

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, September 17th, 2026 – 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), Bagley (present), Dooley (present), Gopalakrishnan (present), Riggins (present), Staab (present), Torimoto (present)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved that the minutes for the August 20th meeting be approved by Commissioner Dooley and second by Commissioner Bagley.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

PRESENTATIONS

A.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Novi Parks Foundation – Commissioners Riggins, Staab & Torimoto

Commissioner Torimoto said at the last Commission meeting he reported on the August meeting. The September meeting is later this month on the 30th. There is no report tonight.

B. Active Mobility Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Gopalakrishnan

Commissioner Gopalakrishnan explained the next meeting is in October and there are no further updates at this time.

C. Programs and Services Update- Commissioner Riggins

Commissioner Riggins introduced her topic of Ella Mae Power Park as more than just a ball field, it is a community and softball destination. The person behind the programs is Erin Junge, Recreation Supervisor for sports. She started working for Novi in January. She brings an extensive resume including five years of parks and recreation experience, a bachelor's degree in sports management from Ohio University, and a master's in recreation and sports science. She is a certified park and recreation professional awarded by the National Recreation Park Association since 2021. Some of her recent accomplishments are introducing softball crossover games to extend competition opportunities, launching a girl's first and second grade basketball program, and exploring boys' volleyball.

Ella Mae Power Park is a wonderful park. It has 45.1 acres of land with six softball diamonds. Softball leagues and tournaments take place at the facility. Commissioner

Riggins had an amazing time watching four games while she was there. There is an inclusive playground, trails, paths, concession stand and all sorts of fun. The adult softball leagues had 209 teams this year. Everyone loves softball in Novi! The seasons consisted of sixty-six teams in the spring and fall with seventy-seven in the summer. Softball is for every generation with a 55+ league on Tuesday mornings. A picture of the senior league was highlighted. This provides the older generation fitness, friendship, and competition. Field rentals are available on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Commissioner Riggins showed some pictures and a video to capture all Ella Mae Power Park has to offer. It is where the sports community and competition come together, athletes come to compete, families gather, children play, visitors are welcome and our community benefits.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project & Initiative Updates

Director Muck stated we are still in construction season. The Bosco ITC Trail Connector project is nearing completion. The pathway was being paved today, then restoration, followed by installing signage to direct people. It should be finished in the next two weeks.

Starting this fall a water systems improvement will begin in the southwest area of the city. This need was identified in the 2020 Water Master Plan to improve water flow and fire protection in this area of Novi. It includes installing a looped water main connection consisting of 15,000 feet of fourteen-inch-high density piping and twelve-inch ductile iron water main along portions of Eight Mile, Napier and Beck. This will include a segment through ITC Sports Park. It will be installed by horizontal directional drilling. A benefit is providing public access to the park facilities. Irrigation will continue through the well system. City water will run to the maintenance facility, concession stand and pavilion.

This also brings city water to Villa Barr. It is anticipated to start in November. ITC park may be closed at times during the construction this fall / winter.

Director Muck stated that several members of the team will be attending the National Recreation and Park Association conference in Philadelphia the week of September 28th. We will receive the official notification of our CAPRA accreditation, which will be at the "Best of the Best" ceremony. We appreciate that the city gives us the opportunity to attend the conference. 7000 parks and recreation professionals and vendors attend from around the country. The exhibit hall is massive with displays of software systems, playground equipment and amenities. The event is very educational. A full report will be provided at the next meeting.

E-bikes have been in the news. City Council Ordinance Committee is set for discussion on October 5th. Director Muck will be attending. Tuesday, September 23rd we are hosting a mParks Directors meeting that will include a session called Wheels in Motion 2.0 from e-bikes to Emoto discussion to action. Parks and recreation staff from around the city and state have been having conversations about the issue. The state association is going to share what has been learned through member feedback, research and work with a lobbying firm. Andy Rohrer the Executive Director of Michigan Bicyclists, has been at the forefront of a lot of information trying to make sure people understand the differences between e-bikes and E-motos. He will provide an overview and Michigan's current legal landscape. It appears that at least one bill is potentially moving through the state legislature which would address impacts to age groups and licensing.

Director Muck concluded his report with the upcoming CIP millage vote in November. The city is hosting three information sessions. Details can be found in the Engage magazine or city website. September 24th 6:00 at the Civic Center, October 6th 6:00 at Lakeshore Park and October 10th 10: 00a.m at the library. Residents will learn about the millage from city officials. What has been done with the tax dollars in the past and the future if it passes. There were additional questions and comments from the Commissioners.

B. Recreation Division – Recreation Supervisor Erin Junge

Recreation Supervisor Erin Junge delivered the report for the Recreation Division. The splash pad closed recently. There were 20,447 visitors this summer which were counted per hour. This was up 39% from 2025.

Registration is open for a Halloween themed parent child Nerf Night on October 23rd.

