

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

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

**Tuesday, October 11, 2022**

**8:00 AM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Ruzzel Zullo, Vice Chair  
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne (arrived at  
8:05 AM)  
Stephen Hooper  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation & Facilities

**Members Not Present:**

Dian Mathews  
Paul Bocko  
Suzy Krautmann

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM.

**2) Approval of July 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Haynes made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 12, 2022, which was seconded by Mr. Hooper and passed by unanimous vote.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that Bartlett Tree has done their work. He continued that the Trustees also approved the ArborScope; it was taken right out of this budget. The budget is up to date. Current expenditures is \$6,558.23.

Mr. Hooper asked if everything is up to date with park maintenance for this year. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, with one exception. They need to have a conversation about the beds, and whether they are going to clean those out and hire someone to clean those out. He continued that last year they left them/did not clean out the leaves, and it did not go as well as planned.

Leslie Casey, of the Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum, said that the Friends feel that in the places where the leaves collect, the soil was improved, the plant growth improved, and it helped cool the soil and keep it moist. She continued that the issue is that the plantings are not dense enough now. The Friends have been trying to get some ground covers going to give the soil some texture to hold some leaves. It was a dry year so the growth was a little inhibited. The City needs to do what it feels is necessary, but she does not think anyone wants to abandon the idea of using leaves to improve the beds.

Mr. Bohannon replied that this is an open conversation and he is not committed to anything. He wants to know if he needs to hire someone to do some cleanup.

Bettina Chadbourne arrived at 8:05 AM.

Raynee Carlson, of the Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum, spoke about grinding/shredding leaves, and of the benefits of the shredded leaves being in the beds. Chair Winsor, too, spoke in favor of grinding up the leaves. He continued that he thinks the ground up leaves should be mixed with woodchips with a ratio of two parts woodchips to one part shredded leaves. It needs to be a conscientious process.

Discussion continued. Mr. Bohannon stated that if they pile up the leaves, it will happen again, so there needs to be a process. He asked where the leaves should go once they are shredded. Chair Winsor replied that once they are shredded, they can sit for a bit, then in the spring they can be mixed with woodchips and brought back to the park. He knows this is work. Ms. Casey stated that she thinks that as long as the shredded leaves are not going to mat or blow around excessively, they could go straight back on the beds and save that work. She does not think they will hurt the plants.

Discussion continued. Mr. Haynes asked if it is possible for someone to shred the leaves on site and blow them right onto the beds. Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not know. Chair Winsor replied or they can be shredded in a big pile and then put onto the beds, but just getting them shredded is a big step.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he will have a conversation and see if they can shred the leaves. He continued that he thinks if they do the woodchips, they will get the same result as last year. He asked if it would work for this year if they shredded the leaves and put the shredded leaves back into the beds. ARPAB members replied yes. Chair Winsor stated that over time they can get more sophisticated with the process. Mr. Bohannon replied that maybe there is a contractor out there that uses this method.

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

Chair Winsor asked Ms. Casey for a report. Ms. Casey replied that Dian [Mathews] did not prepare one for her, but she can give an update. She shared the following:

- Invasive species continue to be a major issue this year. The buckthorn trees are problematic, and make birds sick. Soil quality is fine wherever it remains relatively moist. They are trying to get ground covers to help the places where the soil is too dry.
- Some Friends participated in the Source to Sea cleanup at Ashuelot River Park. She found fishing gear tangled in a tree, dangling over the river, which no one can get to.
- At a Cheshire County Conservation District event, she met the new River Steward for the Connecticut River Conservancy. She will get more involved and one of her missions is to get more engagement on the Connecticut River watershed in this area. She could be a resource for the riverbank problems with invasive species.
- She has been digging up huge bittersweet vine roots and multiflora rose roots; there are beds you would not even know were beds, because they were so covered with bittersweet. The riverbank is too steep for her to be able to dig it all out.
- The Friends received a grant for the raingarden project, which she believes Ms. Mathews got an extension on. In theory, it should have been completed with the report in by the end of this year. The advisors told them that if they are going to use equipment close to the river they need to get a DES permit by notification, and since they do not own the land, that would be a City of Keene undertaking.

