

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 8:15 AM
Room 22 Upstairs, Recreation Center

Members:

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

Staff:

Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

Alternate:

Thomas Haynes

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of July 11, 2023 Minutes
3. Finance Report
4. Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum
5. Park Discussion – Master Plan Implementation
 - a. Rachel Marshall Area
 - b. Kiosk Information
 - c. Bartlett Tree
6. New, Other Business
7. Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, September 12, 2023 at 8:15 AM

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4 ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
5 MEETING MINUTES
6
7

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

8:15 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
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities

Members Not Present:

None

8 **1) Welcome and Call to Order**
9

10 Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:13 AM.

11
12 **2) Approval of June 13, 2023 Minutes**
13

14 Ms. Mathews asked that “postponed” be changed to “agreed to postpone” at page 2, line 70 of
15 the minutes of the June 13, 2023, meeting.

16
17 Councilor Chadbourne made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2023, meeting, as
18 amended. Ms. Krautmann seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
19

20 **3) Finance Report**
21

22 Mr. Bohannon reported that no money had been spent yet. He noted that he removed \$4,000
23 from the budget for tree removal by Bartlett Tree because he planned to hire a local contractor
24 for less money, as Frank Bartlett had suggested.
25

26 Mr. Bocko arrived at 8:16 AM.
27

28 Ms. Mathews said that, with respect to the replanting program, City staff pulled out the barberry
29 and planted six New Jersey tea shrubs in the area by the bridge. Once she gets six additional

30 John's-wort shrubs from Bagley Pond Perennials, that section of the replanting program will be
31 complete. She will give Mr. Bohannon the invoices.

32

33 Mr. Bohannon stated the report he distributed is otherwise just informational.

34

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

36

37 Ms. Mathews apologized for missing the last meeting, noting she was planning the garden club
38 annual meeting.

39

40 She reported that the Friends heeled in the new plants for the rain garden by the bridge. One or
41 two geranium plants did not survive. The John's-wort shrubs will be planted in that spot. She
42 reported that a Cheshire County Conservation Opportunity Fund banner was over the site for
43 Pollinator Palooza.

44

45 She further reported that Ms. Casey made three signs – one for the rain garden, one for the
46 knotweed removal area, and one for the plantings replacing the invasive barberry by the bridge.
47 As a master gardener project, Leah Cammett worked with Michael Nerrie to develop special
48 paper and ink that would last in the rain for Mr. Nerrie's Distant Hill Gardens. Ms. Mathews
49 purchased the special paper and ink, as well as a several metal sign frames and stakes, for the
50 Park. Ms. Casey noted that, because her printer did not work with the special paper, she was only
51 able to use regular paper for the signs for Pollinator Palooza. Ms. Mathews said she would ask
52 Mr. Nerrie what printer he used. Ms. Carlson wondered if Mr. Nerrie would volunteer to print
53 the signs on the special paper. Ms. Mathews suggested getting Ms. Cammett involved.

54

55 Ms. Mathews reported on the invasive knotweed removal project. The Friends did some weeding
56 of emerging knotweed. The volunteer "mermaid" discussed at the last meeting returned to help
57 remove knotweed from the water. The Friends also removed some Dame's Rocket near
58 Mascoma and covered the area with tarps, and City staff put down wood chips. The Friends still
59 have one section to clear.

60

61 The Friends are at the preliminary planning stage for the pollinator garden project. The garden
62 will be near the two granite posts marking the arboretum's exit, as well as the overgrown garden
63 that high school students planted about three years ago. The two plots will be joined with a wood
64 path between them and planted with pollinators plants. Ms. Mathews is thinking about
65 partnerships to help with obtaining the plants. Ms. Carlson asked if the Friends could get plants
66 donated, which has happened in the past. The Friends are thinking about asking the public what
67 their favorite pollinators are and then planting plants that attract those pollinators. Councilor
68 Chadbourne wondered if Julie Barrett would be willing to make a donation. Ms. Mathews
69 responded that she was not sure about the ethics of her doing so, since she is on the Friends'
70 board, but Ms. Barrett has made donations before. Councilor Chadbourne suggested asking Ellis
71 Farm or Windsock Gardens. Ms. Carlson noted that nurseries might be particularly willing to
72 make donations at the end of the season.

73
74 Ms. Mathews noted that there are few plants once the daffodils fade. The Friends are trying to
75 plant for the first time in 30 or so years. She reported that because some of the plants purchased
76 from Prairie Moon were small and planted too far apart, they were inadvertently weeded out. Ms.
77 Mathews indicated that either volunteers or members of the public could be responsible.

78
79 The Friends weed every Friday morning for two hours starting at either 8:00 AM or 9:00 AM.
80 They have put in more than 60 hours since June, if not more. They have had as many as nine
81 volunteers, but the core group of four includes Ms. Mathews, Ms. Carlson, and Ms. Casey.
82 Karen Flavin and Mary weeded the two beds facing West Street, which look really nice, and she
83 and Ms. Casey weeded the back bed by the large sign. They will get to the other beds little by
84 little. Mr. Bohannon asked if Ms. Mathews got in touch with the group that wants to help. She
85 responded yes. She also noted the group plans to leave the lilac bush as a donation.

86
87 Ms. Carlson raised the area full of knotweed near the chain link fence, noting the Friends might
88 work on it soon. Mr. Bohannon indicated a plan for the area could be years away. She noted that
89 the Friends need tarps to cover the area once the knotweed is removed. In the past, they have
90 gotten tarps donated. They still have plenty of wood chips.

91
92 Ms. Mathews closed with a thank you to Mr. Bohannon for getting the stone dust for the
93 cobblestones. Ms. Carlson noted that the Friends installed the first stones around the rain garden.

94

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

96

97 **A) Rachel Marshall Area**

98

99 Chair Winsor reported that he and Ms. Mathews toured the area with Steve Lamond. Mr.
100 Lamond pointed out the many birds, and plants that attract birds, in the area. What the area needs
101 is people to visit. It would not take a lot of money to attract people to the area. It's already a
102 great area for birds. Certainly, signage is needed. Maybe relocating a trail through the area would
103 help, too. Ms. Mathews said she overheard two visitors say they did not know what the area was
104 and therefore did not go. Chair Winsor suggested interpretive signage. Ms. Carlson noted the
105 trail area was cleaned out a few years ago. Ms. Mathews agreed there is still a wide trail there.
106 Mr. Bohannon said the City generally brush hogs the area once a year. Chair Winsor noted the
107 boundary with Melanson needs clarification. Ms. Krautmann recalled that the Board discussed
108 installing binoculars in the area.

109

110 Chair Winsor stated the area already is a bird sanctuary and just needs some planning to make it
111 suitable for visitors. He said the Board needs someone who is knowledgeable about birds,
112 besides Mr. Hooper. Mr. Hooper suggested the Audubon Society in Concord has resources. Mr.
113 Bocko suggested the City could hire a work-study student from Antioch. Chair Winsor asked if
114 Mr. Bocko is willing to get the process for hiring a student going. Mr. Bocko said yes, but he
115 needs to know if the City will offer a stipend or work-study match. Mr. Bohannon said yes, but

116 he can't supervise a student until after the fall semester. Councilor Chadbourne asked if the City
117 could screen and select from student applicants. Mr. Bocko said yes. Ms. Carlson wondered if an
118 expert from the Audubon Society or at least someone more knowledgeable than a student could
119 assess the area for free. Ms. Mathews suggested getting a student from the Harris Center for
120 Conservation Education. She worked with someone there who set up a six-week drop-in program
121 at the library in May and June that provided for people to ask master gardeners questions; it was
122 a grant-funded program. Chair Winsor wondered if Brett Thelen from the Harris Center could
123 offer some guidance. Mr. Bocko noted that Mr. Lamond offered further assistance; he could
124 advise the Board but is very busy. Mr. Bocko noted that a student can always talk to other
125 experts. Chair Winsor confirmed that Mr. Bocko would work on recruiting at Antioch. Chair
126 Winsor said that he would look at the Audubon Society's website for resources. He expressed
127 that he saw the area with new eyes after walking through it with Mr. Lamond. Mr. Bohannon
128 asked if a job announcement or description is needed. Mr. Bocko said he would base a draft
129 announcement off the one he did for the interpretive position. He asked if the target start date
130 would be spring. Mr. Bohannon said he will not have time to accommodate another student until
131 spring. Mr. Bocko wondered if a subgroup should be formed. Mr. Bohannon said he supports the
132 effort; he is just short on time.

133

134 **B) Kiosk Information**

135

136 Chair Winsor asked Ms. Mathews about the timeline she has been working on. She said she had
137 forgotten about it and would finish it.

138

139 Mr. Bocko said he is working on integrating some indigenous history. He wondered if there
140 should be subgroup to fine tune the content. He suggested posting the timeline before the
141 narrative history is complete. Rich Holschuh of the Elnu Abenaki in Brattleboro looked at the
142 indigenous history included on the timeline and wondered if anything else could be included.
143 Part of the problem is that indigenous people were not included in the development of the Park.
144 He is not sure what indigenous people would want included on the timeline. He wondered about
145 having more conversations with local Abenaki people. He suggested doing something with
146 Miranda's artwork. Chair Winsor suggested, if the narrative is close to completion, to get it done
147 and over to Peter Poanessa, along with a couple photos from Mr. Hooper. The Board discussed
148 the timeline starting around the 1920s or 60s, rather than earlier. Mr. Bohannon asked about next
149 steps. He wondered if the narrative should be unveiled in concert with Indigenous Peoples' Day
150 or another event.

