

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

8:00 AM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Ruzzel Zullo, Vice Chair
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne
Stephen Hooper
Paul Bocko
Dian Mathews
Suzy Krautmann

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

Thomas Haynes, Alternate

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:09 AM.

2) Approval of February 14, 2023 Minutes

Councilor Chadbourne made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2023 meeting. Vice Chair Zullo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Winsor skipped ahead to discuss agenda item 5(ii) (Kiosk Information) to accommodate guest Peter [Poanessa]. Mr. Bohannon stated that Mr. Poanessa built the kiosk frame, and a subcommittee met and was working on content for the kiosk. He thought it made sense for them to talk directly. He asked Mr. Poanessa what he needed from the Board to complete the layout for the kiosk.

Mr. Poanessa stated he would like to work with one representative only. He would like a rough sketch of the layout the Board wants. He noted he is building a kiosk for Stonewall's pollinator garden, and they are getting him images and text that is ready to publish, but the materials are not and do not need to be totally organized. Chair Winsor asked what he needs if they want a timeline along the bottom of the kiosk. Mr. Poanessa said he just needs a basic drawing and the dates and text descriptions, and he will do the layout. He will then send them the layout for review and make any requested changes.

Chair Winsor noted there is a fairly lengthy narrative of the history, as well. Mr. Poanessa said there will be a lot of room for readable text, as the kiosk is six to seven feet wide. Ms. Krautmann asked if they could include QR codes. He said yes, as long as they provide the codes. Mr. Poanessa stated he does not use Word, so he would like text either in PDF or pasted into the body of an email. Mr. Bohannon asked if the narrative was proofed. Mr. Bocko noted that he made some minor changes, but he wants another Board member to look at it. Mr. Bohannon advised that they could provide him with the basic layout on an 11-by-17-inch sheet of paper with some photos and the text. Mr. Hooper asked if Mr. Poanessa would choose the font. He said he would prefer to do so. Mr. Hooper agreed.

Ms. Mathews arrived at 8:19 AM.

Mr. Poanessa noted it would not be too expensive to change out the content down the road. Ms. Mathews asked if content could be changed monthly. He said yes and discussed protecting the content from the elements and from theft by placing it behind an acrylic cover. Mr. Bocko wondered if they could have student work displayed on a rotating basis. Ms. Krautmann asked about how they should convey the timeline information to Mr. Poanessa. He noted they just need to get him a rough drawing and confirmed the drawing Ms. Mathews showed him is sufficient.

Mr. Bohannon suggested the subcommittee reconvene, put all the content in PDF, and designate one representative to work with Mr. Poanessa. Mr. Poanessa noted it is the busiest time of year for him, and he would work on the kiosk between other jobs, but he could not promise when it would be completed. He indicated it would work for the Board to get him the materials in a month. He is not in a hurry. He said, however, he could install the kiosk with “Ashuelot River Park” on the top first and then add the content on site later.

The Board gave Mr. Poanessa the okay to install the sign at his convenience. Mr. Bohannon said he would call DigSafe before installation. Mr. Poanessa noted that many City projects are using Vac-Con machines to vacuum out holes instead of digging out holes. He suggested Board members could look at the slightly-smaller kiosk he put in for the Rail Train. Mr. Bohannon said he would talk to Chuck Sweeney about preparing for installation. Mr. Poanessa asked the Board to get him the materials all together and not add anything after he started working on the layout.

3) **Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon stated the Trustees would not be meeting until the following week, so there was nothing to report.

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

Ms. Mathews said she brought a “souvenir” piece of putty from a recent walk around the park. Two sculptures were vandalized. Someone lifted pieces of the stacked sculptures off and took some of them.

Ms. Mathews reported that most of the shrubs and perennials they planted survived. One chokeberry had a bad vole problem. She stated they need to contact Chuck to remove some sod, coming in from the asphalt, so they can build a berm for the rain garden. She reported they will pick up the plants they ordered in June. She reported there are 16 stones in the shed ready to be planted. She noted they need stone dust from Chuck. They updated the brochure to increase the per stone price to \$100.

