

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

8:00 AM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne
Stephen Hooper
Ruzzel Zullo
Paul Bocko (via Zoom)
Dian Mathews
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Suzy Krautmann

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM. He announced Mr. Haynes as an active member in the absence of Ms. Sadoski.

2) Acceptance of February 8, 2022 Minutes

Councilor Chadbourne made a motion to accept the minutes of February 8, 2022 as presented. Mr. Hooper seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

3) Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon reported that the budget has been accepted by the trustees as presented. He made note that the correct Bartlett Tree contract is \$4,995 and will be reflected accurately in the budget for next meeting.

Councilor Chadbourne asked why invasive species are included under the replanting program in the budget, since they will be removing invasives. Mr. Bohannon stated they will be removing them and putting black tarps down, which is part of the budget.

4) Friends

Ms. Mathews announced that they got the rain garden grant. She explained that they asked for \$700.00 but the CCCC Committee liked the idea, and the fact that it will take place in a City park, and will be granting more money than was requested. She went on to state that on May 4th at 1pm the CCCC committee is coming to the park for a site visit and to discuss the proposed rain garden installation. Lisa Lucigen from Soak Up The Rain will be attending as well. Ms. Mathews explained that they will be looking at the spot behind the Starbucks snow mountain, where there's a depression in the ground. She added that they will need to site the location so the snowplows are aware.

Ms. Mathews next mentioned the Garden Conservancy grant called "Gardens for Good," which has diversity as a major component. She informed the board that they will apply for that grant next year. Mr. Bohannon asked if it was diversity of plants or people. Ms. Mathews stated she wasn't sure but she will look into the details.

Ms. Mathews requested permission to use \$59.00 to purchase the 3rd component of plantings from Prairie Moon Nursery. She explained that when she went to purchase three Power Packs they only had two left, so she would like to get one more; however, they raised the price up \$10.00. Chair Winsor stated it is in the budget for her to be able to do that.

Last Thursday, Ms. Mathews stated she and Leslie Casey presented their Ashuelot Park project to the new Master Gardener class at the Harris Center. She requested to be on the agenda at the next ARPAB meeting so they can present it to the board as well. Mr. Bohannon stated he will bring his laptop so they can share. Ms. Mathews reported that the other presenter, Leigh Kamm, completed a signage project for Distant Hill Farm with paper that's waterproof. They recruited her to come work with them as another Master Gardener, expanding the group to 7!

Ms. Mathews stated they are gearing up for spring and working on getting the thick, strong tarps for the knotweed. Chair Winsor asked when they want to do the tarps project. Ms. Mathews stated they will need quite a few volunteers and would like to have a delivery of compost to go on the beds and on top of the tarps. They need to figure out when the snow is going away by Starbucks and where they are going to place the compost.

Chair Winsor stated Hamshaw Lumber has a sale every April so if the project can coincide with that it might be helpful. Ms. Mathews stated they need to time it with the volunteer availability as well.

Mr. Bohannon stated he had a conversation with St. Joseph's School who sent volunteers to do the pollinator garden last year. The principal stated any time ARPAB needs them to just let him know because the kids need a certain number of hours of service. Ms. Mathews stated she believed that was about 12 kids that volunteered from St. Joseph's School last year.

Next, Ms. Mathews stated they are going to start their education component of the master plan and hold an invasives "walk about" during the summer. This will likely include using the black

bags for buckthorn, invasive identification teaching, etc. Mr. Bohannon suggested they buy the longer ties for the bags and just snip them to adjust for the different sized trunks.

Ms. Mathews asked if there had been any discovery of jumping worms in Keene. Chair Winsor stated that he didn't recall ever seeing any on campus. Ms. Mathews explained that she believes they had one in the conifer garden, so it's something to be aware of because they are an invasive.

