

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

**Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 7 P.M.**

Novi Civic Center – Council Chambers

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

**ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners: Joseph (present), Riggins (present), Dooley (present), Joshi (absent/excused), Staab (present), Tolkacz (present), Torimoto (absent/excused)  
Student Representatives: DiDomenico (present), Sid (absent/excused)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

It was moved that the minutes for the October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved by Commissioner Riggins and second by Commissioner Dooley.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz  
Commissioner Tolkacz said the last meeting was significant with the Active Mobility Plan. Norm Cox came to the Parks Commission Meeting in October and covered the plan in detail. Nothing new to report at this time.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Joshi, Staab & Torimoto  
Commissioner Staab explained that the foundation has not had a meeting since last Parks Commission. The next meeting is in December so nothing to report at this time.
- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Riggins  
Commissioner Riggins said there has not been a meeting. Director Muck elaborated that they are waiting for the new City Council to be seated and appointed then they will reconvene.
- D. Parks and Facilities Updates
  - 1. ITC Trail – Commissioner Joseph  
Chairperson Joseph recapped his first trip to the ITC Trail this season, usually he would ride there every Sunday. He said that the ITC Trail is one of the more difficult

areas to present because of the amount of linear feet to cover. He took pictures from the Nine Mile trailhead to the northern end close to Wildlife Woods. He displayed a slide of the trail from the City of Novi website which detailed the rules, showed the entire length and opportunities long the trail. The new trailhead has benches, a structure dedicated to Wayne Wrobel, and plenty of parking. Pictures were shown of the multiple bridges along the pathway. Commissioner Joseph added the bridges are in good condition. The cement was looking great, no cracks and seemed to be holding up to the elements. The signage along the pathway is extremely straightforward and easy to find your location. The only negative he pointed out was the non-motorized blocks not necessarily doing what they are intended to do since a semi-truck could fit through. However, there has not been an issue with vehicles on the trail, but the barriers need to be evaluated as well as eliminating some of the corner cut offs. Chairman Joseph also pointed out the additional paths to Ascension and Rose Senior Living as being a positive. An idea for the future is to incorporate offroad trails intertwined or weaving between the cement pathways.

The future trailhead locations were pointed out and Director Muck explained the properties were acquired through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Due to the grant stipulations the green plaques must be displayed. But since those acquisitions, we now have the trailhead that was worked out with the development agreement with Terra. We do have development opportunities with both these parcels to do something in the future, however, it is a bit lower on the priority list.

Chairman Joseph finished by saying the trail looks great and many people were using it the day he visited.

Director Muck added that every winter there are questions regarding clearing snow from the trail. He addressed the reasons including the salt needed would not be good for the wetlands, the five miles of trail would be hard to plow and extremely difficult to keep clean free of any snow and ice. People should be encouraged to snowshoe and cross-country ski along the trail.

#### **MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:**

##### A. 2024-2029 Strategic Community Recreation & Master Plan

Director Muck stated the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources requires municipalities to develop and approve a five-year master park plan to be eligible and awarded state and federal funds. The plan is meant to be an active working document used to serve the community and meet the needs of its citizens. It is also a vital component to maintain CAPRA accreditation. The department posted an RFP for development of the 2025-2029 plan. The five-year plan will include elements of both a strategic and master plan for the department in accordance with DNR requirements. The preliminary requirements include a meeting with the PRCS team, community open house at Spring Palooza, stakeholders and community roundtables, a public hearing, meeting with staff to develop strategic and action plans, a presentation to Parks Commission, and final adoption at the City Council meeting.

