

PARKS, RECREATION AND FORESTRY COMMISSION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2008 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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

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

WELCOME: New Commissioner Derek Blair
Commissioner Dooley welcomed Mr. Blair and invited him to tell about himself.
Commissioner Blair stated that he is excited about helping the community.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Policicchio to approve the agenda.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved by Commissioner Policicchio and seconded by Commissioner Staab to approve the October 9, 2008 Commission meeting minutes.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Policicchio & Iszler – Commissioner Policicchio discusses the difficulty one would have getting from the north of the freeway to the south of the freeway by foot or bike and also accessing Grand River Avenue.
- B. Park Foundation – Commissioner Dooley – Nothing at this time.

STAFF REPORTS:

- A. Communications & Resource Development Supervisor – Tracie Ringle
Fuerst Park Project Update
Tracie Ringle begins with an update on the Fuerst Park Project. At the previous meeting the Commission heard public comments and then moved to take the plan forward to City Council. The public comment was utilized in the decision to remove the fire pit from the conceptual plan. The plan was taken to the Council for a review of budget and phasing options for elements within the park. At Monday's City Council meeting, different phasing options were presented that would allow the incorporation of more elements that would create a more complete park. Council approved three phases, Phase I, Phase IA, and Phase IB, which will be moved forward for completion concurrently in July 2009. By moving forward concurrently with these phases, some costs will be reduced. The elements

completed in July will be the amphitheatre, including its lighting and landscaping, Township Hall, and Township Hall air conditioning and restrooms. The circle walk, internal pathways, and their landscaping will also be included as well as fieldstone walls and about 45 new trees added to the existing orchard. Phase II and Phase III are future phases for the park and would include the sculptures, additional wildflower plantings, and the incorporation of different community groups in plantings that utilize the barn foundation.

Director Randy Auler adds that at Monday's meeting, Council appropriated an additional \$305,000 toward the development of that project, following up on a commitment they made at the time of the budget discussion last year. Tracie Ringle would also like to add in regards to Engage!, which was well received by the community, that the final details are being worked out for the January through April 2009 addition. Publications are anticipated to be received the week of December 8th and registration for those programs will begin December 15th and will also be able to be viewed online beginning December 1st.

B. Superintendent of Parks – Matt Wiktorowski

2008/2009 Capital Investment Project (CIP) Update

Matt Wiktorowski begins by drawing attention to the supplement that was handed out in addition to the packets which outlines a couple of the projects in particular, Power Park Phase II Lighting Project and Power Park Phase III. He discusses the Civic Center lighting and Police Department lighting projects that are concurrently running. There will be 32 new structures throughout the complex with marketing capabilities as they will have arms extending from the pole base for the placement of banners and the ability to power Christmas and other special event lighting. The supplement demonstrates images of the two types of lighting structures that will be used. The Police Station is anticipated to be completed on Monday. The poles for the sport field lighting fixtures will be twelve feet deep and surrounded by approximately 48 inches of concrete in circumference. There was also an IDS consultant ensuring quality and proper coverage and placement. Several photos of this project are also included in the supplement. November 26th is the anticipated completion date for this project. Several distributors have moved up their shipping dates in order to meet with the requirements and Detroit Edison just received their easement paperwork for the transformer and they have a six week lead time. This means that the poles will be up and completed but will not be energized for approximately six weeks. Power Park Phase III is the concession facility which is anticipated to begin construction in December and be completed by May 1st. The concept plans are given in one of the supplements. Concurrent to this project will be the Grinder Lift Station, a \$35,000 project to benefit the facility and Orchard Ridge subdivision. The Facility Update at Lakeshore Park is still in the process of researching shelter and maintenance facility options so completion dates are regrettably unavailable at this time. Another topic he wishes to discuss this evening is that, as Liaison to the Beautification Commission, he wants to make the Commission aware that the Beautification Commission was recently honored with a Distinguished Service Award for the bio-swale that was implemented at Rotary Park. This is the second year in a row that the Beautification Commission has received such an award and he is very proud of them.

Commissioner Policicchio asks a question regarding if there are any plans for benches or outdoor tables around the concession stand. Mr. Wiktorowski states that outdoor tables were not incorporated into the plan as their funds will come from the Park Maintenance funds and later. He would like to elaborate that the overall thought process is to soften the area with some trees and shrubs as well, specifically looking to move away from the present urban hardscaping.

Commissioner Dooley adds that this seems to be an opportunity for local businesses to take part in the naming rights. He would also like to inquire if there are any banners currently planned for the new lighting structures regarding the holiday season.

