

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, April 19, 2018 – 7 P.M.

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. with Commissioner Thomopoulos presiding.

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Absent), Thomopoulos (Present), Jewell (Present), Muzzin (Present), Pratt (Absent), Staab (Present), Torimoto (Absent), Student Representatives Joohe Lee (Absent), Alice Wou (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Approval of March 15, 2018 minutes.

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Thomopoulos
Commissioner Thomopoulos said Commissioner Muzzin attended for the first time tonight. Received approval for prioritization of 2018 segments, so that will be finalized and published. Will next go through the budgeting process with Council, which began yesterday and should go through mid-May. Will be for \$1.5 million total for segments in the 2018-19 fiscal year. It was about \$1 million in 2017-18. Of the \$1.5 million, \$500,000 is earmarked for the boardwalks over wetlands that need repair.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Staab said there was a meeting 3/26 and Executive Director Rachel Zagaroli gave an update on Pour on the Shore. Could always use more sponsorships. There will be food trucks with food for the event on 7/27 at Pavilion Shore Park. Julie Garavaglia is a new board member. She's the community affairs representative at ITC Holdings.
Director Muck said tickets for Pour on the Shore go on sale 5/7 and there is a link on the Novi website. Some changes were also made to the layout at noviparksfoundation.org to make it more user friendly and include minutes from meetings.
Commissioner Thomopoulos asked whether tickets are going on sale earlier than past years? Director Muck said it's about the same.
- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Pratt
Director Muck said the DNR notified us everything is in order for us to receive the reimbursement for ITC Trailhead Park, so we'll be receiving the match funds back for that shortly. The other grants have been submitted for the Tim Pope play

structure and the shoreline restoration at both Lakeshore Park and Pavilion Shore Park. Chris Jackett and Muck have had to make a couple modifications to those already. During the summer, there will be a supplemental period where we may submit additional information. Another Grants Committee meeting is scheduled for May.

D. Parks Updates

1. Brookfarm Park – Commissioner Muzzin

Commissioner Muzzin said she reviewed the park 4/1. Located just north of Village Oaks Elementary School, connected by a bridge. It was clean and in great repair. The pathways and the benches were great. The soccer field was up. It looked as if there were trees removed and along the ravine. Almost all debris was picked up. There was some slight litter near the wooded area. She asked whether there was or could be a partnership with Village Oaks to take on keeping that clean? Deputy Director Ringle said they just secured a Cub Scout Troup to take that on. Muzzin said the trash collection bins empty and clean. Lots of people walking pets and cleaning up after themselves. Was impressed by the scanning technology. Asked whether there was a way to track how many people visit the Web page. Ringle said there should be. Muzzin said the soccer field was dry considering all the rain and the nets were in great repair.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. CARES Clean-Up Days by Wendy DuVall, Community Outreach & Events Specialist

Director Muck introduced Specialist DuVall.

Specialist DuVall said the CARES Days started in 2013. Before that there was River and Arbor Days and they felt there was a need to expand. CARES stands for cemetery, Arbor Day, River Day, Earth Day and shredding, which was added later on. Adding the extra days made a difference with participation and the number of projects completed. It really shows through, especially at Rotary Park where volunteers and parks maintenance clears invasive species so new native plants can grow through. The first CARES Day is this Saturday at MSU Tollgate Farm. On 4/28, the 26th year of Arbor Day events will be celebrated at Rotary Park. On 5/5, they'll participate in the Friends of the Rouge event – which has also been around for more than 20 years – at Rotary Park. All of these events will be planting trees and pollinators, and removing invasive plants, trash and weeding in the rain gardens. All events will take place 9-11 a.m. and hopefully all of you will be there.

Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if there was still more invasive species at Rotary Park after so much was cleared out last year? Specialist DuVall said there was more, including larger trees that someone needed to be hired to remove, that volunteers couldn't do. DuVall, Landscape Architect Rick Meader and Forester Tiffany Giacobazzi all walked through there and the time from last year to this year it's amazing how much more is coming through with natural plants now that they're not being choked out of the sunlight by invasive species. Commissioner Thomopoulos said she didn't know if there were statistics to show how many people were meeting watchers vs. minute readers, but maybe the goal could be to do this one meeting sooner so the minutes would get published before some of the events have passed. She's seen it on the website, but they might also look for it in the minutes. Commissioner Jewell said it's in the Engage! book. DuVall said it's on Facebook and Twitter.

