

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 17, 2015

8:00 AM

Rm 12, Recreation Center

Members Present:

Arthur (Bud) Winsor, Chair
George Foskett
Jenna Spear-O'Mara
Judy Sadoski
Susan Thielen (arrived at 8:18 AM)

Members Not Present:

Peter Wright, Vice Chair
Jamie White, Alternate

Staff Present:

Andrew Bohannon, Parks & Recreation
Director

Others Present:

Todd Bergeron
Cindy Rodenhauser-Stewart, Antioch New
England

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Winsor called the meeting to order at 8:06 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes – January 13, 2015

Mr. Foskett made a motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2015. Ms. Spear-O'Mara seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

3. Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon reported that there is no update to the budget. He continued that the RFP will be out at the end of the week.

4. Report of the Friends of the Arboretum at Ashuelot Park

Mr. Foskett reported the following from the Friends' meeting on March 10:

- The YMCA project will be on May 30 in the arboretum.
- Tom Flavin is working on creating a map of each garden bed so each person or organization can be assigned a bed.
- The Friends have made a \$4,000 donation to the City

Ms. Sadoski made a motion to approve the report of the Friends. Ms. Spear-O'Mara seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

5. Park Discussion

- Bartlett Tree Inventory – Web demonstration

Chair Winsor showed a video of the services provided in the management plan from Bartlett Tree.

Susan Thielen arrived at 8:18 AM.

Chair Winsor shared information about Bartlett Tree's ability to put a QR code on each tree, which allows people with smart phones to get information about the trees on the Internet. Bartlett makes these signs but they are pricey. He continued that when the trees are each identified and in a database, it makes maintenance easier because you can say to an arborist, for example, "Tree 36 needs pruning." Discussion ensued. Chair Winsor stated that an inventory has a lot of value.

- **Monadnock Conservancy – Invasive Buckthorn Removal**

Mr. Bohannon reported that the Monadnock Conservancy approached him about the possibility of working collaboratively with the Cheshire Historical Society to create a buckthorn fence, using buckthorn that they would remove from Ashuelot River Park. He continued that buckthorn is an invasive species, so having them remove it and use it would be a win win situation. They want to remove it April 12. City staff would then apply an herbicide to the locations the buckthorn was cut from. He has informed the City Council, Friends, and Conservation Commission as well. Ms. Sadoski asked how hard it is to get to the roots. Mr. Bohannon replied that they would spray very close to the plant, practically brushing it on, avoiding a broad spray because it is so close to the river.

- **Antioch New England (AUNE) – Tree Planting – April 19**

Cindy Rodenhauser-Stewart stated that she is here on behalf of Councilor Emily Hague, who is a member of AUNE's Board of Trustees. She continued that she is helping plan a four-day event to celebrate AUNE's 50 years. She spoke of the significance of AUNE's 50 years, the significance of AUNE to the community, and what the celebration will be like. One of the signature events, at which they hope to attract the general public, is a commemorative tree planting. Councilor Hague has been working with Public Works Director Kürt Blomquist to find a good location for the tree, and they would like to plant it in Ashuelot River Park. Ms. Rodenhauser-Stewart continued that she is asking the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board (ARPAB) for permission to work collaborative with them to find a location within the arboretum. Peter Hansel has committed one of his elm trees. It will have a plaque with to-be-determined text. The planting will be April 19 at 12:00 PM.

Discussion ensued, and ARPAB members asked questions, which Ms. Rodenhauser-Stewart answered. ARPAB members gave suggestions for potential locations. Mr. Bohannon asked about the plaque, and spoke of the need for it to be consistent with the rest of the park. Ms. Rodenhauser-Stewart stated that they could easily work out the details (such as location, look of the plaque, etc.), with guidance from this group, Mr. Bohannon, and Mr. Blomquist. Today she is bringing this just for discussion purposes.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara made a motion for the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board to look further into the topic of tree-planting in Ashuelot River Park for Antioch University of New England. Ms. Thielen seconded the motion.

Chair Winsor noted that the ARPAB has one meeting before the planting. He continued that they should do some exploratory in the meantime.

The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- **Cheshire Housing Trust – June 20**

Mr. Bohannon reported that the Cheshire Housing Trust contacted him regarding their annual plant sale, asking for the ARPAB's blessing. He continued that it is June 20, from 7:00 AM to 4:30 PM. In the past it has been very successful. Discussion ensued about the event. Ms. Sadoski asked if Cheshire Housing Trust makes a donation to the park. Mr. Bohannon replied that he does not believe so.

- **Art in the Park – September 5 to 6**

Mr. Bohannon reported that the Art in the Park folks would like to be in the park September 5 and 6. Mr. Foskett stated that they make a donation every year. Brief discussion ensued.

- **Todd Bergeron – Kayak and Canoe Business**

Todd Bergeron reported that he and his business associate, Kevin Rule, are starting a kayak and canoe business with a shuttle service. He continued that the Ashuelot River is a "hidden gem" that is great for boating, and the goal of their business is to get people (especially youth) out onto the river to enjoy this gem that is right in the middle of the City of Keene. They also hope to, with the blessing of this group, help non-profits get people out there using the park and river. Mr. Bergeron gave more details about how the business would work. ARPAB members spoke positively about boating in the river, and about the business. Discussion ensued about the details of it, particularly the questions of parking and access to the river – who, where, and how. Mr. Bohannon stated that he thinks this business is a great idea and he suggested Mr. Bergeron talk to the ARPAB and the Friends. He continued that Mr. Bergeron has provided the City with the necessary insurances. He wants the boats to be visible off of West Street, so he will have to work with the businesses at the sides of the park to keep his boats there. Discussion continued, about the type of shuttle, types of canoes and kayaks, and the logistics of the shuttle service.

Chair Winsor and the other ARPAB members thanked Mr. Bergeron for his presentation. Mr. Bergeron asked the ARPAB to also consider whether the business would be allowed to hold events in the park. He continued that they would give a portion of the proceeds to the park. They can discuss this topic in the future if the ARPAB is comfortable doing so. Mr. Bergeron left the meeting.

Ms. Sadoski initiated a conversation about what is appropriate for someone to sell in the park, and what is not, and how that decision is made. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bohannon stated that it is a good conversation for the ARPAB to have, since they are charged with overseeing the arboretum and the whole park. He continued that there are not many guidelines other than for weddings, and those guidelines are not written in City Council policy. Discussion continued. Chair Winsor asked what would happen if, say, someone wanted to have an exercise class in the park. Mr. Bohannon replied that there is a resolution that would require a person having a class in the park to give the City 20% of the registration fees collected; however, the arboretum may not be the right place for an exercise class. Mr. Foskett agreed and spoke more about what

activities are and are not appropriate for an arboretum. He stated that what to allow or not allow is a tough question. Discussion continued about the distinction between the arboretum and the park, the public's perception of it as a public park like other parks, which rules exist and which rules should, and inappropriate uses of the arboretum that Mr. Bohannon and the ARPAB are aware of. Chair Winsor stated that they will put this topic on the agenda for next month. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will send the ARPAB the written guidelines they have about weddings. He continued that they can continue discussing this.

Ms. Thielen asked for an update on Ashuelot Greenspace. Mr. Bohannon replied that things are moving forward. He continued that the Ashuelot Greenspace folks are learning the history of how the arboretum was given to the City; they are trying to figure out how to give the Ashuelot Greenspace property back to the City at some point. Brief discussion ensued.

- **Jonathan Daniels Trail Sign**

Mr. Bohannon reported that this year is the 50th anniversary of Jonathan Daniels's death, and there will be a sign installed at the trailhead of the Jonathan Daniels Trail, which is in the back of the arboretum. He continued that the sign will identify the trail and give information about who Jonathan Daniels was. It will be funded by the Episcopal Church, the Friends, and the City. Ms. Thielen expressed concerns about the sign being vandalized. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will talk with Peter Poanessa. Discussion ensued.

Chair Winsor returned to the topic of the Bartlett Tree Inventory, and showed the ARPAB the website with Keene State College's tree inventory. He showed how you can click on a tree, see images of it in various seasons, get information about it, and get information about the species by clicking a link that goes to Virginia Tech's website. Ms. Sadoski offered to help take photos of the trees in the arboretum. Discussion continued. The ARPAB thanked Chair Winsor.

6. MSFI Committee Presentation – April 8, 6:00 PM

Mr. Bohannon asked Chair Winsor if he thinks he will be ready to present to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee on April 8, or if they need to push it back – which would be fine with him. Chair Winsor replied that he will talk with Mr. Bohannon soon and let him know.

7. Public Presentation – April 14 – Public Library?

Mr. Bohannon asked if the ARPAB/Chair Winsor and Mr. Foskett still want to give a presentation at the public library on April 14 (to present the inventory, and recruit volunteers for the Friends), or if they want to change the date. Mr. Foskett replied that he is going away for a bit in April but cannot remember the dates offhand. Mr. Bohannon asked him to let him know as soon as he can, so they can change the presentation date if necessary – it is important for Mr. Foskett to be there.

8. New Business

None.

9. Next Meeting – April 14, 2015

Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board meeting minutes,
March 17, 2015

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Stenographer

Edits submitted by
Andy Bohannon