MINUTES
CITY OF ELKO NEW MARKET
PARKS COMMISSION MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2024
6:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sutton called the meeting of the Elko New Market Parks Commission to order at 6:02 p.m.

Commission members present:	Sutton, Vernon, Hokeness and West
Members absent and excused:	Jones
Staff Present:	Planner Jake Skluzacek

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Sutton led the Parks Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Sutton asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Planner, Jake Skluzacek, informed him that there were no changes to the agenda as presented.

A motion was made by West and seconded by Hokeness to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried: (4-0).

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Sutton asked if there were any changes to the minutes. Commissioner Sutton asked if Commissioner West had voted for cash-in-lieu of land for the Victory Fields Development that was presented last month. Skluzacek informed her that it was a split vote 3-2 in favor of land dedication with Commissioner Jones and West voting in favor of cash dedication for the development as recommended by Staff. Chair Sutton affirmed that was his recollection as well.

A motion was made by Vernon and seconded by West to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2024; meeting as presented.

Motion carried: (4-0).

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Capital Outlay – Discussion of Additional Projects

Planner Skluzacek began his presentation by explaining that the City of Elko New Market Parks Department utilizes three main sources of funding for capital expenditures. These include Park Dedication, Charitable Gambling, and Capital Outlay. Skluzacek reminded the Commission that he had shared enough information relating to what the funds are and what they each do from previous presentations this year on Capital Outlay and alternative funding options. Therefore, Skluzacek shared that he would only be focusing on Park Dedication funding to address the recent contributions from several developments in the City.

Skluzacek stated that the City can decide if the developer dedicates a portion of their land (8%) for the park system, or the City can accept an equivalent donation amount in cash. According to the Elko New Market 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the preference is to acquire park and trail land through land dedication, purchase, or donation. However, when it is not advantageous to accept the land dedication, Park Dedication funds are acquired by this onetime fee charged to new developments. These funds are dedicated to building or upgrading parks and are to only be used for this purpose.

The Parks Commission reviewed and was in favor of the Capital Outlay Plan as presented by Staff at the June 12 meeting. At that meeting Skluzacek explained that Staff did not recommend earmarking Park Dedication from recent developments as it had not yet been received. Currently, the City's Capital Outlay Plan is fully funded until year 2052 for all existing equipment with the last expenditure shown being made in year 2047.

The additional Park Dedication funds received following the plat of the I-35 Industrial Park and other recent developments could be earmarked for projects that have been discussed by the Commission in the past, such as:

- Pete's Hill Sign for Pete's Hill Open Space
- Park and Trail Map Signs
- Pickleball Court(s)
- Wagner Park Trail Connection to CSAH 2

Skluzacek stressed that when Capital Outlay items are introduced to the system, the long-term costs (maintenance, repair, or replacement) need to be considered along with the original investment cost of the item. Due to limited funding, there is a strong possibility that not all projects previously discussed by the Commission may be completed with the additional Park Dedication funds. Skluzacek added that the Commission should provide guidance to Staff on which projects are preferred to move forward over others. Skluzacek also noted that not all the funds are required to be spent. Any leftover funds may be utilized on future currently unidentified projects.

Skluzacek compiled preliminary estimates for costs associated with previously identified future projects which were discussed at the June 12 meeting and displayed the figures as follows:

- Trail Connection from Wagner Park to CSAH 2 - $15,000.00 - $18,000.00*
- Permanent Pickleball Court - $77,500.00 - $161,000.00**
- Pete's Hill Park Signage - $1,000.00 - $2,500.00
- Park and Trail Map Signage - $6,750.00 - $7,250.00
- Woodcrest Park Basketball Court Rehab - $3,600.00 - $11,700.00***

*Assuming Public Works completes grading, base, drainage, and restoration.
**Assuming no cost for land acquisition, estimate ranges due to material choice and court number (2-4).
***Assuming no cost for removal of current concrete surface, estimate ranges due to material choice.

Skluzacek explained that if the Commission did not recommend spending more than the identified $121,560.00 in Park Dedication funding, then there would be no impact to the City's budget.

Commissioner Hokeness said that he was told by the City Administrator that there were funds available for a permanent pickleball court. Hokeness added that the current basketball court for Woodcrest Park is in the right-of-way and most likely could not be reconstructed in the same location. Additionally, the court likely could not be moved to another location within the park due to existing drainage and grades. Hokeness did wish to see a new backboard and post installed as it would help make the park feel completed following the new playground equipment installed this year.

