

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

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:

Andrew 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. The members present at that time identified themselves.

2) Approval of January 10, 2023 Minutes

Chair Winsor noted his name was spelled incorrectly as “Windsor” in the minutes of the January 10, 2023 meeting.

Councilor Bettina Chadbourne arrived at 8:05 AM.

Ms. Krautmann made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2023 meeting as presented. Mr. Bocko seconded the motion. The Board passed the motion unanimously.

3) Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon stated there were no changes to the proposed budget for 2023, except he added the cost of Kyle Bradford’s work in the budget, as discussed at the last meeting. He suggested the Board could accept the proposed budget as informational and then discuss it later under agenda item 6 (Budget Development 2023). Chair Winsor agreed.

4) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum

Ms. Mathews stated she did not make a written report because it was down time, and the Friends were not working in the garden, just behind the scenes. She mentioned the Friends were still waiting for a meeting with Matt Kelly and Tom M. to look at the soil and help them decide what to do.

Julie Barrett, a Friends' board member, reported that they took a field trip to Bagley Pond Perennials in Warner last Tuesday. Bagley Pond Perennials started its farm about five years ago, growing all native perennials and shrubs, mostly from seed. They met for a couple hours to discuss the plants the Friends needed. The Friends now have a list of perennials and shrubs they are working with. They plan to meet this week to decide how many of each shrub they need, including for the rain garden. There was discussion about how great it was to have such a good in-state source for native plants. Ms. Barrett indicated the Friends plan to determine how much everything would cost this week.

5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation

A) Ashuelot Green Space

In response to Chair Winsor's question, Mr. Bohannon stated there was nothing new to report.

B) Kiosk Information

Mr. Bohannon directed the Board's attention to the last page of the agenda packet for a tentative view of what the kiosk would look like.

Mr. Bocko asked if the "Project Updates Poster" section was for changing posters, possibly from kids. Mr. Bohannon responded it could be anything. Ms. Mathews stated they needed to put a link to the cobblestones on the kiosk. Chair Winsor mentioned he had some old newspaper clippings from the very beginning he could provide. Ms. Matthews said she had some, too. These would be for the "History" section of the kiosk.

Mr. Bohannon said he did not have the capacity to write the Park's history, although he had trail maps and some tree identification materials, and suggested the Board put some of the information together. Numerous board members agreed. Chair Winsor sought volunteers. Ms. Mathews, Ms. Krautmann and Mr. Bocko volunteered to put together materials for the "History" section. Ms. Mathews stated the "Story Board" section was for the library, but they might not need that much space, or any space at all, but it was not yet clear. Mr. Bohannon indicated he had trail maps and information from Bartlett Tree for the "Map of Trees with Identification" section. Ms. Mathews stated the Friends would take on the "Invasive Species" section.

There was discussion about what the “Arboretum” section should include. Ms. Krautmann suggested it could include a link to the cobblestones. There was some back and forth discussion about the purpose of the section. Mr. Bohannon suggested the section include the purpose or mission of the Arboretum. Chair Winsor suggested it include a request for volunteers. Mr. Bohannon suggested it include information about the Friends. He recommended including the Recreation Center’s phone number, rather than any individual’s personal contact information.

Councilor Chadbourne suggested the section be titled, “Resources,” and list the cobblestones link, how to contact the Friends, and how to become a volunteer. She also suggested the sections of the kiosk be reorganized, with the front having more stable information and the back more changing information, like the “Story Board” section. Mr. Bohannon mentioned the content for that section might not change. Councilor Chadbourne expressed that the “Trail Map,” “Map of Trees with Identification,” and “Invasive Species” sections seemed to tie in, whereas the “Project Updates Poster” and “Story Board” sections seemed added. Ms. Mathews agreed the “Story Board” was secondary to the map and arboretum information. In response to Ms. Barrett’s question, Mr. Bohannon clarified there were two different trail maps – one of the Jonathan Daniels trail and one of the city. Ms. Krautmann stated she liked the simplicity of the front. Members discussed various ideas for where to place the sections. Mr. Bohannon suggested placing a small “Resources” section beneath the trail map would preserve the balance Ms. Krautmann sought.

In response to Chair Winsor’s question, Mr. Bohannon stated Peter [Poanessa] had the kiosk ready, and he was waiting on the Board. He stated they need to get Peter all the text.

Thinking out loud, Mr. Bohannon noted he might want to reserve space under the “Trail Map” section on the front of the kiosk for a separate wayfinding signage effort, so they would not have to construct another kiosk for the wayfinding signage.

Ms. Krautmann asked whether the kiosk would include any QR codes for visitors to scan with the cell phones. Mr. Bohannon said yes. Ms. Mathews stated there should be a QR code for the “Map of Trees” section.

Mr. Bohannon continued that he introduced some wayfinding signage at the Finance, Operations, and Personnel Committee meeting. The Keene Lions Club is supporting the effort to put wayfinding signage in parks and trails, including Ashuelot River Park. Mr. Bohannon said he might be able to put some language on the bottom of the kiosk. Mr. Bohannon also noted the kiosk has to post the Park’s rules, likely on the front.

