

NOVI-PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2008 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DRAFT

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Staab, seconded by Commissioner Dooley to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

AUDIENCE COMMENTS- None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of March 13, 2008 meeting minutes.

Moved by Commissioner Wingfield, seconded by Commissioner Staab.

Commissioner Wingfield asked that the adjournment time of the meeting be changed from 8:50 pm to 7:50 pm.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

TEAM REPORTS

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

1. Update on 2005 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Land Acquisition Grant

Director Auler stated that paperwork is being sent out late this week to the Department of Natural Resources for their review. When we receive approval on those forms we can forward them to the property owners of the two parcels for their review. After that we will be able to finalize some things on the title search and set the closing date for the acquisition of the project. Once we close, within the next sixty to ninety days, we have to do some construction and development work at the site. This includes an entryway, parking area, accessible fishing pier to the lake and pathways. The work will take place this summer. Following this we will submit all of the documentation to the state and seek reimbursement for the portion from the state grant. Generally it takes another three to six months for that process so we will probably get the money this time next year.

2. Update on Park Entry Sign Design

Director Auler stated that in the current budget, City Council has allocated funds for entryway signs in to the City. There was a Committee and a firm, SignGraphix, who developed an entryway sign design for City Council review and approval. On Monday evening City Council approved the design of the concept. There will be a bid package going out to companies for the construction and installation of those signs coming in to the City. The City is initially funding three entryways in to the City. The first three are: Eight Mile and Haggerty Road, Eight Mile and Napier and Twelve Mile and Haggerty Road.

We have the Naming Rights agreements with ITC for the ITC Community Sports Park, Telcom Credit Union for the Telcom Playground in Power Park and Tom Holser Ford for Tom Holser Field in Power Park. We have not ordered signs or installed those yet because as part of the branding initiative we wanted the signs to be similar to what the City is doing with the entryway signs. In the packet are some perspectives on the design. He is working with the committee to revise and "tweak" the signs before we go out for proposals on construction and installation on those. The funding for those signs initially will come from the Naming Rights Agreement in accordance with the agreements signed on those three projects. Eventually all of our park entryway signs will look as a monument sign coming in to the park with smaller signs for way finding in the interior of the park. This way we will have a consistent look. This is the first step toward going to a branding with one sign package for the Department and for the City.

3. 2008 Novi Parks Foundation Golf Outing – August 7, 2008

Director Auler stated that the goal for the Golf Outing this year is to raise \$41,000. To date, in the three years of the Golf Outing we have raised \$46,000. He is pretty ambitious in what they are trying to do. He feels very strongly that it can be done. There is a report in the packet for the status of where we are. The main thing that is needed from the Commission is to supply three contacts that the Foundation can go to for sponsorship of a hole or title and to get three foursomes to participate in the outing. If both the Park Commission and the Park Foundation Board does that then the Golf Outing will be in the neighborhood of 200 golfers. Given all of that we will be in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to \$60,000 raised on one day. That money is utilized to fund scholarships within the community and park improvement.

We currently have two platinum sponsors so we have already generated \$15,000 in sponsorship at that level. We currently have twenty-two hole sponsors which is more than we have had in the past several years.

He would like to have the sponsorship package done no later than Memorial Day. So he needs the three contacts e-mailed to him and the information for three foursomes.

4. Study of Potential Use of the Fuerst Property

Director Auler stated that there was a request for proposal sent out, the contract going to McKenna and Associates. There was a community input process and two conceptual plans were developed for the property. This includes operational analysis as it relates to cost and the maintenance cost is included in that component. The plan was presented to City Council and there was extensive discussion at this past Monday evening's City Council meeting on April 7th. At the end of the day, City Council voted to proceed with Plan B. Plan B calls for the relocation of Township Hall to the property and for the removal of the current facilities due to their condition and the cost. Unless someone can raise the money and present the money for those structures, which would be in the neighborhood of \$1.2 million to \$3 million just to get them usable. The current condition will require \$1.2 million to bring the barns and the house in to structurally sound condition. This will not make them accessible nor weatherproof them nor install lighting.

Included in the budget discussion and proposal is the cost to relocate Township Hall. It will be one of the items that City Council will discuss at budget time.

Director Auler stated that he would like to lay out a "roadmap" for the next several meetings in terms of key topics for upcoming Commission discussions. It will keep us focused on policy and good planning and getting ahead of the curve. We have a five-year comprehensive plan that we need to do this year, the Community Recreation Plan. We have a need to develop a solid Capital Improvement Plan. We struggled this year as to which projects we fund and which we should not. That should be done through the course of the year. We need to update our Strategic Plan and develop a five-year Grant Plan. Every year we are "reacting" to submit a grant and it is right at the end. We need to change how we go about doing this. In order to do this we have to make sure that we as a Commission and staff are thinking strategically and we have to be able to align our resources to do that. Our resources are still not on line to be able to support all of these things but they are things that we need to have discussion about. The "Signature Park" concept is the number one priority of this City Council, this Commission and the Park Foundation so this will be a key discussion topic.

Communication is key because support breeds more support and more success. We need to communicate our successes to the citizens and the understanding of the value we bring to the table. An example is that if you reside within a half a mile of a park your property values, according to Oakland County Community Development, are 12% to 20% higher than if you do not. Citizens do not know that and we need to do a better job of bringing those items forward.

Financially, money is getting tighter all of the time. He will begin to share some of the financial analysis that has been done as it relates to the Parks Department and he will begin to talk about some strategies. This will include fees, charges, what businesses we need to be in and what businesses we need to get out of in order to reduce our general fund subsidy and be able to deliver a better product for the community.

Partnerships are an opportunity to reach out. One of these opportunities is with the new Engage! magazine which he will let Tracie speak about. There are opportunities potentially for shared staffing, facilities and programs. We can have some of these discussions with other communities. You will notice that there are some of Northville

Parks and Recreation's and Walled Lake Community Education's programs in our booklet now. We have begun discussions on how we can utilize some of the school facilities with Walled Lake Community Education. We certainly have a great partnership with Novi Schools. The Northville Schools have said we might be able to use theirs. We have always had continued discussions, and those are much more productive this year, with our sports user groups.

These are topics that he will begin to send information out on and he will begin to discuss with the Commission to keep us focused on the strategic types of things. We need Commission members to be champions of the cause and communicate our needs and successes to City Council and to citizens. He, Commissioner Dooley and Wendy DuVall were in a very productive meeting this evening as related to a potential partnership that may happen. This potential partner did not have a clear understanding of how our department is funded or the shortfall that we face given that everyone thinks that their tax money pays for all of our services and it does not. We need to do a better job of educating about that and why we fund and price things the way that we do. This is one of the topics we will talk about in the future but he wanted to get it in to the Commissioner's hands this evening.

Director Auler then asked for any questions.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he read the newspaper and saw part of the City Council meeting and he wanted to make sure that he understands. He asked if they were going to move Township Hall and then tear down all of the other buildings on the Fuerst Farm property. He then asked if they were going to put a walkway in and a fountain or waterfall at the corner to put a little life in to it or will it be torn down and left in its natural state.

Director Auler replied that there were two conceptual plans presented. Both include similar components. The number one finding out of the community input process was a community recreation center. By far that was the number one thing. A community recreation center is not going to fit on that 6.5 acre site. Every one who participated agreed that wasn't the site but the community recreation center is the number one need within the community. There was a lot of interest and input about preserving the property as it is, a lot of interest on the other side of the cost to fix it, and other ways that money could be spent. It was divided and there was no common middle ground. Concept A was to renovate and fix everything that is there including trails, etc. Concept B was to remove the facilities and have walkways, entryway, and gateways. It is almost like creating a college campus quad for self directed activities as well as programmed activities which could occur on the site. Keep in mind there is a two-story High School adjacent to it with 1,800 to 2,000 students. Next to that there is a 57,000 square foot, two-story, 30 feet tall, entirely glass building on the west side to overlook that property. It would be tying all that visually and use-wise together. He does not know what will be funded in the budget. The one thing that has to be funded or we have to find other ways to fund is the relocation of Township Hall. Township Hall has to be relocated to facilitate the construction of the new library facility. He has to be able to move Township Hall in August or September. He has to be ready to go out to bid on July 1st and get the work moving quickly so the library construction can begin. City Council's motion was to remove the other facilities. There is an opportunity to salvage the wood. He knows that is an emotional issue.

Commissioner Wingfield then asked how much it would cost to tear down all of the buildings.

Director Auler stated that to remove the structure, salvage the wood and sell it, and to relocate Township Hall would be anywhere between \$59,000 and \$114,000 and that is what we have proposed in phase one of the budget.

Commissioner Wingfield then asked since it is not listed on the agenda if there is an update on the Tim Pope Playstructure.

Director Auler replied that the expert did come in and we got the report late last week. He has not had an opportunity to review it to be able to speak to it this evening. He plans to review it over the weekend or next week and can give input at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked where the Township Hall would be relocated.

Director Auler replied that Township Hall would be relocated to the Fuerst property. The exact location is hard to describe but he will provide a print out. The information is on the City Website under Concept B.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he sees where there is going to be a walk around on April 19th in the afternoon. In the memo it lists the Jacob and Rebecca Fuerst farmstead as on the National Register of Historic Places. Will that still be the case?

Director Auler replied that there was an extensive section in the report that addressed that issue. There are certain criteria that you have to meet and he is not sure that we will meet those criteria if those facilities are removed. That designation may be in jeopardy. Further research will need to be done.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there is a process in place to insure that the emotional attachment of that being a National Register site still be in place.

Director Auler replied that there are criteria that you have to achieve and they are identified in the report and they are on the website. His understanding is that we would be hard-pressed to be able to achieve that with the removal of the facilities.

Commissioner Staab stated that since the Tim Pope Memorial Playstructure was brought up he would like a copy of the report as soon as possible. He has done some further research and would like to share that at the appropriate time.

Commissioner Zyczynski stated that she attended a community input session on the Fuerst Farm property. The group felt that the primary need was for a community recreation center and it was agreed that it would not fit on the Fuerst Farm property. Her sense is that the feeling of the people in the session she attended was the need for the recreation center but also that they wanted to preserve that little bit of history that we have. We don't have any history other than houses here and there in the community. It has been voted on and is pretty much done. Her concern is whether it captures the essence of what people were saying.

B. RECREATION SERVICES – Nancy Cowan, Superintendent of Recreation

1. Update on theatre internet ticketing - TIX, Inc.

Superintendent Cowan stated that we have been talking the last couple of meetings about theatre ticketing and online ticketing. That process is nearly complete. We are working on the final details of that website and will be doing some internal training over the next few days to get our staff ready to do that. It is also announced in our upcoming Engage! Guide and does start April 15th, next Tuesday. We are excited to introduce that program to the community. It will be a benefit to all of our customers as well as our staff.

2. Update on National Accreditation Standards and progress (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies – CAPRA)

Superintendent Cowan stated that this program is a rigorous agency accreditation process specifically for Parks and Recreation agencies. There are 10 different categories and 156 standards that are a part of this process. This process will allow us to do a basic self assessment and needs assessment of our organization and help us take a look at where we are based on all of these national standards. There is currently one organization in Michigan that has this certification and that is Canton. We are hoping to be one of the next few to do that. From the time that you apply for this CAPRA process it normally takes organizations up to two years. This is something that our organization and our team feel is very important for us to do. We do have many positive attributes and this will allow us to grow as an organization and to measure ourselves against best practices on a national level and incorporate new things in to our organization as well. We anticipate that this is something we would like to look at kicking off in the fall of 2008. We anticipate that we would complete that within 16 to 24 months. As we get a little closer to this process and begin to talk to the team, you will become more aware of the process. There are many benefits to becoming a CAPRA organization as far as recognition, operating more efficiently and effectively, it brings you more resources from the community, and it brings your team together. It is definitely a team process and will be something that everyone in our organization will be a part of.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if this is like putting together a grant, a long process that will take a lot of time from everyone to get the process going.

Superintendent Cowan replied that it is definitely something that will take time and resources from staff. As we look through the CAPRA guidelines that we have currently, we actually do have quite a few already in place. They deal with a lot of policies and procedures and is essentially an accreditation process that helps you refine those even more. We do have many items in place. For us some of it will be a matter of reorganizing.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that when he worked in Southfield they got the award one year and he thinks it is an honorable award for the City to have. It helps sell the City. When realtors show communities with that award it adds a lot of marketability.

Commissioner Staab stated that he had the pleasure, as he believes other Commission members did, of attending "Father Bingo." It was very entertaining and well done.

Superintendent Cowan stated that it was definitely a great success. There was a lot of recognition regionally for that production. The set and the costumes were fantastic. It was a high quality production.

C. PARK OPERATIONS – Matt Wiktorowski, Superintendent of Parks

1. Update on Capital Improvement Projects

Superintendent Wiktorowski stated that we are currently 80% complete on our capital improvement projects.

- a. Power Park softball complex Sports Field Lighting
- b. Civic Center Parking lot and Pedestrian Lighting

Superintendent Wiktorowski stated that tomorrow we anticipate submitting 7 stamping sets to our Planning Department for their final review of the athletic field lighting and also the Civic Center complex lighting which includes the Police Department as well. That will be one large project submitted. We will also be submitting two final cut sheets for our park maintenance storage facility which is proposed for ITC Community Sports Park. After the sheets are stamped from our Planning Department they will move on to the Building Department which has already preliminarily reviewed them. We are anticipating a quick turn around time from our Community Development Department so we can have significant progress status or be 100% complete on both of those projects by the end of the fiscal year. We think that we can still reach those goals and are pushing for that.

Our last Capital Improvement project is athletic field renovation. We are looking to start the Field A at ITC Community Sports Park project after the end of the spring soccer season. We are hopeful that we can get everything done by the end of this fiscal year.

2. Update on Brookfarm Park Bridge project

Superintendent Wiktorowski stated that we have been working with our Engineering Department who has been in touch with Anderson, Eckstein and Westrick about obtaining a state permit for the Brookfarm Park bridge structure.

The permitting process is going to allow us to do a complete repair. We have since found out that to even do a temporary repair along the stream bank, we would also need to have that structure permitted otherwise we can't do anything. That has led us into further discussions about the economic feasibility of keeping the structure at all; versus trying to get it permitted, do the hydraulic studies and all of the engineering costs that are associated with that structure. That is the most recent development.

Commissioner Dooley asked if he anticipates minimal disruption at ITC Community Sports Park Field A during the summer months, so when the fall session begins that field will be fully operational and ready to go.

Superintendent Wiktorowski replied that it is the intent is to have Field A completely ready to go for Fall Soccer. They intend to use large roll sod, give it a couple of weeks

growing time, keep some of the younger kids on the field and let the field grow in over the fall. It will be ready for the older kids in the spring.

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

1. Engage! – the new recreation guide

Supervisor Ringle stated that she had provided a copy of the new Engage! magazine for everyone. It is currently available for downloading on the City website. It is going to the Post Office on Monday. It is newly redesigned and takes the place of our Recreation Guide. It is a comprehensive publication and it features engagement opportunities for our programs at Novi Parks, the Novi Public Library, Neighborhood Services, Police and Fire Departments, Walled Lake Schools and West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation. In addition to being a one-stop publication it is an excellent example of doing more with more. We have expanded our partnerships and opportunities that provide more for our community. It is polished, easy to read, a fun format and it will reach more people. This edition of Engage! and the following ones are going to go not only to homes, as our original Recreation Guide did, but to all of the businesses as well. When you get your copy in the mail it is going to have a City survey comment card through our Community Relations Department. We value feedback and truly use that feedback to improve our services not only in our department but city wide. We encourage people to utilize the card and send it back to us.

2. Community Connection Opportunities at upcoming events

Our next big connection piece is our City website, which it is going to be an update to our pages on the City website. The plan is going to be fun, informative and concise and is going to highlight principles and the language from Jim Collins' Good To Great book which Director Auler has referenced multiple times. We are using these principles now in a lot of the things we are doing and it is paying off. He mentions a flywheel in that book and we really are in the midst of that flywheel moving. It is moving quickly and is evidenced every day. Our sponsorship support has increased significantly as you can see monthly on the scoreboard. We consistently have three or four out of the top ten hits on our City website. City Council made it one of the top priorities to look at acquiring park land for a signature park and eventually a community recreation center. Staff members are being approached to make presentations at business meetings, community groups, and have been invited to openings and receptions as advocates of what we are doing. More and more businesses are coming to us seeing the value of what we do and want to be a part of it like Lifetime Fitness and Dick's Sporting Goods. They are doing this because we are focused on doing the right things and doing them the right way. There is additional opportunity for connection in our community for the Commission to take part in. She provided an Arbor Day flier and a flier about Dick's Community Sports which we are doing with Dick's at their store at the Fountain Walk location. People can go there and get a discount and look for items for sports they are participating in. Commissioner Dooley was instrumental in partnering to do a fund raiser with Max and Erma's for the Parks Foundation. That is scheduled to take place on Thursday, May 8th.

Student Commissioner Goyal stated that she passed out a lot of Arbor Day fliers so a lot of High School students should attend. She asked about the survey card that would come with the Engage! and whether people could respond on the website as well.

Superintendent Ringle stated that she could put it as a surveymonkey on the website. She will check to make sure that is available next week as the guide goes to homes.

Commissioner Radcliffe asked if the May 8th date for Max and Erma's is the Commission Meeting. And it was determined that it is.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

AUDIENCE COMMENTS - None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Staab stated that it will be after the May Commission meeting but the Choralair Spring Concert will be May 10th at the Fuerst Auditorium at the Novi High School around 7:00 or 7:30. Tickets are available at the Parks and Recreation office and at Meadowbrook Commons. He had the pleasure of attending "Father Bingo" and enjoyed it a lot.

Commissioner Dooley stated that the opening day for Spring Soccer is going to be on Saturday, April 19th. He invites anyone to come out and see what great soccer looks like at ITC Community Sports Park. There will be around 2,000 families and soccer players. His first game is at 9:30. His Novi Jalapenos, U14 girls, are playing Northville. It is a great way to experience what we are truly all about. He thanked Superintendent Wiktorowski for what he does, because the fields look great.

May 8th is a fundraiser that Max and Erma's has been kind enough to do with us. Catherine Coburn is the director of marketing there and she has been a wonderful partner. We expect future partnership opportunities with them. The nice thing about this fundraiser is that it ties in nicely with the Jaguar's Mother's Day Tournament, youth soccer and any youth sports. If you come to Max and Erma's during their designated time (it is from lunch all the way through closing) they will donate 20% of the proceeds back to us.

Commissioner Zyczynski asked how the word was getting out on the Max and Erma's fundraiser.

Superintendent Ringle stated that she has done it two ways. She put it in to the Engage! publication where there is a coupon that can be cut out and used. She was also able to get it in to the Jaguar Tournament Program as well.

Commissioner Dooley stated that you have to have a way to prove you are there for the 20% so you need the coupon.

Superintendent Ringle stated that it will also be on our website so it can be downloaded and printed.

Student Commissioner Goyal stated that Arbor Day is Saturday, April 26th, at Lakeshore Park. Novi High School is performing the musical "Bye, Bye Birdie" today, Friday and Saturday at 7 pm. She is in the crew.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that we have always had a good brochure but it is very improved and is an example of doing things even better. He is involved in Novi Youth Baseball and they are up in numbers by about 70. There are about 670 kids participating. This is remarkable because many communities are seeing a decline because many kids are going to different sports like lacrosse, soccer, etc. Novi Youth Baseball League is going to have a work day out at the fields on Saturday morning, May 3rd, from 9am to noon. He will get together with Superintendent Wiktorowski on things they can do to make improvements to the fields. They are getting coaches, parents, and kids involved in helping with that.

Commissioner Radcliffe – None

Commissioner Zyczynski stated that Superintendent Ringle did a great job on the Engage! magazine. Arbor Day is Saturday, April 26th from 10:00 to 12:00 at Lakeshore Park. She participated in Arbor Day last year and had a good time. There was a great turn out. "Father Bingo" was excellent. Novi Theatres are doing a great job. The Novi Historical Commission is hosting a walk through of the Fuerst Farm on April 19th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. You meet at the Old Township Hall for the tour.

Director Auler stated that he wanted to make the Commission aware of budget sessions beginning soon. He believes that the first one is April 17th. On April 19th is a lengthy session scheduled starting at 9:00am and goes to 2:00pm or later. He will e-mail the Commission members with the remaining budget session dates.

Commissioner Dooley noted after the meeting that John O'Brien of Novi Youth Assistance sent a nice thank you letter to the Commission thanking them for their donation to the NYA bowl-a-thon which raised over \$13,000 for Novi Youth Assistance.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Commissioner Wingfield and seconded by Commissioner Dooley
The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Zyczynski at 8:16 PM.

APPROVED: _____

Signed, Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

Signed, Karen Zyczynski, Vice Chairperson