

**PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2007 – 7:30 PM**

**NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM with Commissioner Wingfield presiding.

**ROLL CALL:** Dooley (Present), Goyal (Present), Kristock (Absent), Policicchio (Present), Radcliffe (Present), Schwarzlose (Present), Staab (Present), Wingfield (Present), Zyczynski (Present).

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

It was moved by Commissioner Schwarzlose, seconded by Commissioner Dooley to table Item C. Matters for Commission Discussion and/or Action - Establishment of Commission Committees and Appointment to Committees until the next meeting, due to the absence of Director Auler from that evening's meeting.

**Discussion of Motion:**

Commissioner Staab asked why the Commission would want to postpone this item. Commissioner Schwarzlose replied that Director Auler usually gives information as to what "his direction and thought process is, as far as committees" and he would like him to weigh in on his thought processes".

Commissioner Staab said that he would not support the motion. He would like to establish the committees so they would "be up and running by the new year".

Commissioner Policicchio asked if the senior report was due out in November, he thought one of the committee appointments dealt with that issue. He asked if whether delaying the committee appointments until November would put a delay on that report.

Superintendent Cowan explained that the Department is already in the process of developing the Senior Strategic Plan. She said that this month's packets included a postcard announcing a community input session. The results for the older adult survey are expected in November.

Commissioner Policicchio replied that he was under the impression that one of the committee's responsibilities was to be involved in that process.

Superintendent Cowan explained that the plan will be done in the November time frame, with the committee helping to carry out the items that will be in that plan.

Commissioner Staab asked what kind of input the committee person/persons would have on that plan if the appointments are postponed until the November meeting.

Superintendent Cowan replied that any commissioner and any citizen are welcome to come to the public input meeting. She explained that the committee member would “become an ambassador and help carry out those processes”.

Commissioner Staab pointed out that he thought this was a “genesis of the same committee” that presently he and Commissioner Schwarzlose are on. He said that he would like to go forward and said that if we are going to defer committee appointments until November, he would be willing to continue to serve on that committee. He added that he would like to be included in anything that happens between now and November.

**Voice Vote** **Passed 6-1**

**Nays: Staab**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Approval of September 13, 2007, meeting minutes.

Moved by Commissioner Schwarzlose, seconded by Commissioner Dooley

**Voice Vote** **Unanimous**

**COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Park Foundation - Commissioner Staab reported that as of October 8, 2007 the Foundation had a balance of \$56,130. He commented that things are flowing well and the next board meeting will be October 16, 2007. He announced that the Foundation is conducting a raffle in conjunction with the Gala Event at Rock Financial November 9, 2007 with the first place prize being a 2008 Ford Escape two year prepaid lease, second place prize a Red Wings suite package for 20 people, third place prize an LCD TV, and fourth place prize a Nintendo Wii. He advised that if the public would like to purchase tickets, only 750 tickets will be sold for \$20 each and are available at the Parks, Recreation and Forestry office.

Commissioner Staab also reported that the Naming Rights Program is going well; there has been some activity that will be announced at a later date.

Commissioner Zyczynski confirmed that the tickets are tax deductible and that the checks are made out to the Novi Parks Foundation.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked how long the tickets would be on sale.

Commissioner Dooley answered that there will be at least 100 tickets held for the night of the gala, with the drawing at 9PM. He said that the invitations have gone out, with tickets going very briskly. He added that the gala is a part of everything the Commission stands for and urged the audience to take advantage of it.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked for clarification as to where the proceeds go.

Commissioner Dooley answered that the proceeds go towards field improvements, sponsorships, and scholarships.

Commissioner Staab added that originally the Foundation was formed to improve the parks and park services. In the 3-4 years that the Foundation has also been in existence, the organization has helped many needy families to participate in programs and be enriched by the Department's services.

### **TEAM REPORTS:**

#### **A. Director's Report**

##### **Baseline Historical Marker and Public Art Project**

Superintendent Wiktorowski reported that the Department was presented with a memo from the Novi Historical Commission that was included in the Commission's packet. He explained that the Historical Commission decided to work with internationally acclaimed sculptor, retired art professor (Oakland University) and Novi resident, David Barr to include Novi as one of the communities along the Michigan Baseline that are participating in Barr's "Coasting the Baseline" historical marker/community art project. He explained that the project would be a ten foot tall granite marker commemorating events that have taken place along the baseline (Eight Mile Road) from the east to the west coast of Michigan. He added that the funding would come from donations to the Historical Commission and that the project would be available for both state and county grants. Mr. Wiktorowski reported that the Department identified a site for the monument at Community Sports Park, on a grassy knoll west of the entrance on Eight Mile. He said that this was brought forward for the Commission's input.

