

City of Keene
New Hampshire

ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 9, 2015

8:00 AM

Rm 12, Recreation Center

Members Present:

Arthur (Bud) Winsor, Chair
George Foskett
Jenna Spear-O'Mara
Susan Thielen (arrived at 8:22 AM)

Staff Present:

Andrew Bohannon, Parks & Recreation
Director

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Jamie White, Alternate
Judy Sadoski

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Approval of Minutes – May 19, 2015

Ms. Spear-O'Mara made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Foskett, and passed by unanimous vote.

3. Finance Report

Mr. Bohannon reported that the landscaper has been in and has done the initial mulching. He continued that they should see a bill fairly soon. They have some pruning that needs to be done. Before he goes out and has Phil's Tree or Mark Johnson do that work, he wanted the ARPAB to be aware of that.

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

Mr. Foskett reported that the Friends had a meeting and he reported on what happened at the ARPAB meeting. He continued that the Friends discussed the following:

- Establishing guidelines for the use of the park.
- Guidelines for the cobblestones, which exist, but they have not been able to find.
- Guidelines for people who want to establish memorial trees, benches, and so on and so forth. There have been some rules about that in the past – maybe they could find those in previous meetings' minutes.
- The sprinkler system.
- The designation of areas (based on a map) to groups and individuals to maintain their sections of the arboretum.

- The Friends' desire to see a copy of the "do's and don'ts" from the trustees – what can the money be used for, or not, and how much do they have? The Friends and the ARPAB should have this information.
- Establishing a meeting date with the bank to discuss their site plan, which clearly shows that they should not be piling snow in the arboretum nor covering up handicapped parking spots, which is illegal. That is an ongoing item on their agenda.
- At some point, the Friends want to discuss the Jonathan Daniels sign for the park.

Mr. Foskett continued that on May 30, he, Chair Winsor, Karen Flavin, Melaney Snow, and five students from various schools arrived at the arboretum at 9:00 AM. Dale Lacasse from Living Gardens/Marlboro Greenhouse donated many narcissus flowers. The students spent three hours planting those. The students, as part of their American Heritage Tour commitment, raised money to purchase plants and brought and planted those as well, all over the park. It was great. These girls were terrific and worked hard.

Mr. Foskett continued that the final thing the Friends discussed was the three-year, \$1,500 contract with Bartlett Tree - the Friends approve of that. Mr. Bohannon asked if the Friends will purchase the web piece. Mr. Foskett replied yes, out of the money they already gave to the City. Mr. Bohannon replied that he will give that contract to the City Manager to sign.

Chair Windsor stated that Melaney Snow is moving and will no longer be the leader for the American Heritage Tour youth group. He continued that she was great to work with and they will miss her. Karen Flavin is great with the youth, too. Brief discussion ensued.

5. Park Discussion

Mr. Bohannon stated that he has not yet looked at example policies to share with the group, but he will do that. He continued that he went to Conway School for the Carpenter Street field discussion, and he has handouts for the committee – the Conway School's magazine highlights the Ashuelot River Park Greenspace project. He explained the components of the drawing, such as parking, a playground, and farmer's market space. Discussion ensued. Mr. Foskett asked about the playground. Mr. Bohannon explained that it is a "natural playground" and what that means. He gave examples of how children in Keene have used elements of nature in their play. Discussion continued about natural playgrounds. Chair Windsor spoke positively about them. Ms. Spear-O'Mara spoke positively about the one at Highlands. Chair Windsor stated that this [what is shown in the drawing] complements the park well. Mr. Bohannon complimented the work of Conway School.

Mr. Bohannon stated that on July 8 the Church of Latter Day Saints will be doing a large project in the park, raising the cobbles and getting other work done. He continued that there will be about 20 volunteers.

Ms. Thielen arrived at 8:22 AM and offered a correction: the full name is Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Mr. Bohannon stated that the Jonathan Daniels sign has been installed in the park. He continued that he does not recall asking for two signs but apparently he did. One sign is in front of the park and the other one is at a place where they know they will get a lot of foot traffic when Ashuelot Greenspace is built.

Chair Winsor asked about creating policy. Mr. Bohannon replied that they will do that at the July meeting.

Mr. Foskett stated that at the last meeting he mentioned that many of the students graduating from high school were taking photos in the park. He continued that one student had a drone and was taking aerial photos, which showed many bare spots. On Saturday they were beginning to work on the sprinkler system. This has been an ongoing issue since the park's creation. He thinks they ought to look into connecting it to the City. The pump has been an issue, especially with the clogging. He does not know how much it would cost but maybe they have the money for it. It needs to be addressed at some point.

Mr. Bohannon replied that he talked with the maintenance staff about the pump. He continued that a year or two ago they bought a bigger pump. Especially in the month of May when they had the drought, they could not get anything. It has been a constant issue when it gets that low, and the Ashuelot River is not a very high river to begin with. He does not know if there is an alternative. If they go off City water it is an annual expense, and there is the question of who pays – the City's operating budget, or the trust? It would change the park significantly. There would be a constant water source that could start up in early spring and run through the fall. It would be a much better water source than the river, although the river water is free, but the maintenance that is needed is the offset. It takes almost a full day for a maintenance person to fix a problem with it.

Ms. Spear-O'Mara asked how hard it is to connect to City water. Mr. Bohannon replied not hard at all. Mr. Foskett stated that he thinks the tax-payers would support this. Chair Winsor stated that when they need the water the most, they cannot get it from the river, which is the main issue. Ms. Thielen stated that she agrees with Mr. Foskett and cannot imagine anyone would oppose having the City water connected. Everyone loves the park. Ms. Spear O'Mara replied that she agrees and thinks they should go forward with this.

Mr. Bohannon stated that he can come back in July with information. Ms. Spear O'Mara asked for information on what the annual cost would be, and the cost for setting it up/replacing the current system. Discussion continued. Mr. Foskett asked if Ashuelot Greenspace has discussed it. Mr. Bohannon replied no, but he has thought about whether they would want sprinklers, if they have any arboretum-type features. He continued that if they go forward with this they can pipe back and make a connection if necessary.

6. New Business

Chair Winsor stated that Bartlett Tree's Frank Grano will be here tomorrow and he wants to show him trees at the college, and also take him on a walk around the arboretum. He continued that he will ask for a proposal on what it would cost to do the pruning on trees that need a

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professional. They would talk with Mr. Bohannon to make sure they were following the proper process. He asked if that is okay. Mr. Bohannon replied yes.

7. Next meeting is July 14, 2015

8. Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Chair Winsor adjourned the meeting at 8:34 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker