

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

RECREATION COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, July 18 at 8:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order

Chair Marichal called the meeting to order at 8:30AM.

Members Present: Chair Eric Marichal, Vice-Chair Kathy Young, Member Kim Fitch, Member Melinda Workman, Member Jon Stein

Members Absent: Member Josh Frost

Staff Present: Matthew Williams, City Planner; Elizabeth Ouellette, Assistant City Planner.

2. Adoption of June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Member Fitch moved to accept the minutes from the June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes. Member Workman seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt the June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes was UNANIMOUS (5-0).**

*The Commission voted to move agenda item #5 to the beginning of the agenda due to time constraints or the presenter.

5. Ellsworth Rotary Club Project at Demeyer Field

Debbie Ehrlenbach, the President of the Rotary Club was present. The Rotary Club meets on Tuesday evenings at China Hill. Ehrlenbach said that she attended the Recreation Commission to see if there was some sort of project planned that the Rotary Club could assist with in the near future. Ehrlenbach explained that next year is the 50th anniversary of the Rotary Club giving the City the land which now houses the Demeyer Field complex. To celebrate this, the Rotary Club would like to participate in a project around the City. The project could be at the Demeyer field complex, or somewhere else around the City. Ehrlenbach said that there will be a committee looking into options, but asked the Recreation Commission to keep the Rotary Club in mind should any opportunities arise. City Planner Williams said that he and the Commission will brainstorm some ideas and get approval from the City Manager for a project. Vice-Chair Young asked Ehrlenbach if there was any budget set aside for this project. Ehrlenbach said that they did not have one in mind, however there are many grants that they can go after to help fund projects. Member Stein asked Ehrlenbach what the group's mission was, thinking that the Commission could find a project that relates to their mission. Member Fitch said that it was "service above self." Ehrlenbach said that anything that benefitted the community would be in line with their mission.

3. Discussion regarding Part 2 of Recreational Assets Tour

Chair Marichal asked if there was a date decided on during the last meeting. City Planner Williams said that there was not as there were not many members present at the last meeting. Marichal expresses his support of doing a second round of site visits, which the group agreed with. Marichal asked if the Commission should schedule the second tour for their next meeting. Williams said they could choose to do that or hold a special meeting on another day. Member Fitch recommended holding a special meeting and then discussing the tour on the next regularly scheduled meeting. Marichal asked if August 8th would work for the group, starting at 8am and going until 10am. The group said that that would work for them. Vice-Chair Young asked if Marichal could obtain a van again, he said that he could. Williams said that everyone will meet at City hall and he will get a schedule put together and sent out.

4. Update on Search for Additional Member

City Planner Williams said that the Communications Specialist for the City has posted the opening on our website and on our Facebook page. He said there was also a press release. He said that there are no applications as of yet. Chair Marichal asked about someone who had expressed interest in the past. Williams said that he has reached out to that person to see if they are still interested. Member Stein said that he believes that person is still interested and he will also reach out. Vice-Chair Young asked if there was anyone from the Rotary who would be interested in joining. Williams said that he will reach out and ask.

5. Ellsworth Rotary Club Project at Demeyer Field – Continuation of Discussion

Chair Marichal began by discussing the type of project that would be best for the Rotary Club to participate in. Marichal noted that the only projects at Demeyer Field are grass repair and the Club would likely want a project more exciting. City Planner Williams said that the Commission could ask if the Club would be interested in owning some of the structures at the fields like the bleachers or dug out, which are in need of replacement. Williams said that something physical that the Club could put their name on may be a more appealing option. Marichal suggested also that the Club could put something at Harbor Park as well. Williams said that the Commission should pick something that they know the Club can achieve relatively easily. Vice-Chair Young said that if the project was going to add any more structures, the Club and Commission would need to consider long-term maintenance of those structures. Young noted that there are many assets around Ellsworth that are already not maintained, and the Commission should be weary of adding any more.

