

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

Thursday, December 8, 2011 – 7:00 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:26 pm with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Present), Jewell (Present), Policicchio (Absent-Excused), Staab (Present), Tecklenburg (Present), Torimoto (Present), Wingfield (Present), Kerbrat (Present), Kodali (Absent).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Donna Skelty stated she has some concerns about the Phase One proposal for the Landings Park which is located across the street from her house. She believes that the parking which has been designated on the plan across from Duana Avenue and also East Lake Drive should be moved over to the area across the street from The Landings which is also City property and vacant. It is an unused parcel which she believes the City has no plans to sell. Her second concern is that Phase One is scheduled to start in the spring and the parking issue sounds like it is considered done. She is concerned that the City will proceed with the plan without advising them, getting more input, or letting them know how they can respectfully object to it. She does not want to look at any cars across from her house. She had no idea when she bought her property that this was going to happen. She would like to see it remain in its natural state.

Randy Flagg from Southpoint Condos stated he agreed what Donna had to say about the parking. This could be a major parking problem. Lakeview Bar is there and their overflow parking goes to the Veterinary place and fears that their overflow may also go to the park. The park would mean a lot more traffic. The traffic light was recently taken out and this may mean putting the traffic light in again. Phase One looks great as far as shrubbery and things like that. He thinks that the future phases like putting in a pavilion and steps going down to the water is a waste of money. The lake is now the cleanest it has ever been and if you bring in more things like that people are going to be coming in and littering. He feels less is better. Phase One looks great but going on from there needs to be looked at.

David Galloway the Chairman of the Walled Lake Lake Improvement Board offered his cooperation. In this past year they asked that our beach be closed for one day. They also asked for Walled Lake to close and they chose not to. It was not a matter of safety. They were putting down pellets to control the invasive milfoil. The DRQ wants the pellets to sink to the bottom and not be disturbed by swimming. They will probably ask again this coming year that the

beach be closed for one day. Mercer Beach was closed for seven days last year for e-coli and there was a severe weed problem off the shore. There have been case studies in Northern Michigan showing that once you remove the weeds from a beach it prevents the water from overheating and creating a mollification of the e-coli. That and what they do in the watershed helps the quality of the lake. This year Mercer Beach did not close one day because they were able to successfully remove the weeds in front of the beach. He stated that phragmites are coming on the edge of Lakeshore Park and are in the canal. They grow fifteen feet tall and are a fire hazard and eliminate all of the natural growth which in turn affects the wildlife and habitat. He stressed the importance of natural landscaping. He spoke to our consultant who is a believer in natural landscaping. This helps not only to filter the water that comes in to the lake but it helps keep the geese away since they do not like to go through foliage that is two feet or taller. He left information with Director Mangum on several topics and issues.

Juanita Scallions of 309 Duana stated she would like action deferred on Phase One. She agreed with Donna Skelty about putting the parking for Landings Park on the other City owned parcel bordered by Endwell, Thirteen Mile Road and East Lake Drive. With the parking as proposed there could be an over flow of parking which would end up on Duana, Charlotte or Austin. This would then be an issue of people crossing the road to get to the park. She stated she would like Landings Park to stay in a natural state. It does not need things built on it or pathways through it but to maintain what we have. She does believe that the shoreline needs to be structured differently and updated. She does not want something added that will create additional traffic. She stated a pavilion would actually block the view of the lake from Thirteen Mile Road. Her final issue is funding. Everything looks great on paper and there is a grant for Phase One. She is concerned there may not be a grant for Phase Two. She asked the Commission not to move too quickly.

Randy Flagg added currently at Lakeshore Park unless you are a Novi resident you pay five dollars to get in. He asked if that would be the same at Landings Park. He then asked, if not, why people have to pay to get in to Lakeshore Park. Rusty Scallions asked that not much be changed in the park except shrubbery and extra trees. He agrees with everyone who has spoken about the parking and traffic being an issue.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Approval of the November 17, 2011 minutes.
It was moved by Commissioner Jewell and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Report – Athletic Business Conference – Matt Ostermeyer
Matt Ostermeyer went to the Athletic Business Conference and Expo in Orlando, Florida. It is a conference geared toward Park and Recreation professionals who are mostly in athletics. It was a great mix with some people from University athletics, Military recreation, YMCAs and some

