

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, Dec. 15, 2016 – 7 P.M.

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. with Commissioner Bauss presiding.

ROLL CALL: Staab (Present), Bauss (Present), Dooley (Absent), Jewell (Present), Pratt (Absent), Thomopoulos (Present), Torimoto (Present), Student Representative Wei (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved that the agenda be approved as amended by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

Committee report items D1, D3, D6, D7, D9 will be tabled to the January 2017 meeting.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Approval of Sept. 15, 2016 minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for September be approved as amended by Commissioner Thomopoulos and seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Thomopoulos & Bauss
Commissioner Thomopoulos said they met in September to set 2016-17 prioritization, but is not yet posted online.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioner Torimoto & Jewell
Commissioner Torimoto said they met in mid-November to catch up on Foundation’s status regarding budget, marketing content, website functions for donors and updating bylaws. Villa Barr Art Park event scheduled for fall was canceled due to low enrollment. Pour on the Shore will be 7/28/17. ITC Holdings presented a \$50,000 check as part of their annual commitment to the Parks Foundation on Dec. 5.
- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Pratt & Dooley
Director Muck said the Michigan Natural Trust Fund announced their recommendations, which included the acquisition of the property at Nine Mile and Garfield. Will include 12.5-acres to become a ITC Regional Trailhead Park site with some parking and potentially a rest area, bike repair station, etc. We applied for the grant in 2015 and didn’t get this funding then, but did this year as MNTF recommended all of the grants. Recommendations typically approved in January or February by State Legislature before acquisition process begins with land owner for likely August-October 2017 acquisition and development in future years.
- D. Parks Updates
 - 1. ~~Lakeshore Park – Commissioner Dooley~~
 - 2. Meadowbrook Commons – Commissioner Bauss

Commissioner Bauss said he arrived earlier today as a crowd was arriving for a holiday party. He was stunned by the holiday festiveness. The grounds were well taken care of. Wondered where the employees park. OAS Manager, Karen Kapchonick confirmed employees do not park in main/visitor lots. The pathway to the exercise pad was cleared. No winter vandalism there. Met with Tom Gordon & he seemed well liked by the residents there. Was impressed by the buzz of activity in the Center.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if there were any major challenges in maintaining the facility. Manager Kapchonick said the biggest challenges were managing different resident personalities and the overall grounds and maintenance issues due to the size of the Meadowbrook Commons community. About 80 individuals are on the waiting list to move in.

Commissioner Stabb said he sees a lot of residents using the nearby neighborhood sidewalks and pathways around Meadowbrook.

~~3. Novi Ice Arena (Nov.) – Commissioner Torimoto~~

4. Brookfarm Park (Nov.) – Commissioner Thomopoulos

Commissioner Thomopoulos said she visited in November before the snow. The sidewalks and bridge look new or recently refurbished. Trees looked healthy. Said she parked at Village Oaks Elementary, but there's no sidewalk from their parking lot to the park except alongside the school building. Said for Walkable Novi she may want to look into adding a path along the street. Said there was a path that used to go through the wooded area. Commissioner Bauss said it had been cleared as part of an Eagle Scout project. Thomopoulos said she walked back there and noticed an old wicker love seat and a lot of trash in the back of the old pathway. Said residents missed having full, cleared access and thought it'd be nice to clean up again. All in all, very well maintained. Soccer goals were already pushed off to the sides.

Bauss said the children in the Willowbrook Estates Sub to the west of the park need to take a bus up to 10 Mile to get to Village Oaks because there is not direct access through the park. Bauss said the park used to feature tennis courts and a hilly space used to be turned into an outdoor ice rink. Said parking is one of the biggest issues. Discussed referring this to the Walkable Novi committee.

5. Ella Mae Power Park (Oct.) – Commissioner Staab

Commissioner Staab he visited on Oct. 15. He said there was still some summer construction wrapping up with small projects beginning when he visited. Director Muck said they had been improved to alleviate trip hazard and draining issue. Staab said the playground seemed well maintained. Said he received a lot of great comments on how the field conditions were. A fundraiser tournament was going on and canopies over the player dugout areas were appreciated.

