



April 6, 2017

Mayor Bob Gatt and
Novi City Council

RE: Villa Barr

Dear Mayor Gatt and Members of the Novi City Council:

The Novi Parks Foundation is actively involved in the development of Villa Barr Art Park. By way of a brief history, the City purchased the home and four acres in 2011. The City purchased the property from David and Beth Barr granting them both a life estate in the property, i.e., the right to live there until their death. The purchase price of the property was for the amount of the City's appraisal of its value. As part of the purchase, David and Beth Barr donated six pieces of sculpture to the City for the nucleus of the development of Villa Barr as an art park. In addition, the City was provided a right of first refusal for the purchase of any of the remaining pieces of sculpture at the park – approximately 27 additional pieces. The thought was that the Novi Parks Foundation would solicit donations from private entities for the purchase of the remaining pieces of sculpture.

With the passing of David and Beth Barr the City took control of the four acres and the house thereon. In recognition of the efforts the City of Novi had made to develop Villa Barr as a public art park, with the grounds accessible to all, and in support of the plan to use the home for an Artist In Residence program, upon the death of David and Beth Barr their estate donated to the City of Novi all of the remaining pieces of sculpture. Therefore, at the present time the City of Novi owns the four acres of property, the house thereon and approximately 33 pieces of sculpture. We truly have an art park.

With total possession of the grounds and house and the acquisition of all 33 pieces of sculpture the City is now poised to develop Villa Barr as a unique park offering residents, visitors and guests of the City of Novi a tranquil setting to reflect, enjoy the art and serve as a workplace for an Artist In Residence who will participate with the City of Novi Parks and Recreation Department as well as the Novi School District Art Departments to educate and offer active art opportunities.

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The ultimate vision is to develop Villa Barr in three phases. The first phase is to make the grounds accessible to all who visit the park. This includes building a small parking lot and the installation of pathways which would allow visitors of all physical abilities access to the entire park and the sculptures thereon.

The second phase would include developing an Artist In Residence program. This would include allowing an artist to actually live in the house at Villa Barr and utilize the studio therein to create art. This could include local artists, artists associated with local or national art schools or artists from foreign countries. Each artist would not only have the use of the house and studio space but would also be required to participate with the City's Parks and Recreation Department course offerings as well as possibly the Novi Public Schools. At this point we are considering an Artist In Residence program of approximately a six-month duration for each artist. The Novi Parks Foundation has been working closely with the Michigan Legacy Art Park organization, which is a group that operates an art park created by David Barr in Crystal Mountain, Michigan. When the Michigan Legacy Art Park organization learned of the City's commitment to developing an art park at Villa Barr they were not only excited about the possibility but they generously offered to assist the City with the development of an Artist In Residence program and to potentially share resources of such an Artist In Residence program between the two art parks. Thus, the Novi Parks Foundation has been consulting with the Michigan Legacy Art Park group for the development of an Artist In Residence program at Villa Barr. Obviously, the City of Novi would ultimately have to approve any such program. At this point the two groups are working together on the particulars of such a program to be presented to the City for its ultimate approval.

Before an Artist In Residence program can be established at Villa Barr the house itself must be modernized in several aspects. This house was built in the 1970's and certain aspects must be improved. The City has examined the home and created a list of items which must be improved to allow an Artist In Residence to reside therein. The cost of these improvements is approximately \$70,000. The Novi Parks Foundation has approved the appropriation of \$70,000 from its funds to bring the house up to the standard sufficient to allow an Artist In Residence to reside and work therein. If the City of Novi approves the funds necessary to install the parking lot and pathways to make the grounds accessible the Novi Parks Foundation is willing to partner with the City and pay for the cost of the modernization of the home.

The third and final phase of the Villa Barr would be to construct a building on the grounds to be used as indoor programmable space. Such space would be an addition to the home and could be used by the City for social gatherings, educational space or meetings. This is not envisioned as anything grand or necessarily large. Simply an

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indoor space, preferably with glass walls, to provide meeting space with year-round views of the art park.

The goal is that now that the City has acquired all of the art sculptures, the development of accessibility of the grounds and the development of an Artist In Residence program will allow the park to be usable and to attract sufficient interests from private groups to solicit donations for the construction of the final phase of a programmable indoor space.

