

**MINUTES
CITY OF ELKO NEW MARKET
PARKS COMMISSION MEETING
FEBRUARY 12, 2025
6:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sutton called the meeting of the Elko New Market Parks Commission to order at 6:01 p.m.

Commission members present: Sutton, Vernon, Jones, Hokeness and West

Members absent and excused: None

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 Vernon and seconded by Jones to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried: (5-0).

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Bergstrom – 255 James Parkway was present to provide public comment. Bergstrom mentioned that he was aware of the new development to the east of his home and acknowledged that to more traffic but hopefully also lead to a new baseball field within the City. Bergstrom reinforced that the New Market Baseball Association is always looking for additional fields in the City and Bergstrom was curious why the Commission was once again discussing pickleball courts. Bergstrom stated that there are 250 kids playing baseball and there are not enough fields in the City.

Bergstrom acknowledged the proposed new development north of Eagle View Elementary School and wished to know what the park dedication requirements were for that proposed development.

Planner, Jake Skluzacek, was present to inform Bergstrom that the park dedication was partial land and partial cash dedication. The land dedication is not large enough to accommodate a baseball field or pickleball courts; however, Skluzacek explained the plan to consolidate park

dedication from several large agricultural parcels to the east for the purposes of a larger community park where there would be a possibility for larger park features to be added. Skluzacek added that for the purposes of tonight's discussion, none of the locations discussed would be suitable for a baseball field as they were all too small.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Sutton asked if there were any changes to the meeting minutes. There were no changes to the meeting minutes as presented.

A motion was made by West and seconded by Jones to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2024; meeting as presented.

Motion carried: (5-0).

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Pickleball Court Location Research

Planner, Jake Skluzacek, provided background and history to the Parks Commission concerning potential locations for future permanent pickleball court facilities. Skluzacek explained that the Parks Commission had been approached in the past by local pickleball enthusiasts who have lobbied for permanent pickleball courts in the City. Due to the lack of funding and location for the project, the City compromised for the time being and opted to convert the Rowena Pond ice rink into three temporary pickleball courts and one basketball court when it is not in use as an ice rink.

To plan for eventual permanent pickleball courts, Staff must first determine if there are any existing locations in the City that are suitable for the project. Staff have prepared a comparison of these locations in the City which will help determine if there are any preferred sites currently owned by the City. If no existing locations are available, the Parks Commission must consider the possibility of purchasing land specifically for the project or alternatively plan the facilities to be in one of the City's currently identified future park search areas to be received as part of the park land dedication which would be required prior to development.

Boulder Heights Park

This site has a limited number of off-street parking and is mostly comprised of wetland. Like most neighborhood parks that will be discussed later, it is located near residential homes. Based on site constraints there is most likely not enough space for a single pickleball court. *This site is not a feasible location for permanent pickleball courts.*

Elko Open Space (old railroad easement)

This site has no off-street parking and is mostly comprised of wetland and wooded areas. Due to the location, on-street parking could be considered. The site is slightly buffered from residential homes due to increased distance when compared to other locations. There is likely

enough space to fit four pickleball courts based on similar facilities located in Prior Lake (roughly 10,000 square feet). *This site qualifies as a preferred location compared to other existing locations.*

Commissioner Hokeness liked this location because it is flat and would be easy to build on. Hokeness also believed that the site would require less fencing due to the surrounding area. Another benefit of this location according to Hokeness was the boost that it may give to the bars and Historic Elko Downtown.

Historic Elko Park

Off-street parking at this site is available. The site is located near residential homes. There is likely not enough space for multiple pickleball courts due to the expanded garage and parking lot east of the former Police Station. The property is also currently being leased to two non-profit entities for the purposes of operating a food bank and an amateur baseball stadium. *This site is not a feasible location.*

Commissioner Hokeness provided an update on the Old PD Building Study Group that he has been participating in. Hokeness shared that they have discussed what should be done with the building and what the future use of the site may be. Hokeness will plan to share a regular update with the Commission as future meetings occur.