Commissioner Torimoto he walked his dog all the way back to the trees a few months ago and commented on how well landscaped such a large area is.

Staab said there was once an exercise course back in the woods south of the playground about 35 years ago.

~~6. ITC Community Sports Park (Oct.) – Commissioner Pratt~~

~~7. Novi Dog Park (Sept.) – Commissioner Pratt~~

8. Wildlife Woods Park (Sept.) – Commissioner Torimoto

Commissioner Torimoto said he had to look up the exact boundaries of the park because he wasn't as familiar with the north end of the park. The fields on the south side are well maintained and he said he's helped with soccer tryouts there

before. Didn't see any garbage on the park property. Said water damage is understandable, but noticed some tire marks. Said he walked along the path to the back and noticed a lacrosse net and softball fields, with the picnic shelter in between. Said the garbage and bathrooms were clean and ready for use. Asked about the tennis court ownership. Director Muck said the six northern courts are owned by Novi Community School District, whereas the southern six courts are owned by the City. NCSD maintains all 12. Torimoto said the courts are packed on a Saturday morning; suggested adding more courts in the City. Noted there are no lights at these courts.

Commissioner Bauss said he'd be interested to see if there's a property agreement in writing with NCSD.

Commissioner Staab asked about Novi Bobcats football use. Muck said Novi Youth Baseball uses the diamonds and the middle school lacrosse programs use the space. Muck said northwest area is not used that much due to drainage issues and any storage items can be removed.

~~9. Villa Barr Art Park (Aug.) — Commissioner Jewell~~

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

- A. Presentation and Discussion on CAPRA Accreditation
Director Muck said five staff members attended the National Recreation and Park Association national conference in October. The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) panel commented on how they were impressed with how it was a department-wide effort spread between multiple individuals and also how the online organization of displaying information could become a standard model for how other organizations should submit in the future. Received accreditation to become one of four in Michigan and one of 150 in the country. Have updated our letterhead, email signatures, created a YouTube video and "History of Excellence" awards page at cityofnovi.org. Already moving forward with preparing for renewal in five years, having updates at team meetings each month.
- B. Presentation and Discussion on City Forestry by Tiffany Giacobazzi
Forester Tiffany Giacobazzi said there's been a lot of change since she's come on. In the past two years, forestry and facilities were separated from being under the same umbrella to give the parks the attention they deserve. Said she's from Traverse City and graduated from Michigan Technological University. Worked in Indiana and moved back to Michigan for her fiancé Adam's job, got married and are now expecting their first child in May. Her responsibilities now are to maintain the City's tree assets. Works with Matt Turco about how to mix tree maintenance into City maintenance schedule. Neighborhoods are on a five-year schedule, but park trees weren't previously on a routine maintenance schedule and were instead handled as issues occurred. Said plans will be done as needed by the City's landscape architect and she's responsible for making sure the trees go in the ground where they need to. Over the past six year, there has been about 2,600 tree and shrubs planted, including those mentioned at Brookfarm. In the past, there was no set schedule, so the main goal is to get the parks on a schedule with tree needs and tree hazards that may arise. Commissioner Thomopolous asked when the park schedule may be available. Giacobazzi said she's working with Turco to determine parks with the highest need and expects to start with Fuerst Park in July at the start of the 2017-18 fiscal

year. Subdivision pruning schedule is online. Expects the park schedule to also be online. If it's not a maintained area, it'd be considered a woodland to be left as is, per ordinance. If there is a trail, then that would be maintained.

Director Muck said he, Giacobazzi and Turco has been a great collaboration since all have been in their roles less than two years. Also discussing mowing schedules and invasive species.