Member Stein suggested that the Club be involved in some annual event, like a winter holiday event or something new. Vice-Chair Young noted that Woodlawn is looking to start a corn-hole tournament and that the Rotary Club could help with the purchase of that equipment. City Planner Williams asked how much the equipment costs. Young said that each set of corn-hole boards would cost around \$200. Young also noted that the Rotary Club could put a logo on the boards as extra advertising. Chair Marichal said that Merrill Park needs some work, however Member Fitch noted that Heart of Ellsworth is working on a project in that Park. Fitch thought that it would be a good idea to recognize the 50th anniversary of the land being transferred, but to have the actual project be at Harbor Park since there is a big need. Marichal suggested possibly a playground at the Harbor, noting that there is only one that is not associated with a school. Young said that in order to do anything at the Harbor, the Commission would need to speak with the Harbor Commission and coordinate the project. Fitch also suggested that the Commission coordinate with the Partners of the Union River organization. Marichal said that they should ask Member Frost (absent) if he had any ideas since he is the most familiar with what is needed around Ellsworth. Williams said that during the second asset tour, the group can consider projects as they visit different locations. Williams also said that the group can discuss this further at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

6. Member Comments

Member Fitch began by giving an update on the Waterfront Concert Series, noting that there has been a great turnout and there have been several people who just drive by and see it is going on and then attend. Fitch did note that there is an issue with food vendors asking if they could attend the Series to sell food, since there is a taco truck at the Harbor already. City Planner Williams said that the Commission would need to see if the contract with the taco truck was exclusive or not before any other food vendor could be allowed to sell food. Fitch told the group that the concerts are on Fridays at 6pm, weather permitting.

Member Fitch then went on to give an update on the movies at Knowlton Park, saying that there will be 2 in July and 2 in August. Fitch said the first movie in July had an attendance of 87 people, and The Grand sold concessions themselves. Fitch noted that the Park was not mowed properly and the area was really buggy, which led some people to leave the movie early. Member Workman said that the Park needed to be treated

and sprayed for bugs before the next movie. Fitch said that the next movie is this week and they are expecting a good turnout again, noting that several families brought picnics to the last one and made an entire evening out of it. Chair Marichal asked if The Grand had purchased the movie equipment or if it was just rented. Fitch said that The Grand had purchased the screen and the projector. Vice-Chair Young asked if the screen could be used in the winter, noting that Woodlawn would be able to use it during their Ice Festival. Fitch said that the equipment would be able to be used in the winter.

Member Fitch then gave an update on the music festival at Knowlton Park, noting that it was a really cool event that was a big draw for people. Fitch noted how many different food trucks were there, saying that was something that attracted so many people. Member Workman said that they managed the noise of the event very well. Member Stein said that there was a great turnout, about 100 people attended the event throughout the day. Vice-Chair Young asked if the event was going to become an annual thing. Stein said that the people who threw the event would like to come back again next year. Member Workman complained that there was one food truck that looked like it was selling alcohol, even though it was not. Workman noted that she would have liked that truck to be farther away from any of the children who attended the event.

Vice-Chair Young told the group that the Library had a band come and play in their outside area, which was well attended. Young noted that the event was on the same day as an event for The Grand, which made it difficult to attend both. Young said that there should be some sort of calendar, at least shared internally, where all of the groups in the City can put their events on. She said that this would prevent any overlap. Young said that either the Chamber or the Heart of Ellsworth could facilitate the calendar since they are both involved with many different businesses and groups around Ellsworth. Member Stein noted that the Communications Subcommittee wants to create a City calendar and said that maybe this event calendar could be a part of that.