Kelly Glen Park

This site has no off-street parking and is mostly wetland. The site is located near residential homes. There is not enough space for a single pickleball court. *This site is not a feasible location.*

Little Windrose Park

This site has no off-street parking and is mostly wooded. The site is located near residential homes. There is not enough space for multiple pickleball courts. *This site is not a feasible location.*

Pete's Hill Open Space

This site has limited off-street parking and is mostly wooded. The site is slightly buffered from residential homes due to the wooded area. There is likely not enough space for multiple pickleball courts without significant loss of trees, and a sport court of any kind may not be considered compatible with the conservation feel of the open space. *This site is not a preferred location.*

Rowena Pond Park

This site has no off-street parking. Due to the location, on-street parking is a possibility. The site is close to residential homes. Currently there are three temporary pickleball courts, and a basketball court located within the ice rink during warm weather months. *Due to much of the site being encumbered by a t-ball field, this site is not a feasible location.*

Wagner Park

There is off-street parking available at this site. The site is close to residential homes. There is potentially enough space for four pickleball courts in the undeveloped conservation area of the site. *This site qualifies as a preferred location compared to other existing locations.*

Whispering Creek Park

This site has no off-street parking. The site is close to residential homes. There is not enough space for multiple pickleball courts. *This site is not a feasible location.*

Whispering Hills Park

This site has no off-street parking and is mostly wooded. The site is close to residential homes. There is not enough space for a single pickleball court. *This site is not a feasible location.*

Windrose Park

This site has no off-street parking and is mostly wetland. Due to the location, on-street parking is a possibility. The site is slightly buffered from residential homes by increased distance when compared to other sites. *Due to much of the site being encumbered by a frisbee golf course and multi-use field, this site is not a feasible location.*

Woodcrest Park

This site has no off-street parking and is mostly wooded. The site is close to residential homes. There is not enough space for multiple pickleball courts on the site. *This site is not a feasible location.*

The Parks Commission is being asked to provide feedback to Staff on the suitable project sites presented. The purpose of the discussion is to prepare for the long-term planning of a location for permanent pickleball courts. The most economic approach to planning for permanent pickleball courts either includes utilizing the existing identified City-owned property - Elko Open Space or Wagner Park; or, if the two identified locations are not determined to be feasible, plan the facilities to be in one of the City's currently identified future park search areas identified on the City's Potential Timing of Park System Development Map.

Planner, Jake Skluzacek, was present to discuss Staff research on potential locations for a future pickleball facility. Only two park search areas have been identified by Staff as likely to develop within the next five years. The first one has been identified adjacent to a portion of property known as Parkway Meadows. Parkway Meadows has received preliminary plat approval. As part of that process, the City had requested park land dedication for incorporation in a future municipal campus. This land has been dedicated and would have the capability of containing four courts. This option would require a policy decision by the City Council as the land has been dedicated to serve the future municipal campus.

The second identified park search area likely to develop within the next five years is a mix of properties under different ownership east of Eagle View Elementary School. This search area is likely to take longer to develop than the other identified search area; however, based on the acreage of the properties it is likely that a larger park may be able to be assembled.

Four Permanent Pickleball Courts are estimated to cost approximately \$109,780 - \$219,560 assuming that there is no cost for land acquisition. The estimate ranges due to material choice.

Commissioner West agreed with the public comment provided at the start of the meeting by Mark Bergstrom on behalf of the New Market Baseball Association. West was not in favor of moving forward with discussing permanent pickleball court locations until a new site has been identified for a new baseball field.

Commissioner Hokeness admitted that he supported both new pickleball courts and new baseball fields but also mentioned that there are limited City resources available to address both needs. Commissioner West agreed and opined that most of the discussions that he has been involved in during his time on the Commission have related to pickleball opposed to baseball.

