

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 22, 2023 5:30 PM

Chair Brian Langley, Vice-Chair Jennifer Sala, and Members John DeLeo, Rick Lyles, Casey Hanson, Jon Stein, Nick Turner, Paul Markosian, Eric Marichal, Erin Witham, and Levi Rogers were present. Member Nancy Smith was absent.

Eleven members present

City Planner Matthew Williams and Assistant City Planner Elizabeth Littlefield attended the meeting.

Two staff members present

1.) Call to Order

Chair Langley called the meeting to order at 5:31PM.

Call to Order

2.) Introductions and Housekeeping

Keri Ouellette from BerryDunn, LLC joined the meeting via Zoom.
Member Witham joined the meeting via Zoom.

Introductions & Housekeeping

3.) Adoption of Minutes from the April 24, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Member DeLeo moved to adopt the minutes as written. Member Lyles seconded the motion. **The motion to approve the above stated minutes as written was UNANIMOUS (11-0).**

Adoption of Minutes

ADOPTED

4.) Discussion and Action of Resignation of Levi Rogers (accepting job offer out of state).

Chair Langley opened the public hearing at 5:36PM. Langley asked for a motion to accept Member Rogers' resignation before discussion. Member Lyles moved to accept his resignation. Member Markosian seconded the motion. Chair Langley asked Member Rogers to discuss his resignation. Rogers stated that he had the opportunity for a new job out of state and it was a great opportunity which his family could not pass up. The Commission wished him luck and showed their support of his decision.

Levi Rogers Resignation Public Hearing Opened

Member Stein asked City Planner Williams if there was going to be a new application period to fill Member Rogers' spot. Williams said that if there were more open spots, they will open the application again to the public. Williams noted that eleven members is still a large enough group to conduct their business.

Chair Langley asked for a vote on the previous motion. **The vote to accept the resignation of Levi Rogers was UNANIMOUS (11-0).** Chair Langley closed the Public Hearing at 5:40PM.

ACCEPTED Public Hearing Closed

5.) Update and Discussion on Public Engagement Tools and Activities

City Planner Williams began by discussion possible tools and activities for public engagement. First, Williams began by explaining the Social Pinpoint website that Berry Dunn has created for the Comprehensive Plan process. Williams said that there has been some promotion of the site on the City's website and at the Library Open House earlier this month. Williams explained how the Open House event went and the type of feedback that they received. Williams said that there were some people who attended the Library

Public Engagement Discussion

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Open House who signed up to be on the email list, and he entered those into the Social Pinpoint website. Member Marichal asked if the comments left on the Social Pinpoint site are anonymous. Williams said that the site does ask for some information, however that is not posted on the site for everyone to see. Keri Ouellette reiterated that the email is not public, it is only used for tracking on the back-end. Member Turner tried to use the QR code and said that he had some issues. A few members of the group tried to use it and ran into the same issue. Ouellette said that she would look into this issue and get an updated QR Code to the Staff.

City Planner Williams then went on to discuss the Ellsworth Pride Event taking place on June 11th. Williams asked for volunteers to sit at the table with him during the event. Williams confirmed that the hours of the event were 11:30-4. Williams asked if there was a volunteer for an 11:30-1:30 window and a 1:30-4 window. There were some members of the group who are going to be participating in the event in other capacities so they were unable. Member Witham said that she could volunteer in the afternoon. Vice-Chair Sala said that she could volunteer in the morning if she could get out of a prior engagement. Chair Langley asked how many of the promotional half-sheets were available. Williams said that we could print as many as was needed. Williams also asked the group to wait to hand out the sheets until the QR code was fixed.

Member Marichal asked about the Chamber of Commerce dinner being held on June 1st. City Planner Williams said that the group is not on the program for the evening, however he and some other members will be in attendance so there will be representation. Williams said that the promotional sheets will be available at the event for members to hand out. Member Turner said that the QR Code is on the slide show at the Grand and he will check to see if the slide show will be played at the Chamber event on that evening. Chair Langley said that this event will have a lot of key stakeholders so it is an important event to attend and promote the Comprehensive Plan.

