

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2009 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Policicchio and seconded by Commissioner Staab to approve the agenda as written.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved by Commissioner Policicchio and seconded by Commissioner Dooley to approve the February 12, 2009 minutes as amended.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

STAFF REPORTS:

A. Proposed Signature Park Update

Director Auler stated that City Council authorized a line item to be placed on the May 5th ballot to propose funding and development for a portion of the Signature Park project. The City's role is to provide information so on the website is a power point presentation, the feasibility study, the conceptual plan and frequently asked questions and answers. He has been fielding e-mails and providing responses. An informational video is being aired on SWOCC, Channel 13, which he, Mayor Landry and Sheryl Walsh taped to inform the community about the project.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there is any way to track the number of people who are watching the video on Channel 13.

Director Auler stated that he is not aware of a way to track that. An informational piece was sent out by e-mail that went out to over 4,000 homes. There were 57 to 60 percent of those e-mails opened.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if a flier with national statistics on the positive impact of parks and walkways could be made available so residents could do their own cost benefit analysis of Signature Park when deciding how to vote.

Director Auler stated that we have information out as relates to the economic benefit of parks in the life of the community which was published previously in the "Engage!". Oakland County has done studies and there are numerous studies and information available on the

internet. It is something we have promoted generally but it is not something we can use, as a department, specific to this project.

B. Update 2005 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) land acquisition grant for the Village Wood Lake/Orchard Hills West parcel

Director Auler stated that in 2005 there was an opportunity to submit a grant application to acquire two parcels of property located between Nine and Ten Mile Roads on the east and west side of Meadowbrook Road. One of the parcels is 36 acres and the other is approximately 15 acres taking the total to 51 acres. There was a matching grant. The City's match was in donated land value from the property owners. We were successful in applying that grant. That grant is supposed to be closed within a year but we have had many project extensions for a variety of reasons. As of March 30th of this year the City now owns both of those parcels. Thirty six of those acres on the west side of Meadowbrook Road will be preserved and we have obtained a conservation easement on that property. That is an important piece of property in terms of quality of the wetland and woodlands. The other side is now available for the public. We do not have any improvements at the site yet but will be doing that through the budgeting and planning process in the future. The next step is to get all of the information together and submit it to the State for reimbursement.

Commissioner Schwarzlose stated that he was on the Commission at the time this started and he appreciates Director Auler's diligence in staying with this because it has taken a lot of effort for everyone involved.

C. Update on Capital Investment Projects

1. Power Park Softball Complex

Director Auler stated that the concession stand has been removed and the new building is currently under construction. Until the snow we were two days ahead of schedule but are currently one day behind schedule. The target is to have it completed by May 29th. A component of this is to also install a grinder pump. Two or three weeks beyond May 29th we have some major softball tournaments coming in.

2. Fuerst Park

This past City Council meeting we presented for consideration of approval awarding the contract for the development of the Fuerst Park. That was awarded and we are now in the process of getting the contractual arrangements worked out and the bonds in place. That project will be completed by the middle to the end of July. It will include all of the walkways originally designed in the concept as well as landscaping, tree planting, fieldstone walls, the amphitheater with the lighting system which goes with it, and park benches. We have money set aside to do the signage which will be part of a different package because the City will be going out for a request on signage for that and other City sites for a cost savings. We are in the process of getting some information on estimated costs and quotes for painting Township Hall.

D. Update on the Land Use Study for City-Owned property at South Lake Drive and Old Novi Road (Landings Property)

Director Auler stated that the City has a venture team which was created to undertake this process. Nancy Cowan is one of the chairpersons for that.

Superintendent Cowan stated that currently a RFP (request for proposal) has gone out already on our MITN (Michigan Intergovernmental Trade Network) software. We held a pre-proposal meeting last week for any of those interested in putting in a proposal. The deadline for that project is next Tuesday. We will take those proposals and work through a QBS process, then do an interview process and select the consultant to lead that project. It will then go through City Council as any RFP. We have a lot of interest in that project and will be excited to see the proposals that will be coming back next week. We are expecting to award the project on May 4th and hopefully complete the project by the end of the fiscal year, June 30th.