Returning to the subject of the vandalism, Ms. Mathews said three top pieces came off the rods. She will pick up the loose pieces and put them in the shed. They need to be epoxied back on. The sculptures are only six months old. Mr. Bohannon said he has photos of the damage. There is a bird missing and other pieces. Mr. Bocko noted that in the Rachel Marshall area, vandals managed to chip bronze plaques out from their stone posts. The Board engaged in further discussion about how disappointing the vandalism is, who might have been responsible, and what they could do to prevent further vandalism. Mr. Bocko suggested they let the students who created the sculptures know via their school. Ms. Mathews said she would take photos.

Ms. Mathews reported she got a table at the volunteer recruitment fair on May 16 to try to get some garden helpers. She continued that the project to remove invasive knotweed will start with one side of the bridge, then move to the shed side of the bridge. She stated they are looking into whether the Friends need general liability insurance in addition to directors’ liability insurance. Ms. Carlson, a member of the Friends board, said she was advised they do. Ms. Mathews asked who they should talk to about insurance, since they got some conflicting information. She asked if volunteers are covered by the City’s insurance. Mr. Bohannon said they are not, as they are the Friends’ volunteers. Ms. Mathews said they need information and quotes. Mr. Bohannon said they can have Clark & Morrison, their insurance agency, call him.

Ms. Mathews said they need to get a wetlands permit for the rain garden. Mr. Bohannon said he will get the permit. She reported that the large pollinator bed project would be their next project, and it is in the planning stages. They will be putting new cobbles around the perimeter of the bed.

5) Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation
i) Rachel Marshall Area

Chair Winsor reported that, in researching its history, he learned the area originally included a bird sanctuary. He suggested guiding visitors with environmental education materials to walk across the bridge and through the area. Mr. Bocko suggested reaching out to have a class of students create a project on birds. Ms. Krautmann asked how much land is behind the area and who owns it. Mr. Bohannon explained the odd boundary and said Eversource owns the land. Mr.

Bocko thinks there are 2.5 acres that go up the river. Chair Winsor said it would be a great wildlife attraction.

ii) Kiosk Information

Chair Winsor noted this agenda item was discussed earlier.

Mr. Bocko told Ms. Mathews he needs to know when the Friends started their work for the narrative.

iii) Bartlett Tree

Mr. Bohannon apologized that he did not speak with Frank from Bartlett Tree yet. Ms. Carlson mentioned that she recently met a woman named Beth who just moved to Chesterfield, and she works for Bartlett Tree. Mr. Bohannon responded that Frank told him about how knowledgeable she is. She is well known in her field. He has her contact information but has not followed up with her yet. He will get them in touch.

6) Budget Development 2023

Mr. Bohannon stated they completed the budget development already, and it was inadvertently included on the agenda.

7) New, Other Business

Chair Winsor reported that he went to a great workshop in Swanzey about landscaping at the water's edge. "Soak up the Rain" gave a workshop on drainage and rain gardens. There is a book available online, and it can be printed out. It is a good resource. He will give the link to Mr. Bohannon.

He asked whether there are still daffodils at the Park. He suggested having a work day to plant them next fall. Ms. Mathews stated there are a lot of daffodils, and a few hellebores, but some are not in bloom yet. She said she would identify areas that need more planted. Chair Winsor said he and Mr. Bohannon will ask the contractor that dumped snow in the handicap parking area to stop doing so.

Chair Winsor raised the idea of moving the meeting to 10:00 AM going forward but said he is concerned about that time for Board members who work. Ms. Krautmann made a motion to change the meeting time from 8:00 AM to 8:30 AM. Councilor Chadbourne seconded the motion. After some discussion back and forth among attendees, Ms. Krautmann made an amended motion to change the meeting time from 8:00 AM to 8:15 AM. Councilor Chadbourne seconded the amended motion. The amended motion passed unanimously.

8) **Adjournment – Next Meeting Tuesday, May 9, 2023, 8:15 AM**

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:02 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Wendy Chen, Minute Taker

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