

**MINUTES
CITY OF ELKO NEW MARKET
PARKS COMMISSION MEETING
September 13, 2023
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: City Administrator Thomas Terry, Recreation Specialist 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. City Administrator Thomas Terry informed him that there were no changes.

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Vernon and seconded by West to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2023; meeting as submitted. Motion carried: (5-0).

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Scott County SWCD Cost Sharing Programs

Planner Skluzacek introduced the topic and mentioned it was brought to City Staff's attention by a resident of the Woodcrest neighborhood who was interested in implementing a pollinator meadow within Woodcrest Park. Skluzacek introduced the program and its requirements. Skluzacek noted that Woodcrest Park would not be a suitable location because approved

locations require 8 hours of full sun and at least ¼ acre of land. Woodcrest Park is shaded on all sides by mature trees. Woodcrest Park is also less than ½ acre in size and there is simply not enough open space for ¼ acre pollinator meadow.

Commissioner Jones asked if the project needed to be located on City owned property. Skluzacek replied that any resident is able to apply for the program and it is not limited to only City property; however, the City would only approve a project located on City property. Recreation Specialist Jessica Davidson asked Skluzacek if he had explored some of the other programs offered, specifically the rain garden project. Skluzacek replied that he had mainly focused on the pollinator meadow as that was the request brought to Staff. Discussion followed, it was determined that Woodcrest Park would not be a good location for a rain garden due to the close proximity of a playground and Woodcrest Park not being a high-traffic area.

Commissioner West liked the idea but did not understand why the program was needed. West believed the costs to be minimal and the City would have more freedom to implement a program on their own. West agreed that the City could help promote the program on Social Media and keep it in consideration for future parks.

Commissioner Vernon agreed with Staff's opinion that Woodcrest Park is not a suitable location for a pollinator meadow. Vernon would like to see a project like this in the future but now is not the time.

Commissioner Hokeness agreed that this was not a high enough priority to institute at the current time. Hokeness thought that the City may start small by offering packets of seeds to residents. City Administrator Terry mentioned that the County already offers a similar program and recommended against any duplicative program. Chair Sutton asked if the City would have any land available in City Parks for a wetland credit program. Discussion followed, Terry informed Sutton that the City had utilized the wetland credit program in the past, but the land required for such a program needs to be a large high-quality wetland to see enough benefit to outweigh the loss of usable parkland. There is no area currently suitable for such a program within an existing City Park.

It was decided by the Commission to table the cost sharing program with the County and advertise it on social media.

7. UPDATES & REPORTS

A. July Parks Commission Update

Recreation Specialist Jessica Davidson had her report attached to the packet. There was no discussion on the July Parks Commission Update.

B. July Parks Financial Report

Recreation Specialist Davidson had her report attached to the packet. Commissioner Hokeness had a question regarding the part-time employee's salary line item contained in the July Parks

Financial Report. City Administrator Terry explained that the part-time employee budget was less than anticipated due to Recreation Specialist Davidson shifting administrative responsibility to other City Staff as she transitions into a purely Recreational Programmer role. Discussion also took place on hiring of Police Officers and Public Works Maintenance Workers.

8. PARKS COMMISSIONER'S QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Commissioner Hokeness brought up concerns with erosion control on the Pete's Hill trail. Hokeness handed out packets containing information related to Sentence to Serve or STS. STS is a program provided by the State of Minnesota. The program provides labor through the Department of Corrections to City's for various projects. Commissioner Hokeness brought several other maintenance issues with Pete's Hill Park up at the meeting.

City Administrator Terry mentioned that the City has used STS in the past and Staff did not see a sufficient benefit to justify further utilization of the program. Terry will pass the information along to the Public Works Director, Corey Schweich, along with the other maintenance related items. Terry did state that Public Works are in the process of obtaining quotes related to the flag painting.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Parks Commission is set for Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 6:00 PM at City Hall in the Council Chambers.

10. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by West and seconded by Jones to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. Motion carried: (5-0).

Respectively submitted by:



Jake Skluzacek
Planner 1