

PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2008 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DRAFT

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

No official approval due to the lack of a quorum.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS- None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of April 10, 2008 meeting minutes.

This item was tabled to the next meeting, due to the lack of a quorum.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION

A. ADMINISTRATION – Randy Auler, CPRP, Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry

1. 2008/2009 Budget Update – Director Auler announced that at the April 19, 2008 City Council Budget Workshop that council voted to approve the proposed 2008-2009 budget. The preliminary approval allows the document to move forward for final adoption. He noted that a public hearing is scheduled for May 12th and later on in the agenda is the Council's consideration for a resolution to adopt the budget; which would take effect July 1st. Director Auler explained that some of the key items which impact the Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department include:

- Fuerst Farm Property-“Council allocated a significant amount of funds for the relocation of Township Hall and for the Phase I development of that property. Essentially it equates in the neighborhood of \$340,000-\$347,000 to be able to bring to the table for improvements and the relocation of Township Hall”.
- Final Phase of the Renovation of the Power Park Softball Complex- “That would include the removal and construction of a new concession stand, restroom and maintenance facility at the complex as well as all of the new asphalt paving for the walkways and entryways within that site. That would complete that project. The improvements we've already made have already yielded a significant return on the investment. The number of tournaments we are able to host is up; in fact we recently hosted a tournament with 40 plus fast pitched teams. They generated a significant amount of revenue for the Department, but secondly it has made us competitive in the market place for lower level national tournaments and at this point we are very confident we are going to be able to acquire an ASA tournament in 2010, which would have a significant economic impact on our community”.
- Funding for a Feasibility Study for a Signature Park Complex -“As you recall, a signature park is one of City Council's priorities and the Park Foundation's number one priority. It is essentially to develop a park that would serve as a

community gathering place and generate additional revenue for the Department, in terms of income opportunities and be able to host festivals and whatever other activities that might be able to be programmed there”.

- Study for the Landings Property- “A site plan/feasibility/best use study for 13 acres of property on Old Novi Road and South Lake Drive and that is also the site of the former Walled Lake Casino”.

Director Auler closed by saying that the Department has some significant items in the budget. Anticipating approval, which we thought they would receive, the Commission will have some key items on the agenda beginning next year. These items will become the focus of the commission meetings to determine the direction the department will take.

2. Fuerst Property Improvements

a. Relocation of Township Hall - Director Auler reported that the Department is currently preparing requests for proposals for a design build project on the relocation of the Township Hall. Township Hall must be relocated to enable the Library facility to begin construction. The goal is to have an RFP out and have proposals in and a recommendation to City Council at their very first meeting of the fiscal year, which would be July 7th. This would enable us to begin work as quickly as possible with the target of having the Township Hall relocated in late August, early September. That is a critical component to enable the Library construction to begin and we are currently looking at relocating it to the site that was identified in the McKenna study under Conceptual Plan B and he thinks that would probably be the best site in terms of the concept moving forward.

b. Phase I Development – Also included in that budget was funding to develop the northwest plaza, pathways, the village green concept and to begin work on either removal of the barns and the home or to salvage those or to find other entities that may be interested in acquiring those barns at their cost and relocating them. The work will have to take place this fall.

3. 2009-2013 Community Recreation Plan Process – Director Auler stated there was a memo in the packet that provides a brief overview of that process. Essentially the Community Recreation Plan is a 5 year comprehensive plan that enables the department to look at what our long term capital improvement needs and land use needs are and how we can incorporate those into a land use planning with Community Development Department and the Planning Commission. The plan also lends itself toward the strategic plan phase which then is really the action strategies that have to be implemented. We have to have a new 5 year plan on file with the State of Michigan which enables us to be able to go for State and Federal grant funds and in the past several years we have been very successful with our grant program and really that comes back to the success of our 2003-2008 Community Recreation Plan. In that plan we had 10 objectives and have accomplished 9 of those 10 objectives, so it is not a plan that sits on the shelf, it is used on a daily basis and the Commission certainly uses that on their decision making process. The only item that is not completed is the acquisition of 80-100 acres of land for active recreation space and certainly that need is going to be addressed through the signature park concept. The plan has laid the foundation for the success we have had over the last 3-5 years and we look for this plan to do the same.

Nancy Cowan will talk about those successes when we touch base on the scoreboard here in terms of measuring our progress for this year.

