

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

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

**Tuesday, December 13, 2016      8:00 AM      Room 12 Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Arthur Winsor, Chair  
Jenna Spear-O'Mara  
George Foskett  
Chuck Redfern (Late)  
Councilor Steve Hooper

**Staff Present:**

Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation & Facilities  
Director

**Members Not Present:**

Judy Sadoski  
Susan Thielen

**1) Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

**2) Approval of November 15, 2016 Minutes**

Mr. Foskett made a motion to approve the minutes of November 15, 2016. Ms. Spear-O'Mara seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

**3) Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported he has not received the invoice yet. He continued to essentially deduct the invoice in the amount of \$2500 and that will be the final budget since that is the amount of the invoice. Mr. Foskett asked Mr. Bohannon where the \$2500 needed to be deducted. Mr. Bohannon replied the \$2500 needed to be deducted from \$4785.

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

Mr. Foskett reported there was no report at this time.

**5) Park Discussion**

**a) Park Plantings discussion with Chuck Simpson**

Chair Winsor reported Chuck Simpson was not able to attend the meeting but would like to meet with the Board in the near future. Mr. Bohannon replied that was correct and that he had reached out to Mr. Simpson to let him know what the Board is trying to accomplish. He continued Mr. Simpson sent a packet called the Ashuelot Park Thoughts for the Board to review. The packet was distributed to the Board and Mr. Bohannon asked the Board to take a moment to read for an overview. Mr. Bohannon stated Mr. Simpson had some thoughts and ideas and wanted to speak with the Board in further detail.

Mr. Bohannon stated the Board had a prior discussion about getting pollinators into the park. He continued after a discussion with Mr. Simpson he said there is a need to have native plants in order to have pollinators. Mr. Bohannon said bringing in outside plants that are good for pollination in one area will most likely not be successful pollinators in New Hampshire. Ms. Spear-O'Mara stated she spoke with Agway and a plant such as a native Black Eyed Susan that is a shorter plant will have more pollinators due to coevolution. She continued in talks with The Harris Center the pollinator garden that was planted a year ago has been successful and it was discovered the plantings that are more shade tolerant aren't as useful to the pollinators. She continued the pollinators are going to the sunny areas. Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested not spending the extra effort by placing the pollinator plants in the shade areas. Before the next visit to the park, Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested the Board look at the sites before planting to keep an eye on how many hours of sun each site has because that is where the pollinators will migrate. Mr. Foskett noted the whole area by the Elm Tree is not shaded.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested talking to folks and organizations in the area about donating plants. She continued the Board could consider placing a sign at the park stating the plant was donated by the organization. Mr. Bohannon replied that was definitely an option. Ms. Spear-O'Mara stated Maple Hill Nursery has a lot of knowledge about native species and would be a great resource.

Chair Winsor asked the Board if they wanted to have Mr. Simpson at a subsequent meeting. Mr. Bohannon replied yes. However, he continued by looking at the budget provided by Mr. Simpson to redo some of the flowerbeds and perennial planting the Board was looking at some sizeable money. Ms. Spear-O'Mara said the Board would not have to do all of the work at once. Mr. Bohannon said it was good idea to bring Mr. Simpson back into the discussion because he has lot of good ideas. He noted Mr. Simpson put forth a lot of effort into making the Ashuelot Park happen.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested in the next discussion with Mr. Simpson the Board bring in a map to discuss certain areas that are a priority. Chair Winsor said Mr. Simpson had a group of members from the New Hampshire Landscape Association to visit KSC to tour the park and Mr. Simpson was sentimental about the work done at the park and had a resurgence of interest. He noted the park is a great legacy to Mr. Simpson. Ms. Spear-O'Mara said she agreed. Mr. Bohannon stated he would bring in a map to the next meeting as well as Mr. Simpson to discuss the park plantings in further detail.

Mr. Bohannon said Chair Winsor mentioned at the last meeting there was a suggestion to bring in students from The Conway School of Landscape Design to look at the park to get a different perspective and possibly facilitate them to work with Mr. Simpson to get fresh ideas for different areas. Chair Winsor replied that was a good idea and at the very least the Board would have a record of the activity as well as an accurate map of the plants. Mr. Bohannon stated the Board would need to go to the Board of Trustees to ask if they are willing to support this idea. He continued the cost is \$6500 for The Conway School to come for a semester and noted they do a great job. Mr. Bohannon said Ken Stewart used them on the green space for two semesters and then carried a student over to the professional world. The Rachel Marshall Outdoor Learning Lab and the Ashuelot dam were discussed as areas The Conway School could also help assist.

As the discussion continued, Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested having the Board look at next fall to have The Conway School do the plants, the flowerbeds and plans for mapping. Mr. Bohannon stated The Conway School is on a trimester and could potentially be possible to get them for the spring if it falls into their cycle. The Board continued discussing what they would be looking for before Mr. Bohannon contacted The Conway School. Mr. Foskett recommended speaking with Mr. Simpson first. Ms. Spears-O'Mara agreed that was a good idea to meet with Mr. Simpson first to get a list of priorities for The Conway School. Chair Winsor said this could be a unique collaboration between Mr. Simpson and The Conway School. Mr. Bohannon said he would contact Mr. Simpson after the holidays and try to have him at the next meeting.

#### **6) New Business**

Mr. Bohannon said it may behoove the Board to listen to Mr. Simpson at the next meeting before the Board comes up with their budget for 2017 and also before making that request to the Board of Trustees. He continued this does not have to be done in January or February but could be done in March. However, the RFP for landscaping would need to be submitted sometime in February because the contract runs out in March. Mr. Foskett asked Mr. Bohannon to distribute the RFP to the Board. Mr. Bohannon replied yes.

Chair Winsor asked Mr. Bohannon if the landscaper he would like to set-up a proposal for would be different than the general landscaper. Mr. Bohannon replied he needed to have this conversation with Purchasing Department.

#### **7) Next Meeting January 17, 2017**

Mr. Redfern reported he would be out of town for the next 90 days and requested attendance to the meetings by conference call. The Board agreed and was happy to set-up a conference call for Mr. Redfern.

Chair Winsor asked the Board if there was any new business. Mr. Bohannon stated Peter Ketchum continues to do great work and has cleared over 1300 feet on the edge of the trail. He continued Mr. Ketchum has visually enhanced the trail and his work has been remarkable. Mr. Bohannon said he wanted to thank him for his work and wanted to write a letter to the Mayor and City Council requesting to thank him for his volunteer efforts. Mr. Bohannon said he does a lot of work and his work goes unrecognized. Councilor Hooper said a month ago he was on the river looking at Mr. Ketchum's work and was impressed. He continued as a family walked along the trail they were able to see a blue heron. Councilor Hooper said if that area had not been cleared they would have missed the opportunity to see the blue heron and noted how Mr. Ketchum's work has enhanced education.

As the discussion concluded, Mr. Bohannon said Mr. Ketchum is a not only a great asset to the City but also a great asset to the homeless. He continued Mr. Ketchum has a great relationship with the homeless and has tried to help them in many ways without judgement.

Mr. Redfern made a motion that the Mayor prepare a resolution for acknowledgement of volunteer trail maintenance by Peter Ketchum. Ms. Spear-O'Mara seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**9) Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Jennifer Clark

Respectfully edited by,  
Andy Bohannon