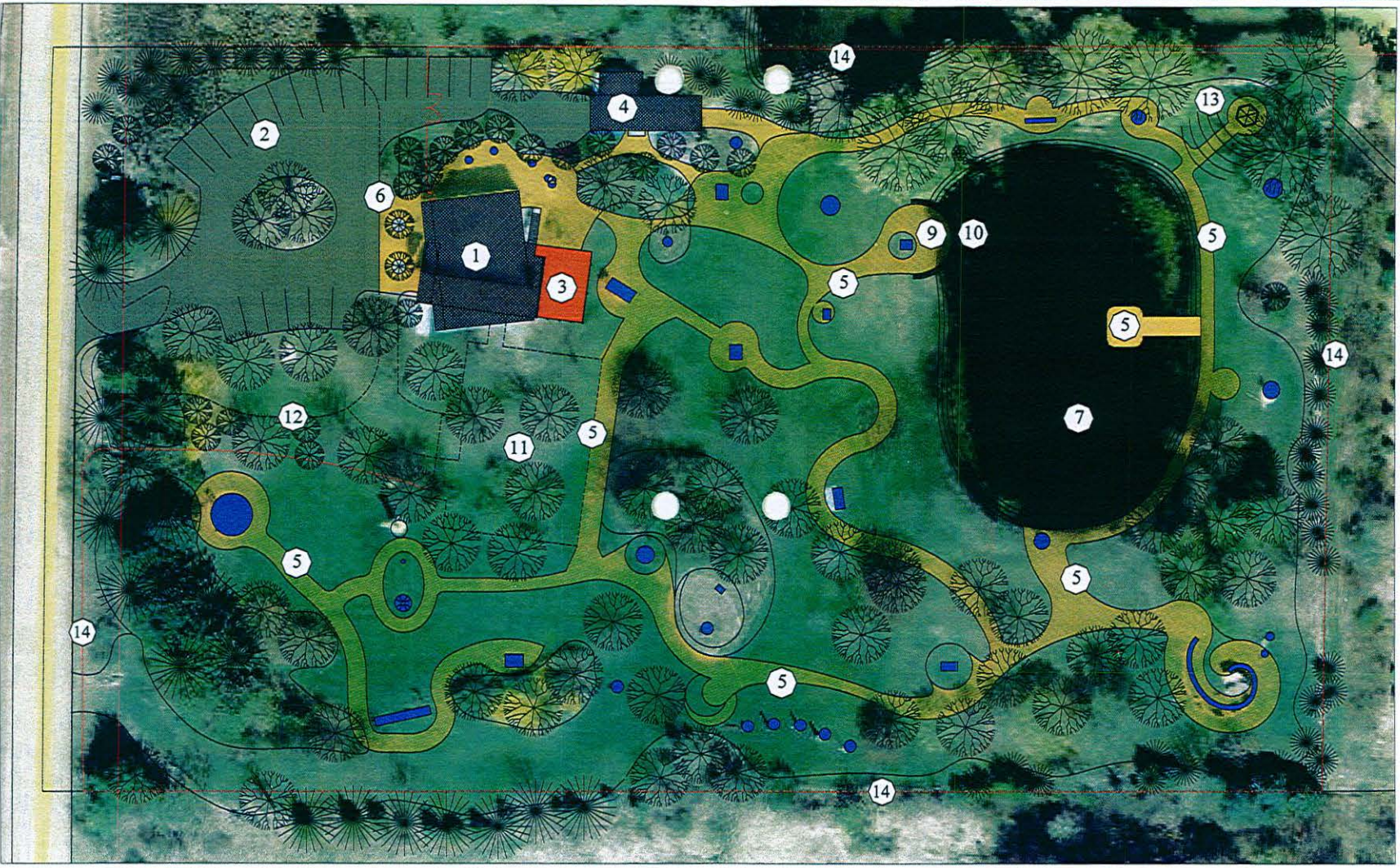
Attached hereto are diagrams which have been created by the City of potential pathways throughout the park and the location of a small parking lot. The background work has been completed and, hopefully, with the approval of the funds for the development of the accessible pathways and parking lot and with the necessary upgrades to the home we can make Villa Barr truly accessible and appropriate for an Artist In Residence program by the end of 2017.

There has been much work that has been done to date by City staff, the Novi Parks Foundation and the Michigan Legacy Art Park. This project is truly a collaboration and once completed would be a unique offering by the City of Novi to its residents and guests. If there are any further questions regarding the progress of this project please feel free to contact myself at any time.

Very truly yours,



David B. Landry
President, Novi Parks Foundation



Phase 1

- 1. Existing Residence
- 2. Parking (18 Cars)
- 3. Addition - Meeting Room (1,250 S.F)
- 4. Existing Demonstration Building (Renovated)
- 5. Walking Trails
- 6. New Brick Paver Walk (Drop-off)

Phase 1

- 7. Existing Reflecting Pond
- 8. Artwork, Sculpture
- 9. Observation Deck
- 10. Retaining Wall w/ Guardrail

Phase 2

- 11. New Building w/ Connecting Bridge (6,000 s.f.)
- 12. Expanded Parking (20 addnl cars) w/ School Bus Drop-Off
- 13. Gazebo outdoor seating area (weddings)
- 14. Security fence w/ Gates

Graphic Symbol Key

	Art Pieces	
	Walking Trails	
	Security Fence	
	Proposed Addition	