Commissioner Staab said that vandalism was his concern with this particular location, adding that the logo on the play structure was struck several times. Chairperson Wingfield invited the Historical Commission Chairperson, Kathy Mutch from the audience, to add anything to the discussion.

Ms. Mutch said that vandalism was a concern for them as well, because the location was isolated a good part of the time. She said that the Northville location is at Center and Eight Mile, a very heavily trafficked intersection and the Farmington Hills location is at their park on Eight Mile and Halstead, which is somewhat isolated but has traffic into the park and ice arena. Vandalism has not

been a problem at either location that she knows of. The challenge that they were faced regarding location was that it had to be a site that was both publicly accessible and publicly owned. She noted that the location in the park is pretty prominent. The only other place considered was a triangular piece at Garfield Road owned by the City of Novi, but there was no public parking area. For background information Ms. Mutch explained that each obelisk that has been installed is on a municipally owned site, in a highly visible, landscaped setting and publicly accessible with seating that invites visitors to spend time learning more about the history of the area and the role of surveying in its development in each community along the baseline.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he would like to see the site well illuminated, both to make it a more striking feature and to discourage vandalism. Commissioner Zyczynski said that she was familiar with the Northville location. She thought that the Community Sports Park location was great for those citizens with children involved in sports, but about half of the Novi households do not and for those citizens this location is very out of the way. She said she previously thought that city hall would be a great location, but now understands the significance of the need to locate it on Eight Mile Road.

Ms. Mutch said that the project has opened a lot of discussion from Novi and Walled Lake teachers to begin teaching local history in the classroom and make the monument part of the lesson.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked if the monument is affixed to the cement base. Ms. Mutch replied that it would face the same vandalism challenges that a cemetery faces, although not as easy to destroy due to size.

Commissioner Radcliffe said that she had passed by the Northville monument but never realized the significance of it. She asked how Novi would market this project.

Ms. Mutch replied that the marketing usually begins before funding and people are in place for an event and they are currently partnering with the schools. She added that the Historical Commission's big annual event, Fuerst Farm Family Fun Day, was held on September 9<sup>th</sup>. At this year's event they brought in the director of the Michigan Museum of Surveying to present a display, they felt would give a heads up on marketing the project. The display was very popular with the older boys and their dads, a market the Commission was targeting. Commissioner Policicchio asked about the price of the monument.

Ms. Mutch replied that this project requires raising between \$11,000. - \$15,000. The granite that is quarried in Vermont has to be paid for up front, Mr. Barr's services are donated, and the engraving is donated by a monument company in Northville, with the balance being landscaping, etc. She added that she thinks

there is a niche of people that may have a professional interest in getting involved with the project.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if the design of the monument allows naming of contributors on it anywhere.

Ms. Mutch replied that they wanted to avoid the “buy a brick program”, Northville’s site includes a boulder with a brass plate attached which names contributors.

Commissioner Wingfield thanked Ms. Mutch for her presentation, noting that like the other Commissioners he was concerned with vandalism at the proposed location. He asked if this item was informational or if the Commission needed to approve going forward with the project.

Superintendent Wiktorowski replied that the item was informational.

Commissioner Staab added that when the Tim Pope Memorial Play structure was constructed they got the schools involved and by getting the school children involved with this project the Commission will have a “groundswell and your support will be vast”.

#### B. Park Operations

Superintendent Wiktorowski reported that there will be a street tree planting that will begin the week of October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Approximately 500 trees will be planted throughout the city; 300 of which will be planted along public right of ways with 200 replacing trees from previous plantings that didn’t make it. He invited the Commission to an upcoming event at the Civic Center on October 21<sup>st</sup> from 1-4 PM - the Japanese Festival hosted by the Japanese Business Society. The building and grounds division of the Department is expecting over 3,000 attendees for this free event.

Mr. Wiktorowski also reported that the Department is changing modes from the athletic season to the fall clean up season and preparing equipment for the winter season. Administratively, he said he has been working on Capital Improvement and Outlay Projects and service improvements.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if the Department inspects the fields at Community Sports Park to look for areas that need to be improved for next year. Superintendent Wiktorowski replied that they absolutely do. However, with staff limited due to seasonal staff’s return to college and focusing its’ efforts to cutting, fertilizing and aerating grass – larger projects must wait until after the first frost.

#### C. Recreation Services

Superintendent Cowan reported that there are a lot of positive things to report on the recreation side. In September the Department hosted a Fire Up Fest focused

on high school students with over 500 teens in attendance of an event that was a healthy alternative for after the first high school football game. The students were a part of the Battle of the Bands, sampled local eateries, and played in Power Park. She reported positive feedback and suggestions to hold the event on an annual basis. She congratulated Intern Mallory Wethers who led the event and Student Commissioner Goyal for her help.

