

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

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

**Tuesday, April 14, 2015**

**8:00 AM**

**Rm 12, Recreation Center**

**Members Present:**

Arthur (Bud) Winsor, Chair  
Peter Wright, Vice Chair  
George Foskett  
Jenna Spear-O'Mara  
Judy Sadoski (arrived at 8:05 AM)

**Staff Present:**

Andrew Bohannon, Parks & Recreation  
Director

**Others Present:**

**Members Not Present:**

Bettina Chadbourne, Councilor  
Jamie White, Alternate  
Susan Thielen

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

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

**2. Approval of Minutes – March 17, 2015**

Mr. Wright noted that he was not present at the last meeting and his name should be removed from the “members present” list.

Mr. Foskett made a motion to approve the minutes of March 17, 2015 as amended. Ms. Spear-O'Mara seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote of 4 to 0.

**3. Finance Report**

Mr. Bohannon reported that all of the bids (for the landscaping and maintenance contract for City facilities and Ashuelot River Park) are due this Friday. He continued that he has received several calls from different companies already. There is a lot more interest out there this time. Everyone he has spoken with thinks this is a brand new process, but he told them that it has been done before. Mr. Foskett asked which City facilities it includes. Mr. Bohannon replied the Recreation Center, library, City Hall, and the Public Works/Police Department building.

Ms. Sadoski arrived at 8:05 AM.

Discussion ensued about the condition of these City facilities. Chair Winsor stated that the Ashuelot River Advisory Board (ARPAB) accepts the Finance Report as informational.

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

Mr. Foskett reported that the Friends transferred what money they had left in their account to the donations account for the park. He continued that the Friends discussed the following:

- The update they received on the dam project (West Street Hydro), and Mr. Bohannon's suggestion that they write to the Sentinel and the City Council in support of the grant and the educational portion of the hydropower.
- CT River Bank's merger with Mascoma Savings Bank, snow storage locations, and the fact that there is still a lot of snow at an entrance to the arboretum. A board member of the Friends is an employee of the bank, and will meet with the facilities people and see if they can find a solution to that problem.
- Upcoming events at the park, starting with the YMCA American Heritage Tour planting.
- Peter Hansel from the Elm City Tree Research has agreed to donate a tree to Antioch's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, to be planted in the arboretum this weekend. (Mr. Foskett explained the location).
- Todd Bergeron's proposal for the kayak and canoe business, information which the Friends received favorably.

Mr. Foskett added that the other night he noticed a large group of people in the park, dressed in unusual gear. Discussion ensued about different park users, acceptable uses of the park, alternative locations within the park for such group events, and issues of handicap accessibility. Discussion continued about the question "Is it a park, or is it an arboretum?", and the ARPAB noted that they have had this discussion for years. Mr. Bohannon replied that all signage states "Ashuelot River Park," not "arboretum," so the public does not know. The ARPAB may have goals of creating educational components specifying that it is an arboretum. Discussion continued. Ms. Sadoski spoke of how the large open space in the center encourages park-like activities. Mr. Foskett suggested developing it with trees and plants. Others disagreed and spoke of the importance of some open space. Mr. Bohannon reported that users he knows think of it as the local version of Central Park – it is close to local businesses, a good flat trail, etc. It is difficult. This group can create some educational items about the arboretum.

Chair Winsor stated that they accept Mr. Foskett's report as informational.

## **5. Park Discussion**

Mr. Bohannon distributed copies of the handout that is given to anyone who asks about having a wedding in the park. He continued that it basically discourages the wedding by explaining that they cannot reserve the park and it is a public location. People are pretty receptive to the rules. The ARPAB can take this further if they want to and create rules and regulations for the park and recommend it be an ordinance, like they did several years ago by banning dogs from the park. They can talk about that. Last month they had a guest talking about wanting to do more events in the park. How do they address that, knowing it is an arboretum? People see events happening at the park and think about having their own. They think of it as a park and not an arboretum.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Spear-O'Mara suggested allowing no more than 25 people unless it was a City-sponsored event. Ms. Sadoski asked if that will bump up against the idea that it is a public space. People might challenge it. She asked what the legal requirements are. Chair Winsor suggested looking at what other places have done, and how they have managed people

gathering in arboretums elsewhere. He suggests a subcommittee study that. Ms. Sadoski replied that she will be a part of that. She asked if the arboretum is City property. Mr. Bohannon replied yes. He continued that it has to be a public arboretum. Mr. Wright asked if they have any signs stating it is an arboretum. Mr. Bohannon replied no. Discussion ensued about signage clarifying that it is an arboretum. Chair Winsor stated that he is sure other arboretums have been through this and they can figure that out. Mr. Bohannon stated that he will email the Parks & Recreation associations and see if anyone else in New England has an arboretum and get advice from them. Chair Winsor stated that this will be an agenda item for next time.

#### **6. Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee Presentation**

Mr. Bohannon reported that this has been rescheduled to April 22. He asked if Bartlett Tree will be ready by then. Chair Winsor replied that he has contacted them a few times and has not yet received a reply – he will try again. Mr. Bohannon replied that he can talk with the City Clerk to see if they can push it back if necessary but hopefully Bartlett Tree will be ready. Chair Winsor stated that they need to get photographs of the trees as they flower, and he encourages anyone who is at the park to take photos if they see newly-flowered trees. Chair Winsor asked if the presentation is just for the MSFI Committee, not the full City Council. Mr. Bohannon replied yes. Mr. Wright asked if they need help with the presentation. Mr. Bohannon replied that everyone is welcome to attend and support Chair Winsor as he makes the presentation.

#### **7. Public Presentation**

Mr. Bohannon asked if they still want to have a public presentation at the library. He continued that there is no date; he wanted to first assess interest. They can move forward with this once the MSFI Committee presentation is done. Mr. Wright suggested it be at the park. Discussion ensued about logistics and the ARPAB agreed that the library is the best location.

#### **8. New Business**

Mr. Bohannon stated that they had talked about pollinators - he does not know when the best time to plant those is. The ground is still frozen. Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied that they were only talking about replacement plantings, so they should wait and see what needs replacing. Mr. Bohannon suggested they wait until May and either have the ARPAB meeting there or have a walk through and see what needs to be replaced. Mr. Foskett replied that he talked with Ms. Snow from the YMCA about choosing pollinator plants. He continued that the students are coming May 30 to do work in the park. Discussion continued. Ms. Spear-O'Mara asked Mr. Foskett to give her contact information for Ms. Snow.

Chair Winsor announced that the next meeting is May 12. Ms. Sadoski and Ms. Spear-O'Mara replied that they will not be here. Discussion ensued, and Chair Winsor changed the meeting date to May 19.

#### **9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted by  
Britta Reida, Minute-taker  
Edits submitted by Andy Bohannon 5/18/15