

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, August 18th, 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 (absent/excused), Riggins (present), Tolkacz (present), Torimoto (present)
Student Representatives: Bheemineni (present), Raghunathan (absent/excused)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Dooley requested to move the item 6D2 (Pavilion Shore Park presentation) to the September meeting.

Commissioner Staab motioned for approval of agenda and second by Commissioner Joseph.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Tolkacz had a correction to the July 21st minutes. He said he didn't remember saying the Walkable Novi Committee takes a couple of months off in the summer. That is not accurate because there was a meeting five minutes ago. If we could delete that it will be accurate.

It was moved that the minutes for the July meeting be approved by Commissioner Tolkacz and seconded by Commissioner Joseph.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz

Commissioner Tolkacz said the meeting tonight was good and mostly focused on the Non-Motorized Report. It has moved to a two-year cycle because when they look at the top 20 segments in the city they do not change that much, and resources can be better spent elsewhere. There was concern about segment 81A and 81B which are funded segments along Ten Mile. We did approve the overall report.

Next, the committee looked into the minutes from June. There was a review with the City of Northville connecting walking paths / non-motorized pathways with Novi. This was taken to City Council, and they advised to consider this as an opportunity as part of Walkable Novi Committee.

Commissioner Tolkacz continued with an update on the Rotary Park Wastewater Project. The paths that were covered with buckthorn have been cleared. The plan is to put in outdoor exercise stations in the fall.

The pathway between the ITC Trail and Wildlife Woods Park has been completed. There is a lot of discussion about pickleball courts, four new courts at Wildlife Woods are a priority, potential courts at ITC in the master plan and considering lighted courts as a possibility.

The next meeting is October 20th.

Commissioner Staab asked if pickleball facilities east of Novi Road particularly at Meadowbrook Commons were being considered. Director Muck said that it is not on the radar and being close to residential can cause issues due to noise.

- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Riggins, Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Joseph stated that there has not been a meeting.

- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Joshi

Director Muck said there will be a meeting next month about the SPARK grants. He gave a reminder that the Grants Committee did prioritize four additional pickleball courts and parking lot expansion at Wildlife Woods. The SPARK grants are \$65 million from the American Recue Act and will be distributed through local municipalities. Indications are there would be zero match, so we would not be required to front any money if we get this grant. It looks like we could go up to \$1,000,000 in this grant funding request. I have worked with the engineering team and the project would be around \$525,000 for the additional pickleball courts and parking lot.

Director Muck continued that there will three cycles of the grants. The first one in the fall will be \$5 million so Director Muck is not too optimistic because 5 million across every municipality in the State of Michigan gives us a low chance based on our economic demographics. We will have three chances for a chunk of the 65 million. The project is not currently in the CIP but may be added this year because we know what a high priority it is for the community. More of the entire grant program will be discussed at the September grants meeting. We are just in a holding pattern waiting for the applications to be released. The fall will be a test run before the next cycles. It is Director Muck's understanding that it will be a less cumbersome process and easier for communities to apply than the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grants.

- D. Parks and Facilities Updates

- 1. Rotary Park - Commissioner Joseph

Commissioner Joseph apologized for his presentation of Rotary Park being delayed. The presentation included slides showing many areas in the park. There is a beautiful sign as you enter Rotary Park. It is off Nine Mile between Novi Road and Meadowbrook; the park is tucked back and hidden. The park is generally fairly busy. The landscaping was freshly cleaned up and everything was looking good up front.

From sky level, it looks like the park is just small area with a playground, shelter, and two tennis courts but there is a large, wooded area to the side including trails that connect to Chase Farms. The parking lot has limited space which can become an issue when tennis is happening, and people tend to park on the road, but it is not a safety hazard.

There is a trail map outlining where you are with all the official offshoots and the

distance associated. The website also has a great map to print and take with you. Commissioner Joseph took a nice stroll down the trail. He said it was well maintained even with the recent rain. It was not muddy and fairly flat. He even saw some deer on the visit to the park. On the northern side of the parking lot are the park rules which are standard, very visible and placed front and center as people are coming into the park. There is a nice, crushed gravel path around the perimeter going from the parking lot connecting to the road. There is a bit of erosion from the water runoff because these are difficult to maintain. The restroom facility is nice. It did have signs noting limited hours and use obviously associated with staff cleaning. The bathrooms were still fairly clean, and the trash was not terrible at the end of the day. There was some standing water from the rain and trash in the shelter / playground area even though there are trash cans close by. Rules for the playground are posted on both sides of the pathway walking in. There is a main play structure and slide for young kids. The tennis courts appeared to be in really good shape with no major cracks. There was some standing water which would be expected after a rainfall. Rotary Park is where the T Bolts play, and that program is advertised there as well as getting the program out into the community and competing against other areas. There was discussion about the maintenance for standing water. Director Muck explained squeegees have been provided in the past, but they disappeared after a couple of weeks. Commissioner Joseph said parks staff was coming as he was leaving and the things, he mentioned were probably were taken care of shortly.

2. Pavilion Shore Park – Commissioner Joshi
Tabled to September meeting.

Commissioner Staab mentioned he visited Pavilion Shore on Monday at 8:30. He was amazed about how many people were there working out with ab rollers, on playground structures for pull ups, and doing yoga in the grass. He used the facilities which were nice and clean. His grandchildren loved the play structure. He said it is a calming, serene setting by the water.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck commended Commissioner Joseph for not going into the construction zone and then added to his wonderful presentation with a few more items about Rotary Park. The focus was the north end of the park by Nine Mile with the water and sewer project, the detention basin plus enhancing the pathway entering the park. The project is close to completion. The path was not very inviting, choked with buckthorn, and overgrown. It has been cleared out and landscaping will be coming soon. There will be enhancements to the buffer area by the Sparc Arena, which is a privately owned business with pickleball,

table tennis, cricket, and volleyball. The Novi PRCS sports team works with Sparc for pickleball and additional programs this fall.

The outdoor exercise equipment's exact location is still being determined but we are thinking about this area (Nine Mile entrance to the park). The equipment requires a cement pad and Director Muck hopes they are installed this fall as the construction and landscaping wraps up. The entry way will be enhanced possibly with an arched entrance to improve the visibility of Rotary Park. The Rotary Club will be engaged to improve the park that bears their name. There are many opportunities including additional benches.

Three new park benches were recently added at Village Wood Lake. The benches are the same as used at Lakeshore and Pavilion Shore. It was a Council goal to enhance the neighborhood parks.

The Meadowbrook Commons roof replacement on the main building will be completed tomorrow. A new gazebo was installed by the pond for residents to enjoy. The management staff is working on quotes for replacing the windows in the entire facility since they are original.

Coming soon signs will be installed tomorrow at Bosco Fields for the Jessica's Splash Pad. We are close to submitting the site plans to EGLE for the permits.

The pedestrian tunnel under South Lake Drive that connects Lakeshore Park to the beach requires improvements. The project scope includes removing the existing tunnel and replacing it with a precast seven by ten-foot concrete tunnel and improving the drainage reconstruction of the road. Additional site improvements include a new fence, guardrails, sidewalk, and lockable gates on both sides of the tunnel. Due to material sourcing and supply chain issues City Council approved the purchase of the tunnel in advance of the contractor award. The design contract for AECOM was approved July 30th. Since then, we have been working to order the tunnel and finalizing the scope and design of the project. Initially we wanted to complete the project in the fall of 2022. However, after meeting on site with DTE there is some overhead power conflicts along the line. Discussions are taking place regarding the placement of temporary poles for the project, ownership, and responsibilities of other providers on the poles. AECOM, the consulting engineer also has concerns about the ability to procure asphalt later in the fall. The project is expected to start in early spring of 2023 and be completed on later than Memorial Day. We definitely want to minimize the impact of usage of the park and beach. There was additional discussion about park and road closures because of the tunnel project.

2. Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) Resources

Director Muck explained that SEMCOG supports local planning through technical data and intergovernmental resources. It was created in 1968 and acts as a regional partner with local government members. SEMCOG serves the Southeast Michigan region, which is made up of Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties. The City of Novi is a member, and the parks department makes extensive use of the data for items such as grants, master plan, marketing and more. A lot of their tools relate to travel, transit, automotive, pedestrian, but Director Muck wanted to focus on the parks and recreation component. SEMCOG developed a parks and recreation

plan for Southeastern Michigan which Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle sat in on meetings along with other parks and recreation people around the region.

Director Muck pointed out some features on their site. Number one was the Southeast Michigan Park Finder. There are links to this on the City of Novi website. This is meant to have a person be able to locate any park all across Southeast Michigan. The 2861 parks can be filtered by location, amenities, and acreage which is an outstanding tool. Another feature is the trail explorer that does virtual tours of the thousand miles of greenways into waterways, water trails and paddle ways. He demonstrated with the ITC Trail, and it showed elevation changes and routes. This a great tool for parks and recreation professionals and everyday residents. Director Muck is continuing to feed SEMCOG information and updates.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle began by saying collectively the recreation team is about one week away from a big sigh as our summer programs end. Immediately they start programming and planning the fine details for fall. Theater, dance, sports, camps, concert series, tennis team, adult softball, and pickleball programming is wrapping up. It is a good transition to switch to a new season.

Camp Lakeshore and Powerplay had the highest attendance numbers ever. That is due to being able to expand into the new building fully at Lakeshore and expansion at the Civic Center post-COVID for Powerplay. Deputy Director Ringle recognized the camp counselor staff. The staff worked 6:45am - 6:00pm Monday – Friday. Some of the staff is going off to be teachers next year, one is starting medical school, another getting married, they are great young adults. Camp is a great opportunity for them to grow leadership skills, learn patience, connect with peers as it is a good program / employment for young adults. Some of the counselors have been with Novi for three to seven years.

The Engage magazine is about one week away from hitting mailboxes. The fall will include Jack o' Lantern Jubilee which is our fall community event obviously tied to Halloween. The fall programs include volleyball and basketball leagues which are large programs for the department. There will be many dance classes plus increased fitness offerings. Deputy Director Ringle will share details of the summer program and camp numbers at the next meeting.

Abby Marchesseault, the artist in residence, has invited parks commissioners, Beth's family, City Council, Friends of Villa Barr to Heart String Lullaby. The dance program will honor Beth Dwaihy Barr who was a dancer. The invitation is for the work in progress performance, and she will be back next spring to perform the whole program.

2. Villa Barr Strategic Plan Update

Deputy Director Ringle said that in 2021 the strategic plan for the park was finished which helps with resource allocation, potential grant applications and idea generating for how we honor the Barr family and move forward. The strategic plan was a great start for us and every year it will be updated, goals and tasks checked off. This report is an update of what was done this year. The paver brick driveway had a lot of work completed. A student who helped lay

the original bricks with David Barr came back to visit last summer and was proud of the work. Garden restoration began last year. It started from scratch with a garden that David and Beth planted intentionally with native plants with stone borders. Cohen, the largest sculpture on the property needed a sandblasting and repaint intensive project. It took a few weeks to complete but it is fresh, will endure for the long term and hold off damage from oxidation, rusting, and other damage that happens when maintenance is deferred.

Cindy Ok was the artist in residence in the fall 2021. She did some block writing pieces and we are in the process of having them framed to be displayed at the Civic Center, Villa Barr, and library. Dawn Roe was with us in the spring, and she did a public workshop using the organic materials found around the pond to create photographic prints without a camera. Some are displayed at the Civic Center. Abby Marchesseault the current artist in residence, will be presenting the performance that was spoken of earlier. She will be coming back in the spring with the completed program. The next artist will be a Polynesian and Hawaiian dance instructor from Hawaii. She will have public programming and connect with our ongoing Polynesian and Hawaiian dance classes. In the winter there will be a break to do maintenance and improvements to the house. Another artist will be in the house in the spring

The commissioners asked questions regarding how the artists are chosen. Deputy Director Ringle explained the process and stressed Villa Barr continues to nurture artists of all mediums. The determination is by the PRCS department and the Friends of Villa Barr. Director Muck added every resident is different as well as every artist. The program continues to evolve. The artists leave behind work to be displayed at in the city, partner with PRCS and library for programs, play a part in helping us promote, and moving forward through their social media.

C. Older Adult Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Programs and Services

Director Muck stated that the Older Adult Services staff has been very busy. He started with the Oakland County Blueprint for Successful Aging update. Sandy Fisher serves on the quality of life working group. They collaborate with the Area Agency on Aging 1-B to create special mailers that will help promote all senior services and centers in Oakland County. The mailer will be distributed sometime in 2023. The working group is gathering data, emailing surveys to area senior centers, researching possibilities, offering free training for senior center staff, plus developing a survey for training needs and barriers.

OAS is hosting one on one counseling for Medicare part D during the annual enrollment which is October 15th – December 7th. It is wise to review your plan every year. Currently there is twenty-two appointments available, these tend to fill very quickly.

September 9th there will be a presentation by Stephen O'Donnell from Oakland County Housing Counseling Services. He will be discussing affordable senior housing, what it is and how to find it.

September 18th - 24th is fall prevention awareness week. As always OAS hosts A Matter of Balance which is an evidence-based fall prevention program presented by the Area Agency on Aging. Several fall prevention awareness posts will be published by the city on Facebook to help educate people.

New fitness classes have been offered. Recreation Supervisor, Madison Lachance is instructing Drums Alive! which successfully started this week. A circuit training class is going to take place at the Civic Center and restorative yoga at the Lakeshore Park building.