private sports and recreation facilities and health clubs. They partner with the National Alliance for Youth Sports who hold their congress at the same time so he was able to attend several of their seminars as well. Some of the seminars he went to were on risk management, workplace culture and employee orientation. He got some ideas for recognition programs for both participants and staff. He did benchmarking and found that we do some things really well. One of the best sessions he went to was a defense attorney who represents Park and Recreation facilities. He talked about waivers and risk management. There were things he brought back that were talked about right away. Bill Walton was the keynote speaker. They awarded facilities of merit. He was thankful that the department was able to send him and he got some great ideas and motivation from the group. He stated we are bringing in house the lacrosse group that had previously been like a user group and expanding to a third team. We are bringing in a part time lacrosse coordinator to help with logistics. Commissioner Dooley asked where the lacrosse teams will practice. Matt Ostermeyer stated in previous years they have practiced at Wildlife Wood Park in the lower athletic field. Previously they played their games there as well. Last year they were able to play almost all of their home games at ITC Community Sports Park. We are exploring potential space at Lakeshore Park to see if there is enough room with the two soccer fields. They will be looking at the yardage with park staff tomorrow. Commissioner Wingfield asked if he brought back anything significant that could apply to our programs from the conference. Matt Ostermeyer replied one of the things he brought back was on team formation and has talked with Theresa McClure, our youth sports coordinator. We can potentially do a better job at creating more equal teams. We are brainstorming about whether that might be a formal evaluation through a clinic. A rating of the child's ability by the parent at registration is also being considered. He has also come up with a new employee orientation based on a seminar he went to. He is looking at some other organizations that have a lot of student employees because many of our employees are high school and college age. They are often in their first job. He is looking at how to motivate and recognize them. He is pulling information from some university recreation employee recognition programs. Commissioner Torimoto stated that the new facility being used for basketball games is excellent. Practices are held at the schools. He coaches a team of first and second grade girls and unfortunately their practice time starts at 7:30pm. It is a challenge when for many it is their bedtime by the time they get home. He asked if there was anything that could be done about opening up some gym space for the younger kids. Matt Ostermeyer stated one of his goals is working more effectively with Community Education to have a comprehensive block of space that is dedicated to Parks and Recreation so that we can more effectively distribute our time. The staff that do any facility requests to Community Education just met and combined their schedules so that one request is

made. This way we have a block of time we can more effectively look at for scheduling.

- B. Walkable Novi - Commissioners Policicchio & Torimoto
Commissioner Torimoto stated that he missed the last meeting and the next meeting is in January.
- C. Novi Parks Foundation - Commissioners Staab and Tecklenburg
Commissioner Staab stated that since the last Foundation meeting was held simultaneously with the Commission meeting all he has is hearsay. The week before Thanksgiving they started their interviewing process for Executive Director. He and Mr. Balconi did the first round of interviews. The next set of interviews will be right after the first of the year. Approximately fourteen thousand dollars was made on the Golf Outing in August. They plan to have the next Golf outing in August of 2012. Commissioner Tecklenburg had no comments.

STAFF REPORTS:

- A. Administration Division-Director Jason Mangum
 - 1. Parks/Programs Update – Director Mangum
 - a. LUTN (Light Up The Night)
Director Mangum stated that Light Up the Night was held here at the Novi Civic Center on Friday, December 2nd. The event was very well attended. We had many sponsors who made the event possible. ITC was our primary sponsor. There were visits with Santa, live reindeer, roasting marshmallows, a kiddie train, crafts for the kids, food samples from local restaurants, and an ice sculpture. It was a great holiday event. Mayor Gatt presented the “Spirit of Giving” award to Mayor Landry for his service and everything he has done for the City. He thanked everyone who attended.
 - b. Aladdin, Jr.
The Aladdin, Jr. youth production was very successful. It was about seventy-five percent sold out. He thanked everyone who comes out to support the arts in Novi.
 - c. Recreation Superintendent Recruitment
Nancy Cowan has moved to the United Kingdom and we are in the process of hiring for her replacement. We had around one hundred applicants for the position and have narrowed it down to the top eight. We will be holding interviews next Thursday. The interview process is more in-depth. We will have an assessment center and candidates will be here for the whole day participating in different exercises and interacting with our assessors. We hope to announce our new Recreation Superintendent at the next Commission Meeting and maybe even introduce them at that time.
 - 2. Current Events – Director Mangum
 - a. Hansel & Gretel
Hansel & Gretel, our youth theatre production opens tomorrow night. Tomorrow night may be sold out or close to sold out. There are plenty of tickets for Saturday and Sunday. He invited everyone to come out and support our youth in that production.

Commissioner Staab asked Director Mangum who the assessors are who will be assessing the candidates.

