

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ELKO NEW MARKET  
PARKS COMMISSION MEETING  
APRIL 12, 2023  
6:00 PM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Sutton called the meeting of the Elko New Market Parks Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Members absent and excused: None

Staff Present: City Administrator Thomas Terry, Recreation Programmer Jessica Davidson, and 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. Recreation Programmer Davidson 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: (4-0).

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. A motion was made by Vernon and seconded by Hokeness to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023 meeting as submitted. Motion carried: (4-0).

**6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**A. Park Field & Facility Reservations**

Recreation Programmer Davidson introduced the topic and explained why it is being discussed. The City is expecting to see an increase in demand for field and facility reservations and current policies, systems, and forms have not been reviewed comprehensively in years

and are in need of an update. The purpose of the discussion is to get feedback from the Commission regarding updates or developments of policies.

Davidson explained why the City needs a reservation system including ensuring that everyone can participate. It helps provide for clear communication of City policies and ensures compliance with legal requirements such as insurance. A reservation system would also allow the City to allocate time and resources to ensure that the spaces are safe, well maintained, and available for use by all members of the community. It can also help alleviate parking issues that can arise when no reservation system is in place.

Davidson reviewed the best practices and typical fee structures relating to facility reservation systems. Davidson next reviewed the current facilities within the City of Elko New Market and whether or not they are able to be reserved or are first come, first serve. The Wagner Park shelter, and baseball fields and the Rowena Park baseball fields are able to be reserved. All other City facilities are first come first serve.

Davidson reviewed other Cities fee structures and reservation systems including Lakeville, New Prague, and Farmington. Davidson summarized the discussion topics and asked for Commissioner feedback specific to the Wagner Park Shelter.

Commissioner Hokeness asked if the City split the rentals between the morning and evening. City Administrator Terry stated that they did not usually split due to the hassle but have made exceptions as needed in the past. Discussion followed. Terry explained that reservations should be discussed for other facilities as part of the discussion as groups have shown interest in reserving ice hockey rinks and other such instances may occur in the future as well.

Planner Skluzacek added to the Commission that the Webster Park shelter would be a good comparable to look at when considering pricing for the Wagner Park shelter rental fee. Skluzacek could not find the rate online but will try to find the fee to bring back. Commissioner Jones mentioned perhaps charging more for holiday weekends. Discussion followed. Davidson asked the Commission about their thoughts on splitting the rentals between morning and afternoon. Commissioner Jones thought it would be too difficult to clean in between. Terry agreed and mentioned other reasons why the City decided to do one rental per day such as determining who left a mess or caused damage.

The discussion then moved on to cancellations and whether refunds will be offered. Skluzacek informed the Commission that refunds are not offered unless the event is cancelled by the City. Terry stated that refunds have been given in the past and it would be better to have a set policy on cancellations and how much time is needed to give proper notice.

Davidson then explained ballfield and ballfield reservations. Terry discussed what most schools do to establish priority of use by instituting a tier system. A tier system allows the City to clearly define who would receive priority in the event two reservation requests come in for the same facility. Davidson shared an example of what a tier system might look like. Historically the fields were reserved by the Elko New Market Baseball Association. No fee is charged but a damage deposit of \$200 is needed along with a certificate of insurance. Public Works maintains the fields including mowing, weed control/fertilizing, and dragging fields

daily. Davidson shared the Lakeville City and School District, New Prague City and School District, Farmington City, and Farmington Area School District's ball field fee structure and participation fees for comparison.

Davidson asked if there were any points of discussion that warranted additional Staff research on the topic. Commissioner Sutton wanted to see if it would be possible to do multiple field rentals in one day. Staff will look at options to bring back to the Commission. Commissioner Vernon asked about the timing related to scheduling these games and whether there should be a set deadline to help avoid scheduling conflicts. Commissioner Vernon mentioned that reservations may help with concerns of safety for some sporting events. Staff will determine the total costs for providing ballfield facilities to apply a formula to determine what fees should be charged, if any. Additionally, Staff will come up with a format for providing reservations for additional facilities such as hockey rinks and picnic shelters.

## **B. Review of Pickleball Options**

Davidson introduced the topic and background from past meetings. The background on past meetings contained information on past action by the Commission. Davidson detailed the different options available for pickleball players including utilizing existing facilities and creating new facilities to accommodate the game. Davidson listed pros and cons for each option.

Option 1 was identified as utilizing the existing Eagle View Elementary School gymnasium. Three indoor courts are provided for pickleball several times per week. Costs are relatively low at \$5 per night or \$50 for unlimited play throughout the season paid to New Prague Community Education. Nets, balls, and markers for the lines are all provided by New Prague Community Education. Advantages to this option include:

- Year-round play
- Short-term solution until a longer-term option can be identified
- No cost to the City
- Low cost to residents
- New Prague Community Education manages program and provides the facility and equipment
- Bathrooms and parking are also readily available at this site
- Noise is not a concern for neighboring properties

Disadvantages to this option include:

- Competing for gym space with other activities
- No outdoor option.

Option 2 was identified as adding pickleball courts to the existing Rowena Ponds hockey rink. Three to four courts could be created by installing nets and painting lines inside of the hockey rink. Advantages to this option include:

- Short-term solution until a longer-term option can be identified

- Could be installed quickly
- Lower cost compared to building facility from scratch
- Parking can reasonably be provided for
- Allows for outdoor play
- No user cost

Disadvantages to this option include:

- Limited play throughout the year
- Noise impact to neighboring residential properties
- Potential parking issues depending on other activities taking place simultaneously
- Reduces the size and orientation of the basketball court from a regulation size of 94'x50' to a substandard size court approximately 84'x50'
- Mixed ages and activities in the same area may be problematic
- Drill holes for the installation of nets may cause concerns with the integrity of the asphalt over time
- Would alter the Conceptual Master Plan for Rowena Ponds set by the previous Commission

Option 3a was identified as building new pickleball courts at Wagner Park in the former sand volleyball court/pleasure rink site. Two pickleball courts could be constructed at the site. They would be bordered by the skate park, parking lot, and playground area. Advantages to this option include:

- Centrally located
- Parking can reasonably be provided for
- Public restrooms are available
- Allows for outdoor play
- No user cost

Disadvantages to this option include:

- Limited play throughout the year
- Noise impact to neighboring residential properties
- Potential parking issues depending on other activities taking place simultaneously
- Mixed ages and activities in the same area may be problematic
- Youth may misuse the court as an extension of the skate park
- Drainage issues would have to be addressed

Option 3b was identified as building pickleball courts in the Wagner Park West Parking Lot. Four pickleball courts could be constructed at the site. Advantages to this option include:

- Centrally located
- Parking can reasonably be provided for (less so than 3a)
- Public restrooms are available
- Allows for outdoor play

- No user cost

Disadvantages to this option include:

- Limited play throughout the year
- Noise impact to neighboring residential properties
- Potential parking issues depending on other activities taking place simultaneously (greater than 3a)
- Mixed ages and activities in the same area may be problematic
- Youth may misuse the court as an extension of the skate park
- Surface would need to be repaved smooth
- Increased upkeep would be needed to keep court clear of obstructions

Option 4 was identified as building new pickleball courts at Chowen Avenue and Main Street on a City owned lot. Up to six pickleball courts could be constructed at the site. The lot is largely right-of-way which cannot be built upon unless vacated. Advantages to this option include:

- Largest available option
- Possible economic revitalization of the area
- Allows for outdoor play
- No user cost

Disadvantages to this option include:

- Limited play throughout the year
- Noise impact to neighboring residential and commercial properties
- Reduces the amount of open green space for nearby residents to enjoy
- Possible right-of-way concern
- Parking conflicts with neighboring businesses during peak times
- Most expensive option overall if more than two courts are built

Staff noted that noise and parking are potential concerns with all options except option 1: Eagle View Elementary. Staff recommended that the City continue to work with the New Prague Community Education to provide three indoor courts at Eagle View Elementary (Option 1). Staff recommended this option due to the fact that it can be utilized year-round, no noise or parking issues are identified with the site, is available with no cost to the City, and it is an option that can be implemented the fastest as this is the option currently being utilized by local pickleball players.