Councilor Chadbourne asked who would do the typesetting for the “History” section. Mr. Bohannon responded it could be Peter, or they could find someone else. He said he would find out. Ms. Mathews indicated they would type up their information and provide it to Mr. Bohannon. He indicated they needed to have it print ready. Councilor Chadbourne wondered if getting it print ready was included in the budget. Mr. Bohannon stated he would follow up with

Mr. Poanessa to see if the cost was included. Chair Winsor suggested working with Mark Johnson, since vinyl can be changed.

Mr. Bocko said he thought putting “Resources” and “Map of Trees” on the front of the kiosk would still allow for the balance Ms. Krautmann wanted. It would also allow space for the items Mr. Bohannon raised.

In response to Ms. Mathews’ question, Mr. Bohannon stated there were not a lot of rules. The rules were things like no dogs off leash, hours of operation, no alcohol, and no smoking. The rules still have to be finalized, but they will prohibit smoking in all parks.

Volunteers for the “History” section engaged in discussion to schedule a meeting for Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 10:00 AM, in Room 12.

C) Bartlett Tree

Mr. Bohannon indicated there was still time to have discussions and make decisions. His last call with Frank from Bartlett Tree was not very productive because it took place right after a big storm, and Frank was very preoccupied with cleanup. Mr. Bohannon said Frank was open to scheduling another call. Chair Winsor said he wanted to schedule another call. He explained he missed the first call due to a family emergency. Mr. Bohannon suggested scheduling a call for the week of March 6, 2023.

Mr. Bohannon indicated there might be some changes to the budget after the call. He noted that Bartlett Tree’s proposal was \$7,000.00, which was over the City’s \$5,000.00 threshold, meaning they would have to do a professional services contract, which would be easy to do. In response to Ms. Mathews’ question, Mr. Bohannon stated the \$7,000.00 included pruning, injections, other routine items, as well as one tree removal.

In response to Ms. Barrett’s question, Mr. Bohannon clarified that the City owns the trees in the Park. The Friends set it up and gifted it to the City. The City pays for any new trees, in part from a trust set up for that purpose.

6) Budget Development 2023

Ms. Mathews noted that she had asked to increase the amount budgeted for shrubs for the replanting program to be increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

There was discussion about how many trees needing removal or replacement should be included in the budget. Mr. Bohannon noted Bartlett Tree’s proposal included removing one tree. He said there was a cherry tree behind the Faulkner bench that Frank identified as needing to be removed. Ms. Mathews asked about a dogwood tree near the parking lot. In response to a comment, Mr. Bohannon stated he had Frank look at a Kentucky coffee tree that did not look

well, and Frank thought it was okay, just a late bloomer, so they should wait and see how it did. He noted, though, that the roots were very exposed, and recommended they cover them with a bed of mulch to try to invigorate them.

According to Frank, a local tree service could perform a basic tree removal for less than Bartlett Tree. The City has a contract with Phil's Tree Service. Phil's would likely cost less than \$1,000, depending on the size of the tree. Ms. Krautmann asked if Phil's would leave or remove the stump. Mr. Bohannon indicated Phil's would probably leave the stump. Ms. Mathews mentioned the dogwood would likely have to be replaced.

Chair Winsor expressed that \$5,000 should be budgeted for trees. It should be part of the replanting program. In response to Chair Winsor's question, Mr. Bohannon said he thought the trustees would understand the expense, especially because they did their due diligence and took all the right steps. Chair Winsor noted they are just trying to maintain what they have.

Chair Winsor sought and received consensus to leave \$1,000 budgeted for miscellaneous expenses.

Councilor Chadbourne asked for a list of what they agreed on. Chair Winsor stated they are budgeting \$1,000 for landscaping, \$1,500 for replanting shrubs, \$5,000 for replanting trees, \$7,000 for Bartlett Tree, and \$1,000 for miscellaneous. The total is \$15,500. Mr. Bohannon indicated that amount is tight to what they receive from the trustees. He said he would ask Karen Gray, fund manager, for the status of the trust. They are limited to spending 10% of the income. This is the highest budget the Board has proposed. However, they did not spend all of last year's budget. Discussion about the likelihood of being able to get the budgeted amount followed. Mr. Bohannon noted the Board is using the trust for its intended purpose, and the trustees were okay with that.

7) **New, Other Business**

Mr. Bohannon showed off a newly-fixed "It's a Connected World" sign. Mr. Johnson provided the vinyl sign fix for \$85. Chair Winsor noted it might be affordable to fix other signs. Mr. Bocko noted problems between the PDF provided and what was printed and wanted to prevent that from happening with the kiosk. Mr. Bohannon stated Chair Winsor would be reimbursed for the sign fix out of the operating budget.

Ms. Mathews asked to have Rachel Marshall added to the Master Plan Implementation discussion at next month's meeting. Chair Winsor supported adding it. Mr. Bohannon said he would add it.

Mr. Haynes said that Matt Kelly would be leading a walk in Goose Pond on Saturday. The walk would be at 10:00 AM. Chair Winsor said Mr. Kelly was very good.

Mr. Winsor asked If Mr. Bohannon would be taking a group to the Boston Flower Show this year. Mr. Bohannon thought it was no longer taking place.

8) **Adjournment – Next Meeting Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 8:00 AM**

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

Respectfully submitted by,
Wendy Chen, Minute Taker

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