Director Mangum replied we have people from the City from other departments, people from other community agencies and other members of the Parks and Recreation profession from other communities in the area. He stated that if anyone on the Commission would like to be involved we would love to have them.

Commissioner Staab stated that Friday in the downtown Farmington United Methodist Church will be the Choralaires concert at 7:00pm. They had two performances last week. One was here at the Civic Center on Saturday night and at Holy Family Catholic Church on Sunday.

Director Mangum added that the Choralaires also performed at Light Up the Night.

Commissioner Staab commented with the performing arts being in the same area as the craft show there was noise from the craft show while the performances were going on.

Director Mangum stated it was an interesting dynamic in that room. It did highlight some of the local groups and hopefully piqued some interest in them.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. Discussion on Capital Needs Priority

Commissioner Dooley asked the Commissioners if they had any findings since the discussion at the last Commission Meeting.

Director Mangum stated last month's meeting was very productive and the feedback he would like from this meeting is their thoughts and recommendations on the projects on the Capital Improvement Plan.

Commissioner Dooley referred to the November minutes where Commissioner Staab talked about the Tim Pope Memorial Play Structure. He asked Commissioner Staab if he had heard from anyone on the subject. Commissioner Staab stated he received an e-mail which he read to the Commission that gave some history on the play structure and its maintenance and also told about Tim Pope's family currently. Commissioner Staab stated that he took the old VCR tape on the play structure and made it in to a DVD and gave a copy to Director Mangum. Commissioner Staab stated he would like to remove this item from the CIP until Director Mangum and other Park's staff have had a chance to discuss the maintenance and future of the structure with the family. He is in complete support of every other item.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if the Greenway Development Phase One of 2.2 million dollars is grant money or is coming out of a City budget we will have to compete for. The Landings Phase Two is not solid at this time. He feels that other than the two play structure replacements there is not much for him to focus on or it seems vague.

Director Mangum stated at this time we are not dealing with money but with priority.

Commissioner Wingfield stated as an example the pathway resurfacing at ITC Community Sports Park and paving the parking lots could probably be done at the same time for a better price. The amount of usage that park gets would make it a good reason to move the project up. Lakeshore Park is a more passive park but it is the one that gets the most use of any park in the City.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if there was any risk management, from a compliance standpoint, that would call for replacement or repair. If so, those should take top priority.

Director Mangum stated right now there is not anything on the list that hasn't already been addressed.

Commissioner Torimoto stated at ITC there is a project that is an investment with return. He asked if it should be considered in prioritization.

Director Mangum said we look at how it affects operation and maintenance. Some projects cut down maintenance, like paving a parking lot. The development of Landings Park will cause us to maintain it at a higher level and standard. We know when we put money in to our facilities we do receive more interest and revenue.

Commissioner Dooley stated the one recommendation we have heard this evening is the priority is good for all six projects for 2012/2013 with the exception of taking off the Tim Pope Play Structure replacement at three hundred thousand dollars which is the recommendation by Commissioner Staab. He asked if everyone was in agreement.

Commissioner Tecklenburg asked where we are in terms of the status of the play structure for repair or maintenance.

Director Mangum stated the staff does not feel the structure is in dire need of immediate replacement. We feel we can address some of the concerns. Some of the concerns we cannot address are things like ADA accessibility. We feel the play structure is sound and in relatively good shape. We feel the arsenic level in the wood, due to an independent playground assessment study, is minimal and poses very little, if any, risk. It will need to be replaced eventually.

Commissioner Dooley asked if we take this off could we make a recommendation to move something up that may be about the same cost.

Director Mangum stated right now we are not considering the cost but we're looking at immediate concerns and needs.

Commissioner Dooley stated the one big concern they hear about ITC Community Sports Park is the unpaved parking and they would like to see it asphalted as soon as possible. He then stated based on Commissioner Staab's recommendation, to defer or remove the Tim Pope Play Structure from the 2012/2013 recommendation and everything else remains the same.

B. Discussion and possible action on recommendation of Landings Park
Concept Design to City Council

Commissioner Dooley stated they have heard many good citizen comments on the topic this evening and they and Director Mangum have taken notes but he is not sure that at this time they are in a position to make a recommendation to City Council. He feels that they should not make a final recommendation on this tonight.

Director Mangum stated Lori of Hamilton Anderson has taken time to be here and listen to all of the comments as well as the Commission's recommendations. The citizens here tonight are the ones who get the written invitations but he has also gotten comments from people from all over the City regarding this park and the things that they would like to see. We have come up with a design which we are comfortable meets that need. We also want to be a good neighbor. It is common to get this kind of feedback from the neighbors when you go in and build a park. Almost always, when the park project is done they are grateful for the improvements that are made and realize the benefit. He stated he would like at this time for the Commission to make suggestions or a recommendation. The plan will be tweaked and altered along the way so this is not a final determination. We need the Commission's backing and support in the park design.

Commissioner Staab stated for the first phase we have a grant for development and the Novi Parks Foundation is providing a match. Director Mangum stated the Novi Parks Foundation is providing a donation which is a portion of a match. The Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant requires, he believes, a twenty-five percent match which would be about a fifty thousand dollar donation. The rest of the money would come from the City capital funds.

Commissioner Staab stated one of the concerns they heard tonight is about the amount of money being spent by the City. Because of the grant and Novi Parks Foundation the City is not spending a great amount of City dollars.

Director Mangum stated Commissioner Staab is right. During hard economic times we have found that families tend to use parks more. This is the time we need to be investing in our parks.

Commissioner Staab stated the one thing he heard loud and clear was about the parking issue. He thinks that moving the parking toward Lakeshore Park or across Thirteen Mile Road would appease a lot of people. He also understands that they do not want a boat launch which would promote more boat usage of the lake.

Director Mangum stated there is not a boat launch in the conceptual design. There is access to be near the water so the boat launch is a non-issue. As a matter of information, there is a City owned boat launch three or four lots down.

Lori Singleton from Hamilton Anderson stated there was a concern about too much parking and looking at parking. Not providing parking will be more of a problem because people will park illegally.

Commissioner Staab stated there was a concern about parking blocking people's views from their homes. He feels having a pavilion in the park will promote use from all age groups.

Director Mangum stated Commissioner Staab is correct. The people who voiced their opinion against the pavilion have a valid point. They live in a home where they have a view of the lake; however, they are a fraction of the percentage of the population who would use that park. He respects their opinion as well as anyone who would want to leave the park natural. It

could be a Kroger or a hotel. We want to do what is in the best interest for all citizens including these people but we need to take everyone in to account.

Lori Singleton from Hamilton Anderson stated there is concern about the amount of pavement in the design. In terms of usability the walkways basically connect point A to point B. It looks like it may be for design but they are actually connecting points together and are meaningful connections. She would be concerned about eliminating too many of them. They provide access to people with mobility issues, strollers and bikes. Commissioner Torimoto asked if there were any constraints on how the Grant and Foundation funds can be used.

Director Mangum stated there are constraints. He explained when we apply for a grant we stipulate what elements of the park we are going to construct with the money. In Phase One the two primary things we will accomplish with those funds is site planning and grading and also shoreline.

On the shoreline we will address the issues of the concrete and chunks of metal. In the grant there is stipulation for landscaping, walking paths, parking and also historical icon (like a marker).

Commissioner Torimoto then asked if it is correct that there will be no programming done at this park.

Director Mangum replied the purpose of this park is to complement our other parks. That is why there are no volleyball courts, a swim beach or other similar things. There are some elements of parks that you are going to see throughout no matter what type of park. Things like gathering places, picnic tables, trash cans, pathways, playgrounds and the like are all things you see in a lot of parks. We don't anticipate programming this park or programming it heavily because that is not the purpose of this park. The primary purpose of the park is a gathering place for individuals and families. Commissioner Torimoto stated a lot of what he heard today was to have a park with open space. He thinks that the waterfront feature is unique. He was asking about programming because due to the shallowness of the water there could be unique programming such as beginner canoeing or teaching children how to fish. These are things they could only do at a park that is along a waterfront that they can't do at Lakeshore Park. The park needs to be something that doesn't overlap with anything else we have. He would like to see the waterfront with no swimming and an ideal open space. He asked if the walkways will be concrete or something natural.

Lori Singleton stated it would probably be concrete so it is economical for long term maintenance. The walkways do not create a barrier but allow people to get from point A to point B on a smooth and even surface if they need that.

Director Mangum clarified he is not saying that we will never program at this park. When we looked at options in the beginning we looked at putting an amphitheater in and threw around a lot of ideas. We are not having programming or potential programming dictate the design of the park. Commissioner Torimoto asked about a dog park for the City. He asked if people are allowed to bring dogs to this park.

Director Mangum stated we do have a leash law in the City. To bring your dog to a park it has to be on a six foot leash. If people run their dogs at this park they are in violation of City code. We do not have an off leash dog area. This is something we have looked at potentially for other areas in the City.

Commissioner Tecklenburg stated the one issue that stands out is parking. He asked if there were other alternatives to address any of these concerns. He asked where the area for across the road parking was.

Lori Singleton pointed out the area on the map and stated it is an open lawn area the City owns and can be developed as a parking lot to serve the park. One concern for using that as parking is crossing the street in a certain degree of limited sight distance. They have been discussing, for events or special events or rentals, that space being used as an overflow parking area for the park. The original design is showing parking for forty cars and each of those two parking lots only has one bay of parking. There are not a significant number of residences that are looking across the parking.

Commissioner Tecklenburg stated he does not have a problem with the pathways. They are needed to get to where you need to go and have access. The pavilion he can't make a judgment on but thinks there is value to having that in the location by the water.

Commissioner Wingfield concurs with his fellow Commissioners. He understands we do have to have the walkways. In parks like this, about eighty to ninety percent of usage does come from people within a quarter of a mile or half mile of the park. This is a park for the City of Novi and we need parking or they are going to park in places they should not. We do not need more active program space and should keep the park passive. A pavilion could be something tasteful with about ten picnic tables under it. There should not be a boat launch there. He asked if Phase One will take care of our needs with the financing we have.

Lore Singleton stated it will not. What the current budget could roughly cover is shoreline improvement and plantings along the shoreline so you would only have to get in to the water for construction one time. Also covered would be a few key walkways and some of the parking as well as the historical marker. Things that are still in question as to whether they are wanted, like a pavilion and additional parking, could be potential future items as part of the master plan based on need or demand.

Commissioner Jewell suggested moving the parking down thirty or forty feet to the south. He stated he is for sculptures and the green space. He thinks it will be outstanding keeping the park natural and open. It will improve everyone's value in that area.

Lori Singleton asked for feedback on the terraced step down to the water as an approach and as far as access.

Student Representative Kerbrat stated, as a lifeguard, she can see where liability may come in. She suggested that instead of steps having stones. The stones would look more natural and is better for the environment and people are less likely to approach the water.

Commissioner Wingfield asked what Ms. Singleton's experience is with the step or if there have been issues.

Lori Singleton stated her experience is that people want to get down to the water whether you permit them to or not. If you start to make it difficult for them to and more difficult to navigate they are going to still try and the liability may actually go up. Especially as the park becomes developed, people are going to want to touch the water.

Commissioner Jewell stated there is a concern that people will get in to the water and swim. It seems that it is pretty easy to get in to the water now if you wanted to. There are different options for the edge of the water. There has to be an edge. Our job is to make sure that edge is esthetically pleasing and has some sort of purpose. He spoke of some of the options from the presentation from last month.

Lori Singleton suggested an option of steps that end in stones at the water's edge.

Commissioner Dooley stated he agrees with Commissioner Jewell about moving the parking. He stated he is not a fan of the terraced waterfront or steps and agrees with Student Representative Kerbrat about the safety. He would like to see the edge of the water soft and natural. He thinks the conceptual design is excellent. The sharp edging has been there for years and feels that in Phase One we should do a very good job of cleaning up that area. The park should be passive and he hopes that the wireless internet is still an option. He believes there should be restrooms there. He applauded the citizens who came and gave their comments.

Director Mangum stated from the discussion this evening the recommendations given by the Commissioners will be taken back to the consultant and adjustments will be made. We will come back next month with a plan that everyone is more comfortable with and move forward.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Student Representative Kerbrat stated Light Up the Night was fun. She went with her sister. Her sister had fun meeting Santa Claus. She applauded the department for creating a great night. She wished everyone "Happy Holidays".

Commissioner Jewell stated he heard a lot of great things about Light Up the Night and the department should be applauded. He thanked Matt Ostermeyer for everything he has done. The Landings property is moving forward and there was a great, robust discussion and is something we can all look forward to. He wished everyone "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year".

Commissioner Wingfield stated it was a good meeting with The Landings being our big issue tonight. He respects all of the people who came and gave their input. He wished everyone a great holiday season.

Commissioner Tecklenburg concurred with his fellow Commissioners. He wished "Happy Holidays" to everyone.

Commissioner Staab stated he appreciated everyone's comments this evening. He wished everyone "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year".

Commissioner Torimoto though it was a good meeting. He wished everyone "Happy Holidays".

Commissioner Dooley stated Mayor Gatt did a great job at Light Up the Night of introducing the winter season. He was exceptional in getting everyone engaged and motivated. Mayor Landry was the recipient of the Spirit of Giving Award and he could not think of a more deserving person for all of his years of service. He wished everyone "Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Holidays".

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner at 9:10pm.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Paul Policicchio, Vice Chairperson