

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023 5:30 PM

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

Eleven members present

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

Two staff members present

1.) Call to Order

Chair Langley called the meeting to order at 5:30PM.

Call to Order

2.) Introductions and Housekeeping

Member Erin Witham joined the meeting via Zoom. Alison Tobey and Keri Ouellette from BerryDunn joined the meeting via Zoom.

Introductions & Housekeeping

3.) Adoption of Minutes from the August 28, 2023 Regular Meeting.

Member Turner moved to adopt the minutes. Member Lyles seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt to minutes from the August 28, 2023 Regular Meeting was UNANIMOUS.**

Adoption of Minutes

ADOPTED

4.) Update Regarding Inventory & Analysis Document.

City Planner Williams began by explaining that he and Assistant Planner Ouellette had an opportunity to review the document and give BerryDunn initial comments. He said that the version that was sent to the Steering Committee is the first draft with no edits. Williams said that the group would discuss the document at the next meeting so that the group has enough time to review it. He said that some edits were provided to BerryDunn as of that day. Williams told the group that at the next meeting, they will go through the document by chapter and discuss.

Inventory & Analysis

Member Marichal said that he had had an opportunity to review the document already and had a few comments. He noted that the surrounding municipalities were not shown to be in the proper location and said that some of the graphs and visuals seemed pixelated. He also recommended that there was a table in the Recreation section which had all of the different recreational assets in Ellsworth. He mentioned that this was something that was done in previous Comprehensive Plans. He also suggested including how many fields or type of assets should be present in a municipality of this size so that we can see where the gaps are. Member Lyles asked how Williams would like to receive comments. Williams said that whatever way works best for the group members works for him. He said that they could provide comments electronically or handwritten if they would prefer. Member Turner suggested that members use Adobe and include comments that way. Marichal said that he would type up his comments and send them to Williams. Lyles suggested including "Ellsworth 2035" in the title of the document. Chair Langley noted that there are some statistics on educational attainment that he would like to see expanded upon. He noted that there are many people in Ellsworth who do not have traditional degrees, but they do have a certificate or special license for a trade. Langley asked if those licenses and certificates could also be considered in that section. Vice-Chair Sala said that she thought the

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023 5:30 PM

document was very easy to read. She did point out a few typos and then mentioned that the appendix at the end of every section was very helpful. She asked if there could be more data next to some of the visuals, noting that it was confusing to see the graphs without any data next to it to explain. Williams told the group to review the document in the next month and get their comments together to discuss at the next meeting.

5.) Update Regarding Citywide Survey

City Planner Williams said that the Citywide mailing will be going out hopefully in the first week of October. He also said that there will be hard copies available throughout the City for people to fill out. He said that there would be drop boxes that Planning Staff will be checking periodically and he hoped that would increase the amount of participation. He said that the hard copies may not be going out until after the mailing depending on how quickly Staff can get the drop boxes coordinated.

Member Lyles asked who would be sent the mailing. Williams said that it will either be all of the addresses on the City tax bills or it would be every physical address in the City, it all depended on the cost. Lyles expressed concern with not sending the mailing to every address, noting that renters will not be included in the mailing. Member Smith said that the group should think about how they are going to reach renters and other people who will not receive one of the mailings. Williams said that there will be a big push on social media and the physical copies around the City should help reach the people who do not receive a mailing. He said that he plans on sending the mailing to as many people as possible, but he is restricted by the cost. Lyles asked how the public will get to the survey off of a social media post. Williams explained that the post will contain the QR code leading to the survey and it will also have a link to the survey. Lyles asked if there would be questions on the survey which ask if the individual rents or owns their home. Williams said that those questions are present. Member DeLeo expressed his concerns about not sending the mailing to every address in the City. Williams said that he understood those concerns, but if there is not enough funds to cover every address, then he would be unable to send them. He said that it was his goal to be able to send as many as possible.

Member Turner explained his first-hand experience with doing mass mailings and said that there would be a lot of people who just throw the mailing away. He said that the group should balance the interest with the amount of waste expected and said that by sending more mailings out, it may just be creating more waste. He said that he was comfortable doing a more limited mailing, given his experiences, and said that the group would be able to get participation in other ways. Turner said that as long as there are options for people, those who are really interested will be able to participate. Member Markosian said that the group can get participation by speaking to people in the community and that they will make the best effort to reach as many people as possible. Vice-Chair Sala suggested sending the mailing to all registered voters. Williams said that there are many addresses that change in between elections so it may not be the most practical. He said that it may be a good idea to do after this upcoming election when the addresses are updated. Smith reiterated that it is very important to reach the renters as well as the individuals who own property so the results will not be skewed. She suggested a door-knocking campaign at different apartment buildings in the City. There was a question via Zoom asking if there were any incentives

Citywide Survey

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023 5:30 PM

for taking the survey or if there was a way that the group could pay people to take the survey. Williams said that there will be a raffle with 2 opportunities to win a \$100 gift card to either a grocery store or a gas station. He said that was all that the budget would allow and it would not be cost effective to offer individual incentives to each participant. Keri Ouellette from BerryDunn gave an update and said that as of right now there are 42 responses and she expects that will greatly increase once the social media push and mailing are completed. She said that they have provided Planning Staff with some promotional material for the survey.

