

City of Ellsworth
1 City Hall Plaza, Ellsworth, ME 04605
RECREATION COMMISSION
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 17, 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 Melinda Workman. and Member Jon Stein.

Members Absent: Member Josh Frost

Staff Present: City Planner Matthew Williams and Planning and Community Development Assistant Brittany Merrill

2. Adoption of August 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chair Marichal moved to adopt the August 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes. Member Workman seconded the motion. **The vote to adopt the August 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes was UNANIMOUS.**

3. Discussion and Testing of Stage Ice at the Grand for Potential Ice Rink

?? From the Grand introduced the Stage Ice, called Synth Ice. Daily maintenance is just checking connections and pounding pieces back together if any are out of place. It is double sided and can be flipped if a piece gets damaged. Scratches are normal from wear and tear. It can be used inside or outside. He's unsure of longevity but this brand is the original makers, and the material creates a chemical reaction that mimics real ice. They sell a spray treatment to treat for longevity. They come in multiple sized panels, 2x4 or 4x8. The Grand purchased the 2x4 panels for a 16x8 area (128sf) for \$1,000.00. A frame or boarder is needed to contain the synthetic ice and stop it from sliding when in use. No special storage is needed, it is heat and cold resistant. Does need a flat surface or platforms to create a flat surface (2x6pt with 3/4" plywood is what they use).

There was then discussion on potential locations: a gym, basketball courts, YMC courts, Knowlton Park. Everyone agreed it would open up a lot of options. For a decent sized rink, it would potentially cost \$15-20K. It could be rented out during the off season to individuals or summer camps.

Chair Marichal asked for everyone's thoughts: All for it. Good investment. They could raise money and compete with the Brewer Hockey rink time and make money back. Cool. Start small to get a gauge of how well it would work and what the community thought. They could do a pilot program and get donations. There is frustration of no ice facility in the area. Great options, great idea even if they have to build a platform. Suggested putting it in the parklet, but there are drainage issues. Suggested Knowlton Park or Fraklin St Parking Lot, but that's the only place with EV chargers. Invest in a pilot program with real ice rink next to the fake ice for people to compare and get feedback. They could test the longevity of the panels. Sell the liner instead and not do the normal ice rink. Indoor use at the Morse Center could be an option on Winterfest Weekend. In conclusion City Planner Williams offered to pull quotes and determine sizes so they could decide on the purchase next meeting.

4. Discussion on Ice Festival/Other Winter Events

Vice-Chair Fitch began by recapping the downtown meeting on the 10th and said the dates of the tree lighting and parade had been set. There was then a discussion on lights. It was determined that the pole lights were stored at Woodlawn but they would use them for other things this year and get new Christmas lights for the poles. There was talk of the Tree Lighting and location by the City Hall. Fire pits and vendors were mentioned. On the Horizon had inquired about being a vendor. Letters for Santa would be at the Tree Lighting again. They would like to do something inside City Hall. Marichal brought up the book thing he did in previous years. They would like live music again and talked about how it made sense to keep everything together and use rope lights around the perimeter. The parking lights must stay on. They would see if there would be free hot chocolate again. There is a book with lighted wreaths to purchase for the bridge and poles at the City Hall. Fitch showed an image of flags being ordered for the poles.

Discussion then turned to ordering twinkle lights for the poles. Fitch would send a link to City Planner Williams for ordering. They would need to figure out who would put them up, Wallace Events or Public Works. A tree needs to be sourced. Marichal went to the Arbor Commission and they gave him a recommendation. He would like to have a contingency plan, and maybe have the tree sponsored. Fitch offered to ask Bob Miller for recommendations on types of trees (Balsam Fir).

The Christmas Parade will be Saturday Dec 7th at 4pm. They will organize the line up like last year as it was very successful. The Woodlawn lighting will be the same day at 7pm. They talked about activity tables with the library, and putting out a call for vendors and working on a flyer with Janna Richards. Small business Saturday is Nov 30th this year.

The Winter Festival or Fire & Ice Festival was discussed. They talked about fireworks, glass blowing, ice carving, bringing back the book festival, and having indoor and outdoor events. They want to do cardboard canoes or sleds and decided cardboard canoes at the YMCA would be the best way. Woodlawn events were brought up which include sleigh or carriage rides, Farmer's Craft Markets starting in November, snow man building contests, snowshoes demos and more. Corn hole tournaments were brought up and the YMCA is doing one in March. The discussion ended with agreeing to get a call out to vendors for the Tree Lighting, the Heart of Ellsworth sponsoring an Ice Bar, and announcement of the theme for the 44th Annual Christmas Parade being Christmas in Toyland.

5. Update on Potential Changes to the Ordinance

The Changes to the Ordinance will be on the next City Council Meeting Agenda. Once the ordinance is changed they can start accepting applications.

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

There were no public comments.

7. Member Comments

Marichal brought up Knowlton Park and the repair list. He went through and prioritized the parts list, keeping in mind that the playground would need to be replaced soon. He mentioned upgrading to zero G chairs for accessibility. It was concluded that Marichal would need to compare lists with Facilities Manager McLean to

avoid duplicating work and agree on prioritized items. Member Workman mentioned she would coordinate with McLean and the donor to replace the logs at Knowlton Park.

It was then discussed that all the fixes with material and labor for the playground would be around \$50,000.00. To fix the items that were a safety concern would cost roughly \$10-13,000.00. There was a brief discussion on moving to raise money for the playground. Once the parts for the fixes were confirmed, they could be ordered that week. Member Workman asked if the Arbor Commission could prune the decorative trees at Knowlton Park.

8. Staff Comments

There were no staff comments.

9. Adjournment

Member Stein moved to adjourn. Vice-Chair Fitch seconded the motion. **The vote to adjourn was UNANIMOUS.**