



## **ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

**Tuesday, April 8 at 8:15 AM  
Room 22 Recreation Center**

**Members:**

Paul Bocko, Chair  
Suzy Krautmann, Vice-Chair  
Leslie Casey  
Dian Mathews  
Kelly Cook

**Staff:**

Carah Fisk Hennessey, Director of Parks and Recreation

**Alternates:**

Thomas Haynes  
Arthur "Bud" Winsor

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of March 11, 2025 Minutes
3. Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum
  - a. Grant Work
  - b. Pollinator Garden establishment
4. Finance Report
  - a. Budget Development
5. Project Tracking
  - a. Bird Ecology Project Updates Steve Hooper & Thomas Haynes
  - b. Master Plan Implementation Discussion
  - c. Permanent Sign Design/Development
6. Upcoming Events
  - a. UNH Cooperative Extension Pruning Demonstration: April 2025
  - b. Pollinator Palooza: June 24, 2025
  - c. Art in the Park: September 2025
7. New, Other Business
  - a. Volksmarch?
8. Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 8:15 AM

**Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board**

**2024 Adopted Budget**

|                         | <b>BUDGET</b>      | <b>ACTUAL</b>      | <b>DIFFERENCE</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Landscaping             | \$5000.00          | \$2117.99          | \$2882.01         |
| Replanting Program      | \$1500.00          | \$ 328.51          | \$1171.49         |
| Antioch Bird Ecology    | \$1069.00          | \$1068.75          | \$ 0.25           |
| Bartlett Tree – Pruning | \$9985.00          | \$9985.00          | \$                |
| Invasive Treatment      | \$1500.00          | \$1000.00          | \$ 500.00         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>\$19,054.00</b> | <b>\$14,500.25</b> | <b>\$4553.75</b>  |

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|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Bartlett PO 20240272                                    | \$9985.00          |
| Raynee Joy Carlson – reimbursement (replanting)         | \$ 328.51          |
| Antioch Bird Ecology                                    | \$1068.75          |
| Gem Graphics Temporary Sign – INV 5266                  | \$ 102.00          |
| VCS Invasive Treatment – INV 23663-01801324             | \$1000.00          |
| Steve Hooper – reimbursement                            | \$ 217.99          |
| Mark Johnson – INV 12.30.24 landscaping (half contract) | \$1900.00          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>\$14,602.25</b> |

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

8:15 AM

Room 22,  
Recreation Center

Members Present:

Paul Bocko, Chair  
Suzy Krautmann, Vice Chair  
Leslie Casey (until 9:15 AM)  
Arthur Winsor, Alternate  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Carah Fisk-Hennessey, Director of Parks,  
Recreation

Members Not Present:

*Ruzzel Zullo – Ruzzel resigned from ARPAB*  
Dian Mathews  
Kelly Cook

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Bocko called the meeting to order at 8:19 AM. Roll call was conducted. The ARPAB welcomed Karen Flavin and Raynee Carlson from the Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum, and guests Ed Haas, Rob Hamm, and Amy Holtz

2) Approval of February 11, 2025 Minutes

Ms. Casey noted a correction to the minutes. Line 215 says she spoke about mussels (in the waterway), but she was not the one who said that and does not know who said it. Discussion ensued about who might have said it. Chair Bocko suggested the minutes be changed to “It was noted that...”, since they do not know for sure.

Ms. Krautmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 11, 2025, as amended. Ms. Casey seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Bocko noted that alternate member Mr. Winsor is a voting member today.

3) Report from Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum

- 29  
30 Ms. Casey reported on behalf of the Friends:  
31
- 32 • A committee of the Friends submitted two grant applications, one to Mascoma and one to  
33 C&S. The funds would be used to create and expand the pollinator garden, and if there  
34 are any additional funds, they would be put towards plants for the West St. bed. They  
35 had a bequest from Dorothy Arway. Once the CD that holds those monies matures in  
36 April, the Friends might put some of that toward a memorial tree and plaque in her honor.
  - 37 • Thinking about the season ahead and the difficulties with watering, and the Friends' plans  
38 for putting in many new plans, they will put some long hoses discreetly in the beds and  
39 leave them there for the season. They will also invest in some watering bags that hold  
40 several gallons of water.
  - 41 • At some point they will hopefully be talking about the parking lot runoff and its  
42 relationship to the plans for a rain garden, but there is nothing to add about this right now.
  - 43 • Regarding digital marketing, they sent an informative email to the Friends board about  
44 the need to find someone. It turns out a Friends member, Jen Roberts, does digital  
45 marketing for work, and is interested in doing this for the Friends. She will create a  
46 Facebook page and update the Friends' Charity Navigator profile. Charity Navigator  
47 allows donations through their portal, so Ms. Roberts will put a link to that.
  - 48 • The Friends are conscious of the fact that they need to be careful with how they word  
49 things, so that if they invite the public to participate in the park, people do not think that  
50 just anybody can come in and do anything. People need to notify the Friends in advance,  
51 and they need to think about what their skill level is, for example.
  - 52 • Dian Mathews will write a letter to Mascoma about how the snow piles in the beds are a  
53 problem. The Friends are considering putting a seasonal snow fence across the  
54 handicapped parking posts/signs.
  - 55 • Once the snow is gone, they will assess the leaf mulch and try to redistribute that if  
56 necessary, before the daffodils come up.
  - 57 • The pruning demonstration through UNH is coming up in April. They will do a walk-  
58 through on March 13 at 3:00 PM. Steph Sosinski said it was not practical to think about  
59 TV coverage this time around, but maybe for next year. The Friends got the official okay  
60 for the language in the ads, and Ms. Sosinski gave them a logo. She was adamant about  
61 the Friends using a phrase about accessibility and who to contact for that.
  - 62 • Keeping in mind that it is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends, they are still thinking about  
63 ideas.
  - 64 • They are reviewing the Friends bylaws. The bylaws would support a much bigger non-  
65 profit than the Friends are at this time. There is a lot of emphasis on incorporators versus  
66 board of directors versus Friends having their own organization, so they are looking at  
67 (making changes to those).
- 68  
69 Ms. Casey asked if the other Friends members had anything to add. Ms. Carlson stated that the  
70 Friends now have a letterhead to use, which was required by C&S (when they submitted the  
71 grant application), and the letterhead has a nice photo. Discussion ensued about the letterhead

72 and the grants. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if the Friends had approached the 100+ Women Who  
73 Care group (for funding). Friends members replied that they are thinking about it and talking  
74 about it. Discussion continued.

75

76 **4) Finance Report**

77 **A) Budget Development**

78

79 Chair Bocko stated that they are in the new budget year. He continued that at the last meeting,  
80 they talked about budget development and how they have some hard decisions to make,  
81 especially about how to come within a certain amount. He thinks \$10,000 to \$12,000 is the  
82 range. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that it will probably be around \$12,500. Chair Bocko stated  
83 that one general thing to look at on the document is to look at the line items, and what they need  
84 and might do there. Then they will talk about Bartlett Tree. That was a big sticking point. What  
85 might have been surprising to the ARPAB is some transition coming up with tree data. They  
86 need to do some software things to maintain that, which costs money. He suggests they talk  
87 about that first, while keeping in mind the other lines, also keeping in mind that Antioch Bird  
88 Ecology is done; that can be a zero. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey added that they should keep in mind,  
89 too, that they have only done half of Mark Johnson's contract, so there is another \$1,900 that will  
90 come out.

91

92 Chair Bocko stated that he and Mr. Winsor talked about Bartlett Tree and they have a proposed  
93 path forward, to do important work and hopefully bring the contract in line so they can move  
94 forward and stay within their range. He asked Mr. Winsor to speak more about this.