Director Auler stated some dates to have on your calendar are June 7th we are going to have a dedication ceremony for the ITC Community Sports Park. That ceremony is going to be an event the community is invited to attend and there will be a lot of publicity going out and Tracie Ringle will be coordinating that effort and getting the word out. There will be an event at the ITC Community Sports Park from 10am-12noon that day with a dedication ceremony taking place at 10:30am with the unveiling of the sign that will be installed prior to that date out at the park. The event is really focused on community and having a number of children and families out there and enjoying the park and activities we will have for that day. It is a celebration of ITC's commitment to giving back to the community and with their significant donation to the Park Foundation that they made last fall.

Director Auler stated that all day today and this evening Max and Erma's at 12 Oaks Mall is inviting the community to come out and have dinner and 20% of the proceeds from today's sales go as a donation toward the Novi Park Foundation. Commissioner Dooley is at that event this evening greeting people and thanking them for coming and participating. Director Auler appreciates his dedication towards this project and steering that effort.

B. RECREATION SERVICES – Nancy Cowan, Superintendent of Recreation

1. Update on Theatre Online Ticketing Program – Superintendent Cowan reported that we went on-line and live with our on-line ticketing process April 15th. Since that time over 72% of our sales have been done on-line through E ticket and our on-line process and the remainder of that percentage has been done at our front box office. A large portion that has been done at our front box office is comp tickets for some of the people who help out with the show. The majority of our tickets are being done on-line and customers are really enjoying that process and we are getting a lot of great feedback, so it is definitely catching on. Also, if you are interested in utilizing that service and catching Kokonut Kapers the opening night of that show is this evening and will be running for 8 shows this weekend and both next weekends. The kids have put a great deal of time into it and it is looking fantastic and they are having a great time with it. She hopes everyone will come out and enjoy the show.

2. ITC Community Sports Park Event – June 7, 2008 – Superintendent Cowan stated that Director Auler already touched on that event and we are definitely working on making it a great community event and something that families and kids and parents will come out and enjoy together. There are a lot of great things planned for the event; the Detroit Ignition is coming out to be part of the event and there are crafts and other programs planned.

Superintendent Cowan reported that we have Memorial Day coming upon us in just a few weeks and we have been in the process for many weeks of recruiting parade entries. She is looking at having the same kind of quality parade and even stronger than last year, always building on what we are doing each year. We are definitely excited about that event and encourage everyone to come and attend and be part of that event and would like the Commissioners to be part of the parade. There will also be a veteran's ceremony after the parade to honor our Memorial Day veterans, a bouncer, food and festivities at the Civic Center.

Superintendent Cowan reported on the Scoreboard for the third quarter. She said there is a lot of green, which means we are in really good shape. Our sponsorship and advertisement, both in-kind and through monetary sponsorships has been outstanding this year and very significant and continuing to grow each day. We have a lot of people who are very proud and happy to be a part of all the great things going on at Novi Parks and that shows. Naming rights is obviously significant and already has reached target for the year. Volunteer's hours and customer satisfaction are on target and she specifically would like to point out Pick and Click on-line registration, once again we are at 51% and that is an average throughout the year and we have definitely had months where we have hit 71%. We do have a lot of softball teams and other items that tend to still like to come to our front desk to find about rules, etc., but we are definitely seeing a significant portion of our registrations being done on-line and the customers are really enjoying that service. Participation and programs are fantastic and up from last year and continues to grow in that area and our expectation is that it will continue to be that way in the coming months and coming year. Recreational Services has exceeded our target at this point as far as where we would want to be at 9 months for revenue, we are a little over in expenses, but we are much higher in revenue, so there is a little bit of an offset that is occurring with those numbers. Also, our rental balance is looking great, definitely an outcry for use of space at the Civic Center and at our great parks. We are already booking the pavilions and rentals at the parks are through the roof already for this summer.

Commissioner Schwarzlose asked if residents can use the Pick and Click to rent the facilities as well.

Superintendent Cowan replied that not at this point, which is one of the services that is not on line simply because we have to juggle a lot of different activities and programs within those facilities. We are continually always looking to update that service and continually looking at ways potentially to make that happen in the future.

C. PARK OPERATIONS – Matt Wiktorowski, Superintendent of Parks

1. Capital Improvement Project Update

- a. Power Park Softball Complex Sports Field Lighting
- b. Civic Center Parking Lot and Pedestrian Lighting - Superintendent

Wiktorowski reported we are 80% on our Capital Improvement Projects, specifically our Power Park softball complex sports field lighting. That plan as well as the Civic Center parking lot and pedestrian lighting plan are in the hands of the plan review department. We expect that set to be stamped tomorrow, given a couple of minor changes, some identification of some utilities and then it will be passed over to our Building Department and then put out to bid. We are still hopeful we can have this project all under way, if not all completed by the end of the fiscal year.

c. ITC Sports Park Facility Service Center - Superintendent Wiktorowski reported that the ITC Sports Park Facility Service Center plans are very close to being stamped and hopeful that it will be done tomorrow as well and can be moved over to our Building Department for permitting and we can complete that project by the end of the fiscal year as well.

Director Auler apologizes for this surprise, but he just received notification late this afternoon and wanted to make the Commission aware and even the team that through our naming rights agreement with Holzer Ford Field we have an opportunity to raffle off prizes and generate additional revenue. It is through the Park Foundation and as you recall we did that last year and raffled off a 2008 Ford Escape, a suite to the Red Wings game, Nintendo Wii and a color TV. We sold those tickets for \$20 and we sold up to 750 tickets. The foundation applied for a license again to do that and wanted to get started on that earlier this year. As of late this afternoon we just received our license from the State and the tickets are being printed tomorrow, so we are going to be distributing and selling tickets and we ask that the Commission support us in that effort and help make that happen. The 1st place prize this year is a 2009 Ford Escape, 2nd place is a suite at a Red Wings game and he believes a 3rd and 4th place could be I Phones with a one year contract, but don't quote him on that. Tickets will be available for sale for \$20 and this is where we may need some help. We have a major event in town this weekend and partnership with our department and that is the annual Mother's Day Soccer Tournament with the Novi Jaguars Soccer Association. There are roughly 400-450 teams in town and they will be participating in a tournament Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. It is an excellent opportunity for us to sell those tickets at that event and so tomorrow we will be coordinating and pulling together last minute a booth or a roving booth and try to sell as many tickets as we can, because as you recall you don't need to be present to win the award. It is a significant fundraiser for the Park Foundation and all the revenue from the Park Foundation is set aside either through an endowment for the departments operations long term or investment/reinvestment into the park systems capital improvement program. He will be getting you tickets and asking you to encourage people to purchase those tickets and if anyone is available this weekend that can help with that tournament section it would be appreciated and an e-mail will be sent out tomorrow.

Director Auler said it is the 5th or 6th year for the Jaguar Tournament and it has grown from 30 teams the first year to 400+ teams this year. That is a tribute, not only to the Jaguars Association, but also to our team. Matt and his crew with the quality of fields and what they are able to pull together, the communication between our recreation side and marketing side and sports division in particular with the Jaguars and being able to cultivate that relationship from what it was to where we are today has a significant economic impact upon the community and he would venture to say in the past every hotel room has been sold out. He would venture to say that again this year as well as the gas stations, restaurants, etc., and everything else that those visitors will purchase within Novi for a 3 day tournament. He would guesstimate that economic impact being in the neighborhood of \$550,000-\$800,000 for a 3 day tournament of that magnitude. It is a tribute to our team, partnership and the organization being able to bring this together.

D. COMMUNICATIONS – Tracie Ringle, Communications and Resource Development Supervisor

1. Effectiveness of Marketing/Communications Tools – Supervisor Ringle reported that we have been working diligently to enhance our communication efforts in the department and one of the points of enhancing communications is making sure they are effective and make sure what we are doing is on target. With the new Engage publication that went out in mid-April to all the homes and businesses we wanted to make sure that the publication did do diligence and was effective in marketing our programs. Through our CLASS database system we are able to

report that 52% of our registrants report that they received their program information from the Engage. Our last addition was 47% of our registration, so proving that is our most anticipated marketing tool that we have for our department. The City of Novi website is the second most popular avenue and yields about 30% of our registrations and that is where she will spend her energy the next month or so enhancing our section of the City Website and really getting that up-to-date and sharper than it is now.

Supervisor Ringle has been working with our GIS and she is able to track where our registrants are coming from. Enclosed in the packet are the Daddy Daughter Dance participants and the red stars indicate where they came from and you will see that there are some areas in Novi where we are lacking participation. Some of that being location, they go to Walled Lake or Northville schools, etc. You also see that there are some clusters of neighborhood participants that were able to come together as a Girl Scout Troop, etc. What we are able to do when this map is live is click on the stars and get information about that registrants, i.e. age, potentially name if we need to do that, so it's really a great marketing piece for us to focus on where we are reaching our participants. Maybe even looking at where we do soccer practices, depending on where people are registering. Looking at that we need to hit the north side of town, which we know city-wide is an initiative for us to do a better job reaching those north end residents, so it is really a great piece that is new to our department. Lastly, she has been working on 'benefit one pages' on a limited basis which will eventually be placed in to a booklet to be used for communicating the benefits that we offer. As a supplemental piece to our recreation guide, we decided to go ahead and put those into a publication and she got a first draft today, so that is something you will probably see in next month's packet. A matching supplement to our Engage publication, that we would be able to use at the counters, parks, and the investment community can look at those when they are coming in or our economic development office upstairs, so it is just another piece to utilize talking about our department.

Director Auler commented that this is going to be an excellent tool as Tracie mentioned to help us with marketing, but it is also an excellent tool to help us with partnership strategy. If you really look at this map, the 2 sections that didn't generate a lot of registrations or interest are north of 96 which is the Walled Lake school district and that is a district that currently we haven't been able to distribute additional information such as the Rec Reminder or other tools to send home with the youth within the school district. The use of a tiered system with our marketing communications, we have our Engage booklet, website, Rec Reminder that goes home through the school system with each student and then we follow that up with newspaper articles and Channel 13. It is pretty clear in the Walled Lake and Northville school districts that the registration component didn't come from those 2 districts with this particular program. As we begin to do this with our other programs we might be seeing a trend or we might not. It certainly is a tool that we can then, with our discussions we have initiated with Walled Lake and Northville school districts and those discussions have been very healthy, in fact some of their programs are in our Engage booklet this time and some of our material is in their school facilities. So that partnership and sharing facilities is growing and this is just another tool to help us with that. At the Commission level or yourselves, if you know members on those school boards or

homeowners associations in those particular areas, this is where you can really help us and many of you have been helping to get the word out through other means.

Commissioner Radcliffe stated she lives in the Northville area that is south of 9 Mile and she has been working through her homeowners association and she has talked to some people individually and they really do align themselves. She was talking to her neighbor across the street about the theatre program, that there are some that were geared to kids and it would be really great. The neighbor said they haven't ever participated in the Novi Theatre, but have taken their kids to Northville. She has found in some of her casual conversations that is the case and it is hard to break into that. She would be interested in the golf outing if we get any people from that area, because she does hit them on-line with a separate blurb and has talked to at least one neighbor who has gone before to encourage them to go again. She would be interested to see if there is any follow up on any of that.

Commissioner Schwarzlose stated that for us to say we will continue to improve the Engage document is an outstanding comment, because he doesn't know how you can get much better than what we put out now. He said it is a very encompassing document, dynamic and it is just an outstanding presentation.

Director Auler stated that there are 2 new student's who have been appointed by City Council to the Parks Commission. He will get their applications and they will begin at the next meeting.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS- None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Radcliffe

Commissioner Radcliffe stated that last month we talked about acquiring sponsors for the golf outing and just wondered how that was coming along.

Director Auler responded that it is going very well, we haven't hit our total goal, but we are way ahead of where we were last year. To date he believes we are in the \$25,000 range and our target is \$40,000. He wants to be at that target by the end of May so that then we can focus June and July on the details of the tournament and getting the actual golfers signed up. He challenged the Commissioners all to get 3 foursomes involved and if the Commission and the Park Foundation do that and with our usual numbers the golf outing will grow to approximately 208 golfers, which would be capacity. That will take all 27 holes of the course that day and would net \$55,000-\$75,000 for the golf outing in a one day event, the previous 3 years total we generated \$45,000 net.

Commissioner Zyczynski

Commissioner Zyczynski stated she attended the Arbor Day event and felt like there wasn't as many people as last year. The day started out kind of gloomy, but she worked really hard and went home achy, but it seemed it went well. She was very impressed with all the use that Lakeshore Park was getting that day, there was a walk for the cure group practicing, soccer going on and then Arbor Day.

Commissioner Schwarzlose

Commissioner Schwarzlose wanted to invite everyone and remind them of all the events that we have going on especially before our next meeting; Kokonut Kapers, Choralaires Concert, Jaguar Tournament, Perennial Exchange, Memorial Day Parade, River Day, Fuerst Farm Family Day and the ITC Grand Opening. He appreciates all Randy and his staff does and they continue to do a great job.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Schwarzlose at 8:07 PM.

APPROVED: _____

Signed, Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

Signed, Karen Zyczynski, Vice Chairperson