B. Winter Maintenance Update by Jeff Muck

Director Muck said Park Maintenance Superintendent Matt Turco provided a winter parks maintenance update and Muck felt it was important commissioners and the residents to see it. They take care of the fields at ITC so they're ready for spring. Commissioner Pratt had pointed out a large depression in one of the fields, so they took care of that after the season ended. They work on irrigation and lines on the baseball fields on all six of the diamonds out there. This allows them to water down the infields and keep the dust under control during the summer months. Our Power Park is known as one of the premier facilities in the state for hosting tournaments. This continues to reinvest in it and take it up a notch. Our parks maintenance team is heavily involved in special events. They helped set up the new holiday tree at Light Up the Night. It's multiple pieces with the frame of the tree there. We received a lot of compliments on the tree and Light Up the Night, so thanks to them for setting that up and taking it down. They were helping out with invasive species removal when the ground is frozen. They also do tree pruning, such as around Tim Pope playground. When it gets really cold, they move inside and start doing routine maintenance to all of the equipment; the Gators, the painters they use to mark the fields. Coming out of winter, they come out early to wrap up any projects before field setup. It's been a difficult spring with the delay of spring, but they're setting up parking blocks in the parking lots, repairing picnic tables that are warping, can replacements and more. This past week, City of Novi hosted a certified playground safety inspector training put on by the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association. It's a national association program and we had more than 80 people from around the state of Michigan here taking that class. Turco and another of our parks maintenance staff are taking that class. They have a detailed test tomorrow that's not easy. It'll be nice to have them certified on our sites so they can look at fall zones, the depth of the playground surfacing and it'll be a real benefit for the City of Novi. Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if this could be published with the minutes. Said it's helpful to get the crews visibility.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck said we're in a holding pattern with some of the major projects due to the weather. The ITC Trail from Nine Mile to 11 Mile segment is anticipated to begin in July. We're still in discussions with ITC Holdings Corporation about some of the exact routes along the corridor, but anticipate that starting in July or August at the latest. Bosco property is the property on the corner of 11 Mile and Beck. It's the former proposed Signature Park property. Mayor Pro Tem Dave Staudt has been pushing the City and school district to reopen discussions about using that property. Specifically, to have that developed into green space to have it used for soccer fields, cricket pitches and baseball/softball diamonds for use by the City. If we are able to reach agreement with the school district to develop that property, we would be able to get that property up and running and move games and practices over from ITC Community Sports Park over to that property while we renovate ITC. It's a very good prospect. The school board has had some discussions about this and there are some contract talks going on. More will be coming out, but nothing to the extent of Signature Park. Mainly just green space.

Commissioner Muzzin asked if this was east or west of Beck and, if west, would it back up against the ITC Trail? Director Muck said it's on the west side and would back up to the trail.

Director Muck said it's a very positive development and would really help the City with future renovations at ITC CSP. The Novi water tower property, Muck has been working on cost estimates. Working to get it stripped down and repainted. Commissioner Thomopoulos said she didn't recognize that as a budget line item in the CIP. Director Muck said it's not currently and would have to be added as a budget amendment. Thomopoulos asked whether it would include a splash pad? Muck said that would come in another year or two years. They're looking at it in steps of the tower, the site, then the amenities on the site. Going in a phase approach.

Director Muck said Lakeshore Park is being worked on at the drawing board so they can come back with a plan that recognizes some of the comments made by citizens. We're close and hope to have more info soon. Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if there was a new timeline yet? Muck said we hope to have something to Council in the next month. At last night's City budget discussions, Council did mention multiple times they wanted to get that final reiteration of the design done and moving forward.