151

152 Mr. Bocko also reported that Mr. Holschuh is too busy to lead a walk for July. Instead, he plans
153 to lead a walk at the nature preserve in November, possibly on November 4. He could do a
154 second walk that day or around that day and include both the Park and the nature preserve. Mr.
155 Bohannon expressed support for a November shoulder season walk because the environment and
156 experience in the fall is quite different from the summer or spring. Of course, Mr. Holschuh's
157 walk will likely focus more on history than the environment, which does not rely on the season.

158

159 **C) Bartlett Tree**

160

161 Mr. Bohannon reported that he recently signed the contract with Bartlett Tree.
162

163 Ms. Mathews noted that the Kentucky coffee tree is beautiful now. Chair Winsor described its
164 ascending branches. He said coffee was made from the tree in early Colonial days. The Kentucky
165 coffee tree is by the garden club bench and shed near the river.
166

167 **6) New, Other Business**
168

169 **A) Pollinator Palooza – June 22, 2023, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**
170

171 Chair Winsor said that the event was very successful. It was a beautiful day. The number of
172 people there was incredible. Caterpillar, Moosehead, Harris Center, and other groups were there.
173 Nicole Cullinane took photos for the website. It was a great educational event for the Park. Chair
174 Winsor thanked the Friends for having a table at the event. Ms. Mathews reported the Friends
175 received \$6.01 in donations at the event. The Board is confident there will be even more people
176 at next year's event.
177

178 **B) Reaching Wellness – July 14, 2023, 4:30 PM – 7:00 PM**
179

180 Alissa Bender, youth services manager, talked about the event. She said the flyer for the event
181 was included in the agenda packet. The event is Friday at the Park. She asked if the Board or
182 Friends want to participate. She noted that gardening is good for stress reduction, and the event is
183 focused on mental health, substance use, and overall wellness. People don't always think about
184 how being out in nature, being in the sun, is good for mental health.
185

186 Ms. Mathews asked for a table for the Friends. Ms. Bender agreed. In response to Chair Winsor's
187 question, she identified some of the ten or so other groups with tables, including Monadnock
188 Area Peer Support, Everglow Wellness, YMCA, and Keene Housing Kids Collaborative.
189

190 Mr. Bohannon announced a community stroll would be led by an Antioch student at 5:00 PM on
191 Thursday, July 27, 2023. The flyer is included with the agenda packet. It will be an easy stroll. It
192 will take place rain or shine. It will go up the river and back, looking at wildlife. Participants
193 should bring a picnic.
194

195 He further reported that Ms. Mathews shared information about a project about the cultural and
196 ecological significance of ash trees, and conserving them, with him. Both indigenous and non-
197 indigenous researchers and other stakeholders are involved. It is called the Ash Protection
198 Collaboration Across Wabanaki. Ms. Mathews plans to sign up to receive information and
199 updates about the project. Ash tree seeds may be available from the Wild Seed Project. Chair
200 Winsor wondered about the impact of the emerald ash borer.
201

202 Mr. Bohannon showed the Board the ArborScope inventory and map of the Park that Bartlett
203 Tree created, which shows where various trees are in the Park. For example, he showed the

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204 Kentucky coffee tree as tree number 29. There will be a QR code for every tree for visitors to
205 scan for more information about the tree. Chair Winsor said he is still adding photos of each tree
206 to the inventory. He will photograph the Kentucky coffee tree soon.

207

208 7) **Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 8:15 AM**

209

210 There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 9:01 AM.

211

212 Respectfully submitted by,
213 Wendy Chen, Minute Taker

214

215 Reviewed and edited by,
216 Andy Bohannon, PRF Director

**Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board
2023**

	PROPOSED			
	Budget	Actual To Date	Difference	
Landscaping	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -		\$ 1,000.00
Replanting Program				
shrubs	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -		\$ 1,500.00
trees	\$ 5,000.00			\$ 5,000.00
Bartlett Tree - Pruning	\$ 2,385.00	\$ -		\$ 2,385.00
Miscellaneous (not contract)	<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>	<u>\$ -</u>		<u>\$ 1,000.00</u>
Total*	\$ 10,885.00	\$ -		<u>\$ 10,885.00</u>

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TOTAL	<u>\$ -</u>	

