

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2010 – 7:00 PM**

**NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01PM with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

**ROLL CALL:** Dooley (Present), Iszler (Absent), Jewell (Present), Policicchio (Absent), Staab (Absent), Tecklenburg (Present), Wingfield (Present), Kerbrat (Present), Raina (Present).

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

It was moved by Commissioner Tecklenburg and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield to approve the Agenda as written.

**Voice Vote** **Unanimous**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- A. Approval of July 8, 2010 meeting minutes  
A motion was made by Commissioner Jewell and seconded by Commissioner Tecklenburg to approve the Minutes as written.

**Voice Vote** **Unanimous**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Iszler & Policicchio  
Both Commissioners were absent. There was no report.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Dooley & Staab  
Commissioner Dooley stated that the Foundation had a very successful Golf Outing last Thursday at the Links of Novi. The Parks Foundation is a great non-profit organization which truly gives back to the community.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Administration Division – Acting Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services – Nancy Cowan  
Acting Director Cowan stated that we just hosted the ASA Girls U18 Softball Tournament this past week. We were chosen last year to host this tournament and it is the first national tournament in Novi since the late 80's or early 90's. We had forty-four teams come from seven different states. Opening ceremonies were held at the Novi High School on Wednesday evening. The girls started play on Thursday morning and

played through Sunday. All of the teams were here for the duration. She has preliminary reports of hotels in the area that were booked for at least four nights. That is over 225 rooms each night. They enjoyed our City and spent their dollars here in Novi. It had a great economic impact. We are working with the Detroit Sports Commission to work on a preliminary economic impact report with them from some studies and other information which they utilize. We have made that contact and will hopefully have some more information and estimates in the next couple of weeks. We have a Girls U14 Fastpitch tournament that will be visiting next August. We are putting in a bid this year at the National selection process in October for a 2012 National tournament. The rating from this tournament, from the managers who are required by ASA to complete a survey, were mainly fours and fives. Five is the top rating. There was tremendous feedback on our facilities and the organization. Many people commented that they had never played at a complex as nice as ours. Many people from the City came and watched the games. She would estimate that our complex saw anywhere from 1,500 to 1,800 visitors daily. There was a tremendous effort by our staff including DPS (Department of Public Services) and IT (Information Technology). We had a partnership with Best Buy to provide an internet café which was a very nice amenity. Community Relations played a huge role in the marketing. It was a citywide effort and certainly a lot of great acclaim for Novi.

The Park Maintenance Standards and evaluations are in your packet. The ratings were very good for June. They were in the 90 and 100 percent area. We have a few areas not reported on but we will continue to work on this in the coming months. She understands that with the change over that July was not a month that was rated but August evaluations are already out. Our DPS crew is aware of the ratings and the information which you provided. It is very helpful in their assessment and in prioritization of what they work on within our parks.

In the administrative area in staffing, the sports supervisor position is open. We are currently in the process of completing second interviews. She anticipates that in the next few weeks we will make an offer to someone and have them onboard. There were many great candidates from all over the country. The whole team has been part of the interview process. Wendy DuVall's role has changed. She is now in the facilities part of the operation. Her position has been filled with two part-time individuals. We have hired one part-time person who will start next week. She has a lot of experience with fitness and programming, which is what we were looking for. We are still looking for one more individual.

We are proud to announce that Rachel Zagaroli, our Senior Services Manager, has come back to work this week from medical leave. One of the Commissioners asked what role the Commission could play in the potential candidate selection. Acting Director Cowan replied that if any Commissioners had an interest, she would be glad to share the information with them.

A. Recreation Division – Superintendent of Recreation – Nancy Cowan

1. David Barr Sculpture Piece

Superintendent Cowan stated that David Barr, who is a world renowned sculptor and a resident of Novi, has graciously donated a "Sonata" sculpture to us for the next three years to be displayed at Fuerst Park. She sees that Commissioner Dooley is holding the article from the Novi News which was recently written. We started out with the sculptures from MSI earlier this year. We now have the David Barr sculpture, which has been lent to us with no cost to the City other than the de-installation that will take place in three years and the painting of the sculpture. We are glad to see that some of the things we are doing with public art are already paying off by someone wanting to donate and be a part of that park. Another sculpture will be added once the gardens are complete in the next couple of months. David Beschke and his team are doing a great job leading that project.

We have an event from our Sizzling Summer Arts Series at Fuerst Park tonight. The Candy Band will play in a couple of hours. We have a movie there next Friday which the community members have voted on. The winner is "Imagine That", which is an Eddie Murphy movie. Typically these movies have brought in three to four hundred people. This is our last movie of the summer. This year we have sixteen events total and she would estimate that over fifteen hundred individuals have come out to events, seen Fuerst Park and visited the new Library. This is a very popular summer series. We have developed a similar September Series, which will have a couple of music events as well as a tour of the sculptures and portions of our "Outdoor Week" programming.

2. National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) – Public Service Contest – First Runner Up – Novi Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Superintendent Cowan stated that the National Recreation and Park Association awarded our organization with a first runner up prize for a recent PSA. They had sent out some press releases and ran a contest for individuals to submit a press release with some basic requirements about saving our parks and their beauty. Novi took the opportunity to submit that with the help of SWOCC and Community Relations. We were selected as the first runner up and honored with a press release and will be mentioned at National Conference this year in Minneapolis. This is another great recognition for Novi around the country and in our state. The Michigan Recreation and Park Association also sent out a press release congratulating Novi.

Our fall edition of "Engage" will be out shortly. It should go to mailboxes on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Even with our tight staff we still have a lot of great programs coming up, especially "Outdoor Week", which is

toward the end of September. Our new “Ethnic Taste and Tune Fest”, which is somewhat of a redesigned International Festival tied in with the Chamber of Commerce Farmer’s Market, is on September 19<sup>th</sup>. We have many great things in this guide. We are currently holding a meeting for soccer coaches at ITC Community Sports Park as soccer will start practices in the next week and a half as well as youth flag football. Our fall adult softball leagues are getting ready to start as our summer session is coming to an end. Unfortunately, our summer league has seen a lot of rain so we are trying to fit the games in as we can on weekends. We have seen numbers dip a little in some areas and camps but this is consistent with what we have learned from other communities in the area. Soccer and flag football numbers are a little low. We are still getting calls every day with people trying to register late which we try to accommodate when we can. Commissioner Dooley asked if there has been any increase in the amount paid to play or is it consistent with last spring. Superintendent Cowan stated that it is consistent with last spring. There was no change in pricing at all. Student Representative Kerbrat asked if there was any information on FireUp Fest for this year. Superintendent Cowan stated that the publication had just been finished. FireUp Fest is going to be September 24<sup>th</sup>. This is the same night as the Taste Fest. We were hoping that there would be a football game a little bit earlier but the only one is before school starts. We are already working on bands and there is some information going out to students to get some last minute ideas. We have interest from many sponsors for FireUp Fest, which has become an event that is popular with High School Students.

**MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:** None

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:** None

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Student Representative Raina asked when the FireUp Fest was being held and whether there was a football game that Friday. Superintendent Cowan replied that it was being held on September 24<sup>th</sup>. There is a football game that Friday but originally we had been hoping that there would be one on September 10<sup>th</sup> when the initial schedules came out eight months ago but it was changed.

Student Representative Kerbrat stated that she would be glad to help with distribution of fliers for FireUp Fest once school starts.

Commissioner Tecklenburg stated that he looks forward to working with everyone on the Commission and is excited about being a member of the Commission. He stated that he has been a resident of Novi for twenty-five years. The past eighteen years he has lived in Meadowbrook Lake subdivision. He and his wife have three sons who will all be at the High School. They have all been active in Parks and Recreation programs.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he finally did his evaluation of Fuerst Park. He walked the park and was very impressed. He asked about the area at the south end of the park that was fenced off with orange fencing with art décor.

Superintendent Cowan asked if he was talking about the two garden areas. She stated that she was not sure and would look in to it.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he had heard a lot of good things about the tournament.

Commissioner Jewell stated that he does not have his park evaluation done but it will be completed by this weekend. He congratulated the department on the great event that the tournament was. He stated that his sons worked the event doing the scoreboard. He had relatives who were playing in the tournament and said that it was the best tournament they have gone to in a long time. They were impressed with the facility and the staff. Both he and Jay Raina are active with the Novi Athletic Boosters and the FireUp Fest is very well received by the High School students. Taste Fest is a big fund raiser for the Novi Athletic Boosters so if there is something they can do to coordinate they would welcome that opportunity.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he had the opportunity to call Bingo at the Senior Center and one of the things he heard while there is the Senior's concern about transportation costs and that transportation costs have increased. Many of these individuals are on a fixed income. He asked if this is something that the City or the Parks Department is looking at to alleviate the cost.

Superintendent Cowan stated that she can speak to the fact that there is a memorandum that will be coming up in the City Council packet. In the past we have had two forms of transportation, which are the subsidized cab program and our van transportation program. We went to bid on the cab transportation program this year and that is something that we didn't get a bid on so we phased it out. We extended hours with our current van transportation and that seems to be working out really well. As far as rates go, the changes is there used to be a rate of three dollars within the City of Novi one way to any destination. That increase has gone up one dollar, so it is now four dollars one way to any destination in the City. Overall, we have had very little negative feedback. About 860 individual rides are taken each month on average. About 19% of those come from individuals who are residents at Meadowbrook Commons. From those individuals we have heard some feedback of going to places like Busch's

which is a short distance is a little expensive. This was the main issue we have heard. We are working on an option to do a discounted rate for them on a specific day. We provide that service at a pretty minimal cost for what it takes to run it which includes the drivers, the high quality vehicles and the certifications that they have. This is a service which as a City we subsidize substantially with grants and from other programming opportunities that we offer to subsidize that cost. This increase does not completely recover our costs. It helps increase the amount that we recover in the expenses toward that program. This is something we continually look at but with prices rising everywhere this is something that needed to occur this past year. There had not been an increase in the past couple of years.

Commissioner Dooley stated that the big issue seems to be the short trip from the Senior Center to Busch's market. He asked if we speak to these individuals to ask them for some patience and perhaps things will work in their favor.

Superintendent Cowan stated that they should hear more information in the next week or so about an option we are working on to at least take care of that request.

Commissioner Dooley thanked Superintendent Cowan for stepping in this summer and doing a great job.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Jewell and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:25 pm

DATE APPROVED:

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Jay Dooley, Chairperson

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Paul Policicchio, Vice Chairperson