

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

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

**Tuesday, June 10, 2025**

**8:15 AM**

**Room 22,  
Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Paul Bocko, Chair  
Suzy Krautmann, Vice Chair  
Leslie Casey  
Dian Mathews  
Kelly Cook  
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Director of Parks,  
Recreation

**Members Not Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Alternate

**1) Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Bocko called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM. Roll call was conducted.

**2) Approval of May 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Ms. Mathews proposed a change to line 98 on page 3, which the group discussed and decided to leave as is.

Ms. Krautmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 13, 2025. Ms. Casey seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**3) Friends of Ashuelot River Park Arboretum Report**

Ms. Mathews and other Friends members reported the following:

- Work continues to remove invasive species. An invasive plant that looks like phlox has been removed. Poison ivy has been found, and flagged, and will be addressed. Knotweed removal is continuous/ongoing. A large flat dock plant, growing from a stump next to the pollinator garden, was cut back by a Parks employee.
- Pollinator Garden: The Friends would like to return to the original plan where the mowers are not mowing in the middle of the two beds. They want the mowers to just go

in a straight line on the edge. They are too big to fit between the beds and they unintentionally mangle things.

- The Friends would like a bucket of stone dust from the City to keep in the shed.
- They are going through the beds, cleaning the beds, removing invasives wherever they find them, making a list of projects to do, and moving plants that need to be moved.
- They are geared up for Pollinator Palooza.
- Removing invasive shrubs, including the roots, will need to be a coordinated effort between the Friends and the City. A backhoe might be needed. This is work for the fall, because this is not the right time of year to plant the native shrubs.
- The Friends recommend that the City put any invasive plant cuttings in a separate pile, apart from the other plant cuttings, because invasives can keep growing just from cuttings.
- Much has been planted in the arboretum, much is growing, and everything looks great.

#### 4) **Finance Report**

##### **A) Landscaping Update**

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey reported that she got the proposal to the Trustees. She continued that they did not have an answer right away, but they are feeling good about it (being approved) and being able to move forward.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that the Parks & Recreation Department paid the full amount to the landscaper. She continued that it is the last piece of business they will do with that landscaper. Friends members asked for more information and expressed dissatisfaction with the landscaper's work. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that the Parks & Recreation Department is moving forward with new ideas.

##### **B) Bartlett Tree Contract Discussion**

Chair Bocko asked for discussion on the Bartlett Tree contract.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that that Arthur (Bud) Winsor sent her the following message this morning:

*"I have a nasty cold that I don't want to share with the group. I thought of trying to Zoom, but I can hardly talk. So, my thoughts for the meeting today: Encourage the group to approve Bartlett's Tree work for this season and let's bring up the inventory work separately at a future time when we have more clarity from Frank (Grano - Bartlett Tree). Also, Amanda (Littleton) is excited about the colocation of the (Monadnock) Conservancy and hopes to work closely with the Friends (of the Ashuelot River Park Arboretum) and the (Ashuelot River Park) Advisory (Board) in the future. She even mentioned educational opportunities like those done at the Harris Center that can come out of the new building and use the (Ashuelot River) Park and Rachel Marshall*

*(Learning Laboratory). She'd love to speak at one of our meetings soon. Sorry I can't be there today.*

*Bud"*

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if the ARPAB members had a chance to go over the proposal from Bartlett Tree. She continued that she wants to make sure they are all on the same page with this. She strongly recommends they move forward with the proposal.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Krautmann expressed support for the proposal.

Chair Bocko stated that what people should know is that what is not in here is the tree inventory. He continued that the tree inventory is about \$2,400. If they have that, it brings them over the \$9,000. Thus, they have to watch that. They might need to compensate for that going forward, as they spend. If they are deciding about another line they have to think about that line as they make that decision.

Discussion ensued, and ARPAB members had questions about what the proposal says about the Siberian Elm. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that she will check with Bartlett Tree about that.

A Friends member asked about a previous discussion they had had about asking Bartlett about certain equipment and/or a method for helping fix the rain garden. Chair Bocko replied that the rain garden is more the Friends' purview and there are multiple things going on with it. Brief discussion ensued about the rain garden.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if the ARPAB is okay with this contract, once she has confirmed with Bartlett Tree what they are doing with the Siberian Elm. Chair Bocko asked for a motion.