Commissioner Vernon preferred the Elko Open Space location to the Wagner Park location as it was more buffered from residential homes and agreed that there may be a pro-business aspect to locating it in the Historic Elko Downtown.

Commissioner Jones agreed with Vernon's opinion and added that it would be nice to see investment in the Elko Downtown and the site itself would be better suited for construction.

Chair Sutton agreed with Vernon and Jones that the Elko Open Space location would be preferred over the Wagner Park location; however, Sutton maintained his opinion from previous meetings that the current Park Dedication Funding should be held on to for future projects which may not even have been identified. Sutton added that there is currently a permanent pickleball facility up the road at the New Market Township Hall that is available to City residents to use. Commissioner Hokeness responded that the same would be true for baseball fields as there are several located close-by outside of the City limits.

Chair Sutton asked about the possibility of locating the courts on the two vacant lots which formerly were used as a pool by the golf course. Skluzacek mentioned that it would require buy-in from the property owners before it could be considered as a potential location. There are several other important things to consider when analyzing this site as Skluzacek continued. The pool itself is still present on the site and would require additional grading work to remove. The parking lot is still owned privately by the golf course so any public parking space would require a form of agreement between the City and Boulder Point. Skluzacek admitted that he intentionally only included City-owned property for the purposes of this discussion.

Out of the locations presented by Staff, the Commission was in general agreement that the Elko Open Space location was preferred as a possible location for permanent pickleball courts in the future.

7. UPDATES & REPORTS

A. 2050 Comprehensive Plan Introduction

Planner Skluzacek explained that the Metropolitan Council requires that all cities within the Metropolitan area update and adopt a Comprehensive Plan at least once every ten years. The Plan is required to contain certain elements as directed by the Metropolitan Council. The City's current Plan, the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, was adopted in 2021 and will need to be updated by 2030. The Planning and Parks Commissions along with the City Council will be reviewing various elements/chapters of the plan as part of the update process.

Staff are awaiting final guidance from the Metropolitan Council on what the Plan will be required to contain. Other than being required to contain certain elements, the City's Plan will need to correspond to the Metropolitan Council's larger overall system plans. This could include things like planning for future regional trail/road corridors and future utility extensions. Once guidance is received, Staff will begin the process of updating the City's Plan.

This process, completed over the course of multiple years, is time and labor intensive for the Community Development Department. Therefore, Skluzacek wished to inform the Commission of this upcoming project as it will likely take up most of Staff's attention over the course of the update.

Skluzacek added that this item was for informational purposes and was meant to give the Parks Commission background on the Comprehensive Plan process.

B. March Family Fun Night

Planner Skluzacek shared a list of events for the March Family Fun Nights which were organized by Recreation Specialist Jessica Davidson. Skluzacek relayed Davidson's request for 5-10 volunteers to assist with the event planned for March 13 starting at 6:00 p.m. The event will be hosted by The Works Museum and feature a Family Engineering Night theme. Interested Commissioners were instructed to contact Davidson.

C. January Parks Commission Update – attached

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

D. January Parks Commission Financial Report - attached

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

8. PARKS COMMISSIONER'S QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Commissioner West mentioned that he was involved with picking out the playground equipment for Boulder Heights Park. On a recent trip to the park with his child, his child was

sliding down the red slide and their shirt came up causing them pain as the slide was hot from being in the sun. West would like to see if there are any products or potentially different colors available that would minimize heat from sunlight.

Commissioner Hokeness shared that he had years of experience selling playground equipment and did not know of any heat-resistant coating available. Hokeness said that he would check with some of his former suppliers to see if there was anything on the market that would address the concern.

Commissioner Vernon asked if there would be trees planted at the park as they could provide more shade for the playground equipment. Planner Skluzacek informed her that trees would likely be planted but would take years to fully mature.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Parks Commission is set for Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

10. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by West and seconded by Jones to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Motion carried: (5-0).

Respectively submitted by:



Jake Skluzacek
Planner 1