

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

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

**Tuesday, November 15, 2022**

**8:00 AM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Ruzzel Zullo, Vice Chair  
Paul Bocko  
Dian Mathews  
Suzy Krautmann

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,  
Recreation & Facilities

**Members Not Present:**

Thomas Haynes, Alternate  
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne  
Stephen Hooper

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM. Roll call was conducted.

**2) Approval of October 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Bohannon noted that in the October 11 minutes, Raynee's middle name was inadvertently used instead of her last name, Carlson, and this will be corrected.

Mr. Bocko made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 11, 2022, as amended.  
Ms. Krautmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that everything is up to date. He continued that Ms. Mathews just gave him the invoice for Prairie Moon, which was \$63. He will update that. The ARPAB budgeted \$10,000 but only spent \$6,500. As a reminder, whatever they do not spend does not go away; they can utilize it next year.

Mr. Bocko asked if there was something the ARPAB thought they were going to do and did not do. Ms. Mathews and Ms. Carlson spoke about some of the items they expected to spend money on but were fortunate to get for free.

- 4) **Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum**
  - A) **Invasive Species**
  - B) **Rain Garden**

Ms. Mathews gave the following update from the Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum:

*“The Friends board is composed of myself as chair and Karen Flavin as secretary.”*

She added that the Friends’ treasurer quit because there was not enough business. She continued:

*“Other members of the board are Leslie Casey and Raynee Joy, both Master Gardeners; Julie Barrett, owner of Julie’s Garden; Laura Andrews, our Antioch liaison; and Barry LeClair who is in charge of the cobblestones. We are the core of the work crew we call The Friends. We also have some volunteers: Doris LeClair, Barry’s spouse; Big Mike; Jennifer Greenstone from Old Homestead Garden Club, and the three Mormon ‘sisters.’ In addition, we have floating volunteers who show up when they can. But the listed people are the ‘usuals.’ This summer we worked every Friday and the first Saturday of each month. The average was five gardeners per workday. We logged at least 20 hours per month – that’s 150 worker hours per month. Plus, each of us was maintaining our own gardens. During the drought we bought a wagon to ferry the twelve water jugs around and managed to save most of the shrubs and perennials we have planted. We watered every other day for two weeks.*

*At the last meeting Raynee explained to you what we have been doing with the Invasives Project. The whole area behind Mascoma Bank has been cut down. You should go see how high the piles of knotweed are.”*

Ms. Mathews stated that with the new idea of tarps and pallets, and piling up the knotweed, they are up to four piles of knotweed.

She continued:

*“Our thanks to Chuck and his crew for their timely application of woodchips and the final tarped area by the shoreline.”*

Chair Winsor stated that it looks really good. Mr. Bocko asked what the plan is with the cut knotweed. Ms. Mathews replied that it has to stay there for at least four years. Brief discussion ensued.

Ms. Mathews continued reading:

*“We divided some of the hostas and moved some to the garden behind the Old Homestead bench because their plantings got walked on by curious visitors who needed to get close to the tree tagged by the shoreline behind the bench. The same thing happened in the front corner by Starbucks. One curious visitor even took off a ‘Buckthorn Baggie’ – we imagine s/he didn’t know where it had come from so couldn’t put it back.*

*Leslie, with very little help, cleared the bittersweet and the multiflora rose from the entire section between the shed and the bridge. Underneath the invasive vines she found what had been another garden, with iris, ilex, bayberry, and blueberry all thriving. All the invasive maples, etc. have been cut and/or dug out of the section we call Steve Hooper’s Garden, the round garden right in front of the bridge walkway.*

*Our third set of nine plants from Prairie Moon arrived in October and were planted in the OHGC spot by the big sign. The price went up to \$63 from \$59 last year. We have decided to plant drought tolerant plants in this section because of the lack of a sprinkler for times when we are not able to get to the Park to water.*

*At the last meeting, Leslie brought you up to speed on the Rain Garden Project. We can discuss how to proceed over the winter months. We will have to have something to show the Grant Committee when they question the lack of process. Leslie has made a spreadsheet of possible plants that can go in the Rain Garden and three potential design schematics. So as soon as we can work out the kinks we’ll be ready to go.”*

Chair Winsor asked if they should talk now about handicapped access.