Brunch with Santa and winter break camp are also open for registration.

Diwali is coming up on November 5th. There will be more restaurants this year, in addition to dance performances, vendors, henna and more. A large crowd is expected.

Brian Feriby, a metal sculptor, will begin his residency at Villa Barr on September 28th.

To date there has been forty-three applicants for residencies in 2027. The selection committee will chose six, three to stay in the house and three local artists. The committee includes a member of WSU faculty, a Cultural Arts Board member, a Detroit gallery owner, and Jenneva from the PRCS office. The chosen artists will be notified by the end of the month. Some of those not chosen will be invited to display in the Civic Center Atrium Gallery. Thanks to a generous donation from Roger Garrett, a member of the Friends of Villa Barr, there will be a new piece of public art on display in Novi starting this fall. Communication Tangle, a large metal sculpture by Michigan artist and Wayne State professor Eric Trofkin will be installed on the large pad in front of the Villa Barr Art Park. This piece comes to Novi through a partnership with the Moross Greenway and was selected with input from the Cultural Arts Board. It is on loan for two years.

All dance classes are underway including Bollywood, hula, Japanese hip hop, tap, ballet and more. The fall theatre show, Matilda will take place December 4th – 6th. Cast invitations were sent to 132 actors for the two casts. The show featuring the younger kids is Olympus the Greek Rock Musical. It will take place in November with twenty-three kindergarten – 3rd graders.

Recreation Supervisor Junge continued with sports. Soccer games started last weekend. Dooley Dog Day is October 3rd. There are 964 players between Tiny Tykes, Thunder and Lightning teams. Fall softball is happening now. Adult three on three basketball is underway. Fall basketball and volleyball registration is closed and rosters are being created. The leagues start the week of October 12th. There are 295 basketball players. Volleyball has forty-nine participants which were split differently to balance out the numbers. It will be third - fifth grades and sixth – eighth grade instead of three separate leagues.

Commissioner Dooley asked Erin to provide more details on her background.

Recreation Supervisor Junge explained she started her career in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio which was a park district. When she relocated to Michigan, she worked in the city of Portland which was a department of two. She was involved in everything in her prior positions. Coming to Novi gave her an opportunity to focus on sports. She said working here has been an adjustment due to the scale of population. She can tell the community cares. It is a good place to work and create experiences for people.

C. Older Adult Division – OAS Manager Kit Keiser

1. Programs and Services

OAS Manager Kit Keiser started her report with the upcoming social services programs. Medicare Open Enrollment runs from October 15th – December 7th. This year OAS is hosting regional My Options open enrollment events on October 19th and November 23rd at the Civic Center in collaboration with Age Ways. They are not in the Engage magazine. There is also a presentation by our counselors Brian Rakoff and Randy Nunez. One-on-one appointments are also available, including those eligible for part D. Medicare will be a hot topic over the next several months.

Bingocize is back and is surprisingly a popular program. Registration is still open. It will run from October 5th through November 30th. OAS will be hosting a vaccination clinic provided by Kroger Pharmacy on October 7th at the Civic Center. It is a drop-in program from 1:00-2:30.

The yearly Perennial Exchange is Saturday September 19th from 9:00-11:00. Typically, it is at Fuerst Park but due to the weather it is being moved inside the atrium of the Civic Center. Community members are encouraged to bring their native overgrown plants and flowers to share. Oakland County Parks will give away native plants and seeds. Captain Theisen will give a short presentation on the importance of pollinators, and the Beautification Commission will be on site. September 30th the city's former landscape architect, Rick Meader will lead a garden design class at the Civic Center. October 28th a new program called Plant and Pour Bingo will take place at Lakeshore Park. Participants can bring their own beverages and play ten rounds of bingo for a chance to bring home some new houseplants.

OAS Manager Keiser explained another new program called Unsolved Michigan happening October 1st. Award winning true crime podcaster Nina Innsted will talk about unsolved cases in Michigan including some in local neighborhoods.

The travel program continues to increase in participation. There was a 15% increase in the past fiscal year. The next travel fair will be October 6th at 1:30 at Meadowbrook Activity Center. Recreation Supervisors from across our divisions have been teaming up to bring a new fall event to the city called the Great Fall Bash. It is a family dance, encouraging participants of all generations to join us for dancing, crafts, costume contest, pumpkin painting contest and fall treats. It will be held on October 10th from 6:00-9:00 at the Civic Center. October 20th the Novi Choralaires will be returning to Meadowbrook Activity center with their fall celebration. Participants will enjoy cider and donuts while listening to the performance.

OAS Manager Keiser thanked all who came out to Meadowbrook this afternoon to celebrate the 25th anniversary. There were brief remarks, but everyone stayed for a long time mingling and enjoying refreshments. There was positive feedback that it was a great time plus much appreciation for the city officials who attended.

