Parks Commission Meeting MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2026

1) **CALL TO ORDER**
The meeting was called to order by Chair Sutton at 6:00 PM
Members Present: Chair Sutton, Commissioners Jones, Hokeness, Vernon and West
Members Absent: None
Also Present: Public Works Lead Derek Cavanaugh and Planner Malecha

2) **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
Chair Sutton led the Commission and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3) **ADOPT/APPROVE AGENDA**
City Planner Malecha advised the Commission that there were no changes to the agenda.
MOTION by Commissioner Vernon, second by Commissioner Jones to approve the agenda.
MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

4) **PUBLIC COMMENT**
None.

5) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Planner Malecha accidentally omitted the draft minutes in the packet. The approval of the minutes of the December 10, 2025 Parks Commission Meeting will occur at the February 11, 2026 Parks Commission Meeting.

6) **GENERAL BUSINESS**
a. Park and Trail Lighting Policy
Planner Malecha stated that based on direction from the Commission at the December meeting, he drafted a park and trail lighting policy. Malecha stated that it is a rough draft and asked the Commission to go through the policy to discuss items they may want to adjust.

Commissioner Hokeness stated that he had some concerns regarding the language in the policy. He said the policy should have less of a narrative. He used an example from the *Purpose* section of the draft policy, citing the sentence referencing that the City seeks to preserve the natural and small-town character of its pars and trails while managing public resources responsibly. Hokeness stated that those types of narratives are unnecessary and the policy should be more straightforward.

Commissioner Hokeness continued by stating that the policy should be less restrictive. He used an example that if the Boy Scouts wanted to install a light above the memorial at Wagner Park and the Parks Commission is in favor of it and willing to pay for it, the way this policy is currently written would handcuff the Commission into forcing the Boy Scouts to go through the petition process unnecessarily. Hokeness expressed desire for the Parks Commission to be able to forego the petition process if they so choose.

Commissioner Jones and Commission Vernon both stated that the policy would be fine with or without the extra language. Vernon expressed that she thought the way the policy was laid out was adequate and she would like the format to remain the same when Planner Malecha brings back the next draft policy. Hokeness agreed with Vernon but also stated that the policy was too dependent on the petition process. Vernon stated that she wished the meeting minutes would have been available for this meeting because she remembers the conversation from the December meeting as the Commission expressing desire to implement the petition process for lights desired by citizens that would otherwise not be constructed by the City.

Planner Malecha concurred with Vernon's recollection and stated that the petition process was an integral part of the direction given to Staff from the Commission. Malecha clarified that the policy does stand separately from the petition, and that the petition is more of an addendum to the policy.

Commissioner Hokeness expressed his desire for electric service to be made available at all new park facilities in the event the City or a petitioner wants to implement lighting either at the inception of the park or sometime in the future. Public Works Lead Cavanaugh stated that Staff had an internal meeting regarding that earlier in the week and have begun to implement that in all new park planning efforts going forward. Malecha stated that the next park to be implemented as part of the Highlands at Eagle View subdivision will have electric, water, and sewer available.

Planner Malecha reiterated what he believed he heard from Commissioner Hokeness. Malecha stated that he heard a desire for more flexibility for the Parks Commission in the event a resident/HOA/etc. asks for lighting at a park that the Commission is in favor of and would be willing to fund using taxpayer dollars. Commissioner Jones asked if rather than having a policy, this could be something that could be integrated in the same way as the tree and bench donation program. The Commission stated that it was a good idea and food for thought but continued the conversation with the assumption we are going to retain the policy format that Malecha drafted.

Public Works Lead Cavanaugh asked if there was anything in the policy referring proximity to someone else's yard. Planner Malecha stated that in section 6, *Design Standards*, there is a bullet point that states all lighting installations shall minimize light spillover, glare, and impacts to adjacent properties and natural areas.

The Commission directed Planner Malecha to edit the draft petition to:

- Be more direct, omit some of the "fluff" and only retain the language in the policy that is integral.
- Create two avenues for citizens that are interested in implementing a light. The first avenue being that the Parks Commission would hear the request at a meeting and decide if they are in favor and willing to fund the light using City funds (would require majority vote by the Commission). The second avenue being that the Parks Commission would hear a request at a meeting and decide they are unwilling to use City funds, the person(s) could petition the Commission to construct a light using private funding, as laid out in the draft policy.

Malecha stated that he understands the direction from the Parks Commission and will bring back the draft policy with requested adjustments to the February Parks Commission Meeting.

7) UPDATES & REPORTS

a. December Parks Commission Update

Planner Malecha briefly informed the Commission of the continued removal of emerald ash borer trees throughout the City. Malecha stated that the ice rinks are open and being utilized by members of the community, and Public Works has been maintaining them. Malecha also informed the Commission that Public Works Lead Cavanaugh has ordered the pickleball net for Rowena Ponds Park and intends to install that this spring. Malecha stated that the price came in just under the $3,000 that was allocated for the net.

Malecha stated that Staff had an internal meeting this morning regarding the Wagner Park Trail connection that is planned for 2026. He informed the Commission that things are progressing as planned. Malecha also stated that Staff is working through the process for the implementation of Highlands at Eagle View park.

Public Works Lead Cavanaugh also mentioned that Staff is working through next steps for Historic Elko Park and intends to bring back more specific information on that in the coming months. Commissioner Hokeness asked what the next steps are. Cavanaugh stated that he and Planner Malecha will work to arrange a meeting with vendors to discuss dimensions and budget, hold a neighborhood meeting displaying a few options, and bring those options to the Parks Commission for a final recommendation. The Parks Commission indicated they would be in favor of considering skipping the neighborhood meeting on this park due to the unique nature of the location of the park.

b. December Parks Commission Financial Report

City Planner Malecha stated the report is in the packet and Staff can answer any questions; there were no questions.

8) PARKS COMMISSIONER's QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Commissioner West asked what the status is of the Old PD revitalization efforts. Public Works Lead Cavanaugh explained that Public Works is working on expanding their building, which would create the necessary space for the CCEC items currently being held at the Old PD building to be moved and stored there. The creation of new storage space was part of the recommendation accepted by the City Council that is required to happen before work is done on the Old PD building. Planner Malecha added that there is $25,000 budgeted for the architectural work to be completed in 2026. Malecha stated that he is meeting with City Administrator Terry next week to discuss and draft the RFP's for this work. West asked what the new use of the space would be. Malecha stated that it is to become a flexible community space. Commissioner Vernon asked if the food shelf would continue operation in the garage, Malecha confirmed it will remain operational.

9) NEXT MEETING

Regular Parks Commission Meeting
Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 6:00 PM
ENM City Hall Council Chambers

10) ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Commissioner Hokeness, second by Commissioner Jones to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM.

MOTION CARRIED: 5-0

Respectfully submitted by

Brandon Malecha, Planner I