Commissioner Thomopoulos asked whether we're still looking at growing ITC Community Sports Park? Director Muck said the potential expansion got into some negotiations and discussions with the property owner, but were unable to reach an agreement about what was appropriate regarding the cost of that property. Thomopoulos said that's sad and does that mean that property is still in limbo? Muck said it is, but it could always come back. The price just wasn't where it made sense. Thomopoulos said you have to be prudent with taxpayer dollars.

2. Lakeshore Park Prescribed Burn

Director Muck said, in 2017, the City contracted PlantWise LLC to do a controlled burn in the southern area of Lakeshore Park along West Park Road and West Park Drive near the water treatment plant. We wanted to make sure we were able to notify about you the plan for this year. The burn is made to control a very dense population of phragmites in the area. It knocks back the invasive vegetation while stimulating native plants. This creates a better habitat for animals that use these sites. The burn is conducted in a way to minimize impact to animals. The contractor does a slower moving backing fire that allows animals to move to their safety zones like their burrows or water. They're very cognizant of that when they conduct these burns. Since we've done these burns last year, we've seen the density and amount of phragmites coverage decrease in those areas. We've contracted with PlantWise to do another set of burns. They're doing a smaller area this year. Burns are done with approval of Novi Fire Department. Burn units have full fire compression equipment on hand at all times. Because the burns are so weather dependent, notice can only be given 1-2 days ahead of time. Days are coordinated so the smoke will go up in the air, with a slight breeze so it'll go up over the wooded portion of Lakeshore Park before it gets to the populated areas. Postcards will be sent to the populated areas shown on the map and offer a phone call notification the day of the burn for those with health concerns. That way they can move to another location during the burn itself. Novi will use its social media to communicate the schedule of the burn to the public. On the day of the burn, traffic will be temporarily rerouted on West Road

near the water treatment plant so they can do the burn along the drive. The sidewalk along West Park Road will also be closed off during the burn and a PlantWise staff member will be patrolling the road in case there are any decreases in visibility. Controlled burns are part of our efforts to fight invasive species in Novi parks. It includes the removal of buckthorn and other invasives at Rotary Park. We're about a month or two out, depending on climate conditions. Showed a video from last year when Muck and Deputy Director Tracie Ringle walked out there. What looks like wheat is actually the phragmites. Some of the flames get rather high as these go, but it's a great way to treat invasive species. Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if it would be OK if we sent out notes to homeowner associations? Director Muck said Community Relations will be reaching out to HOAs and are active on NextDoor, as well. Thomopoulos said that should mitigate some of the concerns. Last year, signs started at South Lake and Old Novi Road, but you didn't know where the burn was. Muck said it's becoming a real common practice and Kensington Metropark just posted a video of it. Thomopoulos said there's a lot of phragmites around Shawood Lake.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said a lot with Villa Barr had been talked about at the last meeting as far as the artist-in-residency and advertising for that in the art world and through different City channels. Applications are due 4/30. She anticipates having an update on application numbers after a meeting tomorrow and will have an update on that at the next Commission meeting and they'll look to start in October. As far as developing Villa Barr, internal projects that have been happening include changing windows, painting next week, carpet and flooring restoration, and wrapping up sometime in May. The construction documents are being prepared to go out for bid and we anticipate getting those back sometime in May, being awarded in June and construction beginning in July and wrapping up in mid-September. That is the pathways to view the art and acreage, as well as the bus loop and parking. When we have information on the grant opening sometime in fall, we'll have that information to share far and wide. We do have a person associated with the Michigan Legacy Art Park who will be staying at the house for a few weeks this summer to get an idea of what is needed for an artist in residence regarding the workspace and tools there. We're getting progress and are excited to share it. It's been alluded to multiple times the weather. Our soccer leagues start Saturday and we anticipate that being able to start that after some stoppages with the weather. Chase Root and Greg Morris have had to make some unpopular decisions, but they're due to safety of the players and longevity of the fields. ITC CSP remains closed this evening. We'll look at the weather tomorrow again and then Saturday/Sunday for games. We've had to limit our practices to Brookfarm and then Novi Meadows and Novi Woods. Wildlife Woods and ITC have been a little bit slower to get prepared. Same with our baseball fields. Our parks maintenance team has been out at the fields trying to get them prepared and we do have a tournament at Ella Mae Power Park this weekend. We're anticipating we'll have good conditions and the weather will hold as forecasted so we can open up those diamonds. It's unfortunately one of those things you get with a Michigan spring in trying to get the seasons off the ground. A production of "Honk Jr." is based on Hans Christian Anderson's "The Ugly Duckling" story, so we have two

