

NOVI-PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2008 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Notice: Minutes are abbreviated due to malfunction of recording device.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM with Commissioner Schwarzlose presiding.

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Present), Iszler (Present) Policicchio (Present), Radcliffe (Present), Schwarzlose (Present), Staab (Present), Wingfield (Present), Bharadwaj (Absent), Venigalla (Absent), .

WELCOME OF COMMISSIONER – Elizabeth Iszler:

Commissioner Schwarzlose welcomed new Commissioner, Elizabeth Iszler, stating that the Commission is glad to have her and looking forward to her new ideas and input. He encouraged her involvement.

Commissioner Iszler stated that she is looking forward to the opportunity of using her knowledge as a landscape architect in her own community.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of June 12, 2008 meeting minutes was tabled.

Superintendent Cowan stated that Director Auler is coming from another meeting and will be joining the meeting soon.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. ADMINISTRATION – Randy Auler, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry

Director Auler stated that he has some exciting news about something that has been discussed over the past few years. He stated that the only objective on the 2003-2008 Recreation Plan that has not been accomplished to date is the acquisition of 80 to 100 acres of recreation land to meet the needs of the community both now and in the future. With him this evening are City Manager, Clay Pierson and Community Relations Manager, Sheryl Walsh. They just attended the School Board Meeting and had an opportunity to present a proposal which they would like to share with the Commission.

The City of Novi and the Novi School District have had a long relationship which has been excellent in terms of partnerships. We have had many collaborative opportunities and all of them have delivered excellent benefits for the citizens. Examples of these include the expansion of the High School, shared facilities, a shared resource officer, Novi Youth Assistance, and we pride ourselves on sharing information with citizens through the schools and city sources to keep the citizens informed.

The 2003-2008 Recreation Plan identified a need for acquisition of 80 to 100 acres of land to be able to meet the citizens' Parks and Recreation need for now and the future. National standards were utilized to determine that value as well as our existing usage numbers in terms of our programs and facilities. We share facilities with the school district and those are nearing capacity. It is very difficult to get gym space, practice field space or program space. We utilized the Older Adults Strategic Plan that the Commission adopted within the last year. Some of the key numbers from that plan were the "Boomer" and senior population which are continuing to grow. Statistics show that we are expected to experience a 269% increase in that population in the next 14 years. That will have a tremendous effect on the types of facilities and programs to meet the needs of that population.

We worked to evaluate all of the possibilities out there both publicly and privately owned. City Council Committee will continue discussion with school board with potential acquisition of land for Signature Park. Staff will keep Commission updated on progress.

1. Overview of FY 07/08 Balanced Scorecard and the FY 08/09 priorities – Staff presented an overview of scoreboard and exceeded our targeted outcome for fiscal year 2007-2008.
2. Novi Parks Foundation – Golf Outing will be held on August 7, 2008.
3. Update on Fuerst Property Plans – The demolition of the barns are complete. Contract has been issued on demolition of house and the 2 remaining barns are under contract for removal. Staff are preparing RFP for final design and construction documents for Phase I of Fuerst Park.
4. Appointment of Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission Vice-chairperson - Jay Dooley was appointed Vice-Chairperson.

B. RECREATION SERVICES – Nancy Cowan, Superintendent of Recreation

1. Overview of Community Recreation Plan Process and discussion of means to obtain citizen input.

Superintendent Cowan stated that Director Auler is coming from another meeting and will be joining the meeting soon. She stated that she will give an update on some of the programs. There are several new camps this session and are very successful. Some of the more popular camps are the Theatre camps and the new Lego camps. We tried to get more sessions of the Lego camps but they were booked for the rest of the summer. Camp Lakeshore is one of the favorites and is licensed by the State. We do still have some spots available in all of our camps. There is something for everyone. We even have a circus camp coming up.

