

City of Ellsworth
Planning Board Workshop Minutes
Wednesday, January 4, 2022 5:30 PM

Chair John DeLeo, Vice-Chair Rick Lyles, Secretary Nelson Geel, Members Marc Rich and Molly Friedland, and Alternate Members Patrick Lyons attended the regular meeting of the Ellsworth Planning Board. Alternate Member Michael Hangge was absent.

City Planner Matthew Williams and Code Enforcement Officer (“CEO”) Lori Roberts attended the meeting.

1.) Call to Order

Chair DeLeo called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

2.) Adoption of Minutes from the December 1, 2022 regular meeting. Vice Chair Lyles moved to adopt the minutes. Member Rich seconded. Motion was approved by unanimous vote (5-0).

3.) Election of Officers.

Vice Chair Lyles moved to appoint Chair DeLeo as Chair, Secretary Geel seconded the motion. Chair DeLeo was approved by unanimous vote (5-0 with DeLeo abstaining).

Chair DeLeo moved to name Vice-Chair Lyles again as Vice-Chair, Secretary Geel seconded the motion. Vice-Chair Lyles was approved by unanimous vote (4-0 with Vice-Chair Lyles abstaining).

Chair DeLeo moved to name Secretary Geel again as Secretary, Member Friedland seconded the motion. Secretary Geel was approved by unanimous vote (4-0 with Secretary Geel abstaining).

4.) Review 2023 Planning Board Schedule.

Chair DeLeo confirmed with City Planner Williams that all meetings would be on the first Wednesday of the month with the exception of July’s meeting due to the Independence Day holiday.

Chair DeLeo then confirmed with City Planner Williams the dates of the TRT meetings.

Chair DeLeo stated that there was no action needed on the schedule.

5.) Proposed amendments to Chapter 56 Unified Development Ordinance, Article 3 Zoning Districts, Article 6 Site Development Review, Article 8 Performance Standards, and Article 14 Definitions. The proposed amendments refine existing permitted use categories, major use site plan development review applicability thresholds, performance standards, and/or definitions, primarily as they related to stand-alone solar energy systems.

Six board members present

Two staff members present

Call to Order

Adoption of minutes

Election of Officers

Review 2023 Planning Board Schedule

Proposed Amendments to Chapter 56 Unified Development Ordinance

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City Planner Williams asked the Board if there were any changes that they wanted to the amendments before they were presented to City Council. Alternate Member Lyons asked if there were any public comments after the mailings went out. City Planner Williams confirmed that there were none.

Chair DeLeo opened public comment at 5:39. There was no members of the public in attendance. Chair DeLeo closed public comment at 5:39.

Vice Chair Lyles moved to present the four amendments to Chapter 56 to City Council. Member Rich seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote (5-0).

Vice-Chair Lyles asked Planner Williams when the amendments would be proposed, Williams said on the January 9th City Council Meeting.

6.) Comprehensive Plan Update

City Planner Williams told the Board that the RFP packets went out that day and he hopes that some proposals come in soon. Questions are due by January 18th and Proposals are due by February 22nd.

City Planner Williams stated that they need to select members for the Steering Committee, said they already have two Board members and two Council members and hopes that by the end of this week he will advertise to the public opening it up for participation. Williams explained the application process for public participants and told the Board they would review applications and interview potential candidates before voting to approve members of the public to the Steering Committee. Williams recommended having a second meeting next month to review and vote on applicants.

The Board asked about how many members will be on the Committee, Williams said ideally 12 people. Vice Chair Lyles asked about subcommittees and if any other members of the Planning Board can be on the subcommittees, City Planner Williams said that he hopes they will be. Vice Chair Lyles asked how many subcommittees there were, City Planner Williams said there were about 12.

Vice Chair Lyles made a comment about the RFP stating that there was a reference to 2022 which he thought was supposed to say 2023. City Planner Williams confirmed he was correct and would replace the version of the RFP on the website.

Vice Chair Lyles asked about whether there was a target end date, Williams stated that there wasn't one in the RFP and that it should be 2035 but that could be too long of a time period. Lyles suggested that is something that the Steering Committee can discuss. Member Rich said that he does not believe there should be an end date because there are many variables that can impact the Comprehensive Plan. Vice Chair Lyles and Secretary Geel discussed how it was important to have an end date on the Comprehensive Plan but

**Public Comment
Opened and Closed**

**Motion to
recommend the
proposed
amendments to
Council was
APPROVED**

**Comprehensive
Plan Update**

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that it must be updated every 10 years which can accommodate any changes to Ellsworth's structure, population, etc.

Member Friedland brought up the fact that this comprehensive plan has not been updated since 2004. The Board discussed reasons why it was delayed and possible solutions to ensuring that the Comprehensive Plan is updated every 10 years without delay. The Board agreed that there were some aspects of the Plan which need to be on a timeline and there are some aspects which can be long-term and putting an end date on the Comprehensive Plan doesn't mean that the Board cannot plan for those long-term projects.

Vice Chair Lyles asked if there was any way that the application for public participation could look less imposing because it looks very imposing at the moment. Lyles also asked that there was a due date on the application and any cover letter that goes with it. City Planner Williams agreed. Lyles also asked if City Planner Williams could make it clear on the application that this is a multi-year commitment.

Vice Chair Lyles asked how City Planner Williams planned to get the application out to the public. City Planner Williams said it will be posted on the City's website and Facebook page and he will also be reaching out to some groups he knows would be interested. City Planner Williams stated there will not be a mailing for this application since it was not budgeted.

Alternate Member Lyons asked if he could be on a subcommittee even though he is not a full member, City Planner Williams said he could. Vice Chair Lyles stated that he thought it would be beneficial to know which subcommittees the members would want to be on.

Member Friedland asked City Planner Williams if he had resources from Ellsworth that have helped him in this process. Williams stated that there are not many resources from the last time the Comprehensive Plan was completed. However, he does have some resources from other municipalities and previous planners who took actions related to the Comprehensive Plan. Member Friedland suggested that he document the process very well so that when this process is gone through again, there will be a more definitive process.

Secretary Geel then asked about the Ethics training which is included in the packet. City Planner Williams said that he wanted this included since there will be members of the public on the Steering Committee who will not have had any ethics training. The Board discussed possible trainings that the Committee members and Planning Board members could participate in. Secretary Geel stated that he thinks this should be mandatory for Committee members and Board members. The Board agreed that the ethics course is a good idea and they fully support it.

7.) Staff Comments

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Chair DeLeo asked if City Planner Williams has started looking for an Assistant, he stated that there are several interviews scheduled and they hope to have someone hired by the end of the month.

City Planner Williams asked the Board if they wanted to pick a date to select the members of the public to the Steering Committee. The Board decided on February 15th at 5:30PM.

8.) Adjournment

Vice-Chair Lyles moved to adjourn, Chair DeLeo seconded, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote (5-0).

**Vote to adjourn at
6:16 PM**

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Littlefield, Administrative Assistant.

Date

**Nelson Geel, Secretary
Ellsworth Planning Board**

*Agendas and minutes
posted on the City of
Ellsworth's website:
ellsworthmaine.gov
A video transcript of
this meeting is also
available on
YouTube.*