

City of Ellsworth
1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605
RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, August 20, 2024 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 Kim Fitch, Member Josh Frost, Member Melinda Workman. and Member Jon Stein.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: City Planner Matthew Williams, Facilities Manager Jim McLean and Planning and Community Development Assistant Brittany Merrill

2. Adoption of July 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chair Marichal moved to adopt the July 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Member Frost seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt the July 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes was UNANIMOUS.**

3. Member Stein brought up an update from last night's council meeting on the anticipated cost of the playground. That the 5-10K discussed at the last meeting was not the total cost but just the cost of labor. It would be more like 20-25K for the total cost of labor and equipment.

4. Ice Festival

Vice-Chair Fitch met with the Christmas in Ellsworth Group which included representatives from the Ellsworth American, YMCA, The Grand and Woodlawn and had a good discussion and that they loved the idea of the Ice Festival. They invited more downtown business owners to the meeting next week. They are all in agreement that they need to plan events that are not weather dependent. The Ice Festival will be the first week in February. Jan 31st thru Feb 2nd. Chair Marichal asked about the fireworks and if they would be Saturday night. Williams responded that they would be taken out of this year's budget but should have the funds for them. He also said he would speak with the Fire Department for them. Marichal said the biggest concern was the ice people. Fitch said that's a discussion for this Commission. Marichal said they should plan a meeting at The Grand so they can look at the stuff there. He then went on to ask if anyone knew anyone from Belfast they could reach out to. Frost said Ellis former Commission Member is living in Belfast. They do an ice festival later in February they would potentially share info. Marichal brought up cardboard sledding vs cardboard canoes for the ice festival. He asked if they should commit to the cardboard canoes so they know it will happen if there's no snow. He asked if they should expect people to bring their ready-made cardboard canoes or if they should set up an area on site for people to make them. Fitch answered that people would bring their already made cardboard canoes. Marichal then asked if anyone was opposed to the cardboard canoes. No one objected.

Fitch brought up the idea of a bonfire, but they needed to figure out where the best place for it to be. She suggested Knowlton Park so people could stay and see the fireworks. Staff McLean said it was not a good place because the fire would melt the underground irrigation system. Several members suggested the City Hall Parking Lot. McLean said Knowlton Park could work if they could get someone to build a metal stand to get the fire above the ground. Fitch said their main goal is to get engagement from local businesses who will plan their own things for the event. The Recreation Commission will take care of the logistics. Williams volunteer

to talk to the fire department about the bonfire. Fitch asked about the propane fire pits and if those could work for Knowlton Park. Marichal suggested they keep the conversation going at the next meeting.

2. Discussion on Advertising for Vacancies/Potential Changes to the Ordinance

Chair Marichal went on to discuss advertising for two vacancies on the Commission and possibly changing the ordinance. Williams said he spoke to former member Ellie and that she would like to serve but the ordinance would need to change before she could. She is no longer an Ellsworth resident. Marichal asked how long it would take to get the ordinance changed. Williams replied that it just had to go through one city council meeting. Marichal suggested there could be some push back on social media about changing the ordinance to allow anyone. He recognizes that it has become less affordable to live in town and questions the fairness of the ordinance restriction. Stein wanted to point out that it was the failure of the housing market that Ellie couldn't find housing in Ellsworth after she made concerted efforts. Marichal brought up that the YMCA did not have a representative on the commission because they didn't have one living in town either. It would open up more opportunities. He asked the Commission for their thoughts. Frost said that the YMCA should have someone on this commission and agrees changing the ordinance. Fitch is all for it because there are lots of people who work or volunteer in Ellsworth and it would open opportunities and more interested people. Workman commented they would need a significant or invested interest in Ellsworth. Marichal added the qualification would be they have to be employed in Ellsworth to serve on the Commission. Williams suggested adding either employed by or on board that serves Ellsworth, or they could take away the Ellsworth Citizen requirement. Stein said they could always look at the applications that came in and determined who was a better fit. Workman thinks they should use employed or volunteer in general vs by an entity that services Ellsworth or it would be limiting. Marichal asked Lewis Sirios resident of Ellsworth said they should keep it as wide as possible, open to anyone interested. Marichal said they could allow Hancock County in case someone from out of state with seasonal interest applies. It was pointed out that the Council makes the final decision on board members, but the Recreation Commission would make the recommendation. Fitch asked if anyone had applied. Williams replied that it hadn't been advertised for. Marichal said there could be pushback but thinks they can make a good determination. Williams said he could remove any qualifier on who can serve on commission. Frost said at the end of the day they will fill out the application and the commission can determine who is a good fit. Marichal asked Williams when they could get it drafted and when could they advertise for the open position. Williams said they should wait until the change to the ordinance is made then advertise for the position.

5. Discussion and Potential Action on Purchase of Ice Machine

The new Safety Officer through the Fire Department recommended purchasing an ice machine for the safety of field staff working in the summer. The purchase would be split between 10 groups, and they are asking the Recreation Commission to contribute \$137. Fitch asked where the ice machine was going. Williams said it was mobile and would be on site as they do different jobs. Fitch asked if it was just for personal use. Workman asked if it was \$1400 in total. Marichal said it was recommended by the safety officer and paid for by splitting costs between departments. Fitch asked if there would be opportunity to use it for events. Williams said he wasn't sure. Marichal said they usually don't use all their budget, so he doesn't see a problem with helping out. Workman said that when the woodchips were delivered it was 90+ degrees out and was hot and while they could have brought their own ice in coolers she understands. They work hard at Knowlton Park and is on the

