

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

10:00 AM

**Room 22,
Recreation Center**

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
Paul Bocko, Vice Chair
Stephen Hooper
Dian Mathews
Suzy Krautmann
Thomas Haynes, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities
Frank Anderson, Manager of Parks and
Cemeteries

Members Not Present:

Ruzzel Zullo
Councilor Bettina Chadbourne

1) Call to Order – Roll Call

Chair Arthur Winsor called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM and roll call ensued.

2) Approval of January 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Bocko recognized a correction to line 129 as the minutes should state “25%” rather than “about 75%.” With the aforementioned correction, Dian Mathews made a motion to approve the January 9, 2024 meeting minutes which was duly seconded by Vice Chair Bocko. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3) Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon stated that the finance report was unchanged from what the Board had.

4) Report from the Friends of Ashuelot River Park

Leslie Casey and Ms. Carlson from the Friends were present at the meeting.

The Friends reported that they met at the Keene Library for their last meeting to discuss developing project ideas. During the previous meeting, the members had discussed creating a project worksheet that would help to define project details such as their budget and resources (in

terms of who is responsible for each part of the project such as the Friends, Parks and Recreation, or a garden designer.) They were hopeful that the worksheet could also help with scheduling, as it would define the scope and timing of each project, allowing the Friends to prioritize as necessary. This would create a portfolio of all of the current and future projects to which they could share more seamlessly with the ARPAB. Ms. Mathews stated that they would begin to use this project on the West Street beds at the very front of the Park.

Mr. Bohannon was contacted by a community member in Keene who runs a film class. Ms. Mathews met with her and her students and gave them a booklet called “The Land Beyond” to read. The students would create interview questions for the Friends to take part in a recorded interview while walking around the Park. The Friends would like to create a Facebook page to upload the interview video to.

George was still working on finding someone to be in charge of the cobblestones as they have over 20 in the shed that needed to be planted around beds.

Ms. Mathews stated that the Pollinator Palooza was scheduled for June 25, 2024. The Friends would make a passport that park-goers would receive at the gate to then walk around to each table to get stamped.

The Rain Garden was expected to be finished in the Spring, although they expected they may need more plants to fill in those that had expired.

5) **Master Plan Implementation**

No discussion.

6) **Bird Ecology**

Vice Chair Bocko reported that he had met with Jen Hlivao, an Antioch University student, who had begun working on ideas for the Rachel-Marshall side of the park for the work-study program. Some things she had begun working on are a sign on the Arboretum side of the bridge that would encourage people across the bridge; creating audio clips of bird sounds that could be heard on a phone once scanned by QR Code signage; a story map that would be an aerial view of the Rachel-Marshall side of the park with texts and links for more information that could be used during a walk of the Park; installing bird boxes; and introducing new plantings that could encourage visits from different bird species. The members discussed speaking with Ms. Hlivao about installing a sign on the opposite side of the bridge from the Park with an explanation of what was on that side. It was also suggested to list the Rachel-Marshall side of the park on the kiosk. Ms. Hlivao was interested in joining the next meeting in March to present her ideas to the Board.

7) **Public Art Installation**

Located at the Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport is a steel sculpture, "Take Flight" by Katie Sherwin, in which the artist would like to see in a more visible place. Mr. Bohannon suggested moving it to the back of the arboretum area. The compost toilet in that area has the same footprint as the statue and is scheduled to be removed, which would create an appreciable spot for the statue. Public Works agreed on handling the move of the structure. The Board agreed on having the statue be a part of the Park so Mr. Bohannon would reach out to the artist to discuss it further.

8) Budget Development

Mr. Bohannon stated that one of the things the Board had talked about is what to do about the beds and mulching as well as whether or not they would do composting first. In the past, the 100-150 yards of mulch had cost around \$4,500 - \$5,000. Their budget would be around \$12,000 - \$15,000 this year. Frank from Bartlett Tree would walk around the park with Mr. Bohannon on March 4 to create a proposal.

Vice Chair Bocko stated that he would be interested in organizing an Antioch University Bird Club visit to the Park. He also suggested inviting Rich Holschuh back for an Indigenous walk interpretation through the Park.

Mr. Bohannon suggested the Board put all of the figures together to discuss further at the next meeting. Chair Winsor planned to extend the meeting to an hour and a half to anticipate further discussion of the budget.

9) Upcoming Events

The Friends had been working on a pruning demonstration scheduled for April 15, 2024. Mr. Bohannon asked that they provide information to advertise the event on their Facebook page.

Parks Day was a very successful event last year with around 300 children at Robinhood Park. This year, they will be utilizing three parks, starting with the Fishing Derby that is held by the Rotary Club at Robinhood Park. They then plan to do something at the bike park later that day. Lastly, they would like to do some type of natural environment at Ashuelot River Park. They were planning to work with art teachers to paint landscape sceneries as well as work on plantings for children to take home for their garden. Mr. Bocko suggested inviting the Antioch Bird Club to lead walks through the Park as well. The details of the date and time were still being considered at the time of the meeting.

The Pollinator Palooza will be held on June 25, 2024 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Art in the Park will take place on August 31 and September 1, 2024.

10) Other Business

Chair Winsor stated he would like to speak with the Sign Committee to resurrect the kiosk that had been in storage. They would have a conversation with Bartlett Tree during their March walkthrough as some trees may need to come down.

11) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 11:17 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Melissa Danneker, Minute Taker

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