

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ELKO NEW MARKET  
PARKS COMMISSION MEETING  
MARCH 8, 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 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**

Joe Serdar, 9705 Oxford Lane, was present to speak on behalf of the group of local pickleball players. Serdar started by thanking the Commission and introducing the group of players in attendance. Serdar mentioned that with the help of Recreation Programmer, Jessica Davidson, and several volunteers, the group was able to play at Eagle View Elementary and mark out three courts. Currently there are 61 regular attendees and an additional 36 who come occasionally. Serdar added that the group would like to be able to play outdoors once Summer begins. Serdar hoped that the hockey rink would be able to function as four additional courts until a new court could be constructed. Serdar added that the group could provide all supplies needed including nets and that the group is growing in numbers weekly.

City Administrator Terry provided some history and background information relating to the discussions held in the past. Three options were considered for the pickleball group. The first was to get help from Community Education and play at Eagle View Elementary. The second option was to utilize existing City facilities to construct courts. The final option was to create a new facility specifically designed for pickleball. Terry mentioned that after discussion by

the Parks Commission at the time, it was decided to go with the option utilizing Eagle View Elementary. Terry asked Serdar if he was asking the Commission to reconsider their past decision, which would require a majority of the board. Commissioner Hokeness stated that he should probably recuse himself because he is sympathetic to the cause. Hokeness noted that the group is passionate and discussed the options presented. Commissioner Jones asked Serdar if they would continue to have a set schedule for the use of the rink. Serdar explained that it would be first come, first serve but if people were waiting to play, games would be limited. Serdar added that signage with rules is also common at these facilities. Terry stated that these were policy discussions that would likely come after a decision was made on providing an outdoor facility.

The Commissioners agreed that they would like to see this item moved to the agenda for the April meeting. Discussion followed on ideas for other possible locations and funding options for a facility. Commissioner Hokeness provided a handout of a Bolten & Menk plan for the Lakeville court as well as an overhead of City owned land in downtown Elko. Discussion followed on the amount of Right of Way occupying the City owned land and determining if there is anything buried in the Right of Way.

## **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. A motion was made by Vernon and seconded by Jones to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2022 meeting as submitted. Motion carried: (4-0).

## **6. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **A. Funding for Future Park System**

City Administrator Terry introduced the topic which was a continuation of previous discussion regarding future park facilities funding. Terry explained the reason for the discussion is the need to have a plan on how growth of the park and trail system will be funded in the future. Terry shared that Staff have identified facilities and their likelihood of being developed in the future. These facilities were broken down into three separate groups. The first group is the near-term facilities which Staff believe are likely to develop within the next five years. Mid-term facilities are defined as being likely to develop anywhere in the next 6-15 years. Long-term facilities are defined as anything that is likely to be developed 16 years or later from now. Terry added that Staff also used generalized assumptions based on typical facilities to establish cost estimates for each facility.

Next, Terry displayed a map of the City indicating which types of facilities are planned, when they are projected to be developed and the approximate location for the facilities. Discussion followed on some of the search areas displayed on the map. The next slide of Terry's presentation contained cost estimates for the identified near and mid-term facilities. For a Neighborhood Park, which is typically 3-10 acres, a budget estimate of \$125,000 was provided. Three out of four of the identified near and mid-term facilities are designated as a Neighborhood Park. The other park identified was a Community Playfield/Athletic Complex which require 40+ acres. A budget estimate for a Community Playfield/Athletic Complex is \$5,000,000. All together including the long-term facilities, the full build out of the 2040 Parks

System is estimated to cost \$16,125,000. The cost estimates provided assume that no land is needed to be purchased in addition to that obtained through park dedication. The estimate does not include site development such as grading and does not take into account inflation. Terry admitted that the figures used were conservative and could cost more depending on what the facilities may offer.

For the next part of the presentation, Terry introduced the three traditional funding sources for parks within the City. The first funding source, Gambling Fund, can be used for activities and facilities benefiting youth under the age of 21. This funding is obtained through charitable organizations who participate in charitable gambling such as pull-tabs. 5% of all proceeds are submitted to the City pursuant to State Statute. This is estimated to raise approximately \$5,000 annually; however, is not guaranteed as it relies on these organizations continuing their charitable gambling activities. Terry mentioned that Gambling Funds are currently allocated in the Capital Outlay Plan for the replacement of existing park playground equipment.

The next source of funding that Terry presented on was cash-in-lieu of park dedication. For a new development, the City can decide if the developer donates a portion of land to create a park or an equivalent cash amount as a one-time fee. At times when it is not advantageous for the City to accept a land donation, the equivalent cash amount goes into a Park Dedication account that can be used for the creation of new parks and trails. The Park Dedication funds must not be used for ongoing operation or maintenance of existing City park and trail facilities. The City of Elko New Market's 2040 Comprehensive Plan outlines that the preference is to acquire park and trail land through land dedication. Currently the Park Dedication Fund balance is fully allocated to partially fund the Boulder Height's Park. Terry displayed a map showing which search areas and parcels were likely to generate cash dedication, land dedication, or no dedication if they were already developed. Terry went on to explain that the parcels most likely to pay cash-in-lieu of land dedication have a value of \$33,724,300 based on the most current assessed value. Applying the City's current park dedication fee of 8% of the land value, the estimated total potential park dedication revenue is \$2,697,944. Terry added that it is anticipated that there will be a timing discrepancy between when new park land is acquired and when those park dedication dollars are received. Also, due to unpredictability of the park dedication funds, the City should not be earmarking specific projects until the fundings has been received. With the addition of the Park Dedication Fund, \$13,427,056 of the 2040 Park System remains unfunded and requires another source of revenue.

