

**MINUTES
CITY OF ELKO NEW MARKET
PARKS COMMISSION MEETING
April 10, 2024
6:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sutton called the meeting of the Elko New Market Parks Commission to order at 6:05 p.m.

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

Members absent and excused: None

Staff Present: Planner Jake Skluzacek and Recreational Programmer
Jessica Davidson

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.

A motion was made by Vernon and seconded by Jones to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried: (5-0).

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Sutton asked if there were any changes to the minutes. No changes were discussed.

A motion was made by Vernon and seconded by West to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2024, meeting as presented. Motion carried: (5-0).

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Old PD Committee Appointment

Skluzacek provided background and history on the Old Police Department building next to the Elko Express Baseball Field. The original building was likely created around 1900 and has served as a school, post office, City Hall, and Police Department in its history. Part of the property is currently utilized by the Elko Express and part of the building is currently utilized by Hope for the Community Food Shelf.

The building has been under a phased construction plan for reuse of the building and is currently in its last phase of indoor renovations to make the building compliant with ADA, OSHA and other relevant codes and regulations. The City Council has directed Staff to form a workgroup to provide recommendations on the future use of the Old PD building. This workgroup would be composed of stakeholders throughout the community, including a member from the Parks Commission.

Skluzacek noted that Commissioner Hokeness had previously expressed interest in serving on the workgroup and asked if anyone else may be interested. Discussion followed and it was decided that if any other members of the Commission would like to serve on the workgroup, they may as an at-large resident or as part of another stakeholder group.

A motion was made by Sutton and seconded by Jones to appoint Commissioner Hokeness to the Old PD Committee workgroup.

Motion carried: (5-0).

B. Tree and Bench Donation Program Discussion Continued

Skluzacek continued discussions with the Parks Commission related to the creation of a Tree and Bench Donation Program within the City. At the January 10, 2024, Parks Commission meeting, the Commission agreed with Staff's presented recommendations related to the program; however, Skluzacek wished to bring the Commission back more accurate cost estimates for trees and benches along with more information relating to warranties that may be offered for trees from the vendor.

Skluzacek shared Staff's estimate of \$745.75 for an average tree as part of the program. Staff recommend rounding up that estimate to \$800.00 to provide a nice round number for the estimated cost. This includes the cost of purchase, delivery, and installation. Skluzacek also shared Staff's estimate of \$2,380.00 for a bench donation. Staff recommend rounding this number up to \$2,400.00 for the purpose of providing a cleaner estimate for interested donors. This includes the costs of purchase, delivery, plaque, and installation with a poured concrete slab.

At the March 13, 2024, Parks Commission meeting, the Commission was in favor of a five-year warranty period for trees in which the City will replace a damaged or diseased tree. The Commission directed Staff to research if the warranty period could potentially be offered by the vendor rather than the City. Skluzacek contacted the vendor who informed him that no warranties are provided for trees planted in public settings. Therefore, the City would have to assume responsibility for replacement if the Commission still wished to offer a five-year warranty period for trees.

After some discussion, it was agreed on by the Commission to accept Staff's recommended cost estimates as part of the program as well as the five-year warranty period for trees.

A motion was made by West and seconded by Jones to recommend approval by the City Council for the creation of a Tree and Bench Donation Program for the City of Elko New Market as presented by Staff.

Motion carried: (5-0).

C. Pete's Hill Sign Discussion

Planner Skluzacek provided the Commission with background history relating to Peter Knutson and the property now known as Pete's Hill. The farmstead was owned by the Knutson family and their descendants from 1887 until 1996. A portion of Pete's Hill was dedicated to the City as public land during the development of the surrounding area. The City honored Pete's history by naming the public land Pete's Hill Open Space.

The top of Pete's Hill is boasted as the highest elevation point in Scott County and potentially the tri-county area. Three US Survey markers were placed on the hill in 1927. An American flag was painted on top of the hill in 1964, first painted on tin, and later replaced with a concrete slab. The City's Parks Commission had the flag repainted in 2017 and more recently in 2023.

Skluzacek showed examples of signage that may be used to document the history of the site for visitors. Also displayed for the Commission were some historical photographs of the Knutson family and the property that would be included with the signage along with background on the history of the site.

Discussion took place on signage design and what exactly would all be included on any potential sign. Commission Hokeness mentioned he would like to see a separate elevation sign separate from the Pete's Hill signage. Several Commissioners expressed a desire for a map of the City's trail system on the back of the Pete's Hill sign. Discussion took place on locations for the sign, which included a spot behind the bench or possibly by the trail access onto Xerxes Avenue. The Commission was in favor of a vertical two-sided sign potentially with a roof covering.

The Commission directed Staff to contact the Historical Society to see if there is any chance of the site becoming a historic site. Skluzacek will bring back information relating to sign pricing, design, and a response from the Historical Society on the importance of the site.

D. Wagner Park Trail Request

Planner Skluzacek presented a request from a resident for a northerly trail connection from Wagner Park to CSAH 2. The resident believes this connection would create a safer alternative to get people to the main area of Wagner Park and give people a scenic view of Wagner Park that is not currently being utilized.

Staff agreed that the location is suitable for a trail connection and the area is owned by the City. Staff also see the potential for a safety benefit by creating safer access to Wagner Park from CSAH 2. The City Engineer provided an estimate for construction of the trail of approximately \$18,000. Staff recommend building in contingency for any project and would recommend using a cost estimate of \$20,000 when assessing the project within the Parks Capital Outlay budget.

The Commission was receptive to the request and agreed that connection would make sense for the area. The Commission was not in favor of advancing this project ahead of others already contained within the City's Park Capital Outlay Plan. It was decided that the Commission would consider adding the project to the Capital Outlay Plan or other funding source when the Commission reevaluates those plans.

7. UPDATES & REPORTS

A. Community Education Update

Recreation Programmer, Jessica Davidson, was present to give a Community Education update to the Commission. Davidson mentioned that Lakeville and New Prague School Districts have both released their Summer Community Education catalogs. A new elementary school is set to open in Lakeville, Highview Elementary School. New Prague's new program "Tiny Trojans" is aimed at toddler-aged programming and is so far successful. New Prague is also offering Senior Shuttle rides for grocery trips and other instances which may be difficult for a senior citizen to get back and forth. Discussion took place on the need for additional space within the City to hold programming as there are barriers in renting the Community Room at the Library far enough in advance.

B. March Parks Commission Update

Planner Skluzacek had his report attached to the packet and briefly discussed upcoming projects including the new playground equipment for Woodcrest and Boulder Heights Parks and the grading of Boulder Heights Park. Skluzacek also provided a recap of the Easter Party.

C. March 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 asked Staff if they could inspect Historic Elko Park and the playground equipment contained within. Commission Vernon agreed that there is one swing in particular that gets hot in the sunlight. Discussion took place on the potential for a sunshade over that swing.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Parks Commission is set for Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 6:00 PM at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

10. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Hokeness and seconded by Jones to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 p.m.
Motion carried: (5-0).

Respectively submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jake Skluzacek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jake Skluzacek
Planner 1