Ms. Mathews stated that when she went around the Park with the people from the Library, figuring out where to put the story things, Chuck Sweeney (City of Keene Parks Maintenance Superintendent) said there were concerns expressed about the location of the Rain Garden. She continued that she thinks they should be included in the planning. The Friends moved the chain from the back where the big snow pile goes, so all of the asphalt is now behind the chain, so the snowplow operators can dump the snow on the asphalt. The idea of the Rain Garden is that the runoff will go through it and lose the pollutants before going in. Mr. Sweeney is concerned because there are still granite posts where the chain was. They have to get a truck in so they can go pick up two benches and a garbage can. Ms. Casey suggested the benches be lifted by people or a hand truck, and Mr. Sweeney needed to review. They talked about taking out the granite posts so they have more room. Thus, the Friends have to think about how they are impacted by where the Friends are putting the Rain Garden, which they had not considered.

Mr. Bohannon replied that when Ms. Carlson sent the description of the Rain Garden that flagged him, because he knows they utilize the area. He continued that he thought the Rain Garden would be further back into the Park; he thinks he did not understand the location the Friends meant. There needs to be a discussion about the location, because maintenance people have to get in there. He wonders if there is a way to get the Rain Garden in there without even

going into that area. He suggests they meet there to discuss it. Where the granite posts are there is also a paved buffer and a curb, and maybe they could get rid of the curb. Discussion continued about the location and the logistics. Mr. Bohannon explained his idea and Ms. Carlson and Ms. Mathews explained their thought process with the Rain Garden's location. Ms. Carlson stated that she agrees with Mr. Bohannon that they should all stand together in the location to discuss it. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will set that meeting up.

Ms. Mathews stated that they are talking about the maintenance people getting in, but they may not be the ones who do the work, because scheduling with them has been difficult. Discussion continued. Ms. Mathews spoke about removal of barberry bushes.

Ms. Mathews stated that she read in last month's minutes that the ARPAB and the Friends were talking about leaf shredding, and she thinks they need to talk about it more. Where will the money come from and how will they use it? Will the ARPAB help the Friends with this? The Friends did not do a lot of fundraising this year. It will cost money if they do not use the machinery of the Parks Department and have to have machinery come in. The barberry cannot just be cut down; it requires a machine.

Mr. Bohannon replied that the Parks Department staff is fully capable of doing this. Ms. Mathews stated that the Parks staff is busy. Mr. Bohannon stated that the Park is the responsibility of the City of Keene, and when maintenance needs arise, it is the Parks staff's responsibility. Discussion continued. Ms. Mathews and Ms. Carlson asked/spoke about when the Parks staff could remove the barberry, and Mr. Bohannon suggested they talk about it more when they have their meeting [at the Park regarding the Rain Garden location].

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

**A) Ashuelot Green Space**

Chair Winsor asked if more is known about Green Space. Mr. Bohannon replied no. He continued that they can keep this on the agenda, but it is almost at rest. It is in Ashuelot Green Space's hands; they have not done the zoning aspect of it. The landscape designer reached out to him yesterday and asked him what the status is. He (Mr. Bohannon) told him he pulled the application for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). It is a minimum of a year away from revitalizing that conversation, unless something happens over the course of the winter. The big piece of this is the conservancy, on the ownership side. They have to figure that out.

Chair Winsor asked about the kayak area Mr. Bohannon had talked about. Mr. Bohannon replied that he explored just doing the kayak launch. He continued that he pitched a presentation to a funding source and they opted not to do it.

**B) Book Walk Installation**

Mr. Bohannon reported that the books are in. Discussion ensued, including about how the Library staff did not use all of the poles installed for the stories (unclear on whether that was intentional or not), and about publicity, which Mr. Bohannon stated is up to the Library.

### **C) Public Art Installation**

Chair Winsor stated that this went very well, and it was nice to have the kids who worked on it there. Ms. Krautmann stated that Carl Jacobs has a half hour radio slot on Saturday and wanted to do something about art in the Park, but Forest (Bencivenga) is not available, so it would be great if Chair Winsor and Mr. Bohannon could do that. Discussion ensued. Ms. Mathews stated that she will talk with the Friends. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will be there, and if someone from the Friends cannot do this, he and Chair Winsor would be happy to cover what the Friends are doing. Discussion continued.

Mr. Bohannon praised Ms. Krautmann's work with the public art installation and thanked her. Others agreed. Mr. Bohannon stated that there was conversation about possibly pointing lights on the art. He continued that the art was strategically placed right next to a light, but the ARPAB could consider spending the money to put a light on the art. Discussion ensued about inexpensive options. Ms. Mathews stated that it would be nice if there were a sign giving credit to Ms. Bencivenga and the students. She continued that the Friends purchased 12 black posts and they have waterproof paper. They could make such a sign. Discussion ensued about the options. Mr. Bohannon asked if he should get a small plaque. Others agreed. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will talk with Keene Monument about getting something, which they certainly have the budget for. It will thank Franklin School and Forest Bencivenga, include the year, and so on and so forth. He will create some verbiage and send it to Ms. Krautmann.

Ms. Krautmann asked if they would be interested in pursuing another person to do something in another area. Mr. Bocko asked if she has someone in mind. Ms. Krautmann replied yes, Miranda (Nelken), the KMS art teacher. She continued that this would be really down the road, but she thought she would mention it. Mr. Bohannon replied that he thinks they should explore it. Mr. Bocko stated that it is an opportunity to collaborate with indigenous people, and Ms. Nelken is tied in. Others agreed.

### **D) ArborScope Demonstration**

Chair Winsor stated that you can do a lot with ArborScope, but they need to learn how to do it. He continued that when he used it every day at the college, it was easy, but it takes some effort to re-learn it once you stop using it so frequently. At the ARPAB's next meeting, they can do an ArborScope demonstration, and everyone can contribute, by taking photos while they are at the Park. The photos can be entered into the inventory, so when people scan the QR code, the photos come up. He wants to dig deeper in ArborScope. Ms. Mathews had asked about having a map, and they could have a QR code at the beginning of the Park that has a map pop up on people's phones.

Ms. Mathews asked if the locations of people's stones could be put on ArborScope, too. Chair Winsor replied that it is a lot of work, but yes, it could happen. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon suggested a map identifying, say, "Row A," but not each individual stone. They already have this.

**E) Kiosk Information**

Mr. Bohannon stated that Peter Poanessa is ready to do the kiosk, but does not have the information the ARPAB wants to put on. He continued that he would like the ARPAB to come back at the next meeting with information that needs to go on the kiosk, and they can lay it out. Certainly, it will include Park rules and that sort of thing. The Book Walk map, as Ms. Mathews mentioned, might be great to have on the kiosk. The purpose is education. Chair Winsor asked Mr. Bohannon to email the rendering again.

Chair Winsor stated that he knows that Kyle (Bradford) is not happy with the layout of some of the words on the signs. He and Mr. Bocko were looking at it and wondering if they could do a vinyl overlay in some places to fix it. Discussion ensued. Chair Winsor stated that a sign-maker in Swanzey, Mark Johnson, has done overlays for signs at the college and they look great. He can approach him to see what it would cost. Discussion continued about how Mr. Bradford and Mr. Poanessa both did great work but sometimes this just happens.

**6) New, Other Business**

Chair Winsor asked if anyone had new business to bring up. Ms. Mathews stated that some of the QR codes for ArborScope are in places that result in people walking through flowerbeds to get to them. She continued that she would like to discourage that as they go forward; she does not want people tromping on plantings. People need to understand that this is an arboretum and it is not okay to go tromping through gardens. Brief discussion ensued. Ms. Mathews asked that this stay as an item of discussion. Mr. Bohannon suggested creating little mulch paths for people to walk on instead.

**7) Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, December 13, 2022 at 8:00 AM**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Andy Bohannon, PRF Director