There was a refresh in the public areas of Meadowbrook Commons with new flooring, paint, furniture, artwork and lighting added to the lobby area. It has given the facility a much-needed refresh. The library space was swapped with another room for communal television viewing. The resident response has been fantastic. The designer, who is an older adult, did a fantastic job.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Bagley

Even though it was a short meeting it was very efficient with a lot of information shared. Commissioner Riggins did a fantastic presentation which I really enjoyed.

I love to hear the news about the splash pad with the 39% increase. It is a testament to how important those gathering spaces are for families.

I loved all the efforts that are going towards Medicaid and Medicare right now right now. It is important to get that information out for older adults.

I am very interested in following the e-bike and Emoto news also on the county level.

Commissioner Gopalakrishnan

Thank you, Commissioner Riggins, for the park update. Even though the park is close and I go often I didn't know much about it until today. Thank you for the great information.

Thank you, Director Muck, for the updates. Looking forward to your trip and the report after. I think it will be a fun event.

Thank you for the e-bike update. I did notice legislation was introduced in the Michigan Senate by a Republican Senator. That will have an effect on what we do here.

I am looking forward to the Bosco Trail opening because I walk there every day and keep watching the progress

I am planning on attending the CIP millage event to learn more information so I can pass it along to get as many votes as possible. We really want it to pass.

Thank you for the Recreation Division updates Erin. I knew the splash pad was going to be a big hit. The numbers are tremendous. It is one of the gems that we have.

It's cool that the new Villa Barr resident is starting. I still have it on my list to visit and see the upgrades.

Thank you, Kit, for your updates. True Crime will be a fun one to see. The Meadowbrook Commons 25th anniversary is awesome. I will plan on stopping there next week to see the upgrades you talked about. It is another gem in Novi.

Thank you for all the updates. It was a fast meeting with a lot of great information in a short amount of time.

Commissioner Dooley

The previous comments were very astute and smart the only thing I can add is that the first weekend in October the city atrium will come alive for the Miss Amazing fundraiser. It will be a gala that anybody can attend. Tickets can be purchased that evening. Miss Amazing is a nonprofit organization. It is a special needs pageant for young girls through adulthood. The city is very generous allowing the Miss Amazing gala here. It is a fun night. Every single penny raised goes to the candidates. If you are not doing anything that evening stop by and watch the magic.

Commissioner Riggins

There is not much else to add but I did attend the 25th anniversary at Meadowbrook Commons tonight. It was very nice. Listening and talking to the long-time residents was awesome. They like the updates and love living there. It was a fun event, and I was happy to be there.

It was wonderful to hear about the 20,000 people at the splash pad this year.

Everybody loves a good splash pad, and it is right in Novi!

Lastly don't forget to go to Dooley Dog Day.

Commissioner Torimoto

Thank you, Commissioner Riggins, for your presentation. I liked how you showcased people and teams using the park so we could get a sense of how much fun they were having. It made it real.

Thank you for the Bosco Trail update. I am excited about it since I walk my dog there and I am in the neighborhood. Neighborhood connectors are interesting with subdivisions and the city parks. We will see how this affects the splash pad with kids being able to walk.

I was bummed; I was late from work and arriving to the 25th anniversary at Meadowbrook Commons. I lived in Meadowbrook Glens twenty-five years ago. It used to be a baseball field that was not used much so it was converted to Meadowbrook Commons. Ginny took me around the building. It was spotless, clean and well

organized. They really care for the building. The residents really enjoy being there. Thank you for giving me a tour. It was just fantastic.
Nice job managing that and everything else presented today.

Commissioner Staab

Thank you, Jeff, for the construction updates. I look forward to the paving and city water at ITC.

I was able to attend the 25th anniversary celebration at Meadowbrook Commons. It was a grand affair at a beautiful facility. It is well maintained. The new paint and furniture really brightens it up. I got to talk to a couple of folks that are happy to live there plus the camaraderie. It is a great partnership between the city and the property manager. They are really invested and do a good job. There is always activity on the pickleball courts. Meadowbrook Commons is a hub of activity and gem for the city because many other cities don't have the ability to offer housing.

Thank you and welcome to Novi, Erin.

Great job Salene on your presentation. I will ship my pictures to you to help with my PowerPoint.

These numbers are just mind boggling with the splash pad, volleyball and soccer. It shows how vibrant the activities are and how people embrace the good offerings from PRCS.

I wish the staff going to Philadelphia for NPRA congratulations on recertification of CPRA and a joyful trip.

Commissioner Joseph

What can be said that hasn't been already said. Erin, thank you for joining us this evening. It is important to remind everyone that the CIP millage is not an increase, just a renewal.

Great meeting. Thank you everyone for the updates and participation as always.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Gopalakrishnan and seconded by Commissioner Riggins.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Joseph at 7:42p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Joseph, Chairperson

Dooley, Vice Chairperson