

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, April 21st, 2022 – 7 P.M.

Novi Civic Center – Council Chambers

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

ROLL CALL:

Dooley (Present), Staab (present), Joseph (present), Joshi (Present), Riggins (Absent / Excused), Tolkacz (Present), Torimoto (Present)
Student Representatives: Bheemineni (Absent), Raghunathan (Present)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Chairman Dooley moved the presentation in the parks and facilities, line item 6D to the May meeting. Commissioner Joseph motioned for approval of agenda. The agenda approval was seconded by Commissioner Staab.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of March 24th, 2022, minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for the March meeting be approved by Commissioner Joshi and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz
Commissioner Tolkacz said there was not a Walkable Novi meeting since the last Parks Commission meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for June 16th.

- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Riggins, Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Joseph stated there was a meeting on Monday 4/18. The main points of conversation were updating financials. The Top Golf fundraiser was successful. The event brought in around \$10,000 for the Jessica Starr Splash Pad. The next topics were about the activities for the remainder of this year recognizing that Pour on the Shore is scheduled for July 28, 2023. In the interim, this year there is a fundraiser proposed at Paradise Park for the evening of June 3rd between 6:00-10:00. It will be a family friendly event where people can buy tickets and wristbands to access all of the activities. There will be drink tickets, cash bar, and food served. Since it is close, marketing will begin next week with a pre-sale of tickets at a discounted rate. Then there will be two tiers with up to the day and onsite ticket sales. The Paradise Park event is in conjunction with the Starr family and a portion of the proceeds will be going to the splash pad. Discussion about planning a fall activity occurred with ideas such as a bowling or family / pet

friendly event. Commissioner Joseph explained that the goal for this year is to continue to keep the name out there, get a marketing presence and continue to raise money. Commissioner Staab continued Executive Director Melissa Agosta has championed for June 3rd. She has a good business plan and projections. Commissioner Staab mentioned that the year-to-date total for the splash pad is about \$145,000.

- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Joshi
Commissioner Joshi mentioned that there was not a meeting today and there are no updates. The next meeting is in May. Director Muck announced that the Northwest Park grant that was submitted to Oakland County was accepted on April 6th. “We were awarded \$100,000 for the new Northwest Park development project. An entire new park will come online in our system consisting of crushed aggregate trails, nature themed play area, parking lot and prairie restoration.” Director Muck anticipates it will take some time before construction begins due to supply chain issues and getting contractors. It won't happen overnight, but our staff will start moving towards it.

- D. Parks and Facilities Updates
 - 1. Wildlife Woods Park – Commissioner Dooley
Tabled to May

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

STAFF REPORTS

- A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck
 - 1. Memorial Day Update
Director Muck showed a presentation about Memorial Day that was shared with City Council. City Council asked staff to resurrect the Memorial Day Parade. First Director Muck explained the new event, Fuerst Field of Honor. This will be a tribute to the men and women who died while serving in the U.S. military which is the real meaning behind the holiday. The event will be held on Wednesday, May 25th starting at 5:30. It features a free dinner for veterans, a community concert with patriotic songs, a very poignant and touching ceremony, and the flag walk of honor. The walkways of Fuerst Park will be lined with 200 flags in the same mind set as Fuerst Festive Nights. Flags will be adorned with medallions telling the story of Novi residents who passed while in service. We are still looking for information on individuals who gave the ultimate sacrifice. If anybody is aware of someone, we do not want to miss them, contact the parks office. There will also be informational pieces on the meaning of Memorial Day, how it was established and background on the branches of service. The flags will stay up through the following Wednesday for people to take a private, more solemn self-guided walk after the ceremony. Director Muck hopes the entire community comes out for this program because it is important to educate people on the real spirit and meaning of Memorial Day.
Next Director Muck gave the update on the request from City Council to resurrect the parade after the absence since the pandemic. There have been

several changes to the parade with number one being the route. It will start with refreshments and gathering at Meadowbrook Commons. The Meadowbrook Commons residents and veterans are invited to the activity center at 9:00am for a continental breakfast before the parade. The KMG staff and veterans' groups are in full support and believe it is a great opportunity for the residents and veterans. Another reason the route was changed is parade viewing opportunities for Meadowbrook and Manor of Novi residents. Bathrooms and climate control for the veterans are a big part too. In addition, our staff can pre-stage at Meadowbrook Commons prior to the event instead of everything being done the morning of the parade. This will also help with safety for the bands and participants plus help traffic flow. The schedule for the day: 9:00 continental breakfast for Meadowbrook Commons residents and veterans, 9:00-10:00 participant arrival and staging, 10:00am parade begins with estimated conclusion at 11:30am at the Civic Center. There will not be a ceremony at the Civic Center after the parades as in previous years. The ceremony will be held with the Fuerst Field of Honor event.

2. Park Projects

Director Muck said Council has completed their budget meetings and there were significant items of note that pertain to Parks and Recreation. They did approve the splash pad to be funded from the CIP fund for 1.5 million. The Lakeshore tunnel replacement to happen next year for \$507,000. The cemetery pathway project will add additional pathways through the cemetery for better accessibility. Council also increased the capital improvement fund expenditure budget by \$50,000 to allocate planning for updates to ITC Community Sports Park. After July 1st a consultant will lead us through public input / strategy sessions, develop conceptual designs and topographical surveys to determine what the community wants and needs for the re-imagining of the park. The staff has initial thoughts on the park to address the need for additional pickleball courts and park shelters.

The grand opening at Bosco Field happened last Thursday. The kickoff included a gathering, short ceremony and the dignitaries kicked a soccer ball.

Commissioners Dooley and Staab attended.

Director Muck added to information about the financials of the splash pad. The purchase of the equipment for the splash pad is going to Council Monday due to the concerns of a 10% price increases. If it is approved the rate can be locked in with significant savings. The engineering work on the water, sewer, electrical, and site planning have started.

The garlic mustard pull will happen at Lakeshore Park on May 7th from 9:00-12:00. This self-directed activity will start at shelter three. Maps, information on garlic mustard, gloves, trash bags and refreshments will be provided to the volunteers. This is a good opportunity for service groups and high school students who need community service hours. Our office can provide a map and other items if volunteers want to go out at another time. This will be in conjunction with the Motor City Mountain Bike Association's trail building day, so it is a good day for volunteerism.

Director Muck mentioned that our great partner ITC once again stepped forward with a \$75,000 donation to the Novi Park Foundation. Simon Whitlock presented the check at the April 11th City Council meeting. The funds were designated for youth scholarships, splash pad construction and funding as well as energy related items at ITC Community Sports Park.

Director Muck continued with updates on the ITC / Wildlife Woods trail connector which has been delayed due to weather. The RC track construction is in progress with May opening being planned.

Several commissioners asked for more details on the financials and planning for the splash pad and ITC projects. ITC Sports Park user groups will be asked to participate in the planning and asked how they intend to support the renovations.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle recapped the early spring programs including the Novi Youth Theatre which performed High School Musical Jr. last weekend. There were six shows between Thursday and Sunday with seventy-six actors in two casts. 1327 tickets were sold to proud families to cheer on this group of actors. The partnership with In The Mitten Productions continues, and the next show is the full production of Cinderella. The longer performance will take place in January. The Choralaires concert will be May 7th at the Novi Middle School. The Novi Concert Band will perform the next day at the Civic Center.

The traditional egg hunt event, Eggstravaganza took place April 9th with two hundred participants between the ages of one and twelve. Over 2,400 eggs were placed in the playground area of Lakeshore Park.

Recreation Supervisor, Chase Root brought forward the idea for the T-Bolts tennis team. The participants will have practices and tournaments. There are fifty players signed up. We are ecstatic about the response. Registration is open until June 12th. The adult softball program was postponed due to weather and field conditions. There is time built into the schedule for these issues.

Dooley Dog Day is May 14th as well as picture day for the soccer program. This event is at Bosco Fields. It is a great opportunity to talk and meet other families.

Dawn Roe, artist in residence at Villa Barr, is presenting a program on May 23rd. This program produces camera less photographic prints that are exposed with sunlight. She calls it Marking Time With(in) Water.

Deputy Director Ringle said summer staff is continuing to be hired including site supervisors, building attendants and camp counselors. We will cover the cost if a camp counselor wants to get lifeguard certified.

In addition, she promoted Spring Palooza which is a city-wide open house with music and food trucks. The event is Friday May 20th 6:00-8:00. Spring Palooza gives residents an opportunity to talk with city departments. Parks and Recreation will have a table promoting programs and meeting community members.

C. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Programs & Services

Director Muck stated that April is volunteer appreciation month and thanked the commissioners for their service. He continued to spotlight three volunteer programs facilitated in OAS. The AARP tax program began January 6th with 351 tax appointments scheduled. It was an increase of ninety-five appointments from 2021. All of the appointments were held in person. The volunteer coordinator, Jack Motz along with other counselors prepare taxes every Wednesday from February 2nd – April 13th at the Novi Civic Center. The biggest challenge for 2023 will be finding additional volunteer counselors. Over forty people attended the Cutting The Cord technology class today in Council Chambers. A volunteer named Mike Ali gave the presentation. He had a long career in technology and likes to share his knowledge with the community. OAS has hosted the Medicare / Medicaid Assistance program for years. Volunteer counselors Megan Schira and John Howland work with people over the phone, through zoom, and in person to assist. The numbers are up by 10 people over the last fiscal year with a few months still to go. John was recently spotlighted in a video for the Area Agency on Aging's Facebook page entitled Henrietta Saves Money. He actually helped her save thousands of dollars. Director Muck added that there was a birding program last Wednesday at Lakeshore Park. A gentleman from Kensington Metro Park educated a group of ten older adults about birding the led a walk to see birds. The group ended up seeing a bald eagle. This was the first Nature Nurture Novi since the start of the pandemic. The first travel fair in two years happened Monday night. Three travel companies came out to present their upcoming trips and answer questions. Approximately fifty people came out which shows how much people want to get back on the road. Fifty-six people are registered for the annual euchre tournament on Saturday at the Civic Center. This is the second highest attendance for this event. A new program called Happy Trails Walking Group with thirty-nine participants has started. They have met at ITC, Lakeshore and Fuerst Park. The group is led by Recreation Supervisor, Madison LaChance. She is doing a great job with a wide range of activities for all ages and abilities. Meadowbrook Commons staff is also running in-house programs for their residents.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Tolkacz

Congratulations to Deputy Director Ringle and Director Muck on the grant award for 100K for Northwest Park. Thanks for the clarification on the usage of Bosco fields and ITC. My boys played soccer with the Jags and parks and rec. As usual I continue to be impressed by all the activities going on.

Commissioner Joseph

I wanted to add to the comments about Melissa Agosta coming on board at the Foundation. The presentation she put together in the month between the meetings was super impressive. She wants to keep the Foundation front and center within the community with a little bit of different ideas from Pour on the Shore. Some people were disappointed that Pour on the Shore was not happening this year but excited about

what she proposed. Of course, all the wonderful things that are going on is impressive to see as always.

Commissioner Torimoto

I am really encouraged by the accelerated progress for the splash pad. I missed the kickoff at Bosco but go there with my dog every weekend. It was a fantastic job, and it is great to see the field really blossoming. It is really neat to hear about the volunteers lending their expertise - from the community to the community. Keep coming up with new ideas. Thank you.

Commissioner Joshi

I'm excited to hear about the parade because I was confused when I read about it. It is great news. I am looking forward to the new format of the parade which is actually what it is meant to be. Congratulations on the Northwest Park grant.

Student Representative Raghunathan

The Jessica Starr Splash Pad sounds amazing including the funding. The Paradise Park event is also going to help increase that. The progress is fast, so it sounds great.

Commissioner Staab

I would be totally remiss if I did not reinforce the Choralaires Concert on Saturday May 7th. We are blessed to have Melissa as our executive director at the Foundation to keep us on task. She is a bundle of energy with robust ideas. I am looking forward to the event in June. I am glad to see City Council getting behind the splash pad, to get it online on a tight turnaround. It will be a real bonus for the community. I look forward to participating in the ideas and brainstorming for the remake of ITC Sports Park.

Chairman Dooley

We always talk about Novi Ambassadors, getting involved in the community, watching the city breath every single day, and what it does for the citizens. I would encourage anybody to get involved in any way possible. It is a great way to start by going through the Novi Ambassador Program. Melissa is a great asset, and she went through the program.

On May 14th the third annual State of Michigan Miss Amazing Pageant will take place at Fuerst Park. The city has been very generous with Miss Amazing. It is a pageant for special needs young ladies and adults. We are hoping it will be largest group vying for the crown in their various age groups. It is a talent contest on a beautiful day. The event is free. The City does an incredible job of prep and take down. The folks at the organization can't thank the City enough for their generosity in making it happen and successful.

Lastly, thank you both for the updates in what makes the City of Novi great.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:49p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson