

Greeley Park Advisory Committee Meeting

March 11, 2026

Attending: Stephanie Ballentine, Vicki Donchess, Alyson Galipeau, Kerry Miller, Francis Murphy, Richard Smart.

Alderman Patricia Klee, Superintendent Bryan Conant

Absent: Kathy Lodi, Lisa Law, Susan McNamee, Lisa Fauteux

Call to Order: 6:05PM

No Visitors attended, no Public Comment

Corrections and Approval of Previous Minutes

Topic: Update on Stone House Refurbishment Status and Gardens from Superintendent Conant

- Project nearly complete; minor touch-ups planned for spring (two light poles to be erected; bathroom windows need painting).
- Bathroom floors: epoxy job unsatisfactory due to gap at floor-wall; another epoxy coating scheduled in spring; bathrooms expected to be functional by then.
- Positive feedback on nighttime lighting and appearance; investment in Stone House supports the historical, cultural and city image goals.
- Sensory Garden considerations/discussion: desire for unobstructed Stone House view, balanced appearance bilaterally; trellis/pergola obscures view of the Stone House and has aesthetic concerns; plantings are low-maintenance perennials; Garden Club has assisted (e.g., sensory garden mulch).
 - Preference to engage Garden Club to discuss redesign or relocation to improve visibility and integration.
- Conclusion:
 - Remaining refurbishment tasks scheduled for spring, aiming to align with “prom season”; consider garden redesign with Garden Club input.

- Topic: Update on Bandshell Renovation
 - Fall start last year to avoid disrupting summer concert series.
 - Metal frame painted; all panels replaced with “Anchor” material to weather well and avoid shrinkage.
 - Back panels retain honeycomb look; side panels are flat to effect better sound characteristics.
 - Remaining work: install new metal roof; clean and seal concrete stage in spring, weather permitting.
 - Conclusion:
 - Target for completion around mid-May, pending weather.
- Topic: Splash Pad vs. Wading Pool and Park Character
 - Description:
 - Discussion on adding/replacing a splash pad relative in a new site or possibly in place of the existing wading pool.
 - Concerns that a splash pad could change the historic feel of the Park.
 - Cost considerations noted; splash pads are expensive.
 - Site ideas mentioned: west side (Manchester Street side) versus current wading pool area.
 - Parking and safety considerations highlighted, especially for young children crossing and increased traffic.
 - Perspective that modernizing amenities could attract broader use; parking remains a recurring citywide issue.
 - Planning board and safety implications: projects may face opposition if parking/traffic impacts are significant.
 - Conclusion:
 - No decision reached; general agreement to preserve the west side footprint on Concord Street; further evaluation may be needed.
- Topic: Manchester Street Side Utilization and Future Ideas
 - Description:

- Manchester side seen as underutilized; currently used regularly by LARPer groups. Flooding in spring creates pools, with rolling terrain and slight incline into woods—design and safety must account for this.
- Discussion of various ideas to enhance usage and aesthetic of both sides of the Park:
 - Enhance walking trails along the river’s edge and expand natural trails (River’s Edge Path valued). Evaluate environmental status (soil, dogs, creosote) and neighbor concerns; potential playground also mentioned.
 - Consider additional athletic fields (“square fields” near boat ramp flats for soccer, football, lacrosse, field hockey) due to citywide shortages.
 - Discussed aging storage buildings and history; potential removal/replacement after new DPW building is built off-site of the Park.
 - Consider a Committee walkabout with Superintendent Conant and possibly Director Fauteux to visualize areas of interest - paths, flats, along the river on the far West side; increased public usage may reduce vandalism and dumping;
 - Consider community cleanup days similar to those organized in Mine Falls.
- Conclusion:
 - No specific plan adopted
- Topic: Master Plan, and Coordination with Community Development
 - Description:
 - Consider developing a multi-year plan (short-term, 1–2 year, and 3–5 year goals).
 - May be better to hire a qualified company/designer to develop an overarching Master Plan for the entire Park.

- Suggest engaging residents, citywide external stakeholders to broaden ideas. Director Sullivan expected to attend next meeting to discuss Master Plan creation.
- Conclusion:
 - Pursue a multi-year plan and consult Director Sullivan and Community Development for Master Plan alignment; on-site walkabouts to inform priorities.
- Topic: Community Gardens Configuration, Season Policy, and Composting
 - Description:
 - Garden plot sizes currently vary widely (10x10, 10x20, 20x20); aim to standardize to 10x10 as larger plot holders relinquish; renumber plots sequentially from 1; waitlist ~30 people annually.
 - Proposal to start season earlier (weather dependent) and relax hard fall harvest cutoff; gardeners support flexibility due to warmer Octobers and crop timelines.
 - Yard waste/dumping area near gardens used for temporary city materials (mulch, tree debris, grass clippings, leaves); explore composting for garden use.
 - Composting is beneficial if properly managed; risks include odor, contaminants, and pests; consider external partners (Grow Nashua/Grow Natural, Garden Club); city liability concerns if city-run; yard waste/grass clippings prohibited in regular trash per RSA.
 - Conclusion:
 - Move toward 10x10 standardization and renumbering; favor season flexibility pending weather; composting requires expert management or partner-led approach; no decision.
- Topic: Funding Strategies, Budget Constraints, ROI, and Field Rentals
 - Description:

- Discussion that every project has cost implications amid tight city budgets and taxpayer sensitivity.
 - Strategy to reduce costs in small increments to meet targets; seek external funding (sponsors, organizations, grants).
- Conclusion:
 - Consider combining city funding with external sources.
- Topic: Jackman Fund (Court-Mandated Trust) Governance and Use
 - Description:
 - Discussion on recent expenditures from the Jackman Fund for park projects (band shell speakers, bathrooms, Stone House) and concern over decreasing balance.
 - Public Works reportedly manages withdrawals; expenditures ≥ \$25,000 must go through finance committee; Parks Superintendent may be expenditure authority; investments pooled in conservative instruments with interest.
 - Conclusion:
 - No final decision; will seek legal and finance clarifications on fund balance, eligible uses, add-on funding, approval workflow, and reporting.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Next meeting April 8th, 2026 at 5:00PM

Submitted by,

Stephanie Ballentine