Giacobazzi said parks maintenance is going to snowblow the trail at Rotary Park to assist with the buckthorn removal. They will be using a woodchipper and spreading the chips to stabilize trail. This is the second phase of efforts to reduce spread of invasive species like buckthorn at Rotary Park.

C. Parks Foundation Committee Appointments

Director Muck said this is for the Commission to determine who will serve on the Parks Foundation committee.

Commissioner Staab they have meetings, but not office hours. The Parks Foundation organizes Pour on the Shore, which raised \$16,000 in 2016.

Commissioners Thomopoulos said this is left over from the September meeting. She and Commissioner Bauss are on Walkable Novi, while Commissioners Pratt & Dooley are on the Grants Committee.

Commissioner Torimoto said he'd be interested to serve on the Novi Park Foundation again if no one else was interested. Thought the commissioners were supposed to rotate between committees each year.

Commissioner Jewell said he'd like to step down due to his work travel commitments.

Director Muck said Commissioner Staab serves as a member of the Foundation so there would be two Commission representatives on the Board.

Motioned by Thomopolous, seconded by Jewell, to appoint Torimoto.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Project Updates

Director Muck said some potential projects after the CIP passed last August could include ITC Community Sports Park renovations regarding drainage and soccer field reconfiguration, Lakeshore Park reconfiguration and facility with more information coming out in January or February, ITC Trail potentially the completion on the Nine-to-10 Mile segment now that we have the ITC Trailhead Park and another round of renovations at Power Park that includes the bleachers and spectators' seating. We'll be hosting another national tournament in 2018; a girls fast-pitch tournament. More information after Council goes through January goal setting and as we proceed through the budget process and Council approval.

2. Villa Barr Art Park Update

Director Muck said in fall 2016 the estate of David Barr said they had completed closure of the Estate and the remaining 20 or so outdoor sculptures and other items have been donated back to the City for use at the property. A Friends of Villa Barr group was formed and has met twice so far; last week and once in September. Group is made of representatives from Michigan Legacy Art Park, The Denno's Museum, Novi Parks Foundation, Mayor Pro Tem Staudt and friends and family members of David Barr. Has started up significant discussion on future of Villa Barr property. First, we want to get the park open and usable for the public in some fashion. The leading idea is to install a small parking lot with a

turnaround for buses and a crushed aggregate pathway for accessibility to the art further back in the property. Can compare it to Fuerst Park in that walking fashion. There is still ongoing discussion about an artist in residency program there; which Michigan Legacy Art Park is leading the discussion on right now. Commissioner Thomopolous liked the idea of the wine tasting that was proposed in the fall; but the timing is tough for families. Would like to see it rescheduled. Muck said one of the challenges is the Napier Road paving schedule for 2017 and may restrict programming at Villa Barr. Commissioner Bauss said he thought having an artist-in-residence program would be really cool to go see someone sculpting or welding and learn about it. It could really evolve into a destination. Muck said the scope of these programs is limitless.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said 12/2 was Light Up the Night and it was our largest ever. It was the second year doing fireworks, so word of mouth and public outreach to neighboring communities helped spread the word. Had lots of smiling faces and great feedback, but do have some areas we'll aim to improve. The event was led by Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller. Last weekend, Spiller led our Breakfast with Santa sold out event 12/10. Rotary Club helped out with making pancakes, serving them, cleaning up, etc. An inter-generational holiday craft event had 16 participants at the MAC from ages 13-82. Recreation Supervisor Amelia Purdy-Ketchum oversaw that. She also oversees our Choralaires and Concert Band. Concert Band had to cancel this past weekend due to snow, but rescheduled for 2 p.m. 1/8 at the Civic Center. Choralaires also had to reschedule one event, now set for 1/8 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Farmington. Coming up, the Engage! magazine should've arrived in mailboxes this week. Shelter reservations open up 8 a.m. 1/10 for all of 2017. We are working to bring back a full-scale theater production, starting with Alice in Wonderland Jr. Auditions are 1/21. Purdy-Ketchum will be our liaison with that. We'll also be updating our stage during the upcoming holiday weeks. Daddy Daughter Dance will be 2/3-2/4 for three dances; Friday night, Saturday afternoon, Saturday night. Those sell out, so register early. Theme will be Alice in Wonderland. Youth floor hockey runs February-March. Greg Morris and Chase Root are also working on Camp Arctic Adventure mid-winter break camp 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Spring soccer registration is now open through 2/28. Will have a midyear review at the next meeting.

C. Older Adults – Older Adult Services Manager Karen Kapchonick

1. Program & Services

Manager Kapchonick said fall was very successful with special events and classes. Should receive Novi Today in the next two weeks with the eight-page Enhance newsletter from OAS. Had our Christmas celebration today with 128 participants and a variety of volunteers. New transportation software will be rolled out 1/8 with live staff training and go live 1/12 with residents. We anticipate being able to service a lot more residents than we were able to in the past. On 12/31 we'll have a special New Year's party 11 a.m., toast at noon and wrap up at 2 p.m. so they can go to their own parties.

Commissioner Thomopolous asked if we've received any feedback from frequent users about the upcoming changes yet. Kapchonik said no feedback yet, but a letter listing the changes was sent out to all current riders. We just made a few changes to what they're used to. Previously 10 rides within City was 430. Will now be \$30 for 12 rides inside the City or seven rides outside the City via two different punch cards. New opportunities like online reservations will be promoted more in the future. All rides must be requested two days in advance. PSA will be recorded for Novi 6, YouTube and City site.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Thomopolous said congratulations on accreditation. Didn't realize how it had been approached uniquely compared to other parks departments. It's a great honor to have that accreditation and visibility. Had a chance to go on ITC Corridor back in September when the weather was nice and said it was an awesome walk. Finding the start from ITC park was a challenge. The dedication of the Pavilion Shore Park pavilion is nice and the new furniture is nice. Will find folks there reminiscing. It's a conversation starter as you walk your dog by. Congrats to the parks staff for the outstanding achievement there.

Student Rep Wei said the park inspection comments are very useful for the future of improving the parks. I and the community are really happy and really appreciate all the detail being looked at and improving the parks. Congratulation on the CAPRA accreditation. It's well deserved since our parks are always clean and well maintained. I'm excited for the future of Novi parks and recreation.

Commissioner Jewell said congratulations on the CAPRA accreditation and kudos to everybody who took part in that. Parks look great and everything is going well. I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Commissioner Torimoto said congratulations on the CAPRA certification. Just the process of standardization and efficiency gains through electronic documents – whether private or public industry – is really the core of being able to achieve a lot more effectively. I learned a lot tonight. Having a broad look at the perspectives people look at the park inspections is good. The tree forestry was very interesting and informative. We used to contribute to Friends of the Novi theater, so it's interesting to hear about the theater program. We bought a dog and have been taking the dog around the parks for walks. We notice things we hadn't noticed before.

Commissioner Staab said he wanted to reinforce the park inspection programs are more meaningful than what we had before. Issues of enhancement and accomplishment are great. Congratulations to you and your staff on CAPRA accreditation as one of four in the state and one of 155 in the country of 10,000. Keep fine tuning to make sure we're ready to roll again in five years. It's nice to see the diversification beyond sports, with Villa Barr and getting that usable in the next year. And with the programs with Concert Band, Choralaires and theater program, the diversity takes our parks and rec above others with things for everybody.

Commissioner Bauss said it must feel great to be part of an organization that has so much going on and has a lot of wins this past year. Congratulations to a great organization. You've accomplished much this year. Moving forward and seeing all the things that are coming, it must be a great place to work. We didn't just tread water, we pushed things forward. Kudos to you and your staff. It makes a great impact on all of our lives. Happy holidays to you, merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Stabb and seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Staab at 8:31 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Doug Bauss, Chairperson

Jay Dooley, Vice Chairperson