Mr. Wiktorowski states that work is currently being done in collaboration with the marketing team members, specifically Tracie Ringle, on some ideas that could be used.

Commissioner Dooley would also like to ask about the ability of the sport field light poles to remain stationary in the event of severe weather and also about the light spill and whether or not it will pose a disturbance to neighborhoods.

Mr. Wiktorowski states that the movement of the poles is very unlikely and also that the light spill will focus on the fields and stay that way, which will be a vast improvement from the current lighting in the complex.

C. Superintendent of Recreation – Nancy Cowan

Upcoming Facility Reservation process

Superintendent Cowan would like to update the Commission on Policy Process that she has been working on. There has been discussion before about the class registration system that is used for all of our registration processes. It also does have a facility module process that they have been working to update and put into place. They have been currently utilizing an Excel form type of system to reserve rooms in the Civic Center, Meadowbrook Commons, and at the fields for all athletics. This facility reservation process that they have will allow them to computerize that system basically and she anticipates that that will be completed and live by January 2nd. It will provide them with tremendous benefits, linking the sports modules to the facility modules and making it accessible to people in the office as well as individuals in the field that take care of those items. It will also allow for different tracking reports, including financial. It may not impact residents largely but will definitely make a difference internally.

Kresge Foundation Grant Award

Superintendent Cowan also informs the Commission that the Kresge Arts Foundation grant was secured by the Novi Theatres. It was applied for in July and on October 20th we found out that Novi will be a recipient of that grant for the next two years, July 2008-10. It is a \$24,000 grant, \$12,000 each year and goes towards general operations of theatre and is not earmarked for any specific area or program within the theatre.

Upcoming Events

The soccer and flag football program is pictured in the packet and had a great fall season overall. The second annual Storybook Stroll was also hosted at Lakeshore Park and even though it was a bit chilly, many people still came and took part. Some upcoming events include the theatre production of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" which will take place December 12th through 14th. Ringing in the Holidays will also take place December 5th and will be from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm in the Main and Market Street area. Additionally all community groups are welcome to enter a float into the float contest as well.

Commissioner Dooley inquires as to whether Novi Parks will procure a float this year.

Nancy Cowan informs him that they do intend to do so.

Commissioner Policicchio asks about what kind of reach out is being done to the community and businesses regarding participation and floats.

Nancy Cowan states that it was included in the Engage! brochure, a tri-fold pamphlet that was mailed directly to many restaurants and neighborhood community groups that invited them to attend and participate. Individuals from last year were also invited and the information is also available on the website.

Tracie Ringle adds that they were also able to partner with the Chamber of Commerce and the information was also included in one of their database emails as well.

Commissioner Dooley inquires as to whether there is any kind of budget for some type of entertainment such as singing, etc. that would be similar to what was done last year.

Nancy Cowan states that there is a general budget for this program, in which entertainment is included. Work is already taking place with some community based groups to try to highlight some of our recreation programs with our Youth Choir, which is new this year and will be singing from "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe", while the cast members will be out doing some small scenes from their production. The Performing Arts Academy will also attend and perform some dances, etc.

D. Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry - Randy Auler

Director Auler notes the removal of all of the trees that were located in the island areas and they have since been re-landscaped with new trees. The reason for the removal was that the trees that were planted suffered from girdling root and would have died eventually. The trees were removed and the new landscaping was performed all by our staff. In response to inquiry as to why taxes are being used for this project while in recessed economic times, he states that the funds being used are not tax dollars. The project was financed by the Tree Fund which is a non-tax source. He would also like to update the Commission on the anticipation of having in January a rough draft of a couple of sections of the Community Recreation Plan for discussion and also an update on the Strategic Plan.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. Approval of FY 2009/2010 Capital Investment Program recommendations

Randy Auler states as a refresher, staff is required to submit, from a staff perspective, Capital Investment budget that outlines our Capital needs of \$25,000 or more for the next six years. Traditionally, this is brought to the Commission for review and discussion. It is then asked that the Commission approve a recommendation that goes along with staff submittal. This will then go through the process over the next several months at the administrative level and ultimately end up in a budget document that is delivered to City Council in late March/late April. Council will deliberate on the budget in April and will approve the budget in April or early May. This is for the FY 2009/2010 and begins in July 1st 2009 and ends June 30th, 2010. There are two items that the staff will be recommending and will ask the Commission to recommend. These are the ITC Sports Park Irrigation Pumphouse Renovation, which is essentially upgrading the pumps and other electrical components associated with that, and continuing with the renovation of park entryway signs. He states that he does anticipate a potential reduction in revenue in regards to the park millage rate, property tax, etc. He states that they have happily received Council support in terms of

recent Capital Investment over the past several years and have been able to make significant improvements for the community within the parks systems. He believes that these two items are good requests for next year.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if there were any plans to put swings in the Power Park play area or if that several years down the road. Some of the parents in his subdivision who have children would like to see some swings there.

