

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

8:00 AM

Room 12 Recreation Center

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair
George Foskett
Jenna Spear-O'Mara
Councilor Steve Hooper

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director Parks, Recreation &
Cemeteries

Members Not Present:

Judy Sadoski
Chuck Redfern
Susan Thielen

1) Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM.

2) Approval of December 13, 2016 Minutes

Mr. Foskett noted a correction to the December 13, 2016 minutes. In the last sentence of the second paragraph on page two, "Mr. Foskett noted the whole area by the Elm Tree is shaded" should read, "Mr. Foskett noted the whole area by the Elm Tree is not shaded."

Mr. Foskett made a motion to approve the minute of December 13, 2016 as amended, which was seconded by Ms. Spear-O'Mara and carried unanimously.

3) Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon noted the finance report had changed with receipt of the finalized landscape maintenance contract. The Board had budgeted \$7,900 and the work only cost \$7,285.58. The unspent amount will return to the ARPAB account and Mr. Bohannon will inquire about money carrying over from year to year.

4) Report from Friends of the Arboretum at Ashuelot River Park

Mr. Foskett reported that five or six cobbles have been delivered and are ready for planting in spring. Some cobble buyers have been concerned about when the cobbles will be placed and where. He said in the past cobbles have simply been placed when

opportunities arise, yet he is considering notifying buyers to incorporate them into the placement process in some way.

The Friends discussed the Bartlett Tree work and decided to continue their program initiated a few years ago.

Mr. Foskett noted the Friends had questions again about irrigation and hope it will remain a priority. Mr. Bohannon noted it is on the agenda for spring. Mr. Foskett added there were concerns about the compost pile being full. Mr. Bohannon replied it is usually cleared shortly after filling.

Mr. Foskett said he has extended invitations to the Homestead Garden Club to revive their relationship with the Arboretum. They were pivotal in the creation of the park, distance grew, and Mr. Foskett is trying to rebuild that relationship.

Mr. Foskett indicated he brought the maps indicating maintenance sections, some of which are still available. Councilor Hooper noted he and Mr. Redfern intend to share a section.

5) Park Use Request from IOOF

Mr. Bohannon said he received a letter from the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) about holding an event in the park. He contacted Mr. Paul Chavira, who was invited to address the Board at this meeting. He indicated to Mr. Chavira that the park is not intended for such events despite some, like Art in the Park, being grandfathered in. He also suggested other venues in the City which would be more appropriate, like Railroad Square, Butterfly Park, or Robin Hood Park, among others. The Board agreed the park is not the appropriate place for the event and asked Mr. Bohannon to work with Mr. Chavira to find an alternative.

6) Park Discussion

a. Continued Planting Discussion

Mr. Bohannon noted that Chuck Simpson could not be at this meeting, but he replied to Mr. Bohannon with proposed garden costs.

- Grub remove all plants saving wanted plants **\$125**
- Small entryway garden under magnolia on left side **\$920**
- Arch to midway point along West Street **\$920**
- Midway point to corner by Starbucks **\$125**
- Small entryway garden under magnolia on right side **\$1,400**
- Arch to end of fence Bagel/Mill side (parking lot) **\$3,490**

- Option 2
 - Remove wanted plants/pot them, then tarp each area for approximately **\$2,750**

- Perennial Plantings
 - Small entryway garden under magnolia on left side **\$150**
 - Arch to midway point along West Street **\$2,500**
 - Midway point to corner by Starbucks **\$2,500**
 - Small entryway garden under magnolia on right side **\$150**
 - Arch to end of fence on Bagel/Mill side (parking lot) **\$3,000**
 - Planted price includes plants, labor, transportation, and mulching **\$8,300**
 - Work would begin when the daffodil bulbs pass

Mr. Foskett noted there was no mention of pollinators in this proposal. Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied the perennials would address pollination. Chair Winsor added a lot of this is near the entry garden that is shaded, pollinators need full sun.

Mr. Bohannon said one way to approach this is piecemeal, noting the Board does not have the necessary budget. Another option is to approach the Trustees with the desire to do this with the park being 30 years old. Mr. Foskett noted many groups and families assume care for parts of the arboretum and pay for large clean-up projects; he said this is an option for getting some of this work done. Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested just hiring Mr. Simpson as a consultant and recruiting volunteers to do the actual work.

