

PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2008 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM with Commissioner Schwarzlose presiding.

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Absent), Blair (Present), Iszler (Present) Policicchio (Absent), Schwarzlose (Present), Staab (Present), Wingfield (Absent), Bharadwaj (Absent), Venigalla (Absent).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Iszler and seconded by Commissioner Blair to approve the agenda as written.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

STAFF REPORTS:

A. Administrative Report

1. Overview of the Signature Park Project

Director Auler stated that in November of 2008 Novi City Council and Novi Community School District Board of Education reached an agreement for a land transfer which would consist of 73 acres of land located at Eleven Mile Road and Beck Road. In exchange for this property the School District would acquire the Wildlife Woods property which is adjacent to the Novi Middle School and Deerfield Elementary. Following the agreement there was discussion and approval by City Council to contract with a team of consultants. They are Pros Consulting of Indianapolis, Indiana, Neumann Smith, and Beckett and Raeder. The purpose of contracting with that team was to develop a conceptual plan for the park site, a conceptual plan for a potential recreation center and conduct an operations feasibility study in terms of revenue and expenditures for each of the components within the park and/or center. The team has been charged with having a conceptual plan prepared along with the feasibility study by January 30th and to present that to the City Council for consideration and discussion. We believe strongly in citizen input and we have provided an online survey to get input on needs for programs, facilities and park amenities. The survey has been online and will be until tomorrow evening. We have also encouraged e-mail and there is an opportunity for audience participation this evening. The Signature Park is about a 93 acre site with 73 acres as part of the land transfer and an additional 20 acres of land contiguous to the property and also contiguous to the ITC transmission corridor at Eleven Mile road which the City has a purchase agreement on. All of this is contingent on funding being in place to proceed with the project.

We have not prepared any conceptual plan at this point. We have been concentrating on analyzing the potential land use, past studies and plans and utilizing community input. Following this, the committee and the consultant team will work to prepare some concepts and then proceed with the operations feasibility study.

2. Preparation of the 2009/2010 operating budget

An overview for the budget calendar is included in the Commission packet. The Commission previously provided a recommendation for the Capital Improvement Project in the 2009-2010 budget which will be forwarded on to the Capital

Improvement Committee and ultimately the City Council for their consideration during the budget process. We are currently preparing our operating budget. As part of that process we are looking at our core services and non-core services to make sure we are aligning the resources with the programs, parks and services essential to the community. We are considering getting out of some non-core services. This information will be brought before the Commission at the February meeting.

Tomorrow night is the City of Novi Appreciation Dinner.

January 22nd is the luncheon with the Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor's State of the City Address at 11:30 a.m.

January 24th is the Homeowner's Association Leadership Breakfast where the Mayor will again give the State of the City Address. This will be held in the morning at the Civic Center.

February 9th the City Council is considering scheduling a special meeting for discussion regarding the Signature Park.

February 14th the City Council has tentatively scheduled a work session for discussion of goals and priorities for the next year to year and a half.

B. Communications Division – Tracie Ringle, Communications Specialist

1. Communications Plan

Director Auler announced that to streamline our operations and to be more efficient, Tracie Ringle will be working in the Community Relations Department. Her new title will be Communications Specialist. The reason we are making the transfer is that it consolidates all of our communications and marketing within one division of the City. Tonight will be Tracie's last meeting in her current capacity but she will be attending some meetings in the future as a Communications Specialist.

Communications Specialist Ringle stated that she would give a brief update on the Fuerst Park. One of the barns has been removed and will be relocated to a site in Farmington Hills. Our 50% plans have been provided by our consultant and they have been through the Community Development process and we are in receipt of their comments. The plan, those comments and some feedback will go to the Planning Commission on January 14th. We anticipate a presentation to City Council on January 26th. We are on target to go out to bid for a construction firm in March with a late July opening of the park.

We have made it a priority to continue to improve our communications as a department. Engage! won an MRPA (Michigan Recreation & Parks Association) award. We have enhanced the senior newsletter. We are moving toward e-newsletters and replacing some of our paper documents that go to the schools with something that can potentially be delivered electronically to parents. We have been doing online surveys as a department for feedback for our programs, etc. Using our CLASS system we can track where people have learned about our programs. She met with Commissioner Blair earlier in the week who is interested in our marketing process. They brainstormed opportunities for further enhancement, identifying target markets, etc. They will continue to meet monthly. Her new capacity in the City will allow for further enhancement of communications.

Commissioner Blair asked Communications Specialist Ringle if she would still be our voice.

Communications Specialist Ringle replied that everything that she does for the Parks Department is moving with her.

C. Recreation Division – Nancy Cowan, Superintendent of Recreation

Superintendent Cowan stated that the Theatre report is now complete and will be in next month's packet.

The new property manager for KMG is now on board at the Senior Center. His name

is Tom Gordon.

We have a full slate of programming starting after the holidays. Our basketball and volleyball have their deadlines this week. The second audition for the production "Seussical Jr." is this evening. Over 100 youth have come out to audition for this production. The production will start the first weekend in March. The Daddy/Daughter dance is about a month away. Derek Smith is planning for that event.

We are honored to be hosting the Japanese Exhibit which Tracie Ringle has been working on. That program will start on February 17th with a formal welcome reception on the 19th. That program will be in our Civic Center and around Novi in various places for a month. For more information you can visit the City website.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS:

A. Citizen input for the Signature Park project to be located at 11 Mile Road and Beck Road.

John Foley, of 24930 Wixom Road, came out to support the Signature Park. He feels it will be a good addition to the City with many benefits and will add to the value of the City. He hopes that the conceptual plans will come back in stages. He is concerned about too much too quickly and about the bond passing.

Cheryl Csordas, of 24562 Sarah Flynn, stated that she is against the signature park. The reason she is against it is because it is near her house and she does not want all of the traffic or the 50's festival in her back yard. They already have school traffic with the buses and also hospital traffic. She believes that the recreation building should be in the Main Street area where the Brooktown development would go. This would bring in traffic in Gateway Park to work down to Main Street. If you put senior citizen programs there it is close to the Senior Center on Meadowbrook Road. Years ago we voted in Community Sports Park to have all of the sports there and now you want to put ball fields in signature park. She does not want to have ball fields there. She believes they would be building in flood plain. There is not an overview so she cannot tell but she knows that area is flood plain. When people buy Kirkway Condominiums they have to have flood insurance. Signature park would be between them and Bosco farm. She hopes that they will think about putting the park in the Gateway district because it would work out better especially if the Theatre is there because then people would come and have dinner before or after and the area would be better utilized.

Ginger Barrons, of 24777 Glenda, stated that she is neither opposed to nor pro signature park. She does want to commend the City for purchasing land at a time when it is a good buy. She feels that it is the wrong time for development because the economy is stressed and she is concerned about too much too soon. She is glad that we have the land but she does not want to see it developed yet because of the economy. She has grave concerns about the multi-purpose building only because so many communities with multi-purpose buildings are struggling to make their bills and are not paying for themselves. Livonia and Plymouth-Canton have gone through some struggles. She is concerned about moving the 50's Festival to what is primarily a residential area. That also ties in with the Theatre and the multi-purpose building as well. She believes we need to assist the business members in our community with the added traffic and that traffic would not be there if the signature park is at the suggested site. She suggested getting more input from citizens and not to rush it so that people feel that it was done behind their backs.

Al Darold, of 25144 Sutton Court, stated that he lives in the neighborhood of the proposed location of the signature park and generally speaking he supports it. He thinks it is a favorable thing and he is looking forward to the activities and opportunities that it will provide. Sutton Court runs parallel to Beck Road and is where Kirkway Place Condominiums are. The concern he does have is the traffic. He would like to be sure that whatever the conceptual plans are, they take the appropriate consideration of the traffic which will be going in and out of the park. Beck Road is already fairly heavily trafficked during the day. Depending on the timing of events, the park could add a lot of traffic on Beck Road and aggravate the already busy situation. Some consideration toward traffic management would be his point of interest. Just for the record, one of the previous speakers stated that the people in the Kirkway Condominiums have to have flood insurance. He lives there and no one told him. He does not have flood insurance nor does anyone he has spoken to. He stated that he does not know where that came from.

A person from the audience replied; "City Council."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Iszler to approve the December 11, 2008 minutes as written.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Walk Novi – Commissioners Iszler & Policicchio

Commissioner Iszler stated that Mark Spencer from Community Development presented the sidewalk, bikepath and greenway policies. It is the start of a draft of a document that we would like to incorporate, that deals with broad based goals about creating a more bikeable and walkable community and having more public awareness of existing facilities. The hope is that this can eventually become a recreation trail plan and could be part of promoting a regional trail plan. He also gave information on complete streets which deals with the policies, costs and accommodating the needs of all users.

B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Dooley & Staab

Commissioner Staab stated at the last meeting on December 16th the Foundation elected their slate of officers for the year. Linda Blair was elected as President, Charles Staab as Vice-President, Justin Fischer as Treasurer and Brian Bartlett as Secretary. The Foundation also talked about some restructuring ideas. This Saturday members of the Foundation will respond to the recommendations and at the next meeting will finalize participation in different committees. At the next meeting the Foundation will also review the year-end financials and develop their activities for 2009.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: None

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Staab stated that he would like to wish Tracie Ringle well in her new department but he still expects her to attend the Foundation Golf Outing. He was able to attend a couple of Choralaires concerts in December. He was out of town during "Ringing in the Holidays." He likes the press we get in the newspaper about our activities.

Commissioner Iszler stated that she wishes Tracie Ringle well.

Commissioner Blair stated that he is looking forward to working more with Tracie Ringle and that they are working on a more involved communications plan. We need to make it easier for the public to give us feedback. He will be attending the Daddy/Daughter Dance with both of his daughters next month.

Commissioner Schwarzlose congratulated Tracie Ringle on her new position. He hopes to see her at every Commission Meeting. He thanked the people in the audience who attended the meeting, those who spoke and those who filled out the survey. He then encouraged citizens to fill out the survey or send an e-mail. He also mentioned that registration is going on now for many of our activities.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Schwarzlose at 8:04 PM.

DATE APPROVED:_____.

Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

Jay Dooley, Vice Chairperson