fence. Frost asked if there's a function, could the ice machine be used for events. Workman replied they could use it for iced coffee at the Ice Festival and asked if everyone who contributed to the purchase be able to use it, especially if they are not using it in the winter. Then it would be a good investment. Stein brought up the Committee Commission Reports that mentioned Knowlton Park and the safety issues. Near the end of the meeting Mike said they would contribute the lacking funds from their budget, which shows that Public Works is willing to work and support us which is good. Marichal brought up fixing the slide and if it's worth the cost if it would be replaced anyway. Workman said she talked to the cleaners, McLean and Public Works and doesn't think that the cleaners have the tools to clean it properly. They go in every day at the same time, but they don't have anything to hose it down. There's no ventilation in the bathroom and the window in the ladies' room won't open. She points out that they are trying. Marichal said when they get the quote maybe it's worth fixing everything but the slide. The slide isn't a safety issue compared to everything else so if they can't find the 10k to fix the slide that's ok. Williams reported that the ice maker is not mobile but will be fixed and in the Fire Department. The idea is to fill up coolers from the ice machine and if there is an event, they can fill up cooler for the event instead of buying ice. Workman asked if everyone could use it. Williams replied yes.

Member Frost moved to vote on contributing approximately \$137 to the ice machine. Chair Marichal seconded the motion. The vote to contribute approximately \$137 to the new ice machine was UNANIMOUS.

6. Public Comments

Sirios said he went to the council meeting last night to offer some comments about Knowlton Park and to advocate for better maintenance and improvements. He passed out his notes and statement. He was unclear about 26k figure and where that came from. Williams replied that the original 6-8k cost that was first brought up was labor only. The cost of materials is 15k. Marichal said that the figure came from the inspector who made a list of equipment, but they have yet to receive a quote from the company. He thinks the cost could come down. Sirios says he thinks the broken slide should not be repaired yet. The equipment will need to be replaced soon anyway and it should be fine the way it is. The 10k for the slide is not worth it to fix it. The Commission thanked him attending and advocating for Knowlton Park. Sirios thanked the Commission.

7. Member Comments

Marichal said that the company was really slow getting back to him with the quote so he would reach out for an update. Frost said Knowlton Park really gets used year-round so let's get it done. Marichal brought up one of the repairs needing a log and said it could be fixed in house to save some costs. Frost said they could as the Wood Bank. Marichal mentioned Jordan Firewood and would reach out to see if they could help.

Workman addressed Sirios and thanked him for bringing everyone's attention to the conditions of Knowlton Park and that McLean and his crew took it very seriously and jumped right on it. Sirios replied that the splash pad was pretty moldy. Workman said she wasn't sure they had the resources to clean it properly and the heat and humidity making it worse. Frost asked if McLean was solely responsible for that. Williams said right now yes but they should hire help for him or a recreation director. Stein mentioned that he knew of someone who slipped and hit their head at the splash pad recently. Fitch brought up the lights for light poles and who had them. Williams wasn't sure but could find out Fitch said they are back in the hands of the city, last year there were very few lights and were told receptacle on the poles were not working and asked how they could address that. Williams said they were already looking into getting them fixed and finding room in the budget. Fitch asked if we outsourced getting lights on the poles. Williams said Public Works would help. Marichal

asked he asked Paul from Flex It for his opinion about the Christmas Lights and he had said fix the light poles. They've been broken for a couple of years now. Fitch said she spoke with people downtown and they didn't want the lights to look like last year, they want the lights to look nice. Marichal asked if they should light up the bridge this year. Williams responded that there were problems with the electric. Marichal said he might have a solution. He proposed they put wreaths on the bridge and use solar powered wreath lights at \$10 each and that would solve the power issue. Fitch said they should start with the poles then visit the bridge. She doesn't think wreath on the bridge is practical but suggest garland instead. Workman asked if solar lights would work for the pole lighting. Marichal said they would have to be the same. Fitch replied that some people wanted color lights but would like to see what they have for existing lights and what works. Williams said to reach out to Adam and Mike. Fitch mentioned that a group of people are putting together a proposal for small flags or poles that will say Ellsworth and have a snowflake on them. They will probably see that soon. The Tree Lighting was brought up and there were complaints that while the tree was decorated there were not enough lights. The Commission discussed where they could get the tree for this year, as it was donated last year. It was suggested the same place as last year, or the Arbor Commission. There was a question on how big last year's tree was. Williams suggested outsourcing the lighting. Fitch replied that wasn't really the issue, the way they were put up it was that they needed more lights. Marichal asked if there was someplace, they could rent lights instead of purchasing and storing. Fitch said yes but it would cost more money. Workman said they are asking to do this internally but if they hire someone out, we might get better end results. Fitch said the just needed to add more lights. Marichal asked what they used for a tree topper last year. Fitch said they used a big bow that she made because the one they bought before did not last very long. Frost asked when the Tree Lighting was. November 29th was the response. Marichal talked about location, should they keep in the parklet or move it up and section off a part of the parking lot instead. It was nice to have live music last year and that it's something to think about for next week. Workman said the parklet is like a wind tunnel and very cold especially after the sun goes down, so she is in favor of moving it up. Fitch said she agreed. Marichal said with the new businesses adjacent to the parklet the dynamic will be different this year. They could work with Black Moon to coordinate with the lighting. Fitch said she liked the live music. Workman asked if them donating hot chocolate took away from the kids selling hot chocolate. Fitch said she spoke with them, and they did really well. Frost said they also sold food and had a generator that took away from the live music so moving it up here would help.

8. Staff Comments

City Planner Williams gave a welcome to new staff Planning and Community Development Assistant Brittany Merrill. Fitch reminded everyone that next meeting will be held at The Grand.

9. Adjournment

Member Stein moved to adjourn. Chair Marichal seconded the motion. **The vote to adjourn was UNANIMOUS at 9:39AM.**