

**City of Ellsworth**  
1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605  
**RECREATION COMMISSION**  
Special Meeting  
Tuesday, April 25 at 8:30 a.m.

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Marichal called the meeting to order at 8:32AM.

**Members Present:** Chair Eric Marichal, Vice-Chair Kathy Young, Members Jon Stein, Kim Fitch, Josh Frost, and Melinda Workman

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Matthew Williams, City Planner. Elizabeth Littlefield, Assistant City Planner.

**2. Adoption of March 21, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes**

Vice-Chair Young moved to accept the minutes as written. Member Workman seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt the March 21, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes was UNANIMOUS (5-0).** (Member Frost was not yet present at the meeting, making the voting body 5 members).

**3. Discussion and action on establishing a Remote Participation Policy**

City Planner Williams explained that the Commission needed to choose which reasons are acceptable for remote participation. He also asked that if any member of the Commission were to want to participate remotely, that they would let him know 24 hours in advance if at all possible. Vice-Chair Young asked how this would impact the public's participation in the meetings. Williams said that if one of the meetings were to have remote participation by a member that it would be sent out to the public that they are able to participate online as well. He said that the public would need advanced notice of the remote meeting, which is why he would need advance notice of the need for a remote meeting. The group determined that the conditions for remote participation will be as follows: (1) out of area travel; (2) inclement weather; (3) illness; or (4) unforeseen circumstances approved by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

Vice-Chair Young moved to accept the Remote Participation Policy with the above stated conditions. Member Fitch seconded the motion. **The motion to accept the Remote Participation Policy with the above stated conditions was UNANIMOUS (5-0).**

**4. Discussion and action on Changes to Chapter 31 Recreation Commission Ordinance**

City Planner Williams then began the discussion regarding the changes to the Recreation Commission's Ordinance. The major change is that the number of members is going from 9 to 7. Williams mentioned that no other board has 9 members, and it has been very difficult to maintain a quorum for each meeting given the members' availabilities. He stated that the new quorum will be 4 members instead of 5, which would help alleviate that issue. Vice-Chair Young asked if there would still be two alternates on the Commission. Williams said that this was up to the Commission, explaining that some other boards have alternate members so as to avoid the issue of not having a quorum. The Commission agreed that the current 6 members are active and should all get a vote on the Commission. Member Stein asked why the staggering information is still in the ordinance. Williams explained that this was a historical reference which will be used to determine the end dates of each member's term on the Commission.

Member Fitch moved to accept the changes to Chapter 31 Recreation Commission Ordinance and recommend to Council that they approve the changes. Vice-Chair Young seconded the motion. **The motion to accept the changes to Chapter 31 Recreation Commission Ordinance and recommend to Council that they approve the changes was UNANIMOUS (6-0).**

Member Stein asked what the next step was in this process. City Planner Williams said that the Ordinance change would be on the May agenda for City Council. Chair Marichal said that they would need to also start looking for a new member.

## **5. Determination of date for Tour of Recreation Assets in Ellsworth**

City Planner Williams then asked the group when they would like to do their tour of all of the Recreational Assets in Ellsworth. Vice-Chair Young asked if they could do it at the regularly scheduled meeting time. Williams said that they could do this, however they would need to give public notice of the tour regardless of the date. Williams then went through his list of all of the parks in town, then the walking trails, then the sports fields. Member Fitch suggested that the group also go see Branch Pond off of the Red Bridge Road as that is a place also used for recreation. Vice-Chair Young said that they should also go and see the pickle ball courts.

Vice-Chair Young then pointed that that the Commission should be pushing these locations out to the public more and ensuring that they know about all of the different recreational opportunities that Ellsworth has to offer. Member Stein then suggested that the group go to some non-city owned facilities that are used for recreation. Stein suggested Birdsacre, Woodlawn, Jordan Homestead, Frenchman bay Conservancy trails, and Whitney Field. Chair Marichal suggested looking at some city-owned undeveloped land as well. City Planner Williams said that these were all good ideas, and perhaps there will need to be multiple days of touring to accomplish all of this.

Vice-Chair Young suggested that the group conduct their tour on their next regularly scheduled meeting which is May 16<sup>th</sup>. City Planner Williams said that they could do this. Chair Marichal said that he could try and obtain a 15-passenger van and drive the group around to the different locations. Marichal asked Williams how long this tour would take. Williams said that he would come up with an initial itinerary and figure out an estimate of how long the tour would take. Marichal suggested that Williams invite City Staff on the tour with the group. Member Frost asked if there could be a list of questions or things to look at for each location. Marichal said that he could make a checklist for each location and send it out to the group.

## **6. Discussion of the City's Capital Improvements Budget and the Impacts on Recreation.**

There was some discussion between Member Stein and City Planner Williams regarding the City's Capital Improvement budgets for the next few years. There was some discussion around the possibility of money being put aside for a Recreation Department. Williams said that he will reach out to Manager Moshier for some clarification and report back to the group.

## **7. Long-Term Projects**

Vice-Chair Young said that she would like to see the addition of a dog park in the City, as well as more maintenance on the existing recreational assets throughout the City. Member Workman said that she

would like to see the addition of a handicapped swing at Knowlton Park, as well as having the walking paths evened out. Member Fitch said she would like to see the addition of playground equipment at Harbor Park. Chair Marichal noted that a mountain bike park would be a great addition to the City, noting how many people bring their bikes with them when they come here for vacation. Young said that she would like to add some bike paths at Woodlawn as well. Marichal also brought up disc golf, noting that its popularity is rising. He mentioned that this may be a good asset for Ellsworth. Fitch asked if there was a possibility of acquiring kayaks or other water equipment and then renting them out to people as a revenue generator. Workman noted that the liability insurance on something like that would be very high and it may be better to have a business come in and do that instead of the City. Member Stein said that he would like to see more wayfinding signage pointing out all of the Recreational Assets. City Planner Williams said that this was in the works already through a different Commission. Young asked if there were any grants that could be sought after to help pay for any of these ideas. Williams said that he would look into possible grants that would be applicable.

## 8. Staff Comments

City Planner Williams brought up the issue of bathrooms at Knowlton Park. He said that usually there are portable toilets installed at the Park in the wintertime when the ice rink is in use. However, this year, Williams said the ice rink was not put up and therefore no toilets were ordered. He also stated that the earliest the Facilities Manager could get the water turned on in the bathrooms was the beginning of May. Member Frost brought up adding some portable toilets to the basketball court off of Forest Ave, Williams said that he would look into this.

## 9. Member Comments

Member Workman said that Knowlton Park has an issue with parking and noise, bringing up several instances last year when neighbors around the Park complained. Workman is also a neighbor to the park, giving her firsthand knowledge of these instances. City Planner Williams said that these concerns were more centered on public safety and traffic which would be best for the City Manager or City Council to address. Williams suggested that Workman attend a City Council meeting and bring up these issues.

Vice-Chair Young asked about the regulations surrounding Food Trucks, asking specifically if they are allowed in Ellsworth. City Planner Williams said that they are allowed and the business owner would need to obtain permits from the Code Enforcement Office and the City Clerk's Office. Young then brought up the fact that Ellsworth does not have an Animal Control office. Young said that she has written to the City Manager stating her opinion that the Police Department does not do anything in terms of Animal Control and that there needs to be a separate department. Williams and Chair Marichal said that this is another issue for the City Council to address.

## 10. Adjournment

Member Stein moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Fitch seconded the motion. **The vote to adjourn the meeting at 9:52AM was UNANIMOUS (6-0).**