Commissioner Hokeness gave an overview of the average pickleball players and stressed that they are for the most part beginners. Hokeness next listed some reasons why the pickleball players do not want to play indoors at the school this summer. Some of the concerns regarded proper air conditioning, limited open court time, and having to rush games so everyone can have a chance to play. Hokeness disagreed with the Staff calculation for parking requirements for the pickleball group. Staff informed him that the projections used were for a full turnout

of 100% of registered participants based on participation numbers obtained from New Prague Community Education. Discussion took place. City Administrator Terry wanted to get the Commission to envision what they see in a facility before getting into more details related to specific locations for facilities. Terry noted that the Commission may want to decide first if the facility they envision is a first come, first serve facility. Terry added that starting with the most basic questions can help narrow down options quickly.

Commissioner Vernon wanted to see what other cities with pickleball facilities do, including Northfield and Prior Lake. Commissioner Hokeness added that both Northfield and Prior Lake are first come, first serve. Terry asked Davidson what the norm is for a majority of cities she has encountered during her time at conferences and events. Davidson said that a lot of cities choose to do scheduled times when courts can be reserved. Hokeness noted that most of the local cities utilize first come, first serve types of facilities.

Commissioner Hokeness believed that option 2 was the best temporary solution. Chair Sutton added that he thought there may be a conflict due to the hockey rinks being planned for basketball courts in the Summer. Sutton added that the two groups playing in such close proximity could present issues. City Administrator Terry again reminded the Commissioners not to lobby on behalf of any specific option at this point and rather focus on the larger questions regarding what type of facility they have in mind.

Commissioner Vernon had questions on the size of the basketball court in relation to the pickleball courts. Vernon wondered if the two courts overlapped, would they both be able to be full sized? Commissioner Jones agreed that may be the best decision. Terry mentioned that Staff have had conversations about that option and that it would not be an issue if there was a reservation system in place so that one court could be utilized over the other since they will be overlapping. Terry added that there are ways to resolve the issue, but it is a consideration.

Discussion took place on how nets for the courts would be provided. Commissioner Jones's opinion was that a temporary facility would require set times for the activity. A permanent facility does not seem to be possible currently with the budget. Commissioner Vernon agreed with Jones that a temporary court seems to be the best option currently. City Administrator Terry related the Commissioner feedback to the options to essentially disqualify any options proposing a new facility at this time. Terry tried to focus the discussion on the Wagner Park parking lot and Rowena Ponds hockey rink, the two remaining options for existing facilities. Discussion followed on the pros and cons of different options. Terry summarized feedback from the Commission so far and Staff was directed to look at the Rowena Ponds hockey rink to see what options the City has in regard to number of courts and design.

## **7. UPDATES & REPORTS**

### **A. Family Fun Night Schedule**

Davidson reminded the Commission that Family Fun Nights are Thursday nights at Wagner Park. Davidson listed the planned events for this year.

### **B. Parks Commissioner Positions**

City Administrator Terry gave an update on the open positions on the Parks and Planning Commissions. Terry also gave an update on the hiring of an additional Planner. The soonest a person could start is late May or early June.

**C. March Parks Commission Update**

A March Parks Commission update was provided in the packet as an informational item.

**D. March Parks Financial Report**

A March Parks Financial report was provided in the packet as an informational item.

**8. PARKS COMMISSIONER'S QUESTIONS & COMMENTS**

There were no questions from the Commissioners during this time.

**9. NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Parks Commission is set for Wednesday, May 10, 2023, 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 9:16 p.m. Motion carried: (4-0).

Respectively submitted by:



Jake Skluzacek  
Planner 1