

City of Keene
New Hampshire

AHSUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 18, 2019

8:00 AM

Recreation Center, Room 12

Members Present:

Arthur Winsor, Chair (by phone)
Judy Sadoski
Dave Whaley
Councilor Steve Hooper
Paul Bocko

Staff Present:

Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks, Recreation
& Facilities

Members Not Present:

George Foskett

1) Call to Order

Mr. Bohannon led the meeting in Chair Winsor's physical absence and began the meeting at 8:02 AM.

2) Approval of Minutes – May 13, 2019

Mr. Bocko moved to approve the minutes of May 13, 2019, which Councilor Hooper seconded and the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board carried unanimously.

3) Finance Report

a. Trustees Request for LED Lighting

Mr. Bohannon reported that he is awaiting the invoice for the spring clean-up and mulch work completed one month prior to the meeting. Otherwise, there are no budget changes since the May meeting. Board donations for bat houses are not reflected because those funds come from a separate account. He referenced information in the meeting packet that he is sending to the Trustees with a narrative of why the Board is requesting funds for an LED light fixture; Hamblet Electric said it should cost less than \$1,400 if there are rebates from Eversource, but that price is not confirmed until the lights are purchased and the process is complete.

4) Friends of Ashuelot River Park Report

Mr. Foskett was not present. Mr. Bohannon reported that eight volunteers from Next Level Church participated in the last workday, which was less than expected. There is another workday coming up.

5) Park Discussion

a. Trustees Informational Memo for 2020

Mr. Bohannon referenced an informational memo for the Trustees in the meeting packet. He and Mr. Foskett walked through the park with someone from the Conway School of Landscape Design. The representative, who was previously a forester for the National Arboretum, was very impressed with the park and the number of species. They saw a lot of potential for students and what the school could offer the City regarding long-term climate resiliency over the next 50 years. Mr. Bohannon noted that the school's fee increased from \$6,500 to \$10,500, in addition to travel reimbursement for the students. He thought the Board might be interested in this during the spring 2020 semester and he would inform the Trustees soon because if they are disinterested, the Board will not pursue the school further. He can also submit a proposal and get a letter of support from the City Manager, as the contract would be under her purview. Mr. Bohannon said Mr. Foskett was also pleased with the visit.

Chair Winsor suggested spreading the fee over two fiscal years. Mr. Bohannon said he spoke with the City's Funds Manager, who did not see an issue to make his suggestion necessary and he does not think the school would be interested, as they want money up-front to fund the students. Chair Winsor asked what the City would get for the \$10,500. Mr. Bohannon said they guarantee two public sessions guided by the students and the Board would act as their liaisons and work closely with them as they review the location. Mr. Bocko said he would love to have Antioch help with implementation or as another logical part of the process and asked to be informed of details. Mr. Whaley asked if the students will have Arborscope access and Mr. Bohannon replied in the affirmative.

b. Park Cleanups – July 8 & August 22, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mr. Bohannon said both of these cleanups are with Keene State College and members are invited to attend.

c. Irrigation Complete

Mr. Bohannon reported that the irrigation work is complete and the final payment processed. Remaining work falls to staff and Chuck Sweeney will work to top dress the park following Art in the Park. The contractors did a lot of trench cleanup and completed what was necessary to meet the obligations of the contract.

Councilor Hooper asked if Mr. Bohannon was satisfied with the infrastructure job. Mr. Bohannon replied in the affirmative, said irrigation systems require constant work, and said there is a warranty for follow-up maintenance. Staff is working with a supplier in town that understands the Wi-Fi software for the irrigation system. Mr. Sweeney worked to schedule the sprinklers to turn on from 6:00 AM – 8:00 AM.

d. QR Codes

Mr. Bohannon said all information that Bartlett Tree provided was included in the meeting packet. The college is interested in working with the City to purchase 100 QR tags to reduce the price and split the cost. Chair Winsor agreed and said the college wants to get signs with the species name and the QR code. The Board agreed similar signs with species names would be appealing in the park on special trees, with simple QR codes on smaller, common trees.

Mr. Bohannon met with a community member interested in public art in the arboretum. He suggested the Board waits until the Trustees decide on the landscape design to take further steps on public art.

Ms. Sadoski moved to have a bat house update from Councilor Hooper, which Mr. Bocko seconded and the Board carried unanimously.

Councilor Hooper thanked the Board members for their donations. Mr. Bocko agreed to donate the cost of hemlock posts (16' tall standard) for the houses, which should be complete by the end of June. Councilor Hooper said the next step is to mark the locations for houses—not right on the trail due to excrement per Council recommendation—and Mr. Bohannon is ready to walk through the park when Ms. Evans is ready. Ms. Sadoski said she wanted to participate in that walk. Mr. Bohannon confirmed that Parks and Recreation staff will set the houses up on their posts when ready and can help fix the houses to the posts. Peter Poanessa will be working on the signs in July. Councilor Hooper suggested a get together in September for a modest introduction of the bat houses to the community; the Board agreed. Mr. Whaley asked what the signs would say. Councilor Hooper said the signs would minimally describe what bats do, basic facts, and why they are important for the environment. They will be approximately 2'x2' and he hopes to have QR codes on them.

6) New or Other Business

7) Adjournment – Next Meeting Date July 9, 2019

The Committee agreed to meet in the park for the July meeting. Mr. Bohannon concluded the meeting at 8:47 AM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katie Kibler, Minute Taker
June 20, 2019