The proposals were evaluated based on four criteria by multiple staff members using the QBS process. We are recommending the contract for development of the plan

be awarded to the Spicer Group. Spicer Group was overwhelmingly rated the top firm of the four submitted and it was also the lowest bidder. Spicer is currently serving as the consultant on the ITC Community Sports Park Master Plan and our staff has been very satisfied working with their team. Development of the plan includes multiple opportunities for public engagement and input. The final documents are scheduled to be presented for adoption by City Council in the late fall of 2024. Feedback and discussion occurred amongst the Commissioners. Director Muck answered the question regarding the exact timeline. He added that every aspect of the department from older adults, recreation, arts, facilities and all divisions within the Parks and Recreation department will be featured in the strategic plan. The Commission approved a motion to recommend Spicer Group as the selected consultant to City Council.

B. Commissioner Alternates to Committees

Director Muck recapped that last month Chair and Vice Chair were appointed along with Committee assignments. Last year, alternates were assigned to Walkable Novi and the Grants Committee due to COVID, work schedules and other situations that could cause a lack of quorum at those meetings. Since two commissioners were absent the decision was moved to the December meeting. He will send out an email, accept inquiries, then Commission can appoint at the next meeting.

**STAFF REPORTS**

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck informed the Commissioners that the concrete at the splash pad is complete around the entire site. The contractors finished the pedestrian bridge. They are currently working on the siding and decorative stone on the building. Most of the landscaping is done. In addition, the sprinklers are in place. The pergolas and shade structures are tentatively scheduled for November 27<sup>th</sup>. That will be the last milestone before the site is buttoned up for the winter. The final concept for the ITC Community Sports Park will be presented for review in December along with the estimated costs. The next step would be for the commissioners to all to sign off on the final concept. It will then be taken to City Council.

The Lakeshore Parking Lot Expansion Project at the back by the main trailhead will go out to bid within the first three weeks of December. The construction is targeted for spring of 2024 to be complete by Memorial Day. Shelter three will be blocked from rentals until that time. This project has been communicated with the Mountain Bike Association.

Another project going out to bid for next year is the Meadowbrook Commons and Wildlife Woods pickleball courts and parking lot expansion. Those plans are at 90% after review with just a few minor changes needed. Those will be going out to bid very shortly. Construction is targeted for the summer of 2024.

Director Muck provided a sneak peek for projects in the 2025 fiscal year, including lighting and sound upgrades for the Civic Center Theatre Quarter, Power Park pathway reconstruction and tennis court resurfacing at Rotary and ITC.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Programs & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said the department is in holiday mode. The December holiday edition of Engage is online and will be in mailboxes soon. She showed the commissioners the flyer for the new program, 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge. Every person in the department is working on an event which include an owl prowling, Lunch with Santa, wreath making, night hike, parent / child cornhole and more fun things for all ages. The building will be decorated with a “lodgey” feel and the windows will be painted with a winter scene. The Goddard School and Crandall-Worthington are sponsoring the event.

The concert band has holiday performances on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of December at 2:00. The concerts will take place at the library and Civic Center. The Novi Choralaires have performances on the same dates at the First Presbyterian and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

The annual dance recital will take place on December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Berman Center in West Bloomfield. It is a great location for the number of kids in the dance program. The audience space is perfect for proud parents and grandparents. Volleyball and basketball leagues continue with the winter season beginning right after the holidays on January 8<sup>th</sup>.

Additional programming from the Community Relations team and city administration is Light the Lights on Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at Fountain Walk from 6:00-9:00. Santa will arrive and fireworks will happen at 6:30.

Deputy Director Ringle provided other news that Stella Johnstone accepted the Arts and Events Recreation Supervisor position. She will start December 4<sup>th</sup>. The selection of the Youth Programs and Camp position is wrapping up as well.

The Northwest Park playground is almost finished being installed. The beautiful weather has allowed the contractors to move quickly on the project. It is one of the first natural playgrounds on this side of the state. In the spring there will be restoration and a grand opening.

C. Older Adult Division – OAS Manager Kit Kieser

1. Programs and Services

OAS Manager Kit Kieser began by saying there is a lot going on with older adults as well. Sandy Fisher attended the Michigan Association of Senior Centers Conference in Mount Pleasant earlier this month. She enjoyed the opportunity to learn from the successes of other senior centers around the state.

Last week the annual Veteran's Day celebration was held at the Civic Center. A fantastic lunch was provided by Mission Barbeque. 117 veterans and 53 additional folks attended. There were ten generous sponsors that were in attendance. VHW Post 1519 presented the colors and provided the invocation. The entertainment was presented by ABC Sisters, a Rosie the Riveter drill team from the Yankee Air Museum, Dance Collective swing dancers and the Novi High School Chorus. Many generous volunteers including Commissioner Staab gave their time to make the event possible.

A Thanksgiving luncheon for older adults took place today at the Meadowbrook Activity Center. Moe's on Ten provided the food. Motor City Blend Chorus performed fantastic acapella music.

Upcoming events include the Holiday Luncheon on December 7<sup>th</sup>. The Rotary Club is hosting a holiday lunch and program on December 14<sup>th</sup> at the middle school. OAS is doing two programs for the 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge: wreath making and Kathy Crawford speaking about holiday history in Novi. OAS will be hosting the Oakland County Veterans resource fair on December 14<sup>th</sup>. All veterans and their families are welcome. Brain Health 101 will take place on December 15<sup>th</sup> presented by Jewish family Service of Metro Detroit.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

#### Commissioner Tolkacz

Nice job to Chair Joseph. You have big shoes to fill but I think you did very well. I also enjoyed the ITC Trail presentation. It was very well done. I appreciate the challenge with the trail being long and narrow. Thank you, Deputy Director Ringle for the flyer for 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge. A number of these events look interesting, so I plan to check some out. I'll enjoy hearing about Novi holiday history, that is a cool thing. I appreciate the splash pad update from Director Muck. I can't wait to take my grandkids over there when it opens.

#### Commissioner Dooley

Thank you, Commissioner Joseph and Riggins. Thank you for being chair and vice chair. I think you will do a tremendous job. I am very excited to have you sitting in those chairs. I was privileged enough to attend the Wreaths Across Novi event with Director Muck that was sponsored by the Historical Commission. It is nice to recognize the many veterans that made it back to hear their stories of those who were not fortunate to come back. This is done every Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. The City of Novi is very gracious and humble to honor those veterans. The event took place at the cemetery on Novi Road. It was wonderful to hear Kathy Crawford talk about the history of Novi and the cemetery she remembers from her youth. It has been a wonderful cornerstone to remember some of the veterans from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, World War I, World War II, Korean War as well as present day conflicts. There was an opportunity for anyone to place a wreath in honor of that person who died for the freedom of our country. Thank you to the city for holding events like this on Veteran's Day. Thank you for your presentations. Kit, Tracie, and Jeff thank you for your continued leadership and I look forward to the leadership of those two fine individuals in the middle.

#### Commissioner Staab

I want to congratulate Ryan and Salene on their first meeting . A good presentation on the ITC Corridor. I imagine how difficult it was to put together.

I wanted to add to what Commissioner Dooley said regarding the wreath program on Veteran's Day and one last plug for the program a week ago on the 9<sup>th</sup> with the festivities and great program.

There is a lot going on with the park updates, art, and new programs. I am looking forward to the 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge and the older adult programs too as we go into the new year.

I want to reinforce that the next meeting is December 21<sup>st</sup> and put it on the calendar. I want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Student Representative DiDomenico

Some good events were going on and I thought many looked pretty cool. The Veteran's Day luncheon seemed like a great idea.

Commissioner Riggins

There are going to be some big shoes to fill but this was a great meeting. Thank you for the updates. I am excited for the new programs that are coming this winter. Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Joseph

Chase is not here but I have been noticing the numbers for the youth activities as they continue to impress me. The numbers year over year show outstanding growth. I do not know how we facilitate all these individuals playing. Great job from the entire state perspective on the recreation side.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Riggins and seconded by Commissioner Staab

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Joseph at 7:47p.m.

DATE APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ryan Joseph, Chairperson

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Salene Riggins, Vice Chairperson