City Planner Williams said that he and Staff were preparing for Berry Dunn's visit to Ellsworth taking place in June. He said for that visit, he will be setting up meetings with key stakeholders and groups around the City to give input on the process. Williams said that he will be scheduling those meetings this week to provide a list to Berry Dunn. Williams then went on to tell the group that he and Staff had a meeting with the Director of Economic Development Richards for the City and her consultants who are working on an update to the Business Attraction Plan. Williams explained what Richards' Plan will be focusing on and said that there was talk about collaboration between the two plans since there is some of the same issues discussed. Williams said that those consultants were planning on being in Ellsworth sometime in July and there will be a joint meeting with the public and the two groups. Williams said that the focus of this meeting would be on "quality of life" in Ellsworth, meaning topics like housing, transportation, and economic development. Chair Langley asked if the Business Attraction Plan is a separate plan from the Comprehensive Plan. Williams said that they were and they are going through the process at the same time as the Comprehensive Plan. Member Hanson said that there was some discussion at the beginning of this process that it was convenient that they were happening at the same time. Langley asked if Berry Dunn was planning on using the

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information in the Business Attraction Plan. Keri Ouellette said that the timing works out well and that Berry Dunn will be working with the consultants to share information. Williams said that he was not sure yet of the date or location of this meeting, however he will share that with the group once he has that information.

City Planner Williams then went on to talk about Subcommittees and asked the group how they wanted to set them up. Williams asked if the group wanted to hold any public forums before the “Open-House” event, or wait until they see what kind of interest they get from the event. Williams said that there were some topics that could be discussed beforehand since he is sure those will be big-ticket issues. Member Marichal said that he thought it would be better to go into the subcommittee process with more guidance on what the citizens of Ellsworth want to discuss, that way the group can be more prepared. Member Lyles said that he thought the group should leave the topics open ended at the moment to see where the citizens guide the conversation to. Williams said that the group will wait on starting the subcommittee process until after the Open House on 6/16.

6.) Discussion regarding Kick-Off “Open House” Event.

Kick-Off Event

Member Lyles asked what is going to be happened at the June 16th event. City Planner Williams said that the event will be in the Parklet. Lyles asked if Berry Dunn will be present for the event, Williams said that they would be. Williams said that the event will take place from 11am to 1pm in order to take advantage of the people walking by to get lunch. Member Markosian asked what the plan was in case of rain. Williams said that he was not sure yet and asked Member Turner if the Grand would be available as a rain location. Turner said that the Grand would be available on that date and could be used as a rain location. Williams said he will coordinate with Turner as the event gets closer and the forecast is more accurate. Williams said he will be sending an email to the group asking who would be available to table at the event. Once he has that information, Staff will come up with organize the tables and assign members to each table.

Chair Langley said that he has an interest in the Marine Resources Subcommittee and he was considering hosting a Saturday Morning talk at this restaurant to discuss those topics in a setting that overlooks the river. Langley encouraged other members to think of similar ideas for their subcommittees.

City Planner Williams said that at the June 16th event, Staff will create poster board for each chapter with some information on those chapters. Williams also said that there will be index cards at each table for people to write down ideas/hopes for Ellsworth in the next 10 years. There will also be sign-ups for the individual subcommittees at the event. Williams said there will be a door prize and raffle at the event in hopes of getting more participation. Chair Langley asked if Berry Dunn could provide some information on what was in Ellsworth’s 2004 plan to use as examples during the event. Williams said that Assistant City Planner Littlefield is already working on booklets for each chapter which will contain that information as well as some projects that Ellsworth has already done regarding the chapter. Williams said that those would be available at the event as well. Keri Ouellette also said that Woodard and Curran will be at the event and will be able to give a lot of information about Ellsworth’s infrastructure. Member Lyles said that it is important to have a clear

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mission of what the group will tell the public at these events. Williams said that the group could include a table that is an introduction to Comprehensive Plans in general so that the public is aware of what the purpose of this process is.