Mr. Bohannon will share the proposal with the Board members to consider possible resources and volunteer efforts while considering other budget needs. He noted if Mr. Simpson did plantings, mulching, etc. that would eliminate spring cleaning in that part of the park for the City. Chair Winsor said the hardest part is site prep, not planting. He suggested having Mr. Simpson do the site prep and bringing in volunteer groups for the actual planting. The Board will consider this for the next meeting.

b. **Bartlett Tree Proposal**

Mr. Bohannon indicated the Bartlett Tree Experts proposal in the meeting packet. Chair Winsor noted the need to correct the date on the new proposal. Mr. Bohannon said last year the proposal was piecemealed, including \$1,800+ for fertilization, which needs to continue. Chair Winsor noted the maple trees (\$925) are the only things that remain to be addressed, which could leave the elm tree for next year as it is not as hazardous. Ms. Spear-O'Mara noted that would be \$1,100 total for Bartlett Tree Experts and the Board agreed on that amount.

c. **Budget Development**

Mr. Bohannon said the Board has typically requested approximately \$8,000. While he did not need a finalized budget at this meeting, he will need something to take to the next Trustees meeting, after the ARPAB March meeting. The City currently goes to contract, which will end in March. Mr. Bohannon can renew that contract with Mark Johnson and MJ Johnson Landscaping for \$5,000 for the year. Alternatively, the City can terminate that contract and the Facilities Division could potentially bring in a part-time employee.

Councilor Hooper asked if all the budget money comes from the Trustees. Mr. Bohannon replied yes, when the park was created the Friends of the Arboretum raised thousands of dollars which was transferred to the City into two trusts for maintenance and development. He noted the Board had discussed hiring different people for different tasks but then consolidated and things have since worked well. Some of the things Mr. Simpson proposes are similar to what the Board would hire a landscaper to do. Mr. Foskett said he has never received as many compliments on the condition of the park as he has this year. Mr. Bohannon agreed that Mr. Johnson does an adequate job for what he is paid. Chair Winsor added that Mr. Johnson is understaffed for the size of the park and suggested combining that work with a landscaper who does other work for the City.

Mr. Bohannon said the bigger conversation currently is that some facilities in the City need more attention than others. If the Facilities Division had a seasonal employee there might be an option to share that individual with Public Works' downtown crew. Ms. Spear-O'Mara said then Mr. Simpson could do the spring work and the Facilities person could do other work. Mr. Bohannon replied that is an area for attention because that then crosses the line into Parks, which is a different division. He suggested perhaps trying to hire Mr. Simpson for this spring work and then hiring someone else for fall cleanup as in previous years, allowing a contract to be added for the following year. He said it is a lot to consider, it is not annual maintenance but a complete makeover of the front entrance of the park. Mr. Bohannon will send out electronic materials to the Board who will think about the options for the March meeting.

d. **Educational Workshops**

Mr. Bohannon has reached out to the County Extension Office and they would like to work with the Board hosting events in the park or at the Rec Center about pruning and maintenance of home gardens. He hopes to have some in the park to increase park exposure and possibly recruit volunteers. He is waiting for more information, which he will present at the March meeting.

7) **New Business**

Mr. Foskett noted the snow plowing pile in the park is in the wrong place. He spoke with the bank and with Sue Silver, who spoke with the plow company. He will speak with them again about finding a different place. Mr. Bohannon suggested perhaps the Bank could adopt a bed.

Mr. Foskett also saw lights on all day at the park. Mr. Bohannon is looking into getting that corrected.

Mr. Charles Daloz of the Keene Agricultural Commission thanked the Board for their work and offered any help the Agricultural Commission can provide. Mr. Daloz asked if the park goes up the river. Mr. Foskett replied the park goes all the way to the hospital; the Friends only have responsibility for the Arboretum. Mr. Daloz asked the Board's

purview. Mr. Bohannon replied mostly the Arboretum. Mr. Daloz questioned the private lot next door to the park. Mr. Bohannon replied that is private property.

8) Next Meeting March 14, 2017

Mr. Bohannon will supply a list of 2017 meeting dates and the Board will hold annual elections.

9) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker