

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

Thursday, January 12, 2012 – 7:00 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:26 pm with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Present), Jewell (Absent), Policicchio (Present), Staab (Present), Tecklenburg (Present), Torimoto (Present), Wingfield (Present), Kerbrat (Absent), Kodali (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Wingfield and seconded by Commissioner Tecklenburg to approve the agenda as written.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Approval of the December 8, 2011 minutes.
It was moved by Commissioner Tecklenburg and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield to approve the minutes as written.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi - Commissioners Policicchio & Torimoto
Commissioner Torimoto stated the topic of today's meeting was the trail system, specifically using the Walkable Novi Committee with the DNR to connect the trails in Novi to the regional trails. It was positive in terms of momentum. Funding doesn't seem like it is going to be an issue so it is more an issue of putting together a plan, timeline and scope of responsibility.
Commissioner Policicchio confirmed Commissioner Torimoto's statements.
- B. Novi Parks Foundation - Commissioners Staab and Tecklenburg
Commissioner Staab stated in the January 10th meeting the following action was taken, the second interviews for Executive Director are to be conducted by either Board Member Linda Blair and Catherine Cardenas or Board Member Blair and Kim Capello. The second item was that the Golf Outing for 2012 will be on the second of August again at the Links of Novi. The next item was the review of bylaws and policies next month. The final number for the 2011 Golf Outing held this past August was about seventeen thousand dollars. Director Mangum will come to the Foundation Meeting in February with some conceptual discussions on

possible use of Foundation funds for a dog park, disc golf course and other similar items. The Foundation is always looking for additional people, especially someone with a financial background who could assist as being treasurer for the organization.

STAFF REPORTS:

A. Administration Division-Director Jason Mangum

1. Parks/Programs Update – Director Mangum

a. Superintendent of Recreation process

Director Mangum stated the department has gone through the process to hire a new Superintendent of Recreation. A few weeks ago we held an assessment center which was an all-day process. The top seven candidates were brought in. The process took from 8am to 5pm. A candidate was selected to take the position. He is the current Assistant Director at Oak Park. His name is Scott Pratt. He will be here for his first day on the twenty third. His e-mail is now active so if you want to welcome him you can. We believe that he is going to bring a lot to the table.

b. Recreation Supervisor recruitment process

Emily Stevens has accepted a similar position with the City of Lansing. This is a great opportunity for her. Her last day will be tomorrow. We have opened that position and it is currently active and advertised on the City website and the Michigan Recreation and Park Association website.

c. Fall Basketball Season

The fall basketball season just ended with over two hundred and eighty participants. The games were played at Home Court Advantage. It is a basketball facility in Wixom on West Road. The feedback we have received so far is positive. It is convenient because people who have multiple children in the program can come to one facility and don't have to worry about going back and forth between schools. We will continue that partnership for the foreseeable future.

d. Holiday Road Rally

One of the new programs held was the Holiday Road Rally. It was an Emily Stevens program and was very well attended and we got a lot of positive feedback. There was an article written on it in the Novi Patch. There is a summery sheet in the packet.

e. Skate with Santa at Ice Arena

Suburban Sports Group manages the Novi Ice Arena and they do a great job of keeping it in good shape and always looking to do innovative programming. Kris Barnes, the rink manager, submitted a memo which is in the packet.

Commissioner Wingfield asked what the timeframe is for recruitment and interviewing for a Recreation Supervisor.

Director Mangum replied it is as soon as possible. There has been a robust response to that posting.

Commissioner Dooley asked if we have anything going on at Home Court Advantage during the winter.

Director Mangum stated he can respond to that as he goes to current events.

2. Current Events – Director Mangum

a. Winter Basketball/Volleyball Season

Director Mangum stated the winter basketball and volleyball seasons have started. The first games will be on Saturday. We have about three hundred participants so we are up from last season. Our 5th and 6th grade girls volleyball has about sixty girls. We have a lot of new participants from the surrounding cities as well. They will be playing at Home Court Advantage.

b. Soccer/Lacrosse

Director Mangum stated spring soccer and lacrosse registrations are currently being accepted. We are looking to grow the lacrosse program. Soccer is one of our bigger programs and does very well.

c. Music Man Theatre production

Director Mangum stated that "Music Man" is our big musical for the year. They had quite a few audition this past week. They are casting it now and the cast list should be posted by next week.

d. Mystery Trips

Director Mangum stated that this is a new and innovative program. Often parents have to work when kids are out of school so we are trying to provide some services with fun and offering mystery trips where the kids or parents won't know the location of the trip. Our first trip is Friday, January 27th when there is an in service day for teachers. Some parents have called and asked where the trip is going and the programming staff does not tell them but promises it will be safe and fun.

Commissioner Tecklenburg asked if there was a lot of interest in the Mystery Trips.

Director Mangum replied we already have people signed up for the program. He does know where the trip will be but it will be fun. It is in the local vicinity and will be recreation based.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if the department had any discussion with the lacrosse coach of the Novi Schools when putting the program together.

Director Mangum replied that the sports staff had a meeting yesterday with Christian Wilson, the new Athletic Director at the High School. He has met with Mr. Wilson as well and we have a great relationship with the schools. We are always looking for partnerships and ways to better the programs.

Commissioner Policicchio stated the University of Detroit has a Division One program and the University of Michigan has a Division One program. Maybe we could invite those two because they are always looking to recruit in the Midwest and that might help our program.

Director Mangum agreed.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

- A. Discussion and possible action on recommendation of Concept Design for park located at 13 Mile and Old Novi Road (Landings) to City Council – Director Mangum

Director Mangum stated this project is not new. It is a project mostly funded by money from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant. This property has been purchased by the City and has been designated as park land for some time. We are now at the point where we are going to develop this property and put it in to use or activate the property so the citizens of Novi are able to enjoy it. We have talked about some of the goals. We are going to activate it by providing new park design elements. We will provide clear access to the water and enhance the lake shore theme. The draw to this piece of property is the lake. We want it to blend with the neighborhood and provide an attraction for the regional and local community. We want to provide a historical reference because this is probably the most unique part about this property. We want to provide a space where people can gather.

Director Mangum then went over some of the history and previous features on the property.

Director Mangum stated some potential program components are to focus on activities for all ages. He then went over some of the components that had been talked about in previous meetings. He stated there are two major access points to the property. One is Old Novi Road and the other is Thirteen Mile Road. He pointed out the focal points of the park for the primary components of the park. He showed the original plan and the revised plan after the meeting last month. The wetland type native plantings have been moved to the edges of the property on the lake side. It is a buffer to the private property and also provides a habitat area for wildlife. The focal point is the waterfront access, picnic plaza and pier, boardwalk, play area and potential water feature. Some of the changes from the original plan are some of the walkways have been removed and a potential bathhouse or restroom has been added on the west side of the park. On the east side of the park there are two parking areas which are option one and option two. The parking area on the west side of East Lake Drive is option one and the area on the west side of East Lake Drive is option two. Based on the feedback of residents who live in the area of wanting to move the parking to the other property feeling it may be a better use and save the interior of the park for park features. We did keep a small parking lot of about ten spaces, or so, on the west side for accessible parking and parking for families. We kept a lot of features that the people liked. There will not be concrete steps going into the water. There will be native Michigan stones that will create a step down effect.

Director Mangum stated he wanted to break the concept plan down in two phases and showed pictures of potential park amenities. In phase one the main path that goes through the park stays. Phase one is primarily concerned with the waterfront. We want to get all of the concrete pilings and work on the edge since several citizens brought up that there are some

hazards there. Phase one will mostly consist of the waterfront, some parking and walks to get people down to the waterfront. We feel that it is important to do the waterfront in phase one because we want to be efficient and work in the water once and accomplish shoreline restoration. Phase one will include handicapped accessible parking and the pier and peninsula will be a highlight and focus point.

Director Mangum stated in phase two the original path that goes through the park gets straightened out and realigned. The historical icon at Thirteen Mile Road and Old Novi Road gets a little more prominence with a plaza and an opportunity to incorporate some historical aspects of the park. We do not know what the historical icon is going to consist of. We are hoping to work with the Historical Commission to help us craft how we are going to relay the story of the property. Phase two also has the pier that gets people out over the water.

Phase three will be where the parking comes in. They show more trees and planting and a potential picnic plaza where we can construct a structure or shelter of some sort.

Phase four/five or future phases include the water feature, play areas and restroom facilities.

This is how we are planning on proceeding. As funding becomes available some of these phases could be broken in half or parts of phases can be put in to others. Phase one was scaled down with some of the walkways removed. One of the concerns was not enough open space. The open lawn on the west side of the park is about an acre and a half. The other open space is 2.7 acres so these are large open spaces with plenty of room. Director Mangum stated we will have the small parking area on the west side with about ten spaces. On the east side of the park, Commission will make a decision tonight on which parking option to go with.

Commissioner Dooley stated the Commissioners have had a chance to look at the conceptual plan and are going to recommend that in phase three the parking be put on the east side of East Lake Drive so it does not interfere with the sight line and leaves the space for the park.

A citizen stepped forward and commented on the parking.

Commissioner Dooley stated the feedback from the citizens last month was very helpful for the Commission and they took it very seriously.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if the ten parking spots on the west side were all handicapped parking or if there was also some regular parking.

Director Mangum stated it is some handicapped parking and some regular parking but at this time are not sure exactly how it will be designated. We would like to keep some parking open for people who come with small children who might be crossing the road.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if there is a reason that parking lots A and B are such different sizes.

Director Mangum stated at this time we are just illustrating the locations. If we go with option A there will not be as many spaces as if we go with option B. He also stated by the time we get to phase three we will know more about the usage of the park and we will build according to need.

Commissioner Wingfield asked since phase three could be two to five years away if he feels that the ten spaces on the west side of the park will be adequate.

Director Mangum stated the more amenities you put in to the park the more accommodation you have to make for people coming to the park. With phase one having fewer amenities we won't know if the parking is ideal until the park is built. We want to accommodate the people in the area and make sure they are proud of this park and take ownership of it. We are taking their feedback and will move forward with it.

Commissioner Policicchio stated if you develop phase one and there is no parking and you don't get a lot of usage it is going to look like people are not interested in it when, in fact, there is a barrier to get to it. He asked if it was possible to put some gravel down in the proposed parking area so people have a place to park a car.

Director Mangum stated parking at Lakeshore Park would be a viable option since it is not far away. There are limited amenities in phase one and phase two. Right now we are just looking to recommend the concept plan to City Council so they can make their decisions. The property on the east side of East Lake Drive has not been designated to be developed as parkland and that has to come from City Council. We can make a recommendation but the grant application only had the property on the west side of East Lake Drive.

Commissioner Dooley stated that the Commission has decided that phase one, as is, is fine. Children and adults will have access to the lake right away. He feels, as a group, they had no issues with phase two. The big decision will be whether to put the parking on the west or east side of East Lake Drive in phase three. It is clear from the site lines that it will take away from the beauty of the park if the parking is put on the west side. As a Commission we recommend the parking be on the east side of East Lake Drive in phase three.

Director Mangum stated what we are recommending tonight is the concept of the side it would go on because we would like the flexibility to build what we can when we can.

It was moved by Commissioner Policicchio to recommend the current conceptual plan to City Council as presented by Director Mangum. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Staab.

Voice vote

Unanimous

- B. Discussion and possible action on Naming process for park located at 13 Mile and Old Novi Road (Landings) – Director Mangum
Director Mangum stated at the December 19th City Council Meeting Councilperson Wrobel brought up an idea to rename this park. He mentioned that the name Landings was derived from a development that was going on this piece of property and doesn't hold any real significance to the park, City or history of the property. At the January 9th, 2012 City Council meeting a plan was presented to rename this piece of property, which is in the packet. The plan outlines the direction it will go including

having an exercise where we solicit names from the community. Because of the unique nature of this piece of property we have put together a proposal where we would have members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, members of the Historical Commission and some local youth on the Committee that will review the names. Commissioner Wrobel asked that a senior or seniors also be included on the Committee. We would like to have three members of the Parks Commission to either volunteer or be appointed to serve on the park naming committee. For this process we will reach out to the community for new names for this park and take them in to consideration. The committee will narrow it down to the top few choices. City Council will then make the final decision. A motion was made by Commissioner Staab to support the park naming process as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Policicchio.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

Director Mangum stated as part of the process we need three Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commissioners to serve on the naming committee.

Commissioners Staab, Wingfield and Tecklenburg volunteered to be on the naming committee.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if this were the kind of park where we would get a corporate donation to name the park.

Director Mangum replied the Department of Natural Resources discourages the naming of parks after individuals. We can apply for a waiver if someone comes in. What we are looking for is something that illustrates the history or something unique about the park. If a corporation, individual or foundation wants to come in and put their name on it they could do so but it would not change the name of the park but be listed as an addition.

Commissioner Staab asked if a corporation stepped forward and wanted to put their name on it would the money go through the Novi Parks Foundation. Director Mangum stated that the naming rights program is through the Novi Parks Foundation.

Commissioner Staab asked if there is a set dollar amount wanted for the naming rights.

Director Mangum stated the outline for the naming rights is a program through the Novi Parks Foundation.

Commissioner Dooley thanked the Commissioners who volunteered to serve on the Naming Committee.

C. Discussion on recommendation of Handicap Parking at Civic Center – Commissioner Staab

Commissioner Staab stated in the packet is included a recommendation by Director Mangum to City Manager Clay Pearson on maintaining access to seniors and those with disabilities. Handicapped parking will no longer be used for programmable areas during events at the Civic Center. There were problems the night of Light Up the Night. We will not be able to use the front parking area for programmable events. Commissioner Staab's concern is

that this space is the main venue for the Memorial Day Parade. The stage and events are there. He asked if this would apply because the reason it is there is that the Memorial marker is actually there.

