

(Draft) Minutes of the Mine Falls Park Advisory Committee

August 2, 2021

In Attendance:

Jeff Hannigan, chair
Paula Lochhead, vice chair
Greg Andruskevich
Pam Anderson
Dick Gillespie
Doug Gagne

for the City of Nashua:
Jason Puopolo, Parks and Recreation Dept. Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Minutes from the May and June meetings were approved, changing the header to read “Minutes”, not “Agenda”.

Superintendent report:

1. Financial report: not much has been expended to date. Jason will have staff prepare a review of expenditures over the past 5 years for review at the September meeting. Doug pointed out the need to repair/replace aging “infrastructure” throughout the Park, much of which has suffered from deferred maintenance, and spending some of these funds would be a good way to accomplish it. Dick disagreed, at least regarding bridges, stating that they should be considered part of the City’s infrastructure and be funded from other budgets.
2. We need to update the list of members and their term expiration dates for the mayor’s office.
3. We were asked our position on the spreading of cremains on Park property. There were no objections to the practice. The State leaves it up to municipalities, and the City has no ordinance prohibiting it on public property, so it is a moot point.
4. A request has been received regarding a UNH research project to install wildlife cameras on Park property for a short period of time. There may be a requirement to have notification posted at kiosks; temporary signs could be placed at kiosks. We agreed to the request with the understanding we would receive results of their findings.
5. Boardwalk test treatment: Jason has one protectant material in hand to trial, and is awaiting delivery of another recommended product. These treatments will be applied once received and weather is favorable.
6. Bridge inspections: Jason reported that the City Engineering Dept. has conducted an inspection of all the Park bridges, and needs to “open up” some of the rotted fascia to examine any possible damage inside before reporting back to us as to status.

Parks Dept. work backlog:

1. A contractor (Gate City Fence) has been hired to replace rotted and missing guard rails in several places within the Park.
2. Simple repairs to wooden bridges and overlooks will be coordinated by the Parks and Rec Dept.
3. The Gatehouse needs an interior cleaning and the windows washed by a contractor, as the Parks and Rec staff lacks necessary equipment to reach them.
4. The Gatehouse soffit still needs to be checked to determine necessity of rot repair.
5. Spine Road needs to be regraded, as there has been erosion leading to deep puddling in several areas. The trail along the canal needs regrading as well due to ongoing erosion. Jason will coordinate work to be done by the Streets Dept., likely by this fall.
6. Missing/damaged trail location signs have been painted, and await installation. Doug will handle this as a Trail Day project or on his own.
7. Canal dredging: this will be a future endeavor, as there is much research, planning, permitting and budgeting to be done.
8. The Parks and Rec Dept. will trim trees overhanging along the canal.
9. We await any sharing of the Mill Pond and Canal water study, which was supposed to have been conducted in 2020 as part of the Hydro dam recertification process; Deb Chisholm needs to be contacted as to the status of this report.
10. Stone gravel at the Mill Pond boat launch has been washing into the pond and needs to be scraped out of the pond.

Old Business:

1. Jeff conducted a poll of MFPAC members to determine whether we believe electric scooters and electric bikes may be allowed to be used in the Park -- whether rentals or privately-owned (We currently prohibit their use.) The consensus was that they should not be allowed for various reasons, including the dumping of rental vehicles in the Park; excessive speed leading to pedestrian injuries; erosion of trails or creation of new paths through the woods; etc. Discussion ensued of whether certain classes of these electric vehicles should be permitted, but consensus agreed that it would be difficult to police, and excess speed would remain a hazard for pedestrian users. The City's policy as to permitted uses of electric vehicles needs to be spelled out, and Jason will contact Cecilia Ulibarri to get up-to-date policy. Members largely agreed that rental vehicles should have their GPS software to block out use within Park property.
2. New dog park at Millyard: the MFPAC would like more information about this recently-approved area abutting Park property, and hopes to get a member of the Dog Park Committee to meet with us sometime soon, so we can gauge possible Park impacts, if any.
3. The access problem to the kayak launch by gate City Fence remains and needs to be addressed.

New Business:

1. 'Imagine Nashua' is working on a new Master Plan for the City. Jason will contact Cecilia for more information. (Paula reported that, at an earlier Zoom meeting for Imagine Nashua, a participant suggested that MFPAC apply for Engineering Historical Landmark status in order to request restoration grants.)
2. The upcoming Trail Day is scheduled for August 14, and several projects were identified; among them:
 - *painting over graffiti, especially at the kiosk by Gate City Fence;
 - *cutting down of Japanese Knotweed around kiosk and sign at Millyard entrance as preliminary step to a control project at September Trail Day;
 - *Trish will do a canal cleanup by kayak
 - *the "triangle" needs another cleanup
 - *Greg (and maybe Pam) will repaint the metal fence at the Gatehouse by the dam
 - *the Red Trail needs a trash cleanup by the ice rink
 - *Doug will work on installing the replacement location markers

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Gagne