95

96 Mr. Winsor stated that he was surprised when Bartlett Tree said they need to re-inventory. He  
97 continued that they want the inventory updated, but he did not realize they had to do it all over  
98 again. He wrestled with the idea of maybe not inventorying and just labeling the trees and doing  
99 it on their own, but realized that the database is so important. The value of the trees, which  
100 needs to be updated, is probably over a million dollars. It is something the ARPAB needs to  
101 protect and have reasons to justify. One item (Bartlett) has is "summer tree and shrub work,"  
102 and they mention the Silver Maple and the Siberian Elm. He looked at those trees last week as  
103 best as he could, given the ice, and will look closer later. He suggests they consider eliminating  
104 the Siberian Elm instead of saving it, as it is invasive and not attractive. Perhaps the tree  
105 dedication Ms. Casey spoke of could go in that spot. They could have a local tree contractor  
106 remove the Siberian Elm, if the ARPAB agrees after further discussion. He will take a closer  
107 look at the Silver Maple, and maybe that could be pushed to next year's budget if it is not a  
108 dangerous or hazardous tree. That was \$5,600. That would take a big chunk of money out of the  
109 Bartlett Tree budget and would allow the ARPAB to move forward with the inventory of the  
110 trees. The only missing piece is that he has not contacted that company that Mr. Grano spoke of,  
111 regarding the tags. The website does not have pricing, so they will need to look into this further.  
112 He will talk with Mr. Grano before he talks with the company.

113

114 Discussion ensued. Chair Bocko asked what the total was that Bartlett Tree had proposed. Mr.  
115 Winsor replied \$12,000. He continued that removing \$5,600 brings it down to a reasonable  
116 amount. They still have to do the tags eventually. The tree inventory will mean locating,  
117 resizing, and tagging each tree with a number, on a little tag about the size of a penny. It will be  
118 up to them (the ARPAB/Friends/City) to add QR codes or whatever labels they want on the  
119 trees. He would like to put the trees' names with the QR codes, which would be a little more  
120 expensive.

121  
122 Ms. Carlson stated that she wonders if it would be possible for them (the ARPAB/Friends/City)  
123 to measure the trees themselves. Mr. Winsor replied that to be official, it would probably need to  
124 be done by a certified person.

125  
126 Ms. Carlson asked about how much it would cost to have the Siberian Elm taken down.  
127 Discussion ensued. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that it is approximately \$1,000 per tree; there is a  
128 certain charge per inch with the City contract, but she does not know the actual amount off the  
129 top of her head.

130  
131 Chair Bocko stated that if they keep the rest of the numbers as they are from 2024, they are at  
132 about \$14,400. He continued that that is without putting in tags, and without extra money for  
133 taking out that tree. Discussion continued. Chair Bocko stated that they are carrying over (some  
134 money), but it is more about what the budget amounts will be next year. He wonders about  
135 landscaping, replanting, and invasives. Ms. Carlson noted that the \$1,900 needs to be paid (to  
136 Mark Johnson's contract), and can be considered gone, leaving about \$1,000 (in that line item).  
137 Chair Bocko replied that they need to be at about \$12,500. He asked if the remaining budget for  
138 landscaping can be lower, since they are spending this year. Ms. Casey stated that they still  
139 wanted to have money in this budget for this fall's leaf mulching. She continued that they have  
140 two Mark Johnson charges they are looking at this year. The \$1,900 is for compost. Next fall,  
141 they will have to shred leaves again. Others replied maybe not; it depends. Mr. Winsor asked if  
142 they are counting on Mark Johnson to supply the compost. Discussion continued. It was noted  
143 that they might need more in this budget to get the *correct* compost. For example, from Ideal  
144 Compost.

145  
146 Someone suggested taking a year off from shredding leaves, and just doing it every other year, to  
147 save money. Friends members spoke about maybe doing away with the \$500 for invasive  
148 treatment this year. Discussion ensued. Friends members agreed that the total would be \$1,000  
149 instead of \$1,500. Chair Bocko asked about the replanting budget, and discussion ensued.  
150 Friends members spoke of how early spring is the ideal time for turf removal, with planting in  
151 late May or June. They need to order plants. Chair Bocko asked if there is a lower amount they  
152 could put in there now, while waiting to hear about grants. He continued that if the grants do not  
153 come through, they could then work together to apply for more grants or do something else.  
154 Discussion ensued about how if the City could do sod cutting or scrape with a backhoe, it would  
155 help. Friends members spoke about a local man who will give them machine time at no cost.  
156 Discussion ensued about compost and whether it is part of the landscaping or replanting.

