. He stated that he will talk to the parks crew about the install and mentioned it could also be an Eagle Scout project. Chair Winsor suggested funds for the install could also come from the \$1,000 they assigned to landscaping. Ms. Mathews stated it sounds like the trustees have money to pay for the install so that could be an option too. She suggested they could start using the words 'in honor of' instead of 'in memory of' so as to avoid making Ashuelot River Park a memorial park.

Mr. Haynes clarified that the stories will be interchangeable so they can be different ones at different times and suggested they could have themes depending on the seasons, etc. Ms. Krautmann stated the board can suggest what they'd like the content to be, such as science themed. Ms. Mathews stated it will be good to work with the library. Ms. Krautmann agreed and stated it will be great to have the community involved. She mentioned that location is important and they need to carefully think about that. Mr. Bohannon and Chair Winsor suggested they do a walk around before deciding. Ms. Krautmann stated they need to also decide how far apart they want the boards and whether or not they will have QR codes on them. Mr. Bohannon stated you want the boards spread out and mentioned that when they've done them in the past they went around the pond at Robin Hood, which is almost a 20 minute walk. In Ashuelot River Park they may need to go out along the trail and back, as there may be 20 to 30 pages in the children's book. He mentioned that at one of the Recreation Department summer camps in the past, the kids created their own book and they put those books out on the trail, which was very popular. Mr. Bohannon stated there's a lot of opportunity for the Recreation Department and the library to work together on this and get kids outdoors.

Mr. Bocko stated it could be a great project to get classrooms involved in during the school year, maybe making that part of their curriculum.

Ms. Mathews stated they are planning 12 sculptures and combining that with 20 of the story books, which may be a lot so it will need to be well thought out. Ms. Krautmann stated she believes the sculptures will be in one spot and they will need to decide which spot. Mr. Bohannon suggested the front interior of the park, next to some benches so they are protected and visible.

C) Public Art

Mr. Bohannon stated with the sculptures they can do stacks of 3 in clusters, which is a little different than the books because those you want spread out. The stacks can be short, medium, tall, and have more flexibility. Ms. Krautmann stated she has not been in contact with the contact for the sculptures this month so she doesn't have an updated report.

Ms. Krautmann reported that she called Georgia Cassimatis from Friends of Public Art about the tiny doors idea and she is willing to point them in the right direction and assist with finding a grant for the project. She suggested Jessica Gelter from Arts Alive as a good resource for designing the project. They may need to fill out a public land resolution and present to City Council and Ms. Cassimatis stated she is willing to zoom in for that. Chair Winsor suggested they leave that project on the table for future developments and accept as informational. He thanked Ms. Krautmann for her work on this.

Ms. Krautmann asked what the next steps would be with the library and Mr. Bohannon stated he will contact them to discuss moving forward.

7) **New, Other Business**

Chair Winsor opened the floor for new or unfinished business. He stated Brian Mattson was instrumental in the formation of Ashuelot River Park and a wonderful person and would like to do something to honor him in the park if possible. Mr. Bocko agreed and stated Mr. Mattson was a very special connection with Antioch University as well, always engaged and a big part of the educational piece with the Rachel Marshall learning lab. Ms. Mathews suggested they could do something like an education circle for kids to sit in and use for classes and have a plaque there. Mr. Bohannon stated there's another bench location within the pergola as well that could be a possibility, also noting that Mr. Mattson was instrumental in that park. Chair Winsor stated they will discuss this at future meetings. Mr. Haynes added that Mr. Mattson was instrumental for Goose Pond as well. Mr. Bohannon stated he served the Recreation Department for many years and the things he was able to accomplish in his tenure were absolutely amazing and he influenced staff and so many boards and commissions. Chair Winsor shared a story of how he helped him in the past and noted that he was generous with his time and a great guy.

8) **Adjournment – Next Meeting Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 8:00 AM**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:48 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

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