Councilor Chadbourne asked for more information on the jumping worms. Ms. Mathews stated they eat everything and take the nutrients out of the soil. There was short discussion about what they look like. Ms. Mathews stated they only live for a season but they lay eggs in the soil. She mentioned that they can kill trees because they take the protection away from the trunk. She suggested they make sure the compost they get has been heated up because it's the only way to kill the eggs.

Chair Winsor suggested they use wood chips instead of compost because it will be cheaper and more readily available. Ms. Mathews agreed that that was a good idea. She stated she'd like to cover the whole strip of knotweed if possible.

Ms. Mathews reported that the Friends have decided they won't do any planting this year because they did a whole lot last year, and they want to see what comes up. She referenced the section of Ashuelot Park over the bridge, where there's a circle across from the bat house. The area has a lot of invasives and she wondered if the Friends could have permission to go in there and remove invasives and add a pollinator garden. Chair Winsor stated that would be nice. Mr. Bohannon stated they could definitely do that because it's in the park.

5) Park Discussion

A) Educational Signage

Mr. Bohannon stated Kyle met with Ms. Mathews and Chair Winsor in the park and did a walk around to give Kyle some guidance. On March 1st Kyle gave him an update on his project status and the direction he's going in. Mr. Bohannon stated he feels Kyle is doing great and on the right track, and has very good examples already. Their next call is scheduled for March 11th. Chair Winsor stated he gave Kyle a copy of the tree inventory and Mr. Bohannon gave him credentials to the website. Mr. Bohannon stated Kyle will come to the next meeting in April to present a final draft of his work.

B) Book Walks

Mr. Bohannon stated he was in communication with Gail Zachariah from the library. He reported that the trustees have paid for book signs but that doesn't include the posts, so the ARPAB will need to pay for those. He added that they will likely need to put concrete around the posts so there will be some labor and expense involved with this project, but it's for the better good. He stated they will need to research pricing on the posts.

C) Public Art

Mr. Bohannon stated they haven't heard anything with regards to the sculptures, other than the project is going well so there's no need for them to be involved just yet.

6) New, Other Business

Chair Winsor stated the company that plows the plaza by the park continues to dump snow in the park, even after having been asked several times not to do that. He wondered if they can talk to the bank or the contractor and noted that there's plenty of room to have the snow dumped in other places.

Ms. Mathews agreed and stated they planted lilacs there but had to move them all except one because of the snow situation.

Mr. Bohannon stated they can write a letter to the branch manager.

Councilor Chadbourne suggested putting a fence up or extending the existing black fence. Chair Winsor felt that might look bad. Ms. Mathews stated if they put the black fence there on the edge of the tar, the plow might start putting snow right in the handicap parking spots. Mr. Bohannon stated he doesn't feel access to the park in the winter is going to be impacted. Mr. Haynes asked if it was the same contractor year after year and Chair Winsor stated he believes so. Mr. Bohannon stated they likely do what's easiest to get the job done when plowing.

Mr. Bohannon stated Benée Hershon from Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD) is looking to host an event in the park during National Pollinator Week, focused on local pollinators. There will be 3-4 tables and it will take place on Tuesday, June 21st from 1-3pm. CCCD plans to host an educational booth where community members can build their own pollinator planting kit. The Harris Center would host a booth focused on education for kids and different pollinator themed games and activities. Additionally they mentioned bringing a cardboard butterfly cutout with the hashtag for the event, where community members can pose and promote the importance of pollinators on social media. They also hope to bring the Caterpillar Lab to host a booth. Mr. Bohannon suggested the Friends might want a booth as well. Ms. Mathews stated it sounds like a great event. Mr. Bohannon added that it fits right into their mission. There was general consensus that it was a great idea to have the event in the park.

Ms. Mathews brought up water and stated they need a solution, especially for the rain garden. Mr. Bohannon stated they will get a connection, there's a very simple solution and he will take care of it.

7) Adjournment

Chair Winsor announced that the next meeting is Tuesday, April 12, 2022 at 8:00 AM.

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:29 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Nicole Cullinane, Minute Taker

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

Additional edits by,
Katie Kibler, Clerk's Office