157  
158 Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that the Friends did the cobblestone project as a fundraiser to support  
159 enhancements to the park. She asked if there are other ideas for fundraising opportunities  
160 beyond grants. Ms. Casey replied that the Friends could reintroduce themselves to the  
161 community and seek donations from people who have supported the park in the past and new  
162 people. Discussion continued about how to seek support and donations now for the park's 30<sup>th</sup>  
163 anniversary.

164  
165 Chair Bocko asked if they have to decide on the budget right now, or if he and Ms. Fisk-  
166 Hennessey can fine tune it and bring it back next time. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that she does  
167 not think they need to finish it right now. Chair Bocko replied that he and Ms. Fisk-Hennessey  
168 will talk. He continued that he thinks they need to look at other funding sources. Ms. Carlson  
169 stated that by the end of the month, the Friends will know whether they received the grants or  
170 not.

171

172 **5) Project Tracking**

173 **A) Bird Ecology Project**

174

175 Chair Bocko stated that there is no update; this is in the same place as last month.

176

177 **B) Master Plan Implementation Discussion**

178

179 Chair Bocko stated that regarding master plan implementation, that is what they are doing with  
180 all these discussions.

181

182 Ms. Casey stated that she wants to mention that it is clear in the master plan that the polluted  
183 runoff from the Starbucks parking lot is one of the park's biggest ecological problems. Chair  
184 Bocko replied that that is something else he and Ms. Fisk-Hennessey can discuss.

185

186 **6) Upcoming Events**

187 **A) Permanent Sign Design/Development**

188

189 Chair Bocko stated that he and Mr. Winsor talked about this. He continued that there is a  
190 subcommittee about the signs, and they will be getting together. Mr. Winsor replied yes, with  
191 Nicole (Cullinane). Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if there is an anticipated timeframe or date. Mr.  
192 Winsor replied not yet.

193

194 **7) New, Other Business**

195

196 **A) Bartlett Tree Direction (included in Budget Development)**

197 **B) Thoughts re: ARPAB Annual Review Document**

198

199 Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that the one-page, double-sided document she had is a review for all  
200 the annual events. She continued that Councilor Ed Haas brought it up, for the City Council to  
201 have a review of committee minutes or committee initiatives. She asked Councilor Haas to  
202 speak about this.

203  
204 Councilor Haas stated that (the idea is for committees) to put out something to say what they did  
205 and what they want to do. He continued that they could think of it as bragging about themselves;  
206 it is not an examination. Keep it positive. It is a good advertisement for all the committees and  
207 boards and the volunteer activities they do. It will come down from the City sometime in June or  
208 July, with a suggested outline for it. The idea is to advertise and highlight all the good work.

209  
210 Mr. Winsor asked if this is related to the AI-generated document Ms. Fisk-Hennessey showed  
211 last time, which came out well. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied yes, that was to give them an idea.  
212 She continued that it is a recommendation, not a requirement, for committees to share highlights  
213 of their work each year, getting a recap in June and presenting it in July.

214  
215 Ms. Casey stated that she wants to point out something that the Friends alerted to in the last  
216 meeting. She continued that under “Park maintenance and landscaping,” where it says, “invasive  
217 species removal,” it should say “in the arboretum,” because invasive species lurking in the huge  
218 park are feeding regrowth in the arboretum.

### 219 220 **C) ARPAB & FAARP Roles and Responsibilities**

221  
222 Chair Bocko stated that everyone has a paper in front of them about this, and they do not have  
223 time to read it now, but he encourages everyone to read it later. He continued that it is important  
224 to check in about these things, similar to an annual review, regarding the roles and  
225 responsibilities. It also helps to look at the mission statement and purpose. It helps make  
226 decisions easier. There is good information in all documents for both the ARPAB and the  
227 FAARP. He asked what thoughts people have. He noticed that he cannot find a purpose  
228 statement for the Friends. Friends members replied that the Friends do have a mission and vision  
229 statement. Chair Bocko replied that it is not in the document he has. Discussion ensued. Ms.  
230 Flavin stated that the Friends’ mission statement is *“to provide stewardship, to maintain,  
231 develop, and protect the Ashuelot River Park gardens, utilizing funding assistance from the  
232 community and environmentally minded groups, and promote sustainable and educational  
233 garden practices for the community’s benefit.”* Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if they could (send  
234 her) that.