Director Mangum stated when we need to do something like Memorial Day; our goal is not to use accessible parking as programmable space without replacing it. What we are hoping to do is invest in temporary signage and set up temporary equivalent handicapped parking at an event site where they may need it. There are some times when we have events here where there are a greater number of seniors or people who need accessible parking. A good example would be the Senior Show. We have both participants and members of the audience who may need accessible parking. This is something we are working on now. It will be an added service at times when we have high usage by seniors or people with disabilities using the Civic Center to make that parking available for them.

- D. Discussion and possible action on recommendation of changing meeting days from second Thursday of each month to the third Thursday of each month – Director Mangum

Director Mangum stated we are going through the Parks and Recreation accreditation process. One of the things we try to do in our department is to have each member of our staff serve or be a liaison on a service organization or a youth service organization that we partner with or work with. Examples of these would be Rotary Club or Boys and Girls Club. One of these we feel is important to maintain contact and a relationship with is the Boy Scouts of America. They have their monthly coordination meeting for this area on the second Thursday of the month. This is something he is involved in personally by volunteering and giving back to the community. He would like to attend both meetings each month. He asked if the Commissioners had any objections to moving the Commission meetings on a regular basis from the second Thursday of the month to the third Thursday of the month.

There was discussion about coordinating Walkable Novi Committee meetings which are held every other month.

Commissioner Wingfield made a motion that starting February 16, 2012, that the Novi Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Commission meetings be moved to the third Thursday of every month starting at 7pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tecklenburg.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Randy Flagg stated that he would like to have a flag pole at the monument in the new park.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Student Representative Kodali stated the new park will attract a lot of attention by teenagers who will go there to study and for the free Wi-Fi. It is a good idea.

Commissioner Torimoto stated he is excited about the Landings property. He likes the different phases and being able to “tweak” as we go. The biggest concerns he heard was the parking and the traffic.

During the holidays he went to the Holiday Skate three times. His daughter learned how to skate. It was crowded but very well run. There were a lot of out of town people which points to the fact we have the facilities and put together good events. There are also many out of town people who participate in our basketball and volleyball.

Commissioner Wingfield stated he is very pleased with compromises that have been made in the different concepts and phases of Landings Park. He took some leisure time during the holidays and parked at Lakeshore Park and then walked through the Landings Park. It is not as big as people think it is. It is a beautiful piece of property and he is happy where we are going with it by keeping it passive. He noticed there were quite a few people there because of the nice weather. Some of them had parked along the road. It was nice weather so some people were sitting on the ground down along the lake. He thinks it is a good idea to make sure that there are plenty of benches.

Commissioner Tecklenburg stated he is happy with the park recommendation. He thinks it is a good process and good that we were able to make compromises and to bring in and recognize the concerns of the citizens.

Commissioner Staab stated he agrees with the statements of both Commissioner Wingfield and Commissioner Tecklenburg. Commissioner Staab showed a picture of his new grandson. He was born this past Tuesday to two ex-Novu residents and graduates of Novi High School. Mother and son are doing well.

Commissioner Policicchio thanked his colleagues on the Commission for the support they have given him in the past few months, particularly Commissioner Dooley for keeping him “in the loop”. Novi has always had a reputation for being a premier community in location, amenities, quality of life and schools. He thinks the Landings Park, along with Furest Park and Lakeshore Park and its amenities, if all of the connections take place, will draw people who walk, hike and bike and will be like a major pedestrian intersection. This will enhance the property values and quality of life. He commended Director Mangum for taking leadership in his short tenure in this process.

Commissioner Dooley stated he echoes the statements of all of the other Commissioners. He complimented Director Mangum on his presentation. He encouraged the citizens to continue coming to the meetings and to continue to express their opinions and voice their concerns. He thanked them for their feedback because it helps the Commission make decisions.

Commissioner Dooley stated there is a public relations firm in Novi called Shazaam. Right now they are conducting a one million dollar pro bono services give away to celebrate their tenth anniversary in business. There are one hundred and two organizations nationally that have been accepted as a nominated organization that you can vote for. The top ten vote winners will each get one hundred thousand dollars in pro bono services. It can be used for any kind of fundraising because they are 501 c3 organizations or non-profit organizations. There are four Novi organizations that are available for your vote. He asked the citizens to go online and support the four Novi organizations.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Policicchio and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:15pm.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Paul Policicchio, Vice Chairperson