Superintendent Cowan stated that in the Commission packet there is a detailed memorandum discussing the Community Recreation Plan and all of the components of the plan. The Community Recreation Plan is a five year plan that

will serve as a roadmap for our department, now and in the future, for park open spaces, facilities, recreation and programming, operations, management and fiscal responsibility of the department. We have a current five year plan which is expiring toward the end of this year. That is why we are updating and doing some new things with this plan at this time. The plan is also a requirement for us to apply for State of Michigan and Federal grants. It is a key aspect of what we do. We constantly reference our Community Recreation Plan to look at our goals and to use in planning. The development of the plan will be a team effort and will be done in house. We will ask the Commissioners to be a part of that plan in an advocacy and advisory role. A very large part of the plan is citizen involvement and feedback to look at what they want from Parks and Recreation and where they see us five or ten years and the services they would like to see so that when we are developing this plan and look at our strategies and develop budgets that we are keeping all of those things in mind. We are here to serve our citizens. What she would like to get from this meeting is the Commission's thoughts on the public input process. We do not have a set budget for this plan but we have a lot of resources for gathering input.

Commissioner Schwarzlose asked what the time line is on the plan.

Superintendent Cowan replied that we have an internal time line and would like to complete the plan by the end of November so that we can complete it by the end of the year and get it off to the State for their review. However, we could ask for an extension if we needed to go further in depth.

Commissioner Policicchio stated that he didn't know what our capabilities are as far as staff resources. To him, the most comprehensive way to get input from the breadth of Novi would be to speak to the Subdivisions. Subdivisions cover all of the population in one form or another. Most of the subdivisions have a homeowners association with some sort of regular meeting or a publication and some leadership. He suggested that those Commissioners who wanted to could go to a gathering sponsored by each subdivision and give and gather information. This could also serve as a basis for establishing a constituency.

Superintendent Cowan stated that is an excellent idea. We have the listing of all of the subdivisions. Cindy Uglow works closely with those groups. We are currently doing some education on some older adult service which we offer. Rachel Zagaroli has been attending quite a few of those homeowner's association meetings just to gather awareness. We could send Commissioners with surveys to hand out to garner information.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if we have contact people for each of these subdivisions, like association presidents.

Superintendent Cowan stated that we do. For many of them we have their e-mail addresses.

Commissioner Policicchio stated that the department would need to provide talking sheets, points or even an agenda for the Commissioners who would go speak.

Commissioner Iszler stated that if you have a public meeting you should have a lot of prep work which is having things like posters of a lot of different ideas. There is also the dot game where you give everyone dots for indicating what they like. In Grand Rapids a group developed a Trivial Pursuit game to make the process fun the questions on the cards is how people answered the survey. If people don't have time or can't come to a meeting there is always the internet option.

Commissioner Dooley stated that at the ITC Community Sports Park event there was a willing audience in attendance. There were families there for soccer, softball and baseball. Bringing them to us would be a very good venue for gathering answers to our questions.

Commissioner Radcliffe stated that it has to be a multi faceted approach because different people respond to different ways of communicating. It needs to be done several different ways.

Commissioner Staab stated that a blending of all of these ideas would be great. "Fall for Novi" is coming up in September and would be a perfect venue for soliciting information. The sessions held like for the Fuerst Farm seemed to bring out a lot of people. His concern with the subdivision meetings is that some subdivisions only meet once or twice a year.

Commissioner Schwarzlose suggested using the e-mail addresses for the subdivision leadership for leveraging the group surveys.

Commissioner Dooley suggested getting on the agenda on the merged Chamber of Commerce for a presentation. He then asked Superintendent Cowan, of the six methods listed in the packet to solicit public input is there one that is more favorable.

Superintendent Cowan stated that similar to what has been discussed tonight, the department favors a multi-faceted approach. One of the next steps is the kind of questions we want to ask and what we want to target through the surveys.

Commissioner Dooley stated that as part of the success stories of various cities in the packet reflected the cohesiveness and close discussions between the Parks and Recreations and the School Boards. Is that something we have entertained?

Superintendent Cowan replied that would be an important aspect since the schools serve a lot of youth and we do the same.

Commissioner Radcliffe stated that she sees that the guidelines have been updated as of 2006. Have you noticed any major difference in the approach in doing it since last time?

Superintendent Cowan stated that she was not here for the last process and she has not compared the guidelines. She does know that some of the sections have been refined in that they do not need as much background and statistical

information and are looking for a little more detail from communities on that strategic input and demographics and are focusing on that area a little more.

C. PARK OPERATIONS – Matt Wiktorowski, Superintendent of Parks

1. Overview of Capital Investment Program and planning process.

Superintendent Wiktorowski provided an overview of the planning process of the Capital Investment Program.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Zyczynski. The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Schwarzlose at 8:58 PM.

APPROVED:

Signed, Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson
