

NOVI-PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 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: Bharadwaj (Present), Dooley (Present), Goyal (Present), Policicchio (Present), Radcliffe (Present), Schwarzlose (Present), Staab (Absent), Wingfield (Absent), Venigalla (Present), Zyczynski (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Zyczynski, seconded by Commissioner Radcliffe to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

AUDIENCE COMMENTS- None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of April 10, 2008 meeting minutes.

Moved by Commissioner Zyczynski, seconded by Commissioner Dooley.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

Approval of May 8, 2008 meeting minutes.

Moved by Commissioner Zyczynski, seconded by Commissioner Dooley.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

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

1. Welcome to new student representatives

Director Auler welcomed Student Commissioners Baradwaj and Venigalla. They will be with the commission for the next two years. He then thanked Student Commissioner Goyal for everything that she has done for teen activities and the program as a whole.

Director Auler then stated that this past Saturday from 10 a.m. until noon was the dedication ceremony for the ITC Community Sports Park. He commended the staff, particularly Nancy Cowan, Tracie Ringle, Matt Wiktorowski, their teams and all of the volunteers who participated. He thanked ITC for their support and volunteer efforts from their team members. The event drew a large number of people and created a lot of interest. He thanked ITC for their partnership now and in the future.

Director Auler stated as an update for the Fuerst Farm property that we have to have Township Hall relocated this fall in August or September to make way for the library construction. The ground breaking ceremony for the library will be in October or November. We have out engineering and design bids for the relocation of Township Hall. This includes the foundation and the relocation of the structure. That will be relocated to the site as indicated in the McKenna conceptual Plan B. This would be approximately in the area of the northern barn. This provides access to the library and parking as outlined in the plan. A company has also come in and performed an environmental phase one assessment on all four structures on the Fuerst Farm site. We are waiting for the findings to see if there are environmental issues to deal with as part of the work on the property. There are bids out on demolition of the structures and on "take down" of the structures. "Taking down" is hopefully being able to find someone to come in and take the barns down and use the wood or we would store the wood and sell it for salvage value. "Taking down" is our preferred direction but we have bids out for both ways so that the work can proceed. The north barn is the one to be dealt with first because of the relocation of Township Hall. The other structures have a little more time but the work will occur probably in November. City Council allocated funding for phase one improvements on the site as indicated through the conceptual plan. He will be preparing an RFP and getting that out in the next week for landscape architecture and engineering design firms to come in and take the conceptual plan and put it in to more defined plan and construction documents, drawings and site plans toward going out to bid. Hopefully construction will start this fall and be completed next spring so that next summer programming through Nancy's team will begin on the site for recreation services.

Director Auler stated that generally June is a light meeting and a time of Commission reappointment so he does not like to take up new issues until there is a full seated Commission.

Director Auler stated that there are five major topics that the Commission will be focusing on for the year. These are the Fuerst Property construction project, the Signature Park Project, the Community Recreation Plan (5 year comprehensive and strategic plan), an update to the Land Use Master Plan, a Master Plan for the Landing property (13 acres adjacent to Walled Lake on South Lake Drive and Old Novi Road), and the Capital Improvement Projects.

There are three or four major capital improvement projects that we will be focusing on. They are the Fuerst Property, Phase 3 improvements to Power Park and completing Phase 2 (lighting for Civic Center Parking and the Softball field complex), and developing a solid six year Capital Improvement Plan.

Secondary items would be things like working toward alternative funding options and other funding options that City Council or the MRPA might support and lobby for at the State level to help with the funding situation for Parks, alternative transportation plan, sidewalk and pathway prioritization.

Some other things that are being looked at are staff assessment, core issues in the department, core programs and services and function as well as non-core services that

we need to get out of. Our resources in terms of personnel are not growing. We are able to meet our targets. We need to have a discussion relating to the Theatre program and what the vision, mission and what it is we are trying to be known for.

Commissioner Zyczynski stated that one of the priorities over the last few years has been to find an additional 80 acres for active parkland. Where are we in that process?

Director Auler stated that there are some potential opportunities which are probably being evaluated as part of the Signature Park process. They are also be assessed by him and within this year an opportunity will be brought forward and discussion will be entered in to address that issue.

One of the Student Commissioners stated that she knows there is a protest going on against the Fuerst Farm demolition. Is the 90 days that was given to raise funds over?

Director Auler replied that the 90 days is not over but our job as a staff is to implement City Council's direction and policy. Their direction and policy was for us to proceed with Phase 1 development and relocation of Township Hall. If citizens come in with that money and present opportunity to City Council, then City Council would consider that and either reassess or continue on.

B. RECREATION SERVICES – Nancy Cowan, Superintendent of Recreation

1. Upcoming Events

Superintendent Cowan thanked Student Commissioner Goyal and stated that she has been instrumental in marketing the "Fire Up Fest" and giving her time and ideas. She wished her well at the University of Michigan and in everything she does. She also welcomed the new Student Commissioners.

Superintendent Cowan stated that there have been a great number of new programs this year. The "Engage" has grown each time it has come out.

The Memorial Day Parade and celebration took place on May 26th, honoring our veterans and their families. The event was led by Derek Smith and was a true departmental effort. We estimate that there were over 3,000 people who attended the event and watched the parade.

June 7th was the ITC Community Sports Park dedication and celebration to recognize ITC's generosity to the Novi Park's Foundation. Over 500 people came out just for a Park rededication ceremony. There were many family oriented activities. ITC did Bucket truck rides which was a huge hit. Many people requested them at other kinds of events that we have. There was flower planting, entertainment, free food, face painting and other great things to do. There were sports demonstrations and the Detroit Ignition were nice enough to come out and have some of their players on site as well as cricket demonstrations and tennis demonstrations.

In the park that day our spring soccer program wrapped up for the season. That program is led by Wendy DuVall and Theresa McClure who do a fantastic job organizing

over 800 children and also coaches and family members. As a reminder, Fall soccer sign up is going on now and you can register until the end of July.

On June 7th there was also River Day at Rotary Park. This was led by Steve Printz and Matt Wiktorowski and their team. They built a bioswayle with a number of volunteers.

The "Girls on the Run" program, led by Mallery Wethers here in Novi, is a national program. We had 30 Middle School age girls sign up to train for 9 weeks with volunteer coaches to run a 5K run which they did on June 7th. It is not only running but it builds self esteem and to respect themselves and others around them. There was tremendous support from parents. We will run this program again. There is another national program called "Girls on Track" which has the same purpose but is designed for elementary girls which will start in the fall. Many of the volunteers and great role models for this program were members of the Novi Police force.

Superintendent Cowan stated that we have a great number of camps and programs that will kick off promptly next week after school is out. If parents are looking for things for their children to do we have a wide variety of things to keep them busy. Some of the LEGO and Science programs have been so popular that they are already full. There is a Circus Camp that the Creative Arts program has planned.

We have our new, expanded Sizzling Summer Arts Series coming up. We have done a Kids Concert Series for the past few years and have now built on that. There will not only be music but some movies in the park, puppets and magic. All of these activities are free as part of the Sizzling Summer Arts Series. Vendors will be on site to sell food or you can bring your own. Posters and fliers have gone out on this program.

Commissioner Dooley asked the best way to come in to the park for the movie.

Superintendent Cowan stated that we encourage a healthy active lifestyle, so if you can walk to the park or bike you get a double benefit. We certainly have a plenty of parking. The series occurs at different parks within Novi.

Student Commissioner Goyal asked if there were postcard size fliers.

Superintendent Cowan replied that we are working on making smaller fliers and by event, too. If you know a local business or have contacts and can pass out information please let us know and we can get you those materials.

Commissioner Zyczynski asked if people had to register for the Sizzling Summer Arts Series.

Superintendent Cowan replied that they are free and people can just show up and leave whenever they want.

Commissioner Schwarzlose stated that he knows that camps and activities during the summer typically fill up quickly. He asked if there were still openings for people who are interested.

Superintendent Cowan stated that we have openings in quite a few things. The only ones she is aware of that are full are some of the LEGO and Science camps. You can view those at our online system.

Student Commissioner Goyal stated that things could be promoted by making a bookmark for the library to give out.

Superintendent Cowan stated that the bookmark is a great idea and that we do have some posters and fliers over at the library. We are partnering with the library to help promote their summer reading program. They have some large weekday events so we promote our programs with theirs so both programs benefit from the publicity.

One of the Student Commissioners asked if the movie starts at 7:00 p.m. will it be dark outside.

Superintendent Cowan stated that the events and activities start at 7:00 while it is still light outside and that the movie will start at dusk which will be around 9:30.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Policicchio had no comments

Commissioner Dooley congratulated Student Commissioner Goyal and wished her well.

Commissioner Zyczynski stated that Student Commissioner Goyal has been an asset to the group and that her regular attendance was appreciated and that she had a lot to offer. The ITC sign looked great.

Commissioner Radcliffe had no comments.

Student Commissioner Goyal thanked everyone for making her so comfortable and allowing her to express her ideas. If she had never been on the Commission she would never have realized how hard everyone works to make the city a better place for citizens. She feels it is a great program and gives students a first hand view of how people are trying to make the city better. "Thank you for the opportunity to learn and grow."

Commissioner Schwarzlose thanked Student Commissioner Goyal for her participation and allowing the Commission to share in her ideas which were very valuable. He wished her luck.

THANK YOU COMMISSIONERS: Director Randy Auler

Director Auler stated that Commissioners Policicchio and Zyczynski's terms are up and that they have reapplied. He hopes they will be successful in that endeavor. In the event that they are he is looking forward to working with them again. In the event that they are not successful he wanted to thank them for their time, service, commitment and

volunteerism. They have brought strategic thinking to the table. When first appointed, Commissioners get the challenge to think big, dream and help us make it happen. Both Commissioners have done a tremendous job of being supportive, volunteering and attending activities and programs. Both have also done an outstanding job of communicating with the citizens through their various connections.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Zyczynski. The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Schwarzlose.

APPROVED:

Signed, Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

Signed, Karen Zyczynski, Vice Chairperson