Mr. Bohannon replied that a permit by notification is simple and not too expensive. In order to do it, staff will need to know the exact location and the details. Ms. Casey replied that it is between the apron near the Starbucks parking lot and the river.

Ms. Carlson asked if there were any updates on the air compressor. Chair Winsor replied that he was going to show the arborist the location, but Ms. Mathews let him know the markings were no longer there. If it gets marked again, the Friends can let him know and he will show the arborist so he knows what is involved. Ms. Carlson explained the area and stated that they had talked about assessing whether they need to get a small backhoe; it is really solid there. Chair Winsor replied that he thinks [the arborist] can handle the whole thing. Ms. Carlson stated that she will do the markings again on Friday morning when she is at the park.

Ms. Casey stated that if they get that area excavated and cleaned up, and they want to bring in some crushed stone for a walkway or some good soil to put in so they can put in plantings, they want to have a landscape company deliver a yard or two of these materials. She asked if it is okay with the City if the Friends do that. Mr. Bohannon replied yes.

Chair Winsor stated that he wants Ms. Mathews to know he did not fertilize the plants this summer, feeling that it would have done more harm than good. He continued that he kept waiting for a good window, and could not find one. Ms. Casey replied that growth was so limited because of the drought, anyway.

Ms. Carlson gave an update on the Friends' knotweed project. She spoke of the work they will do this Friday, and their intention to start the next phase, which is dependent on whether they can get chips. That is a question for Mr. Bohannon. She continued that they need more chips on the old site. In some

places, it is not four inches as it is supposed to be. Mr. Bohannon asked what they need. Ms. Carlson replied that she does not know how much was dumped last time; maybe one dump truck load before. Mr. Bohannon replied that the department has plenty. Ms. Carlson replied that the Friends are not quite ready for it; they have work to do on Friday to prepare. She continued that they probably will need the chips at the end of the month. Mr. Bohannon asked for her/someone to tell him when they want the chips, and his department will have them dumped.

Ms. Carlson stated that she went to the invasive species conference in Concord, and was advised that the Friends should keep the cut down knotweed on site. Two or three weeks ago, they made a site on the pathway going toward the bank. They cut down a lot of knotweed there, and laid it on pallets on a tarp. They want to cut behind the old outhouse and put another set of pallets there, for everything cut in phase two. In areas where they cannot cover, they will try to cut about 12 times a year, especially in the spring, to keep the knotweed to a foot or below. They will not dig up the roots. The cuttings will go into those piles. They will try that method in the little area to the right of the path out to the bank. Discussion ensued about knotweed. Ms. Casey spoke of how the Friends/Ms. Carlson's work has been a gratifying project to see, uncovering native plant species, and cleaning the banks to the point where members of the public are returning to them. Discussion continued.

Councilor Chadbourne asked why the knotweed cuttings cannot be brought to the dump. She continued that her second question is why they do not dig up at least some of the roots. Ms. Carlson replied that in the section they are working on now, they have dug up many roots. She continued that it is just too much to try to dig up the roots [in the other area]. Ms. Casey added that the roots can be 10 feet deep. Ms. Carlson stated that when she dug up roots she was afraid to just leave them to dry, so they bagged them and put them in a dumpster, the contents of which go to an incinerator. She continued that many people have knotweed in their yards, because other people put it in the compost piles at the dumps and people who did not know what would happen brought that "great compost" home to their gardens. Councilor Chadbourne replied that she meant "dump" as in dumpster that gets taken away. Discussion continued about the roots. Ms. Casey stated that knotweed does not need to grow from a root, because it can grow from just a piece of leaf or stem. Chair Winsor stated that it is about just waiting until it disintegrates. Councilor Chadbourne asked if that is what happens, eventually, when you keep cutting it down. Ms. Casey replied yes, it starves the root and the root dies. Ms. Carlson added that it takes constant cuttings, for years. Their goal is to not allow it photosynthesis. Chair Winsor added that digging up the roots on that bank could cause erosion, which they do not want. Others agreed, and discussion continued. Ms. Carlson spoke of the benefits of putting in some native plantings that could withstand the knotweed to strengthen the bank.

