

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 28, 2023 5:30 PM

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

Nine members present

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

Two staff members present

1.) Call to Order

Vice-Chair Sala called the meeting to order at 5:32PM.

Call to Order

2.) Introductions and Housekeeping

Alison Tobey from BerryDunn joined the meeting via Zoom.

Introductions & Housekeeping

3.) Adoption of Minutes from the July 31, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Member Lyles moved to adopt the minutes. Member Turner seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt to minutes from the July 31, 2023 Regular Meeting was UNANIMOUS.**

Adoption of Minutes

ADOPTED

4.) Update regarding ongoing Subcommittees.

City Planner Williams began by giving an update on the Subcommittees. Williams said that 6 were done and there were 5 left at this point. He said that there has been some good conversation, however they have not been that well attended. He said that he would wait to have more subcommittees after the chapters are completed. He said that he hoped when the chapters are completed, that will draw more people in. He said that there will be more of an effort to get the word out, noting the short notice of some of these subcommittee meetings. Williams did mention that there have been some people at the meetings who would not have normally engaged which is great.

Subcommittee Update

Vice-Chair Sala asked how many people actually attended the meetings. Williams said that the most public who has attended has been 5 and there have been Staff and Steering Committee members also present at the meetings. Sala said that she ran the analytics on the Ellsworth American advertisement and there were 632 engagements which means that the ad was looked at for more than a few seconds that many times. She said that typically ads like those have less engagement than normal ads, but this appears to be getting a lot of attention. Sala also noted that she has had many people RSVP to one of the later subcommittees so she is hopeful that that one will be well attended.

Member Markosian said that in the Population & Demographics Subcommittee, there was a member of the public present who had only lived in Ellsworth for a couple weeks. He said that it was very encouraging to see new people being engaged in this process. Sala said that an employee from the Ellsworth American told her that any sort of email that goes out with dates of meetings should also be sent to the American and they will post it in the paper for the group. Sala provided the email address that it should be sent to. Markosian asked if the Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce and Heart of Ellsworth were being kept informed. Assistant Planner Ouellette said that a representative of both organizations are

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on the general email list. Williams said that representatives have also attended a few of the subcommittee meetings.

5.) Discussion regarding Comp Plan Survey

Williams said that the survey is available on the Social Pinpoint website. He also said that there has not been a city-wide mailing as of yet because of budgetary restrictions. He said that he hoped to get the mailing out on the first week of October but it would depend on the availability of funds. He said that timeframe would still work with the visioning process. There was a press release regarding the survey that was picked up by the Ellsworth American and a few other outlets, so there has been some attention given to the survey. Williams said that he was hopeful that once the mailing went out, there would be a lot more submissions. Williams also said that he has not pushed the survey on social media because he did not want to distract from the subcommittee dates, but once they are over he will switch to pushing the survey more.

Survey Discussion

6.) Discussion regarding potential speaker series

Williams said that the City of Bangor did a speaker series during their Comprehensive Plan process. He said that there were various topics chosen by Bangor and the presentations were virtual. He said that he had a few ideas of topics or potential speakers, one of which being a municipality that has had some experience with building out a riverwalk, since that is a frequent topic discussed in the subcommittees. He asked the group to give him recommendations of other topics or speakers. Sala said that he should reach out to Crystal Hitchings from Sunrise County and have her give a talk about the National Heritage area designation. She said that the talk would help put Ellsworth in the context of the entire region. Member Markosian asked how many of these speakers would happen. Williams said that it would all be virtually and that he would like to do 5 or 6 talks.

Speaker Series

Member Smith suggested that a speaker come in a discuss Dark Sky requirements as an economic driver. Smith noted that Lamoine is currently reviewing a glamping project in which there is a robust discussion on Dark Sky standards. Williams said that is something that he also has been looking into as a possibility for Ellsworth and he thought that would be a great idea for a talk. Member Marichal said that the Maine Office of Tourism gave a presentation on Dark Sky standards a few years ago and he thought it was a really interesting presentation. Member Turner asked if the Social Pinpoint website is being read and recorded. Particularly, he asked if the Vision Board was being read. Williams said that it was and every comment is being read and recorded. Ouellette said that every physical comment given at another event was also being put onto the website when they are turned in.

Member Hanson said that there have been a lot of interesting speakers at the Moore Center Union River meetings. She suggested that Williams reach out to them to see what speakers they had come. She also said that the Frenchman Bay Conservancy annual meeting had an interesting speaker who may be a good choice for Ellsworth. She suggested choosing some legislative topics that are relevant to Ellsworth. Member Lyles suggested choosing topics that are not necessarily Comp Plan related, suggesting some political topics. Lyles also

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suggested a few speakers who could come in for a legislative update panel or something like that. Williams said that was a good idea and he would look into it.

Turner suggested looking into the speakers who go to the Chamber's Eggs & Issues discussions. He also said that the group should consider attending those meetings. Member Smith said that the group needs to go to more community meetings that are already existing instead of holding a bunch of meetings on their own. She said that would be where they would get the most amount of attention from the public. Markosian suggested the Rotary clubs. Williams said that he is speaking to the Evening Rotary Club later this week and is looking into attending a Noontime Rotary Club meeting. Markosian asked if the group was giving updates to the City Council. Hanson said that she or Member Stein give an update at each meeting and will make more of an effort to push the important dates at those meetings. Williams also noted that once the Inventory & Analysis document is completed, a copy will be given to the City Council.

7.) Public Comments

There were no members of the public in attendance. **Vice-Chair Sala opened and closed the public comment period at 5:50PM.**

8.) Staff Comments

Williams asked Ali Tobey from BerryDunn if the first week of September was still the target for the draft Inventory and Analysis document. Tobey said that it was and the draft went to their internal review committee and will then be sent to the group.

Marichal asked what the next big dates were that they should be aware of. Williams said the remaining subcommittees were the dates to keep pushing. He also said that when the mailing for the survey goes out, he will tell the group so they can begin pushing it to the public. Williams said that second subcommittee meetings would not be until the chapters are completed. Marichal asked if the group will review the Inventory and Analysis document at the next meeting. Williams said that they would. Lyles asked if Williams could send out the document ahead of time, Williams said that he would. Member DeLeo asked if they should fill out the remaining schedule that Williams sent over. Williams said that it would not be necessary and he will reach out when he is ready to schedule additional subcommittee meetings.

9.) Adjournment

Member Lyles made a motion to adjourn. Member Turner seconded the motion. Vice-Chair Sala adjourned the meeting at 5:54PM.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Ouellette, Assistant City Planner.

Public Comments

Staff Comments

**Meeting adjourned
at 5:54PM**

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