E. 2009/2010 Budget Work Sessions

Director Auler stated that he wanted to make the Commission aware of City Council's budget sessions. The first is April 20th at 6:30pm and the second is April 25th at 9:00am. Commissioner Staab asked if Director Auler has a presentation during the Budget sessions or if the agendas have been finalized.

Director Auler stated that the agenda has not been finalized. In previous years the City Manager has presented the budget. It is then turned over to City Council for their deliberation and we are on "stand by" to answer questions and provide information.

F. Correspondence regarding the Pope Play Structure

Director Auler stated that the City received an e-mail regarding the Pope Memorial Play Structure requesting that it be sealed this spring. We have plans to seal it this spring. We have \$3,350 available to spend. It is going to cost about five to seven thousand dollars if we contract that out. We have been actively seeking a volunteer group who would undertake that project. It would probably take 30 to 35 people a full day to seal all of the wood on the site. As of today we may have secured that volunteer group. We are targeting May 14th and he will let the Commission know once it is finalized. Included in the packet is a memo we sent to City Council regarding all of the repair work which has been performed on the playground and the key findings of the study as well as an article of another community who had one of these playgrounds. The playground in the article had outlived its lifespan and the committee raised money to replace it using recycled plastic which lasts longer and has a lower maintenance cost. We are planning to reseal it this spring.

G. ITC Community Sports Park Emergency Contact

Every year we seem to have an emergency situation at ITC Community Sports Park because it gets a lot of usage from youth sports programs. When an emergency arises everyone calls 911. Because of the location of the park, when you call 911 there are a variety of carriers which go to different cell towers which go to different communities such as Novi, Northville, Washtenaw County or Oakland County. Once they determine the location they transfer the call to Novi. The way we have bypassed that so that it goes directly to Novi dispatch is we publish the 248-348-0911 number. We share this information with our coaches who share it with their team. We have 14 different locations in the park with signage informing people of this number.

Director Auler asked for any questions.

Commissioner Staab stated that in past minutes of November 13, 2008, we had a balance of \$8,000 for the Tim Pope Memorial play structure. Now there is a balance of \$3,300. What did we use the money for?

Director Auler stated that he can get a detailed expenditure list from the warrant. It has primarily been used for all of the maintenance work done on the site.

Commissioner Staab then asked if donations could be promoted through the Parks Foundation so that people can get the proper tax break.

Director Auler stated that he thought so but the Foundation Board would have to consider a proposal. When asked by Commissioner Staab, Director Auler stated that he would support it.

Commissioner Staab stated that when they built the structure there was a "picket" program. He asked if it would be worthwhile to reactivate that.

Director Auler asked how many spaces were left.

Commissioner Staab stated that all of the purchased pickets are up and that he believes there is still space around the back perimeter. He also stated that he would like to be kept in mind for the May 14 project date.

Director Auler stated that if it works out it will be lead by a business in town as part of their "National Day of Caring". There have just been initial discussions but no confirmation yet.

Commissioner Schwarzlose asked what tournaments we have coming to Power Park.

Director Auler stated that we have a Junior Olympic tournament which is a major Fast-pitch tournament for girls. There will be between 80 and 100 teams who will be here for four days. We are also hosting a State tournament but he does not recall the Class level but more than likely an E or D tournament based on the distance of our fields. This will also bring people in for three or four days. There will be between 30 and 50 teams. There are a variety of other tournaments which we host annually and we have added some others. The Junior Olympic and State tournaments are a direct result of the improvements we have made to the complex

Director Auler stated that we have been working on the draft of the Community Recreation Plan. He has provided a hard copy for each of the Commission members. He asked Superintendent Cowan to provide an overview for the process of the plan and stated that he would then talk about the next steps and Commission input.

Superintendent Cowan stated that this is the five-year plan which is required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in order to be able to apply for funding via grants. The plan is based on certain requirements which the DNR establishes for each department. We have added sections which the DNR does not necessarily require but we felt were appropriate such as items on pathways. We have also included information on how the City has worked with Oakland County on green infrastructure and other projects. We have also included an extra natural resources inventory. This draft is being presented to the Commission as well as City Council for feedback. We will go through the established process which the DNR has as far as holding public hearings and have a public viewing time for the plan so the community can also give feedback on the Plan. The target date is to have the Plan to the MDNR by mid summer. This will allow us to apply for grants this fall by the August 1st deadline for the next round of grants.

Director Auler stated that he wants to make the Commission aware that there are two ways to do the five-year plan. They can be outsourced with a consultant who would have a rate of between \$20,000 and \$35,000. It can also be done in house which is what we have elected to do. He wants to recognize Superintendent Cowan's work on the Plan. She has been the lead on pulling all of the information together, contacting all of the departments and getting information from them as well as writing the Plan. Many staff hours go in to this at a significant savings for the City. The purpose of the Plan is to look at capital improvement items and lay out a guide for investment in the Park system in the future and then to be eligible for grant money. It is different from a Strategic Plan where you get into the operations of the department, your vision statement, your mission statement, performance measures and how you are going to align resources to accomplish those. This is more of a guide for capital needs within the system, how we are going to reinvest those, the challenges we might face, and how we are going to position ourselves for grant money. Last time we combined the two. We have a Strategic Plan in place and will be updating that later this year. We will update the Community Recreation Plan which will take us up through 2014 and we will be able to submit for grant applications. The Commission just received the Plan tonight but he would like for them to read it. He would like to have input from the Commission in the form of having several members, who have an interest and background in this, meet next week with Superintendent Cowan for input on actions, strategies, changes or amendments. We are also sending it to City Council and would like to have it back in by the end of next week because we are on a tight time frame to have it in place to be eligible for the next grant cycle. If we are not ready for the next grant cycle that is alright because it is important to get the Plan right. He feels they have put forward a good document for the Commission's consideration and feedback. After the Plan goes through all of the before mentioned processes and is adopted by City Council, it is sent to the State. Once the State receives it and reviews it and they send us a letter saying it is approved, we are then eligible to submit

for State and Federal grand funds. We have been very successful in the past five years with grant dollars and hope to continue that in the future.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if after reviewing the Plan and if not able to attend the meeting, comments could be made by e-mail to Nancy.

Director Auler confirmed that would be good.

Commissioner Staab stated that he would be willing to meet and participate.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Walkable Novi – Commissioner Policicchio

Commissioner Policicchio stated that the meeting scheduled for this evening is being rescheduled so there is no report.

B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Dooley & Staab

Commissioner Staab stated that they want to start promoting the Golf Outing which will be at the Links of Novi on August 6th. The “save the date” cards went out. Angel Heard is the chairperson and Derek Blair will also be working with her on this project. We are actively looking for people who want to get involved in this project.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: None

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Policicchio: None

Commissioner Dooley stated that it is very important to have the 911 information displayed and given to Coaches and parents. Thank you for the signs and information.

Commissioner Staab stated that he appreciates us being able to get out to the Tim Pope Memorial play structure to strip, seal and maintain it. He looks forward to working on the Community Recreation Plan since it is our key to grants and additional funding. He also stated that August 6th is the Park Foundation Golf Outing and he will be very actively promoting that because people are needed to help, sponsor and golf.

Commissioner Schwarzlose stated that he wished to thank Director Auler and his staff for all of their time and effort working on the Community Recreation Plan. Having been involved in the last one he realizes all of the effort going in to putting it together. He appreciates also the fact that by keeping it in house it saves money by not bringing in a consultant to do something which we have capable staff to do. He also wants to state that a few years back when the improvements to Power Park were being addressed it was a big step and the immediate impact is that we are getting tournaments coming in which have 80 to 100 teams participating. The dollars being spent at the hotels and restaurants will have a huge financial impact on the community. It takes that kind of foresight and commitment to bring this positive economic impact to the community. Your staff has proven time

and time again that with all of the events going on they get a handle on it and they do it to perfection. This has an impact on the bottom line of this community and the business owners who operate here.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Policicchio

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Schwarzlose at 8:09 PM.

DATE APPROVED:_____.

Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

Jay Dooley, Vice Chairperson