Commissioner West said that his top priority would be the completion of the trail extension from Wagner Park to CSAH 2. West added that he felt it would address a safety concern and informed the Commission of a recent experience with a car honking at children biking in the street on their way to Wagner Park.

Chair Sutton discussed possible locations for where a pickleball court may be in the City. Commissioner Hokeness stated that he believed there was a good location for the courts near Main Street in Elko on City-owned property. Discussion took place on various factors of consideration including noise levels, surrounding properties, and proximity to other features. Sutton stated that he liked the Wagner Park trail extension project and expressed a desire to save the rest of the available Park Dedication funding.

Commissioner Vernon was in favor of the Wagner Park trail extension being the priority due to the safety concerns it may help address. Additionally, Vernon also wished to see a permanent pickleball court if there was a location and funding available for the project.

Commissioner West believed that since the location for the pickleball courts is not yet known at this time, the City should hold off and save the extra funds until a location is decided. Commissioner Hokeness shared his final thoughts that there is nothing for seniors to do in the City and they are more active than they have been historically. Several Commissioners mentioned that the library offers events and amenities for seniors. Discussion briefly took place on the library's reservation system.

Chair Sutton called for a roll-call vote for each Commissioner to voice their desired preferences and priorities. The Commissioners in attendance were split 2-2 with two preferring that only the Wagner Park Trail Extension Project be earmarked for completion in the Capital Outlay Plan and two preferring that both the Wagner Park Trail Extension Project and Permanent Pickleball Courts being earmarked.

A motion was made by Sutton and seconded by Vernon to continue the discussion on this topic to the next meeting so Commissioner Jones could give his input, and a conclusion is made following the City Council's decision on land or cash-in-lieu for the Victory Fields development at the November 14 meeting.

Motion carried: (4-0).

B. Discuss Preferences for Future Off-Site Meetings

Planner Skluzacek stated that Staff believed it may be beneficial for the Commission to conduct an off-site meeting in the future for the purposes of touring other city's recently constructed parks facilities. Skluzacek recommended conducting the off-site meetings sometime in the Spring or Summer due to daylight hours and weather conditions. Skluzacek also mentioned that the Commissioners would be reimbursed for the mileage of their personal vehicles for attending the meeting.

Skluzacek shared examples of recent projects in nearby cities including Shakopee, Lakeville, Jordan, Lonsdale, and New Market Township. The examples ranged from new playground equipment, complete park upgrades, wholly new parks, and specific newly constructed facilities such as pickleball courts. Skluzacek also asked the Commission if they had any other projects that they would be interested in viewing as part of an off-site meeting. Once direction has been provided by the Commission, Staff will arrange a date for the meetings and contact Staff from other cities to learn more about the projects.

The Commissioners in attendance expressed a desire to conduct the off-site meetings in cities of similar size to Elko New Market. Skluzacek confirmed with the Commission that it would be limited to New Market Township, Lonsdale, Jordan, and possibly Northfield. The Commission agreed that those locations would offer the best examples for Elko New Market.

7. UPDATES & REPORTS

A. October Parks Commission Update

Planner Skluzacek had his report attached to the packet. There was no discussion on the Parks Commission Update which was included in the packet.

B. October Parks Financial Report

Planner Skluzacek had his report attached to the packet. There was no discussion on the Parks Financial Report which was included in the packet.

8. PARKS COMMISSIONER'S QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Commissioner Hokeness expressed his frustration on the Planning Commission's recommendation for cash-in-lieu of park land dedication for the proposed Highlands at Victory Fields development that was discussed by the Parks Commission at last month's meeting.

Planner Skluzacek explained that Staff's recommendation to the Planning Commission remained consistent with what was recommended to the Parks Commission. Skluzacek further explained why Staff had recommended cash-in-lieu as it was consistent with the City's 2040 Parks and Trail Plan. Skluzacek reinforced that there should be no ill-will on the subject as both Commissions are entitled to provide their own separate recommendations to the City Council.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Parks Commission is set for Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

10. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Hokeness and seconded by Vernon to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Motion carried: (4-0).

Respectively submitted by:

Jake Skluzacek
Planner 1