

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

THURSDAY JULY 9, 2009 – 7:30 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DRAFT

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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Policicchio and seconded by Commissioner Staab to approve the agenda as written.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC HEARING:

Director Auler stated that the Commission is holding a public hearing for the consideration and adoption of the 2009-2013 Community Recreation Plan. The purpose of the plan is to be used as a guide document for the Commission, staff, City Council and administration in moving forward in terms of land acquisition, park development projects, capital investment projects within the park system and potential partnership opportunities. The plan also enables the City of Novi to be eligible for State and Federal grant funds. With the adoption of the last plan we identified ten priorities and during the course of the five year period and were able to complete all of those priorities and were also successful in acquiring approximately \$1.2 million grant dollars through the adoption of that plan and the establishment of those priorities.

The Plan has been available for public review for a period of thirty days at the library and other City facilities as well as on line. There were Public Meetings held to obtain input and opportunities for citizens to provide input via the City website as well.

The Plan identifies key priorities for the next five years. Those are classified in terms of organizational excellence in terms of how we manage the department's resources and achieve fiscal sustainability, how we collaborate with the community and establish partnerships, how we improve service in terms of programs, parks and facilities. It also identifies the need for connectivity within the community through pathways and sidewalks and opportunities through grant dollars and partnerships. It includes the capital improvement program for the next six years. It is the same document which was included in the adopted budget by City Council and is also in the City Council budget.

Commissioner Schwarzlose opened the Public Hearing for citizen comments or questions.

There were no comments or questions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Policicchio stated one correction should be made and that he believes that the Walkable Novi report was given by Commissioner Iszler. It was moved by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Policicchio to approve the minutes as amended.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Policicchio & Iszler
Commissioner Policicchio stated that they just had a committee meeting. The report projects were funded by City Council as City improvements for the development of walkways and pathways. City Council did approve and contract services which will set up the opportunity for meeting future grants and accessing Federal funds. The committee supports the need to connect with our fellow townships in the area.
Commissioner Iszler stated that from a walkable and bikeable standpoint, it is exciting to be included in the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Hopefully in the fall a non-motorized pathways/sidewalk master plan can be done. We are also looking into perhaps rethinking the language and the title of our group because it's interest also includes biking. Mark Spencer gave them information on the Bicycle Friendly Community Program which is one of many programs to get communities thinking about biking and incorporating it in to what they are doing.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Dooley & Staab
Commissioner Dooley stated that the Foundation Golf Outing is scheduled for August 6th at the Links of Novi. There are plenty of opportunities for sponsorships and foursomes. He encourages everyone to participate. Contributions can be made on the website.
Commissioner Staab stated that they do need golfers for the Golf Outing. This is one of the Foundation's major fund raising events.

STAFF REPORTS:

- A. Update on Capital Investment Projects
 - 1. Development of Fuerst Park
The park construction is on schedule. We will have our opening event on August 21st. The past week was focused on laying the pathways and walkways within the interior of the park. We are continuing work on the Amphitheatre and Township Hall. At a recent City Council meeting they authorized additional \$4,000 for a conceptual design of the community gardens area to commemorate the location of the barns. Director Auler encouraged the Commission members to visit the Fuerst Park site.
 - 2. Tim Pope Memorial Playstructure
Director Auler stated that there is one page which stated that the washing and sealing of the Tim Pope Memorial Playstructure has been completed.
Commissioner Staab appreciates the work done on the playstructure. He asked about point number 6 on the report where we are not complying with the ADA, he thought that we went through and ADA assessment for all of our parks as part of the past Community Recreation Plan.
Director Auler replied that there were some components that were not compliant and in some cases we were able to modify and make revisions. In some cases we have had to remove portions and we also have pursued Grant dollars and have been unsuccessful in improving the access to the playground. The majority of the playground is compliant but not all of it.

Commissioner Staab stated that he has a question on the donated items. Will they be able to reattach the plates on the cars and the chimes?

Director Auler stated that he would have to verify the status with the Department of Public Services.

B. Update on the Land Use Study for City-Owned property at South Lake Drive and Old Novi Road (Landings Property)

Superintendent Cowan stated that we are moving forward on that study with the consultant. The public input process is currently underway. This property is located at South Lake Drive and Old Novi Road on Walled Lake. There is some lakefront on the property. The public input process has been advertised through the website, a press release, newspapers and electronic newsletters. A mailing of postcards targeting individuals who live in that area were also sent out. There are two opportunities next week for individuals who wish to give input. The first is Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Novi Civic Center and the second is Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at Lakeshore Park. This is an open forum for individuals to speak about what they would like to see on that property. If individuals are not able to attend there is a survey on the website. There is some information on the website about the property.

