

City of Ellsworth
1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605
RECREATION COMMISSION
Special Meeting
Monday, January 13, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.

1. Call to Order

Chair Marichal called the meeting to order at 8:33AM.

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

Members Absent: Member Josh Frost

Staff Present: Matthew Williams, City Planner and Brittany Merrill, Planning and Community Development Assistant, Maura Condon, Communications Director

2. Adoption of November 19, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chair Fitch moved to adopt the November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes. Member Workman seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt the November 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes was UNANIMOUS.**

3. Discussion on Ice Festival

Vice-Chair Fitch by mentioning the event committee would be meeting Wednesday morning to discuss the schedule for the Fire & Ice Festival. She noted that the fireworks would be on February 1st at 5pm and that the event ran from January 31st-February 2nd.

Marichal mentioned the YMCA was open to using the pool for the cardboard canoe races but needed to confirm.

Fitch noted she had no updates from Heart of Ellsworth or the Chamber.

Marichal noted that since it was the first year a couple other events added to the BANFF Film Festival and Fireworks would be a good start.

Fitch added that the Woodlawn would be doing a snowman contest if there were snow and either sleigh rides or horse drawn carriage rides depending on snow.

Marichal brought up potentially subsidizing an event if someone wouldn't be able to do it otherwise but only if they had room in the budget.

Fitch replied that no participants had expressed concern about funding and would rather see the money go to advertising.

Marichal asked when they should start promoting fireworks.

Williams replied after Wednesday.

There was then a discussion on advertising. Key takeaways included:

- Doing a press release – focusing on the rebrand and having events that were not weather dependent.
- Interview on STAR radio
- Advertising on Social media
- Having an article in the Ellsworth American

4. Update on Ice Rink

Williams began by sharing a quote from Polyglide Ice. The first quote included Bouncebars with 62sq ft of skateable ice. The second quote did not include Bouncebars with 96sqft of skateable space.

There was then a discussion on size difference, location and ordering. Key takeaways included:

- Everyone agreed there should be something around the edge for safety
- Everyone agreed to order the panels with the bounce bars
- The next steps would be to find a place to set up in time for the Fire & Ice Festival
 - Places discussed included:
 - Knowlton Park
 - Harbor Park – Gazebo (need size confirmation)
 - Fogtown Beer Garden (if no other place was available)

5. Public Comment

Stein shared an e-mail he received from Ellsworth resident Sue Tripp. Tripp was worried about the trash in Knowlton Park and mentioned that it had not been emptied, and the cans were not lined this winter. Amanda Ray from Public Works had replied saying they would look into to and figure something out but had no definitive plan yet.

Marichal added that the park did get used in the winter and asked about the playground equipment.

Williams replied that the pieces had been ordered but was not sure if they had arrived yet but they were going to do the repairs in the spring.

6. Member Comments

Fitch began by recapping the Tree Lighting and Parade. She noted that she was looking forward to next year. She mentioned that she had a lot of comments that people did not like the Tree Lighting even being on a Saturday because there was no parking for downtown businesses. She thought businesses should take advantage of the event. She thought the stuff at the library separated the event too much. She noted that the sound system was not large enough for the space. She mentioned that the Tree Lighting and Christmas Parade could be on the same day. She noted that Thanksgiving is late again next year giving them only three weeks before Christmas. She was very pleased with the parade and thought the lineup was smooth.

Marichal said he went to the parade and thought it was great. He noted there was really good feedback. He noted that at the Tree Lighting, they couldn't hear the caroling in the audience and though they could rent a sound system next year. He thought there was not enough to do at the event and though they should shorten it or have more stuff.

Fitch added that there should be an age cap on the child who lights the tree.

Marichal added that people loved the tree and that the library gave people a place to use the bathroom and warm up.

Workman asked why City Hall, and the Fire Station open for bathrooms.

Fitch and Workman were frustrated that no one was there early for the set up and when someone did show up it was 15min before the event.

Fitch noted that the lights from public works were great.

Workman added that the games went over really well but the hot chocolate ran out and they needed more food, including a dinner option.

Marichal noted that the event improved every year and though the library did dilute the event, but people did like that everything was up near the tree and not in the parklet. He added that they should survey the people about the library.

Fitch added that they should have a warmup space but felt the library was too disconnected and asked if they could open City Hall.

Marichal noted that he would do a s'mores table next year.

Workman noted that they needed more cookies for next year.

The general consensus was that the event worked better with everything up by the tree and not in the parklet.

Fitch noted she would take care of the tree next year.

Marichal asked if they had received any applications.

Williams replied that they had not that he knew of and noted that they would advertise again.

Communications Director Maura Condon suggested they write a letter to the editor as that worked for the Cemetery Commission.

Workman volunteered to write a letter and asked where the application was.

Condon noted that it was on the website and would do another advertising boost.

Marichal thought the best bet would be to recruit by reaching out personally.

Williams reminded them that the majority of members had to be Ellsworth residents.

Stein brought up the County Commission Meeting and suggested they attend as a group. He noted their meeting falls at the same day/time as theirs but if everyone agreed they could have a field trip meeting. He noted there was not a lot of communication between the County and the City.

Post Meeting, Frost added that the pacing of the parade needed addressing. He noted that Main Street was quick but they always have to stop going up State Street.

7. Staff Comments

City Planner Williams mentioned that McClean was budgeting for a poly acrylic coating for the splashpad that would be in the next budget cycle and planned on having it be ready for Spring of 2026.

8. Adjournment

Member Stein moved to adjourn. Member Workman seconded the motion. **The vote to adjourn was UNANIMOUS at 9:33AM.**