The final source of funding presented by Terry was property tax dollars. Property tax dollars are funds collected for Capital Outlay or to pay for debt issued to fund improvements. The property tax levy used to collect those funds has a direct impact on the taxes paid by property owners, residents, and businesses. There needs to be sufficient time to build the reserves without undue burden on the taxpayers. This source of funding places the tax burden on the current taxpayer although it may be future taxpayers who are receiving the benefit. Another option is the issuance of debt which can be used to fund the replacement or construction of park facilities. This method places the tax burden on the future taxpayers who may not necessarily receive the benefit depending on the duration of the facilities.

For reference, Terry included information and background relating to estimated tax impact. Approximately a \$22,200 increase in the annual levy equates to a 1% tax impact for the typical home. Each 1% of tax impact equates to approximately \$13-14. For an example, a 5% tax impact would equate to \$65-70 in additional annual City property taxes for the typical home. Terry indicated that this form of funding is more useful for lower cost near-term projects as opposed to more expensive long-term projects due to the tax impact generated.

Next, Terry explained the process of issuing debt via referendums: voter approved bonds. A bond referendum is a voting process that gives voters the power to decide if a municipality should be authorized to raise funds through the sale of general obligatory bonds. A simple majority of voters is needed to pass the referendum. This funding mechanism is typically utilized for major improvements such as a community center, athletic complex or to acquire high amenity park and recreation areas. The following steps to implement a referendum were explained by Terry:

- Identify a project or list of projects
- Develop cost estimates
- A ballot question(s) are prepared
- Public engagement
- City Council approves the referendum
- A Special or General Election is held

Some referendum pros were highlighted by Terry. Referendums provide a level of political support from the public. It gives insight into what citizen's desires are, which can lead to policies or procedures which reflect the majority's will. Desired future park facilities are fully funded. Some cons of this type of funding include the following:

- Cost of resources and risk (financial cost, time, packaging)
- Cost of issuance and sufficiency of scale in a referendum
- Failed attempts result in a cooling off period
- Potential political fallout from a failed attempt
- Need to address incorrect assumptions and misinformation
- It has the potential to create division within communities

Terry held a discussion with the Commissioners regarding hypothetical situations and letting them determine which funding source, if any, make sense for that scenario. The discussion was aimed at showing the Commissioners and City Staff why some funding sources may be utilized over others. Terry stated the purpose of this discussion has been to get the Park's Commission working towards making a recommendation to the City Council regarding funding for future park facilities. This includes wholly new facilities added to existing parks. The Commission expressed support for placing discussion of the topic on the next meeting's agenda.

## **7. UPDATES & REPORTS**

### **A. Parks Commissioner Position**

Chair Sutton and Commissioners Vernon and Dornseif's positions are all open. Chair Sutton and Commissioner Vernon have both reapplied. Three or four total applications have been received and Staff are setting up dates for interviews to take place later in the month. Terry said there is a high likelihood that the new Commissioner would not be appointed until the May meeting due to timing of the City Council meeting. Commissioner Hokeness asked about the Planning Commission positions. Terry replied that they are in a similar situation to the Parks Commission and have received a few applications.

### **B. Park and Recreation Staffing**

Terry informed the Commission that Recreation Programmer Davidson's schedule has been getting more constrained which caused Staff to take a step back and address how the City will meet the needs for the Department. Terry stated that in the past, the City has looked at having someone to handle the recreation programming in addition to another position in Community Development that would be responsible for more administrative tasks. The new position within Community Development will be responsible for functions in both departments. Individual department needs both did not warrant a new position but combined they do. Applications have been received and interviews are planned for the end of the month. The position may need to be posted again if the panel is unable to recommend anyone for the position the first time. Discussion followed.

### **C. February Parks Commission Update**

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

### **D. Parks Monthly Financial Report**

Terry asked if there were any questions on the monthly financial report. Planner Skluzacek mentioned that the large expenditure taken from the Charitable Gambling Fund was for the purchase of the hover net at Wagner Park. Terry added that projects for this year will include Boulder Height's Park and Woodcrest Park refurbishment. Discussion followed on park equipment maintenance and safety. Terry notified the Commission that Maintenance Worker Cavanaugh was recently certified to perform inspections on equipment and playgrounds. Discussion took place on the history of Woodcrest Park's creation and improvements over the years.

## **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, April 12, 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 8:21 p.m. Motion carried: (4-0).

Respectively submitted by:



Jake Skluzacek  
Planner 1