6.) Preview of Upcoming Meetings

City Planner Williams began by saying that the consultants will be leading a workshop on the Visioning statement section at the November meeting. Williams said that Keri Ouellette from BerryDunn had prepared a short presentation to introduce the group to visioning statements in general. Ouellette began by explaining that in November there will be a workshop to discuss developing the visioning statement. She said that the survey results will be compiled and given to the group prior to the workshop so that the group can know what the key priorities for the public are. Alison Tobey from BerryDunn then went into the presentation. She gave a brief overview of what a vision statement is by definition and some of the qualities of a vision statement. She then went on to discuss the purpose of the statement, saying that it would look 10 to 20 years in the future and be a strategic vision for the future. She said that the information gathered during the public engagement process will help to inform that statement. Ouellette then gave some specific examples of different visioning statements that other municipalities have done. She said that the most important part is the general statement which is typically short. After that statement, she said, are more in depth information about the topics contained in the statement. Ouellette said that some municipalities choose some guiding principles that will guide the implementation of the vision. There are also several municipalities that include visuals in the visioning statement to make it easier to understand.

Chair Langley asked if there was a word limit on visioning statements. Ouellette said that there was not, however it is a good idea to try and keep it short. She said that the City can elaborate on each of the different topics raised in the statement. Vice-Chair Sala said that she prefers the visual aspects of the statements as opposed to the statements that are just words. The group agreed and made comments saying that pictures or other visuals should be used in Ellsworth's statement. Williams said that there would be materials provided related to vision that would be sent to the group before the workshop in November. Member Smith suggested that the group pretend they are 20 years in the future looking back on this process. She said that would help the group think about the bigger picture and not get wrapped up in the practical difficulties in achieving some of these goals. Langley said that the group could try that with the previous Comprehensive Plan and look at it through that lens. He said that may help inform the visioning statement process.

Williams then moved on to discuss the meetings in November and December, asking the group if they would be present for those meetings given how close they are to the Holidays. The group said that they would be available for the November meeting and that shouldn't be an issue. Williams then asked about the December meeting since it would have been

Upcoming Meetings

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023 5:30 PM

held on December 25th. The group agreed that the meeting should be cancelled and then a special meeting could be scheduled for a different date in December if there is any work that is needed.

Member Turner moved to cancel the December 25th meeting of the Steering Committee. Member Hanson seconded the motion. **The vote to cancel the December 25th meeting of the Steering Committee was UNANIMOUS.**

7.) Public Comments

Member Hanson said that she had received a comment from a citizen and asked if she could bring it up. She said that the citizen made a comment about the pictures on the Social PinPoint website. The citizen said that those pictures are not the best ones that could be used. City Planner Williams said that they are able to swap out pictures and asked which pictures in particular the citizen commented about. Hanson said that she would reach back out to that citizen and get additional information.

There were no other members of the public who wished to speak.

8.) Staff Comments

Chair Langley asked Keri Ouellette if they were still on track to be completed as per the initial timeline. Ouellette said that they were still on track, although the survey is taking a little longer than planned. She said that the final product is still expected in October 2024. City Planner Williams said that they could discuss the Inventory & Analysis document and the Visioning statement at the same meeting, but it would depend on how much the group wants to take on. Langley said that he thought they should wait and see how long the discussion on the Inventory & Analysis takes and decide from there. Ouellette said that the survey will not have closed by the October meeting, however they should have most of the information gathered and available. Member Smith said that maybe the group could start the conversation on the visioning statement on October and then take a month to think it over and finish the discussion in the November meeting. Member Hanson asked Williams if people from other municipalities can take the survey. Williams said that they can and there are questions that ask where the participants live. Hanson said that she could include some hard copies of the survey in her waiting room. Smith said that they should include the predicted time that it will take to complete the survey so people know what to expect. Williams said they could do that and they expect it to take around 10 minutes. Member Marichal asked what a good target number of participants would be. Ouellette said that Bangor got around 300 responses to their survey and they did a lot of work on promoting it. Member Lyles asked if they were all Bangor citizens or if there were outside people who completed the survey. Ouellette said that the respondents were not just Bangor residents. The group discussed more options to promote the survey and ensure that as many people fill it out as possible. Ouellette also mentioned that Falmouth has done a citywide mailing like the one that Ellsworth is planning and they have gotten over 500 responses. She said that she is hopeful that the mailing will get more participation.

9.) Adjournment

Member Smith made a motion to adjourn. Member Turner seconded the motion. **Chair**

**December Meeting
CANCELLED**

Public Comments

Staff Comments

**Meeting adjourned
at 6:27PM**

City of Ellsworth
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023 5:30 PM

Langley adjourned the meeting at 6:27PM.

Minutes prepared by: Elizabeth Ouellette, Assistant City Planner.

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