



Ellsworth

Planning

City of Ellsworth
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, ME 04605

Planning Board Minutes
July 1, 2026

ELLSWORTH PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

City Hall Council Chambers July 1, 2026 – 5:30 PM

1. Call to Order – 5:30 PM Board Members:

- **RL:** Rick Lyles, Vice Chair (Acting Chair - Present)
- **MH:** Mike Hangge, Secretary (Present)
- **VM:** Vince Messer, Member (Present – arrived late left early (Excusable))
- **LL:** Lisa LaRue, Member (Present - recused for Item 3)
- **MO:** Matt Outhier, 1st Alternate (Present)
- **MB:** Marc Babayan, 2nd Alternate (Present)
- **Absent:** John DeLeo, Chair

Staff:

- **BM:** Brittany Merrill, City Planner (Present)
- **RG:** Robert Grant, Code Enforcement Officer (Present)
- **TC:** Thomas Canavan, Life and Safety Officer (Present)
- **AL:** Andrew Lutterloh, Deputy CEO (Present)
- **TP:** Tim Pease, City Attorney (Present)

Others Present: Steve Salsbury (Representative), Eric Salsbury, and Rick Newman (Owner, Anchor In Campground).

2. Adoption of Minutes The Board reviewed minutes from the June 5, 2025, and June 3, 2026, meetings.

- **Motion (5:31 PM):** To approve the minutes of the June 5, 2025, meeting as submitted.
 - **Moved by:** MO; **Seconded by:** MH.
 - **Result:** Approved Unanimously.
- **Motion (5:31 PM):** To approve the minutes of the June 3, 2026, meeting as submitted.
 - **Moved by:** MO; **Seconded by:** MH.
 - **Result:** Approved Unanimously.



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3. Preliminary Plan Review: Anchor In Campground LL recused herself from this item. **RL** provided an overview of the Planning Board's purview. Steve Salsbury presented the proposal for a 28-site RV campground at 566 Bayside Road. **Discussion:**

- **Infrastructure: MO** requested that transformers be shown on the plan and questioned electricity purview. **MH** requested a long-term maintenance plan for stormwater.
- **Environmental/Safety:** The Board discussed wetland impacts, groundwater capacity, and the need for more detailed hydrology analysis. **RL** requested the addition of road safety data to the project narrative. **PUBLIC HEARING**
- **Opened:** 6:12 PM.
- **Public Comment:** Kelly Brackett submitted a letter signed by 39 households opposing the project, citing inconsistency with the **2025 Comprehensive Plan** and concerns over high-density commercial use in a rural neighborhood. Residents raised numerous concerns including:

1. Consistency with City Planning and Zoning

- **Comprehensive Plan Conflict:** Residents argued that the high-density commercial nature of the 28-site campground is a "major shift in land use" that contradicts the **2025 Comprehensive Plan**, which emphasizes preserving rural character and low-density development.
- **Inappropriate Location:** Neighbors pointed out that while they are prohibited by covenants from running businesses out of their homes, they are now expected to absorb the impact of a commercial operation. It was noted that other existing campgrounds in Ellsworth do not directly abut established neighborhoods in this manner.

2. Environmental and Utility Impacts

- **Groundwater and Well Depletion:** Multiple residents expressed fear that the campground's estimated demand of **2,200 gallons per day** would deplete neighboring residential wells, especially given recent drought conditions.



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- **Aging Septic System:** There is significant skepticism regarding the developer's plan to use an **existing 45-year-old septic system**. Residents noted it was originally designed for a three-bedroom home in 1985 and questioned its capacity to handle a 28-site campground, office, and bathhouse.
- **Recent Land Clearing:** Residents like Wyatt Brawn and Serene Lama reported that a large portion of the natural tree buffer was cleared within the last year, allegedly in violation of city ordinances, leading to an **ongoing investigation by the DEP**.

3. Traffic and Road Safety

- **Inaccurate Trip Data:** The developer's estimate of 6–10 trips per hour was challenged as "unrealistically low".
- **Hazardous Turnarounds:** A primary fear is that large RVs will miss the campground entrance and use **Alton Avenue** as a turnaround. Alton Avenue is a residential street with no sidewalks, where children play and school buses pick up students.
- **Road Suitability:** Neighbors described Bayside Road as narrow, crumbling, and lacking shoulders, making it dangerous for both large RVs and the pedestrians who use the road.

4. Neighborhood Character and Quality of Life

- **Nuisances and Buffering:** Residents requested **strong, permanent visual and sound barriers**—similar to those used on highways—to mitigate noise from campfires, music, barking dogs, and generators.
- **Light Pollution:** While the Board can regulate permanent fixtures, residents were concerned about light trespass from campers' personal equipment and the "commercial feel" the lights would bring to a dark-sky area.

5. Management and Operational Oversight

- **24/7 On-Site Management:** There were repeated requests for a mandatory **24-hour on-site manager** to enforce rules and handle after-hours



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complaints so that neighbors would not be forced to call the police for routine rule violations.

- **Security:** Concerns were raised about the off-season, specifically whether vacant RVs would remain on-site and become targets for vandalism or trespassing.

6. Formal Requests to the Board

- **Moratorium:** Kelly Brackett officially requested a **moratorium** on campground applications in rural zones until ordinances are better aligned with the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. (The Board later clarified that moratoriums are within the purview of the City Council, not the Planning Board.)
- **Decision Delay:** Residents asked the Board to delay any decision until the missing information regarding traffic, groundwater, and the DEP investigation is fully disseminated to the public.
- **Site Visit:** The public strongly advocated for a site visit to allow Board members to see the proximity of the cleared land to existing homes.
- In response to these concerns, the Board ultimately voted to **schedule a site visit** for later in July to better understand the "lay of the land" before proceeding with the final review.
- **Closed: 7:08 PM. Motion (7:13 PM):** To find the preliminary application for Anchor In Campground complete.
 - **Moved by:** MO; **Seconded by:** MH.
 - **Result: Passed Unanimously.**
- **Motion (7:15 PM):** To schedule a formal site visit for the property.
 - **Moved by:** MH; **Seconded by:** MO.
 - **Result: Passed Unanimously** (Tentatively set for July 21 and July 27 at 5:30 PM).



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4. Final Plan Review: P.E. O'Halloran, Inc. The applicant proposed a paved area for storage container sales at 923 Bangor Road.

- **Motion (7:39 PM):** To approve the landscaping design modification, finding the stormwater zone provides an adequate buffer.
 - **Moved by:** MH; **Seconded by:** MO.
 - **Result: Approved Unanimously.**
- **Motion (7:41 PM):** To waive the technical photometric plan requirement.
 - **Moved by:** MH; **Seconded by:** LL.
 - **Result: Approved Unanimously.**
- **Motion (7:41 PM):** To approve a design standard modification for minimum foot candles as the site operates only during daylight hours.
 - **Moved by:** MH; **Seconded by:** MB.
 - **Result: Approved Unanimously.**
- **Motion (7:42 PM):** To approve the Final Plan for P.E. O'Halloran, Inc. with the three approved waivers.
 - **Moved by:** LL; **Seconded by:** MO.
 - **Result: Approved Unanimously.**

5. Staff Comments BM reminded the Board to provide feedback on the **Planning Board Guidebook** by July 20th. Director Danielle Gift is leaving the city for a nonprofit position; her last day is tomorrow. Planning and Code departments will be moving to the ground floor of City Hall.

6. Adjournment Motion: To adjourn. **Result: Passed Unanimously at 7:51 PM**



Mike Hangge, Secretary