Commissioner Dooley asked if the survey is up on the website yet.

Superintendent Cowan replied that the survey is up and has been for about a week and a half. There have already been about 60 individuals who have provided input through the survey.

C. Update on Recreation Services

1. 2009 ASA State Championship Fast Pitch Tournament – Director Auler

Director Auler stated that we had the opportunity to host the 2009 ASA Fast Pitch Tournament. We hosted 42 teams over the weekend. Our team did an excellent job. The State ASA Board and Regional Board as well as the participants acknowledged that. They expressed not only how well the tournament was run and organized and how good the communication process was but also the quality of our facility. The investment that this Commission and City Council made in that facility enabled us to host that tournament. That tournament has now lead to us hosting a National Tournament in 2010. We have placed bids for two national tournaments in 2011. It is very likely that we will host at least one, if not two national tournaments in 2011. Not only is the facility improvement a significant upgrade for the quality of our programs and leagues, and quality of life for our neighbors since our lights do not shine in to their homes in the evening, but it has yielded those tournaments which have and will have an estimated economic impact of approximately \$400,000 over the three day period. We sold 120-plus hotel rooms for that three day period and all of those people stayed, shopped, ate, purchased gasoline and had entertainment in our community for that weekend. Derek Smith was the team leader on that project but it took all of the department's efforts to accomplish the results. He stated that Superintendent Cowan will speak about an event that took place the evening of the first day of the tournament where we brought the community out and had them participate as well.

2. Sizzling Summer Arts Series – Superintendent Cowan

Superintendent Cowan stated that the Sizzling Summer Arts Series is a series of eleven different events which are offered free to the community throughout the summer. One of those was a movie in the park which we hosted on the Friday night which the tournament was here. The festivities started around 7:30 p.m. on one of the ball fields after the games had wrapped up. Due to some of the people coming early to the movie many of them stopped and watched some of the softball games. Over 300 people attended the movie that night. Many of the players from the tournament commented that they do not usually receive that kind of a welcome. She

stated that there is a concert this evening at Lakeshore Park. Please keep on your calendar August 21st for the movie in the park which will take place at the grand opening of Fuerst Park. That movie is on a survey for a vote of which movie people would like to see.

Director Auler stated that he wanted to go back to the investment that City Council and the Commission made. All of that generated discussion out of our Recreation Plan 2003-2008. That was one of the capitol improvement items that was identified. The quality of the facility is ten-fold what it was. That is being heard at the state level and in our region as well. He had an opportunity to umpire in a tournament over the July 4th weekend which had 94 teams from all over the mid-west and our facility in Novi was being talked about. The Senior National Tournament was being held at that facility and they are now considering relocating to Novi as well. That tournament brings in teams from all over the country. The vision and the investment which was made have yielded a significant economic benefit for the community and will continue to do so. It has also improved the quality of life for the many players, around 900, who play at that facility on a weekly basis.

Commissioner Policicchio asked if additional staff needs to be hired when there is a tournament the size of the recent one. Director Auler replied that we were able to accommodate the last tournament with existing staff and were supplemented ASA State Board and Region staff. Those people take vacation days from their jobs and come to help administer and run the tournament from registration to umpiring chief and umpires. The tournament began on Thursday evening and ran all day Friday and Friday night, with the exception of one rainy period. It also ran on Saturday and Sunday. We were able to host the tournament because we used both the ITC Community Sports Park and Power Park and also the High School Varsity field. This was a tournament of 42 teams. The Nationals are expected to be double that number and have a greater economic impact for the community. Entrepreneur opportunities is certainly something we want to focus on. Tournaments do not make our department any money in terms of revenue generation. It does from concession sales and from gate admission. The tournament is set up in a way that we won't lose money with our agreement through the State Board. There are other tournament opportunities we would like to get in to and it comes back to having facilities available. Basketball and Volleyball tournaments take gymnasiums to be able to do but they have the same type of benefit. Soccer tournaments and lacrosse tournaments, like the Jaguar Tournament and last year's lacrosse tournament, have companies or individuals come in and rent our facilities. It makes sense because we do need a lot of staff involved and we get rental income and the positive economic impact for the community.

Commissioner Blair asked about hockey.

Director Auler stated that we have had some successful hockey tournaments as well through a partnership with Novi Youth Hockey Association, Novi High School and Northville High School. This year we hosted the Regions and the final four for the hockey tournament before they went the State Finals at Compuware.

We are starting to establish partnerships with the hotels because they see the value of the tournaments.

Commissioner Blair asked if there was any potential for Rock Financial Showplace as far as partnerships.

Director Auler stated that there may be some opportunities but we haven't explored that yet. One of the keys would be the quality of the court you could bring in. One might be a Sport Court type of surface but it is hard on your body so many

tournaments may look for the type of court with a cushion which will give while you are playing. It would depend on how we could package that.

- D. Overview of the process to create the 2010 – 2013 Strategic Business Plan
Director Auler stated that the Community Recreation Plan is a comprehensive plan to look at capital investment and to be eligible for grant dollars, which the Commission is going to consider for approval and recommendation to move forward for City Council approval under the Action Items this evening.

The second plan is a Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is focused on tactics operations. It is an operation plan that, internally, staff utilizes to allocate resources to achieve desired outcomes identified by the Commission, Council and City Administration. The 2007-2010 did just that. It identified priorities and served as a guiding document. Some of those outcomes are evidenced by the statistically valid surveys which were done this past year. Eighty-one percent of citizens have visited a Novi park in the last twelve months. This is higher than the national average and higher than when we did the survey two years prior. Ninety-one percent of citizens rated the quality of our parks as excellent to good. This again is higher than the national average and improved over the two years prior. Twenty-eight percent of residents have participated in a recreation program in the past twelve months. Those numbers are true to the national average and are increasing over the two years prior. The work the Commission did with the previous Recreation Plan and following it up with the Strategic plan yielded the desired results. These plans help us stay focused on doing the right things the right way.

Director Auler asked the Commission to consider appointing or having volunteers to serve on a work group with him and some of his team members to go through the process. The goal is to have the plan complete by December 30th and implementing the plan in January.

Commissioner Dooley volunteered to work with Director Auler.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

- A. Approval of the 2009 – 2013 Community Recreation Plan and recommendation to submit to City Council and the State of Michigan Department of Natural Resources for approval.

Commissioner Staab stated that he worked with Commissioner Dooley and Superintendent Cowan on a redraft and he thinks this plan is ready to go and he fully supports it, so he recommends the Commission's adoption.

Commissioner Policichio stated that he supports the plan. The reason is that he thinks it is important that we continue to try to move forward no matter what our challenges are. He believes this plan will get us through hard times and will be what the community needs.

Commissioner Dooley stated that the statistics which Director Auler pointed out show that many citizens go to our parks for many reasons. We have great parks with amenities and resources. Commissioner Dooley commended Superintendent Cowan for the great job she did on the plan. He supports the plan as well.

Commissioner Iszler stated that it is good to hear about the successes and to be reminded of the resources that we have. The continuing of these plans will give us more improvements. She fully supports the plan.

Student Commissioner Kerbrat stated that the plan looks good and that Novi is a great community and is doing better than many areas.

Commissioner Schwarzlose stated that we need to continue to stretch and strive for a better community. These are difficult economic times and we could easily just say that things are going to get better and let's just deal with now, but that is not reality. The reality is that we need to look forward, plan ahead and continue to strive to improve the quality of life in our parks and recreation system because it does affect the quality of life and drive economic impact. There is documented, factual, statistical information which backs the fact that parks and recreation service and land adds value to the community and property values and is important to community infrastructure. If we do not plan ahead and continue to look forward it would be a disservice to the community.

A motion was made to approve the 2009–2013 Community Recreation Plan as presented by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Iszler.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Staab stated that he appreciated the opportunity to participate tonight in setting our plans for 2009-2013. He encouraged the community to participate in the upcoming Novi Parks Foundation Golf Outing.

Commission Blair stated that he hated to see Commissioner Schwarzlose leave and that he appreciates the direction and guidance he has given the Commission for the several years and wishes him and his family well.

Commissioner Polocicchio commended the department and wished Commissioner Schwarzlose well.

Commissioner Dooley praised Commissioner Schwarzlose and his family and wished him luck.

Commissioner Iszler is pleased with all of the successes and she is looking forward to future planning. She wished Commissioner Schwarzlose well.

Student Representative Kerbrat stated that it was only her second meeting and she was glad to meet Commissioner Schwarzlose. She stated that it was mentioned using the Rock Financial Showplace but wondered if any one was using the Novi Expo.

Commissioner Schwarzlose stated that it is with regret that after five years of service on the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commission, upon adjournment this evening he will be resigning his position on the Commission as a result of employment. He and his family have lived in Novi for 17 years. In that time he has seen Novi grow from a sleepy bedroom community to a very

prominent community within the State of Michigan. This includes the much advancement in Parks and Recreation. He personally thanked all of the Commissioners as well as the Parks and Recreation Staff for their efforts and commitments.

Director Auler congratulated Commissioners Staab and Dooley who were recently reappointed to the Commission and to Jerry Jewel who will be joining the Commission. He thanked Commissioner Schwarzlose and his wife, Peggy, for their talent and time.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Schwarzlose at 8:28 PM.

DATE APPROVED: .

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Vice Chairperson