

**City of Ellsworth**  
1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605

**RECREATION COMMISSION**

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 5:00 pm

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 5:23 pm.

**Members Present:** Chair Eric Marichal, Vice Chair Kathy Young, April Clifford, Kim Fitch, Josh Frost.

**Members Absent:** Courtney Bunker, Daron Goldstein, City Councilor Robert Miller.

**Staff Present:** City Planner Elena Piekut (Staff Liaison), Public Works Director Lisa Sekulich

City Planner Piekut and Chair Eric Marichal reported that Courtney Bunker had just sent an email of resignation.

**2. Adoption of April 12, 2022 Special Meeting and April 19, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Vice Chair Kathy Young moved to approve the April 12, 2022 special meeting and April 19, 2022 regular meeting minutes as written. Josh Frost seconded. Vote: U/A.

**3. Quorum/Attendance Discussion – Chair**

The Chair led the group in a discussion of potential ways to resolve issues with attendance and a quorum at scheduled meetings. Suggestions included: reducing meeting frequency and/or skipping summer and winter holiday months, a meeting time during the workday, reducing the number of seats on the Commission, adopting a remote meetings policy to allow hybrid or fully remote meetings, and clarifying the role and purposes of the Commission to attract and retain volunteers. City Planner Elena Piekut will review the remote meetings policy used by the Planning Board for adaptation to this Commission and assist the Chair in bringing forward potential amendments to Chapter 31.

**4. Role of Public Works Department in Parks & Recreation – Public Works Director Lisa Sekulich**

Public Works Director Lisa Sekulich provided an overview of how the Public Works Department (Highway, Water, Wastewater, Transfer Station, Harbor) currently functions with regard to parks and recreation facilities and maintenance. Discussion included:

- Dog waste bags on rail trail. Director Sekulich indicated it might be possible to provide bags for the existing receptacles. She gave an example of how the number of receptacles for trash influence behavior of users, with less trash accumulating if there are fewer receptacles.
- Volunteers. In past years Recreation Commission and other volunteers along with YMCA and Little League leadership oversaw setup/maintenance/take down of elements such as the Knowlton Park ice rink, basketball court sound curtains, and baseball fields. These volunteers have mostly dwindled with duties taken over by City Public Works staff.
- City has hired cleaners for some facilities; even tasks like replenishing paper goods does not have assigned staff.

- Addressing complaints or concerns. Chair Eric Marichal asked how best to direct residents to address issues with parks and facilities. Director Sekulich encourages the public to use the Fix It ticket system on the City website.
- Parks & Recreation Department. April Clifford led a discussion and provided history on the Commission's research into and advocacy for a Parks & Recreation Department, which included seeking advice from similar communities. Director Sekulich said she is advocating for addressing the need and suggested overseeing an employee of her own with the goal of establishing a Department once that person is established. She offered to attend Commission meetings to assist if this is something they will be working on. City Planner Piekut suggested starting by outlining the current structures and expenses and figuring out whether the goal is for new staff to focus on facilities or programming. Discussion ensued regarding conflicts in scheduling fields and spaces like Harbor Park and Knowlton Park, long-term maintenance of projects initially taken on outside the City, and the programming funds currently budgeted to outside organizations like the YMCA. Director Sekulich also brought up the contracted landscaping work taken on in the urban area by an older couple who may be nearing retirement.
- Comprehensive Plan. City Planner Piekut that there will be a role for the Recreation Commission in the Comprehensive Planning process as facilities, utilities, and services are addressed.

Josh Frost left the meeting at 6:03 pm.

#### **5. Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Update – City Planner Elena Piekut**

City Planner Piekut reported that the budget was approved as proposed with the exception of the “Power” line for Demeyer Fields, which was reduced to \$1,000 from \$5,000 in prior years and \$7,500 recommended. This occurred at a workshop where Recreation was not represented. She said discussion at Council seemed to indicate fixtures had been replaced, resulting in cost savings; Director Sekulich clarified that lights that had fallen down were not replaced.

#### **6. Staff Comments**

No other comments.

#### **7. Member Comments**

Chair Marichal will convene a committee to work on holiday events. City Planner Piekut will review a remote meetings policy. The July meeting may be rescheduled to a special meeting based on earlier discussion.

#### **8. Adjournment**

Vice Chair Kathy Young moved to adjourn at 6:11 pm. April Clifford seconded. Vote: U/A.