Director Auler stated that is something that can be evaluated as part of the structure update at the time. The design for that structure would have to be looked at because safety requirements associated with swing sets have space requirements. The current play structure does not have a lot of space available. But if other funds were made available it is certainly something we could look at in the fiscal year with a donation or other sources.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if the price quoted for the Tim Pope Memorial Play structure renovation is for the structure to be completely removed and completely replaced.

Director Auler stated an assessment of the playstructure was done last year and components of the playstructure have been taken out of operation to try and extend its lifespan. At some time it will need to be replaced.

Commissioner Dooley asked for an explanation of a renovation.

Supervisor Wiktorowski stated that there are service requirements to any mechanical system. The key component is energy efficiency with the installation of a variable frequency drive. There are differences the amount of water in the different zones in a complex. The variable frequency drive would not only be energy saving but also save the infrastructure of the system.

Commissioner Staab stated that he strongly supports the items for 2009/2010. He also stated there is \$8,000 dollars sitting in a fund for the Tim Pope Memorial Playstructure. This could be used to hydro wash and seal the playstructure which is what Northville and Plymouth have done over the past ten to fifteen years and their structures are beautiful. He would encourage that it be maintained as best we can for the heritage and emotion tied to the playstructure. He stated that an assessment was done on the structure in the spring by an outside service and he requested a copy of the assessment.

Director Auler stated that is what was going to be done at the meeting that had been scheduled. While sealing appears to make playstructures look better it doesn't solve some of the critical issues. This will be discussed when they meet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Iszler to approve the fiscal year 2009/2010 Capital Investment Program.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

B. Annual election of Commission Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Chairperson

Commissioner Dooley recommended that Reagan Schwarzlose continue his role as Chairperson.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Policicchio that Commissioner Schwarzlose remain the Chairperson of the Novi Parks, Recreation and Forestry Commission.

Voice Vote Unanimous

Vice-Chairperson

A motion was made by Commissioner Policicchio and seconded by Commissioner Iszler that Commissioner Dooley continues serving as Vice-Chairperson.

Voice Vote Unanimous

AUDIENCE COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Student Commissioner Bharadwaj: No comments.

Student Commissioner Venigalla: No comments.

Commissioner Blair: This is his first meeting and he thought about how the Commission connects to the community. All of the things being done with the greenways and the sidewalks, and Engage! show how they connect in physical sense as well as with activities and ideas.

Commissioner Iszler: She wanted to comment that it was good to see an update on Fuerst Park and that there are more Phases to be implemented at the beginning which will make a bigger impact over all. She was happy to see the softening of the concession area to keep it from getting so hot with a break in the paving. She was pleased with the Grant for the Theatre to improve the program.

Commissioner Staab: He also was pleased about the Grant for the Theatre. He verified that Lauren Sorrentino is the current contact person for the Theatre and asked what the long term strategy is for the Theatre.

Nancy Cowan stated that as a part of the team process took a look at Theatre by doing some focus groups and analyzing information. They are currently working on a report and plan based on recommendations and input from the community. Within the next two weeks they will be developing a concrete plan.

He also wanted to remind the public of "Ringing in the Holidays" on December 5th, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" production on December 12th through 14th, and also the Chorlaire's concerts on December 5th, 6th and 7th.

Commissioner Policicchio: He commended Matt Wiktorowski for not only for the necessary improvements to our facilities but also for considering the impact on the community especially since he lives in the subdivision behind Power Park. For Nancy Cowan and Tracie Ringle he states that

the idea that we continue to have programs that build community spirit is a testament to why Parks and Recreation are needed in communities. To Director Auler he states that in these times, the fact that Fuerst Park is going to come to fruition at a critical time in 2009 is going to show the residents that the taxes they pay are being used for their benefit. This is a first of its kind park in Novi.

Commissioner Dooley: He stated that Parks, Recreation and Forestry is a top notch team. Everyone contributes and this was never more evident than at the Parks Foundation Gala which was held last Saturday night at Rock Financial Showplace. There were more than one hundred people who came. There was so much support for Novi Parks and a great opportunity to network with not only business leaders but citizens who believe in our mission. We are a unique community, especially in Oakland County because there are so many people who want to contribute to our mission and what we value. He thanked Director Auler and his team.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:34 PM.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Reagan Schwarzlose, Chairperson

Jay Dooley, Vice Chairperson