235  
236 Chair Bocko asked for people’s thoughts, noting that the goal is to make sure the two groups are  
237 collaborating well and with clarity. Ms. Casey replied that she thought the ARPAB’s  
238 (documents) look good. She continued that the Friends’ vision is good; it is more the mechanical  
239 things that they need to work out, such as whether they really need incorporators separate from  
240 the board of directors. They do not have enough bodies and enough distinct roles, but they want  
241 to leave room, when they revise their rules of procedure, to become a slightly bigger



242 organization that is getting more in the way of donations. It would be good to preserve the idea  
243 of the board of directors as separate from the Friends, and the Friends as the larger underlying  
244 body that does things like appoint board members.

245  
246 Mr. Winsor stated that he applauds the idea of donations. He continued that he wonders if the  
247 cobblestone idea has run its course. Ms. Casey replied that she is not the one to ask. Discussion  
248 ensued about the cobbles, regarding the amount of them, their locations, sizes, and costs.

249  
250 Chair Bocko asked if the Friends or others have questions about the ARPAB stuff. He continued  
251 that the (roles and responsibilities) were created by the City. The purpose is clear, and  
252 “advisory” is a key word.

253  
254 Ms. Casey left at 9:15 AM.

255  
256 Mr. Winsor stated that he agrees that the ARPAB’s charge is clear. He continued that he thinks  
257 the support from the Parks & Recreation Department through the years has been outstanding.

258  
259 Chair Bocko stated that they will keep this as an agenda item, not forever, but for a while. He  
260 continued that as people read things and the information percolates, they might have more to say.

261  
262 Chair Bocko asked if any of the visitors wanted to speak. Amy stated that she is a Keene  
263 resident, and does work with the Ashuelot River Clean-Up. She was wondering what was  
264 happening on the local level.

265  
266 Ms. Krautmann asked if Mr. Hamm is working on Russell Park. Mr. Hamm replied yes. Ms.  
267 Krautmann stated that she has been thinking about working with them somehow on the Russell  
268 Park, to maybe combine efforts in some way. She continued that a fundraiser she had thought  
269 about for the City is a Volksmarch. She looked into it years ago. The City has to apply to  
270 become a member. Then they could host something like that once a year.

271  
272 Mr. Winsor asked what that is. Ms. Krautmann replied that Exeter, NH has done it. She  
273 continued that it is a place where people pay to walk around the city, on a path, and visit parks.  
274 It means a lot of traffic in the parks. It is a way for entities to combine work and efforts. A path  
275 was designed years ago for the Wellness Program at the high school. This is done in Germany,  
276 too. Usually it is a 5k or 10k walk. Participants get a little pin to show that they accomplished it.

277  
278 Chair Bocko stated that this would be a way to highlight and publicize the City’s green treasures  
279 and raise some money. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that “vibrant neighborhoods” and “connected  
280 mobility” are components of the master plan. Discussion continued. Ms. Krautmann stated that  
281 the City would have to apply to become a member, and she does not know if Volksmarch is what  
282 it is called in the United States. Chair Bocko asked if Ms. Krautmann knows someone in Exeter  
283 who has done this. Ms. Krautmann replied no, they probably would need to contact someone in

284 Parks & Rec (in Exeter). Chair Bocko asked if that would be a good action step Ms. Fisk-  
285 Hennessey could take.

286  
287 Chair Bocko stated that in the late 1990s, he worked with a Symonds School class to make a  
288 treasure hunt at Ashuelot River Park. He continued that it is still there. Beyond just creating a  
289 path to a park, they could do something like that. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied yes, there is  
290 letterboxing, geocaching, and other such activities that do not impede or harm the beauty.  
291 Discussion ensued. Chair Bocko stated that this can be a New Business item for next time.

292

293 **8) Adjourn – Next Meeting Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 8:15 AM**

294

295 There being no further business, Chair Bocko adjourned the meeting at 9:23 AM.

296

297 Respectfully submitted by,  
298 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

299

300 Reviewed and edited by,  
301 Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Staff, April 1, 2025