



Ellsworth

Planning

City of Ellsworth
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, ME 04605

Planning Board Minutes
8/5/2026

ELLSWORTH PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

1. **Call to Order 5:30 PM:** Chair John DeLeo called the regular meeting of the Ellsworth Planning Board to order.

- a. **Board Members:**

- John DeLeo (Chair),
- Rick Lyles (Vice Chair),
- Mike Hangge (Secretary),
- Lisa LaRue (Member),
- Matt Outhier (Alternate),
- Marc Babayan (Alternate),

- b. **Staff:**

- Brittany Merrill (City Planner),
- Robert Grant (Code Enforcement Officer),
- Andrew Lutterloh (Deputy Code Enforcement Officer).

- c. **Others:**

- Raymond Williams

2. **Staff Comments**

3. **Agenda Item 3: Discussion of Development of Planning Board Bylaws**

The board held a workshop discussion regarding the development of a standalone bylaws document. City Planner Brittany Merrill and the board summarized the following key points:

- **Historical Context:** Prior to 2011, the board operated with distinct bylaws, but these were "smooshed" into Chapter 18 (Unified Development Ordinance) during a previous update.
- **Administrative Intent:** The goal is to extract relevant governance rules back into a separate document. A primary benefit of a standalone bylaws document is that it allows the board to adapt meeting procedures and internal governance more quickly, avoiding the procedural delays and "hassle" associated with seeking City Council approval for every minor ordinance tweak.
- **Adoption Process:** Bylaws are intended to complement existing ordinances. While they do not technically require Council approval for creation or updates, the board intends to present the final version to the Council upon adoption to maintain transparency.
- **Public Outreach:** A "What to expect at a planning board meeting" handout is under development to assist the public in understanding meeting structures and setting clear expectations.

Term Lengths and Limits Discussion The board debated the merits of three-year versus five-year terms. Member Lisa LaRue noted that a five-year term represents a significant commitment, observing that new members typically face a one-year learning curve before becoming fully knowledgeable contributors.

The discussion analyzed the balance between "fresh eyes" and "institutional knowledge." It was noted that smaller municipalities often face challenges in filling board seats, making a deep pool of volunteers difficult to maintain. The board also discussed the technical necessity of cross-referencing Chapter 18 to ensure consistency between the Unified Development Ordinance and the new bylaws, thereby preventing legal conflicts if one document is updated and the other is missed.

Consensus: The board reached a consensus to recommend moving to **three-year terms** with **no limits** on the number of consecutive terms a member may serve.

4. Public Hearing

The Public Hearing was formally opened at 5:52 PM.

Correspondence and Preliminary Notifications: Before public testimony commenced, the board informed the public that the **Anchor In Campground (RV Park)** project had been moved to the September agenda. This project was noted as being the final application reviewed under the "old rules" prior to the July 1 ordinance updates.

Public Testimony: Raymond (Ray) provided testimony in opposition to the establishment of term limits for the Planning Board. He provided a historical perspective on the value of experience, citing long-term board members such as John Frink, Teddy Beal, Dick Salsbury, and **Tony Giunta**. He argued that enforcing term limits results in a substantial loss of institutional memory. From a technical and legal standpoint, he contended that if term limits were to be adopted, they must reside within Chapter 18 of the City Code and be established by the City Council, rather than being placed within board-level bylaws.

Board Response: The board addressed public concerns regarding speaking limits and procedural rules. Following the discussion, the board decided to keep language regarding speaking time limits vague in the bylaws. This preserves the Chair's discretion to adjust time limits based on the complexity of a specific application or the volume of the public present, ensuring a fair process while preventing filibusters.

5. Adjournment

The public hearing was closed, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Motion (7:05 PM): To adjourn the Planning Board Workshop. **Moved by:** John DeLeo **Seconded by:** Rick Lyles **Result:** Unanimous.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Mike Hangge", followed by the date "9/2/26" written in the same ink. The signature and date are positioned above a horizontal line.

Mike Hangge, Secretary

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

A video transcript of this meeting is also available on YouTube