City Planner Williams said that earlier that day, Staff and some members of the Committee had an interview with the Ellsworth American about the Plan and the event. He said that there is also going to be a press release that also gives that information. The group discussed other ways of possibly getting the word out so more members of the public will attend the event and provide feedback. Williams said that he will be attending two public engagement events in Bar Harbor this week to see how they are conducting their events and get some ideas for Ellsworth. Member Lyles thought that this was a good idea, however he reminded the group that Bar Harbor is farther in their Comprehensive Plan process than Ellsworth so the events would be more tailored to their plan. Vice-Chair Sala said that she was planning to attend a lunch with Friends in Action to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and get some feedback. Williams said that he would be interested in joining Sala at one of those lunches. Lyles suggested that the group go to more housing developments and complexes throughout the City to try and get feedback from residents who would not otherwise come to an event. Chair Langley suggested publishing a notice in the “yard sale” section of the newspaper as many more people read that section than the notices section. The group went on to suggest other groups that could be reached out to for feedback.

City Planner Williams asked the group if they had any more questions regarding the event. Member Witham confirmed that date of the event, Williams confirmed that it was on June 16th at 11AM. Member Lyles asked if the Committee were going to be meeting with Berry Dunn during their visit. Williams said that they would meet at the kick-off event and that the consultants will be meeting with a lot of stakeholders and groups around the City. Member Turner said that he could promote the Kick-Off event on the Grand digital sign. Williams said he would appreciate that and he will send him some language for the sign. Lyles asked if there was a list of people who Berry Dunn will be meeting with. Williams said that he provided a list to Berry Dunn of about 40 different groups that they could potentially meet with and he will share it with the group as well. Chair Langley suggested setting up tables outside of grocery stores with information. Langley also suggested reaching out to various radio stations. Williams said that these are ideas that Staff has already discussed and they will be implementing them throughout the process. Langley asked Ouellette how many people would be a good target to shoot for during this event. Ouellette said that it was very dependent on the community, and typically survey responses are around 2-5%. Ouellette also said that it was dependent on the types of public engagement used. Ouellette also said that the public engagement is going to be started earlier in the process to accommodate for the summertime change in population.

7.) Public Comments

Rachel Yves was present and wished to comment. Yves asked if the Berry Dunn was going to use the information contained in the Asset Map done by Heart of Ellsworth. City Planner Williams said that the report was given to Berry Dunn and they will review the information.

Public Comments

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Molly Haswell was also present at the meeting and wished to comment. Haswell asked about the amount of participation that Ouellette was discussing. Ouellette reiterated that it varies and the 2-5% figure that she gave was only based on survey responses. She said that the figure does not take all public engagement strategies into account. Member Witham suggested reaching out to Hancock County Planning Commission to see if they have some figures on regular participation rates since they are involved in many different Comprehensive Plans around the County. Haswell asked if there were any targets for Ellsworth's participation. Ouellette said that they do not have a figure that they are looking for, they are trying to get as much participation as possible. Member Lyles said that the group is focused on reaching members of the public who do not ordinarily show up to meetings and events like this. Haswell said that it is important for the group to convey the importance of this project to encourage people to participate. She said that the group needs to convey the stakes upfront so the citizens would be more inclined to provide feedback.

8.) Staff Comments

The group discussed other places that Staff could reach out to in order to promote the kick-off event.

There were no other comments from Staff.

9.) Adjournment

Member Markosian made a motion to adjourn. Member Turner seconded the motion. Chair Langley adjourned the meeting at 6:31PM.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Littlefield, Assistant City Planner.

Staff Comments

**Meeting adjourned
at 6:31PM**

*Agendas and minutes
posted on the City of
Ellsworth's website:
ellsworthmaine.gov*