Councilor Chadbourne asked if the City could do something to remove that fishing line tangled in the tree. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, if it is safe enough to take down. He continued that he will send a crew down there to check out the location. Discussion ensued about possible methods of removal.

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

Chair Winsor stated that before getting into the Master Plan conversation, he wanted to get an update on some items. He asked how Art in the Park went. Mr. Bohannon replied that it went well. He continued that it is nice to have Foskett and Delisle taking over that operation. Ms. Casey stated that the Friends had a table there. Mr. Bohannon stated that someone reached out to the City related to joining the ARPAB, but they actually meant to ask about the Friends. He will connect with Ms. Mathews related to that.

Chair Winsor asked if any other events happened in the park since the ARPAB's last meeting in July. Mr. Bohannon replied that Art in the Park was the big one.

**A) Ashuelot Green Space**

Chair Winsor asked if anyone has an update on this. Mr. Bohannon replied no, he has not heard anything. He continued that Rotary International is celebrating 100 years, and the Keene Rotary Club is looking to do some type of 100-year gift. They want to do something in the park. Part of this Green Space project was a kayak launch, so he has talked with Keene Rotary about that particular option. He does not know where it will go, what kind of funding Keene Rotary has, and so on and so forth. He hopes to have more information for the ARPAB at the next meeting. The kayak launch, if it happens, would be an ADA-compliant dock and have to go through several steps. He will keep them posted.

Mr. Haynes asked if he is talking about the adjacent land. Mr. Bohannon replied that the kayak launch area would be actually in the City's space. He continued that there is no push with the Ashuelot Green Space. It is quite complicated, with potentially a non-profit organization building a building there, and the group wants a solar array to be net zero, and there are many things that would need to happen for them to make everything work. Chair Winsor asked that they just keep it on the agenda.

**B) Book Walk Installation**

Chair Winsor asked if there is any update on this. Mr. Bohannon replied that he has been out for three weeks, but he touched base with Chuck Sweeney before he left, related to the installation. He was looking to connect with the Library to walk and mark the spots again. He continued that Ms. Mathews is probably the only person who has the map. He wants to get a copy. Ms. Carlson replied that last week, Ms. Mathews said something about meeting with the Librarian. Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not know if they connected. However, the book walk installation will happen this fall.

**C) Public Art Installation**

Chair Winsor stated that Suzy Krautmann is not here to give an update. Mr. Bohannon replied that the last conversation he had with Forest Bencivenga at Franklin School was that she was looking for the installation to happen on the 19<sup>th</sup>, or for the holes to be dug on the 14<sup>th</sup> and to have the actual unveiling on the 19<sup>th</sup>. He continued that he has not heard anything since. Ms. Bencivenga was involved with a couple different craft fairs recently, and was waiting for some items to come back from a kiln. He does

not know if the pieces have been completed yet. He will email everyone as an FYI when he learns more.

Ms. Carlson asked why there are cement circles out back by the knotweed. Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not know. It is not related to this art installation.

**6) New, Other Business**

Mr. Bohannon stated that an organization planted a lilac bush. He continued that he did not steer the organization in that location. They were to be connected with Ms. Mathews and meet in the park, and the organization skipped that step and did it on their own. He knows that ruffled a few feathers. They can move it if necessary. Discussion ensued. Ms. Carlson stated that the stone has been removed, into the shed. She continued that it says “In memory of –.” Mr. Bohannon replied yes, that is not acceptable.

Mr. Bohannon stated that Peter Poanessa is finishing up the kiosk that they had commissioned him for, in the entryway. He continued that Mr. Poanessa asked him if there was any additional content they wanted him to add to it, and he told Mr. Poanessa he would get back to him. Chair Winsor asked to see an image/artist rendition of this, if Mr. Bohannon has that to send out again, because he did not see it. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will see if he has it.

Discussion ensued about the kiosk. Mr. Bohannon stated that the file Mr. Poanessa received was not a very high level graphic, and sometimes when you enlarge an image, it gets distorted. If the signs need to be replaced, it is on “our” dime [ARPAB]. With some of the signs Kyle Bradford did, some of the colors did not come out correctly, and there were other minor details that most people would not notice, but the person who created it noticed and asked for it to be redone. Chair Winsor replied that most people would not even notice, but people should take a close look at the signs, before the next meeting, and see what they think, e.g. whether there is a particular sign or two that does not look right. Mr. Zullo asked if there is a warranty or guarantee they can tap into because of the misprint. Chair Winsor replied that his understanding is that Mr. Poanessa did exactly what Mr. Bradford gave him, so it is not his fault. The file resolution was an issue. Mr. Bohannon replied that when you go from copy to print, it does not always translate, if the file is not correct. That is what happened in this case. In order to get it corrected, he cannot just send the same file over. It has to be higher resolution, and he does not think Mr. Bradford has the capacity in his software to do what Mr. Poanessa needs. Hiring Mr. Poanessa to do that [might not work], because he is very booked right now.

Discussion continued. Ms. Carlson asked if someone with a good camera with a card can take that to Mr. Poanessa, if the issue is one of the photos. Mr. Bohannon replied that he can send Ms. Carlson some of the things Mr. Bradford was worried about, so she can find that particular sign. He continued that he understands that Mr. Bradford does not want his name on something that does not look good, but he himself thinks they all look great and Mr. Bradford did a fantastic job. It is just the resolution that threw it off a bit.

Ms. Casey stated that to return to the subject of the Master Plan, one of the volunteers for Art in the Park was talking about how one of the Keene social service agencies moved from one site to another and as a result no longer has a community garden. She continued that this volunteer said it would be great for the community to have, and she would love to see Monadnock Conservancy build out their concept, put some thought into engaging socioeconomically disadvantaged families who live near the park, which is part of the Master Plan. It would be great to have some kind of interactive community garden, particularly oriented to vegetables. Mr. Bohannon replied that those are good to have. He continued that community gardens had a very good year in the space behind the Monadnock View Cemetery but many gardeners reported theft. That is problematic. Councilor Chadbourne asked if the City has more than one community garden. Mr. Bohannon replied no.

Chair Winsor stated that regarding ArborScope, he would be happy to take some photos of the trees while they look as good as they do, and he can add those in, if Mr. Bohannon gives him the login information. Mr. Bohannon replied that that would be great. He continued that the license has up to five users, so he would be glad to add users. Chair Winsor told Mr. Hooper to send him any photos he wants him to add, if he takes any. Mr. Hooper agreed.

Ms. Carlson asked if there is a map of the trees on the ground. Chair Winsor replied yes, with the ArborScope. Mr. Bohannon stated that he can give one of the Friends the password to ArborScope, and they can go in and see that. He asked if they want that. Ms. Carlson replied yes, that would be great. Ms. Casey added that many people at Art in the Park expressed that they did not know there was an arboretum in the park, and if the Friends had a map to show them or something to print and give them, people could do a self-guided tour. Chair Winsor replied that a future agenda item could be about putting the ArborScope map online. Mr. Bohannon replied that they can put this on the next meeting's agenda, but in the meantime, he will send Chair Winsor and Ms. Carlson the ArborScope password.

**7) Adjournment – Next Meeting Tuesday, November 8, 2022**

Chair Winsor stated that the next scheduled meeting is on Election Day. He asked if people want to move it to the following week. Others agreed. Chair Winsor stated that the next meeting will thus be on November 15, 2022.

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:05 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

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