Ms. Cowan also reported that the International Festival was held the previous Saturday, with close to 2,000 attendees and over 16 countries represented, as well as 8 vendors, and 6 restaurants. She thanked the many sponsors that helped make the event a success, particularly St. John Providence Park a presenting sponsor and great partner.

Ms. Cowan reported that Rachel Zagaroli received her Senior Director Certification and she will receive her certificate at the November conference. She congratulated Rachel on this accomplishment and noted that it is one more step to making sure our seniors have the best here in Novi, as well as moving the Department forward in our objectives. She reported that Rachel is also working hard on the Senior Strategic Plan. She invited the Commission and the community to take part in the focus groups being held the following week on October 17<sup>th</sup>, providing an opportunity for the public to voice their opinions on the senior services the Department provides, as well as to look at areas to improve in the future.

Ms. Cowan said that the Department is looking forward to the annual Ringing In The Holidays Event on November 30<sup>th</sup>. This year the Mayor has challenged all of the city's boards and commissions to building a float for the Electric Light Parade at the event. She said she hoped she could look forward to a fantastic float from the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission.

Ms. Cowan also invited the Commission to attend or help with the Storybook Stroll on October 20<sup>th</sup> at Lakeshore Park.

It was moved by Commissioner Staab, seconded by Commissioner Schwarzlose that the Commission take part in building a float for the Ringing in The Holiday Event, "but under the auspices and the assistance of the Department to build the float".

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

Commissioner Wingfield said that he drove by Power Park about 1 ½ hours after the football game and he was thoroughly impressed by the amount of people in attendance and has heard a lot of positive feedback. He asked Intern Mallory Wethers what she had next on the agenda.

Ms. Wethers replied that the next event that she's working on is the Halloween Storybook Stroll. She is currently working on planning programs for the January – April brochure, with her internship complete on November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if any other suggestions for high school events came up after the Fireup Fest.

Ms. Wethers replied that there was a committee wrap up meeting. At the meeting it was confirmed that people thought the event should take place next year; even bigger and better. The Department has looked at doing other one time events, such as after school ends in the summer.

**MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:**

A. Approval of the five year Tree Fund Utilization and Planting Strategy

It was moved by Commissioner Schwarzlose, seconded by Commissioner Zyczynski to approve the five year Tree Fund Utilization and Planting Strategy.

Discussion of Motion:

Regarding Table 4 - Commissioner Zyczynski asked if the Finance Department's balance includes the Catholic Central fees.

Superintendent Wiktorowski replied that he believes it is included.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

B. Annual election of Commission Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

It was moved by Commissioner Zyczynski, seconded by Commissioner Dooley to nominate Commissioner Schwarzlose as Commission Chairperson.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

It was moved by Commissioner Dooley, seconded by Commissioner Radcliffe to nominate Commissioner Zyczynski as Commission Vice Chairperson.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**Commissioner Comments:**

Student Commissioner Goyal – Said that she thought it was great that different programs were offered for people in the community with different interests.

Commissioner Zyczynski – Said that she was excited to see all the areas within the city where the sidewalks are being connected and she sent out kudos to those responsible for making that happen. She added that she attended the Fall For Novi event and she urged all citizens to attend this great event in the future.

She also said that she attended the senior theatre production “Hit Parade” and complimented the performers and everyone involved in the production.

Commissioner Schwarzlose – said that although we recognize her accomplishments and efforts at the senior center, it’s great to have other recognition and congratulated Rachel Zagaroli on her award from the Michigan Association of Senior Centers. He also reminded everyone that the application for an invitation to the upcoming gala is on the Foundation’s website at [www.noviparks.org](http://www.noviparks.org).

Commissioner Staab – congratulated Intern Mallory Wethers on the Fireup Fest Event and Ms. Zagaroli for her recent designation. He reminded the community that they could purchase raffle tickets by calling him. He also congratulated Commissioner Wingfield and Commissioner Schwarzlose for the job they did as last year’s Chair and Vice Chair and thanked Commissioner Schwarzlose and Commissioner Zyczynski for stepping up to be next year’s Chair and Vice Chair.

Commissioner Dooley – thanked the incoming Chair and Vice Chair and said he felt the Commission would be in good hands in 2008. He reminded the Commission that last year at this time there was 4 inches of snow on the ground and we were trying to play the fall session of soccer. He added that the fields at Community Sports Park have never looked better, which is partially due to the decision to not hold practices on those fields.

Commissioner Policicchio – None.

Commissioner Wingfield – thanked Intern Mallory Wethers on the teen event, Fireup Fest. He said that he thinks that we lose that sector of the population in Parks and Recreation and hopes that the Department continues to do events for that age group after Ms. Wether’s internship is complete.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Wingfield at 8:29 PM.

---

Signed, Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

---

Signed, Karen Zyczynski, Vice Chairperson