Ms. Cook made a motion for the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board to approve the contract with Bartlett Tree after the information about the Siberian Elm tree is confirmed. Ms. Mathews seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**5) Project Tracking**  
**A) Bird Ecology Project**

Chair Bocko stated that someone from Antioch just called, wanting to know if there are birds in the bird boxes. He continued that however, the cameras were not put up. He will go check after this meeting. They will continue to work on things.

**B) Master Plan Implementation Discussion**

Chair Bocko stated that the ARPAB did a good job last time doing some project tracking. He asked if anyone has any more thoughts at this point. Almost everything they do is supporting the master plan.

**6) Upcoming Events**

**A) Pollinator Palooza June 24<sup>th</sup> 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

Chair Bocko stated that Pollinator Palooza will be June 24<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that there will be 18 tables with 36 chairs. Thus, quite a few different groups will be tabling. Chair Bocko asked if that includes someone from Antioch. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied yes, she thinks so.

**B) Monadnock Conservancy June 26<sup>th</sup>**

Chair Bocko asked what the Monadnock Conservancy is doing on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that it is the groundbreaking celebration. She continued that they will have a handful of speakers, and the event will include all the people and groups that have collaborated to make the Monadnock Conservancy a reality. She believes it is at 4:00 PM, right at the site.

**C) Art in the Park August 30<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>**

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that Art in the Park will be at the end of August because Labor Day is early this year. That will accelerate the Parks and Recreation Department's redecking of the bridge. Brief discussion ensued.

Chair Bocko asked if there were other events not listed. He continued that he is having a hard time getting in touch with Rich Holschuh, Director of the Atowi Project, liaison for the Elnu Abenaki Tribe. Ms. Mathews stated that she would like to get to the point where it (the event with Mr. Holschuh) happens once a summer. Discussion ensued. Chair Bocko stated that he will keep trying to connect with Mr. Holschuh. He continued that he connected Ms. Mathews/the Friends with Antioch student Chris Liazos. He asked if she has connected with him. Ms. Mathews replied a little bit, but then it faded. Chair Bocko spoke about trying to reconnect, as Mr. Liazos might only be available through the fall.

**7) New, Other Business**

Ms. Krautmann stated that she looked into Volksmarch, and it is complicated. She continued that there is the "Twin States Volksmarch Association of VT and NH." Carol Adams of VT and Cindy Gray of Hancock NH are co-presidents, and they said there have been Volksmarch events in Keene. It is a worldwide sponsored event by volunteers. It is not a money-maker. She gave

more information, and spoke of how Volksmarch has deteriorated over the years due to aging members and reduced funds, leading to the walks becoming shorter, pins and patches no longer being given, and so on and so forth. However, there is still interest and activity, and the City could become a Volksmarch member, for a fee, and offer Volksmarch events combined with other events.

ARPAB and Friends members asked questions, and discussion continued in support of Volksmarch. ARPAB members spoke about how there is definitely an interest in Keene in the walking trails, and about connecting with John Mitchell and the Partner City Committee, about the possibility of doing something with the group of travelers from Einbeck, Germany. Ms. Krautmann spoke about how some people travel all over the world to do Volksmarches and someone she spoke to completed a Volksmarch in every US capital.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that she has a list of all the Volksmarches that are happening (in New England), and the dates, with quick descriptors. She gave some examples, such as the August one in Medford, MA. Discussion continued. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey gave more information about Volksmarches in MA and NY, and how she thinks this is worth exploring (for Keene). Ms. Krautmann replied that the next step would be to contact Cindy Gray. Chair Bocko asked if Ms. Krautmann would be able to do that. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey and Ms. Krautmann replied that they can work together to do that.

ARPAB members and Friends members discussed ideas for what trail(s) in Keene could be a Volksmarch route, and the possibility of having multiple. Ms. Krautmann added that (Ms. Gray) suggests that a way to (fundraise) is to combine Volksmarches with Oktoberfest events. Chair Bocko agreed that combining Volksmarch with other groups or events would help. Discussion ensued about other groups to consider connecting with, such as the Bicycle Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC), the Cheshire County Historical Society, and the East Keene Neighborhood Group.

Chair Bocko stated that the next step is to contact Cindy Gray and see what they can do. He continued that they can think about connections with other groups. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey asked if it is okay with the group if she brings this conversation to the BPPAC meeting tomorrow. Others replied yes.

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

There being no further business, Chair Bocko adjourned the meeting at 9:04 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Carrah Fisk Hennessey, Parks & Recreation Director