casts of children who will be performing 5/3-5/6. Tickets are available at cityofnovi.org or in person. It's our third show with our production company and we continue to be impressed with what our young actors and actresses have been able to do in their short time. It's a wonderful program to build self-confidence, bring kids together and all the great things recreation does. Lastly, is a project we as a department did some revisiting with this winter and early spring: our sponsorship catalog. We've had the sponsorship catalog for a number of years as a concept as far as being able to work with community sponsors to be comprehensive, look at how our sponsorship opportunities relate to each other and hit them in the right budget cycle. We've kind of gone to this catalog format and had success with it. Last year alone we brought in more than \$50,000 in monetary sponsorships and that's not to mention in-kind, as well. We do appreciate those because they allow us to save on costs. Sponsorship is a way to offset costs both monetarily and if a business is willing to bring things in to an event. We're also going to have a sponsorship Web page at cityofnovi.org. We want to meet with sponsors face to face, but sometimes that's not always possible, and sometimes they're not aware of it. It's a department effort for sponsorship and does a great job with that. Everybody plays a role with that and it allows us to continue to offer the programs we do and provide some exposure to businesses when the audiences match.

Commissioner Muzzin asked if the catalog was an internal document or one someone can access from the public? Deputy Director Ringle said she met with a marketing person with a local business yesterday and had it in hand to discuss and they can take it away. If we know a business has a target audience or maybe a tax preparer who wants to hit their marketing goals in January and February, we can target and customize based on who we're meeting with. If anyone on Commission wants a copy or to share with a lead, let Ringle know.

Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if there's been any feedback from parents of children in Theatre who were in Theatre previously with the old production company as far as how they view the productions now? Deputy Director Ringle said we do have returners. She can't speak to their opinions, but having returners is a good sign. They participate in all three shows and there's a good number of people who do. We do solicit feedback and make adjustments, like do we have a Thursday show; we'll see after this next one and adjust for the fall show.

Coming back is a good sign. Thomopoulos agreed.

Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if there was a policy for dogs at Villa Barr Art Park? Deputy Director Ringle said there isn't specifically. All of our parks allow dogs on a 6-foot leash, per general ordinance. If we find there's problems, we can address that individually by park.

Commissioner Muzzin asked if there was an internal document with who you're speaking with so there's not cannibalism within the department? Deputy Director Ringle said there is a shared folder and we ask anyone reaching out to view the folders first. The nice thing about the layout of our office is we can talk a lot about sponsorship. It's also more than one person going together. It makes conversation more free flowing. If a person is interested in multiple things, all of the supervisors may meet with that business.

- C. Older Adults – Older Adult Services Manager Karen Kapchonick
 - 1. Program & Services

Manager Kapchonick said there were recently transportation town hall meetings to find out their needs and wishes. Using that feedback, a survey was developed and is being sent out. With those town hall meetings, individuals voted on five areas of interest. Of those five areas, one was increase marketing and awareness of senior transportation services. They also talked about having more rides on Saturday. We currently only have one driver Saturdays, so we'd want an expansion there and during the week. To change the border. Currently, we stay within a 10-mile radius that takes us outside the Novi community. When we go outside the Novi community, there's an additional charge. There's a charge for within the Novi area and going just outside the Novi area. One area that came into question is if we could just be charged the Novi rate for the Eight Mile and Haggerty Meijer in Northville. Another was to have designated shopping days. For example, a certain day to Busch's or maybe Twelve Oaks. We asked them to rate their preferences and sent those out yesterday, so we expect to have updates in the next two weeks. Within one day, we've had 11 responses and the top two would be to extend weekday service and to expand the border to include Eight Mile and Haggerty at the Novi rate. It'll be a directive for us to go in and we hope more individuals will give us feedback. We did receive a letter from one individual that did receive the survey who was very complimentary of what we were doing. He was unable to attend the town hall meetings, but he used the service when he had surgery and didn't realize how important our service is. We know other individuals who can drive, but because they've undergone surgery, do use our services. We primarily look at 50 and up, but because they've had surgery, they can use the service. Without all of our volunteers and our special events, we could not host many of our programs. April is the month of volunteers, so the City had an appreciation dinner for all of the volunteers. Those that attended were very appreciative of it. It was a hoedown theme, so they got out dancing and had their pictures done. We applaud all of our volunteers, no matter which area they're in. We had a Euchre tournament recently with 51 individuals participate and 13 different communities. We reached out to other senior centers and invited them to come. We continue to reach out like we do with our Senior Socialites group. Our Travel Fair was today with 53 attending and 21 new trips. Upcoming is the Novi Derby. The Kentucky Derby is always the first Saturday in May and we do our own derby the Thursday prior. We have our participants guess who will win and set up betting lanes. Then we have volunteers who throw the dice to determine how far they'll go. We have little prizes for the winner on that. A new event we're having on Monday, 5/7, is the Fox Run Men's Choir coming to do a performance for residents at Meadowbrook Commons. We're doing a free trip to the DIA (Detroit Institute of Arts) on Thursday, 5/17. That's a very popular event. Representatives from the DIA will provide the bus, which can take about 60 individuals. They can call our office to sign up. And then the community event is the Memorial Day activities. It's just around the corner Monday, 5/28, with an 8 a.m. 5k run, 10 a.m. parade and is followed by the memorial service. Information is on the City website and we encourage everyone to participate and attend the parade along 10 Mile. Residents, participants and our veterans will go from Karim Drive to the Civic Center. On Monday, we're going to host a Safety Awareness Day for everyone over at Meadowbrook Commons. It's going to be important to show what to do in case of fire, severe weather or a power outage. We're fortunate to say the main generator has been delivered and we're working with DTE to have that

hooked up so the apartments will be powered in case of a power outage. Another area we're looking at is the File of Life. We encourage all residents to have the File of Life and to put that on their refrigerator. We also have three fire drills per year. We feel it's better for everybody. We're also doing a video for people to watch each year as they sign their lease. With exercise and fitness, our spring session just started. We have had a fitness enhancement project doing on as part of the Fuerst sisters' donation. That will include a fitness closet in the fitness studio so we can keep the equipment. The goal is to provide the equipment so we get more individual sign-ups. They're got the weights, their mats, the bands and we have steps, too. Now we can enlarge the class offerings we have. 5/5 is National Pilates Day. We have an instructor who wants to promote that, so we have an event over at Meadowbrook Commons starting at 11 a.m.; an adult mat class and then 12:30 p.m. a family mat class. It's all free. She's giving her time to promote pilates and show them the benefits of pilates. Anyone can contact us or show up at Meadowbrook Commons. Commissioner Thomopoulos asked if we're advertising Pilates Day. Manager Kapchonick said we are. Thomopoulos said it's amazing how soon 5/5 will be. Commissioner Staab said it'll also be Cinco de Mayo.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Jewell said thanks for everything. He realizes the challenges with weather. Thanks to Manager Kapchonick for the extensive report. Asked when the next Euchre was? Kapchonick said it'll be next April, but there will be Pinnacle in the fall. Jewell said he will be out of town for the next meeting due to business.

Commissioner Muzzin said she had no comments.

Commissioner Staab said the Choralaires concert is 5/12 here at the Novi Civic Center. Tickets can be purchased at the Parks office and online. Will talk to Deputy Director Ringle about a minor change to the minutes. Is anxiously awaiting the warm days on a consistent basis. Thanks for all you do. He appreciates it.

Representative Wou asked if the Memorial Day run, is it for older adults or do teenagers and kids do it? Manager Kapchonick said it's a community event from as young as you want to as old as you got them. It's a great event and last year we had a little shy of 700. Proceeds go to the Parks Foundation.

Commissioner Thomopoulos said thanks for the updates and thanks to Commissioner Muzzin for her first Brookfarm Park update.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Thomopoulos at 7:57 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Shelley Thomopoulos, Vice Chairperson