The first inaugural Mackinac Island Grand Experience trip is sold out with a total of twenty-four rooms at the Grand Hotel.

Mahjong Madness took place last week. Twenty-five people came to socialize with the players, enjoy snacks, watch, and learn the game. Current players offered to run a month-long instructional class because they want to increase the number of players that participate in the beginner and intermediate drop-in program.

An Oktoberfest luncheon will be held at the end of September. It will include travelogue and an accordion player dressed in lederhosen.

The Nature, Nurture, Novi is another program that continues to grow. The Friends of Maybury Park lead a special introduction to edible plants with a hike yesterday. In September a bird enthusiast and photographer will share pictures of Michigan birds she has captured. September 26th Rick Meader the Novi landscape architect is going to host a talk on plants that will attract local birds, butterflies, and bees.

These programs including fitness, nature, education, and information make the OAS department very well rounded. The staff is really hitting all the bullet points with programming and all areas.

Commissioner Riggins added a few things since she attended the OAS advisory board meeting August 16th. Bingo and Bots will be held October 1st at Meadowbrook Commons. One interesting fact noted at the meeting was the fiscal year numbers – 414 volunteers that worked 2968 hours and 437 boxes of food were distributed. More volunteers are needed.

Director Muck finished by mentioning that there is a need for older adult transportation drivers. It is a flexible schedule and a great way to give back to the community.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Torimoto

Before the commission meeting today I stopped by the RC Park. I'll be honest I was not sure what to expect when it was first presented but it is just unbelievable. It is beautiful and professionally put together, just fantastic. Director Muck explained provided details on the July 30th trial race event that had over 100 people from the tri county area. There is a great network of over 1,000 followers on the Facebook page. There are plans for a grand opening, but the date has not been decided because a few more enhancements need to be completed.

Commissioner Torimoto continued saying that variety offered in the parks from Villa Barr to a racetrack is fantastic. Being open minded and giving people opportunity to provide input or even create a park. Thank you for everything you are doing the programming and facilities are amazing.

Commissioner Joseph

I would like to congratulate the summer programs staff for another successful year. We

will see the numbers, but I am sure they are going to climb, coming out of COVID. It seems like every program we have is expanding or growing as opposed to retracting so that is obviously positive and moving in the right direction. Great job by your team. We appreciate everything you do.

Commissioner Talkacz

Three quick take away comments from me. Number one, Commissioner Joseph great report, capturing wildlife, it was outstanding and worth the wait. Second, I am a data junkie as well because I enjoyed the SEMCOG presentation. Third, thanks Deputy Director Ringle for going through the Villa Barr criteria. It was very interesting to hear how you picked the candidates.

Student Representative Bheemineni

SEMCOG is a very good resource to visit. The visuals allow us to narrow down and search for a park that fits our needs or what we are looking for. It is a very cool resource.

Commissioner Riggins

I am proud to be a resident of Novi. All the parks and everything we have is amazing. I took my grandson to Pavilion Shore last weekend and he loved everything. A lot of people were there participating and using the facilities. Wonderful presentation on Rotary Park. I really enjoyed it.

Commissioner Staab

Thanks again for a very comprehensive report. I would like to get a copy of the Villa Barr master plan because I was involved. It would be nice to see the final product. I look forward to doing some data mining on the SEMCOG site to see all the information available.

I would like to pass on to the coordinators for the Oktoberfest since I was there three or four months ago that I might be able to give a few pictures or assist in any way. I had the availability to attend a couple of the Sizzling Summer presentations. Including the last one at Fuerst Park on indigenous Americans. It was a great presentation, informative, different and I learned a lot. The neat thing about the department is all the areas that are touched on from Villa Barr, indigenous Americans, normal parks and rec, and the parks we have here are first class. I've mentioned in previous meetings that I have traveled through many different parks this summer watching games for my grandkids and by far ours are the best. I asked people while out at Pavilion Shore what they think? How do you like coming here? People said they love it because it is nice, clean, and well maintained so kudos to the people behind the scenes.

Chairman Dooley

It is truly a privilege to sit here and communicate with the department and have us offer feedback regarding the parks. I learned a lot tonight about SEMCOG. It is an opportunity for those to use the website to take advantage of Michigan parks. I suggest signing up for the Michigan parks sticker when you get your license plate renewed. For a small fee that will afford the opportunity to enter any one of those parks that have a daily fee.

I want to remind everybody the roads are closed at Nine Mile and Taft due to construction. Be careful.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Joseph and seconded by Commissioner Riggins.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:14p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson