

Mine Falls Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes – March 2, 2026

Attendees: Bryan Conant, Paula Lochhead, Natlalie Iucci, Andrew Iucci, Matthew Roscoe, Laura Santer, Dave Silva, Lon Hohberger, Mike Sliwa, Steve Kenney, Sherry Dutzy (Conservation Commission Member), Walter (Ben) Davis, Kamal Masand, Justin Hoprich, Kim Gryglik

Guests: Chris Bennett

Call to Order – 7:00 PM

Approval of February Meeting Minutes:

Dave motioned to approve the February Meeting Minutes. Matt seconded this motion. The minutes were unanimously approved without revisions.

Election of 2026 MFPAC Officers

Paula motioned to nominate Steve Kenney as Chair. Kamal seconded this motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Paula motioned to nominate Dave Silva as Vice Chair. Mike seconded this motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Paula motioned to nominate Laura Santer as Secretary. Matt seconded this motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Wood Duck Houses

Chris Bennett, following a recent episode of *NH Chronicle*, asked the committee to approve the construction and installation of two wood duck houses within the park. They could be constructed by local Cub Scouts at no cost to the MFP budget. They would need to be installed during winter months, so either the construction will need to begin quickly (for installation in 2026), or installation could occur in winter 2027. The installation of these houses would help to increase the local wood duck population which would in turn benefit the park's ecosystem. Anecdotaly, Beaver Brook (Hollis) and Horseshoe Pond (Merrimack) have successfully installed similar housing for wood ducks.

Committee members found the proposal to be favorable, but had some important

logistical questions about the location, construction materials, longevity, maintenance, and efficacy. The Oxbow area and nearby 7th St. bridge area were suggested as optimal locations for installation. Chris informed the committee that the houses would need to be cleaned once per year to prevent bees/hornets and to promote ongoing efficacy. Chris will gather more information (and contact potential Cub Scout builders) in time for the committee to vote on this proposal in April.

Oxbow Area and Cove Trail Remediation

The committee continued discussion from last month about their plans to not only clean this area (after the city's sweeping of encampments in December), but to preserve the area for future use by park-goers.

Most immediately, the Cove Trail area and clearing is overgrown with invasive knotweed and bittersweet and also contains significant debris that will need to be removed at the April Trail Day. It was suggested that DPW spread wood chips over the area once cleaned, at least as a temporary measure.

Some sort of fencing is needed at the top of the berm to prevent people from traveling down the slope to the affected area. The committee discussed multiple options including rope or strategic placement of shrubs/other vegetation. The latter would be a better long-term solution, but might also be harder to remove future litter from.

Gate House Updates

Paula will coordinate with Pam Davies to apply for a grant with the Division of Historical Resources for money to conduct an updated study of the Gate House. This study will aid any future grant writing and repairs. In the meantime, the committee will move forward with their recent vote to use MFP funds to repair the soffits on the Gate House. Due to the substantial cost of repairs, they will need further approval from the Finance Committee and the Board of Public Works. It should be specified in the scope of work that the soffits need to be replaced with the roof (not just the roof, as was done previously).

MFP Website

Lon has created a landing page for MFP which includes links to Facebook, Instagram, and the city website. It will also include a link for volunteers to sign up for trail days and become part of a mailing list. This landing page will be accessible via a QR code on the new table cloth (Bryan will order). It was suggested that the google form for volunteers also contains a question gauging interest in Gate House tours, visitation, etc.. This would allow the committee to better advocate for future grant funding by demonstrating significant and sustained interest in the Gate House.

Trail Day Planning and Misc. Requests

Steve suggested having the city buy people counters for MPFAC to install at various entrances to the park. This would help to track how many people are using the park, as well as identify popular entrances and days/times.

Future Trail Day Projects

- Cleaning of Oxbow/Cove Trail area (top priority)
- Knotweed removal
- Canal clean-up using kayaks
- Purple Trail remediation and possible re-routing

Adjournment – 8:13 PM