Member Workman made a comment about the Knowlton Park splash pad and the hours it operates. Assistant Planner Ouellette said that she has spoken to the Administrative Coordinator for the Public Works Department and is looking into the topic. Chair Marichal asked City Planner Williams for an update on the broken playground equipment at Knowlton Park. Williams said that the slide is on its way and when it arrives, the Public Works Department will install it themselves. Williams said that he intends on writing a grant to fund the purchase of the remaining equipment that needs to be replaced. Williams said that they are also looking into other funding options. Marichal noted that Williams could look into obtaining a sponsor for the new playground equipment, referencing another municipality that did something similar. Williams also said that they are looking into replacing some of the wood that is at the Park. Member Fitch asked if the City does anything to monitor how many people use the playground. Williams said that they do not. Marichal noted that a lot of parents driving through Ellsworth stop there to let their children play and get some energy out. Fitch said that there are a lot of people who are not from Ellsworth that use the playground. Marichal said that the Park should be a priority for the Recreation Commission since it gives an impression of our City through its quality. Member Workman noted that there are a lot of people who use the Park and there is some equipment that will need to be replaced in the near future. Marichal said that the Commission needs to focus on maintenance as well as getting new equipment, noting that it will be a cost saver in the long run. Workman asked if there was any limitation on how much playground equipment can be at the Park. Williams noted that there was an agreement with the DEP to keep a certain amount of the park as “greenspace” so there is a size limitation. Marichal said that this may be a good opportunity to switch out some of the equipment that does not get used as much and replace it with things that are more appealing.

Member Stein said that the Harbor Commission Chair just got approval for signage funded by a grant. He said that the signage will have historical facts regarding the river and they will mimic the design of the National Park signage. Stein also said that the signs will have a unified brand with the Museum in the Streets signage that the Ellsworth Historical Society put up. Stein said that the Harbor Commission is bringing in different historical groups around the City to contribute to this project. Member Workman said that there needs to be

more wayfinding signage as well. City Planner Williams said that this is something that City Staff is working on and looking to obtain a grant in order to fund. Member Stein then gave an update on the Franklin Street Parklet. He said that a representative from Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) came and gave a presentation to the City Council regarding new experimental equipment that the City will be installing. Stein explained that this equipment will be loaned to the City and that the City will monitor if the traffic patterns are improved. Member Workman asked if there was any idea of how many people use the parklet. City Planner Williams said that they do not have a way of monitoring that. Workman said that if the parklet were to remain open, it would need some more shade for people to sit in.

Chair Marichal said that the Commission would need to start thinking about Holiday events. Member Fitch said that she will talk to the Chamber of Commerce to see if they are interested in helping with any of the Holiday events this winter. Fitch said that there is a website that is administered by the Ellsworth American which gives all of the information about the events. Marichal said that he would like to see an events committee, noting that there is not enough capacity in the Recreation Commission to successfully put on all of the events. Fitch agreed with this, saying that it would be an opportunity to hold more events and improve the existing events. Chair Marichal then asked City Planner Williams if there was any update on the possibility of a Recreation Director for the City. Williams said that it is not currently in any budget, however it will be something that is going to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan update. Williams said that he should have more information on that by the end of this year.

Member Workman made a comment about how Ellsworth did not hold an event on the 4th of July. Member Fitch said that there is some money for fireworks, however those funds were not used this year. Member Stein said that there were supposed to be fireworks at an event in the Harbor in February. Vice-Chair Young said that that event never ended up taking place, so the fireworks were not used. Fitch said that there was discussion years ago about doing an event around the 4th of July, however the City Council at the time struck it down stating that it would be too much competition with Bangor and Bar Harbor. Stein said that it may be worth bringing that before Council again since there are different Councilors.

Chair Marichal said that the Commission needs to hold a better tree lighting this year to prove to the Council that they can do a winter festival as well. Member Fitch said that The Grand can assist with the sound equipment, noting that it was difficult to hear performers last year. Marichal said that the Commission should start planning the event at their September meeting after all of the asset tours are completed. Marichal also said they can find out how involved the Chamber of Commerce is willing to be.

Vice-Chair Young asked City Planner Williams who was best in the City to push out community events. Williams said that the Communications Specialist would be the best person to send them to, as she has access to the social media accounts and can push events on the City's Facebook. Young then again brought up the idea of a community calendar. Williams said that he thought this was a good idea, but did not believe that the City would be the best entity to facilitate it. The group agreed and said that either the Heart of Ellsworth or the Chamber of Commerce should facilitate the community events calendar.

7. Staff Comments

Staff did not have any additional comments.

8. Citizen Comments

There were no members of the public present.

9. Adjournment

Member Fitch moved to adjourn. Member Stein seconded the motion. **The vote to adjourn was UNANIMOUS (5-0) at 9:37AM.**