

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

Thursday, February 3, 2011 – 7:00 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Present), Iszler (Absent), Jewell (Present), Policicchio (Absent-Excused), Staab (Present), Tecklenburg (Present), Wingfield (Present), Kerbrat (Absent), Raina (Absent).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Wingfield and seconded by Commissioner Jewell to approve the Agenda as written.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Approval of December 9, 2010 meeting minutes
A motion was made by Commissioner Tecklenburg and seconded by Commissioner Staab to approve the Minutes as written.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioner Policicchio
No report.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Dooley & Staab
Commissioner Staab stated that there are no updates.

STAFF REPORTS:

- A. Administration Division – Acting Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services – Nancy Cowan
Acting Director Cowan stated that there was a late addition to the packet which is a memorandum from Barb McBeth who is with Community Development. She and Mark Spencer have been meeting along with Commissioner Policicchio and Commissioner Iszler who are assigned to the Walkable Novi group, on the non-motorized pathway master plan. That planning has been going on for the past few months and there have been some public meetings within the community along with staff input. The goal of this plan is to draw up the “dream plan” of connectivity within Novi. It includes sidewalks, bike trails, neighborhood connectors and regional trail connectors. It is a very long range plan and is nothing that will be built in the next year or two. What you have before you is a map of the plan. It has a lot of information in it. There is also a

200 plus page draft of the pathway plan which is on our website. The first draft went to the Walkable Novi Committee last week and was approved. As far as the process moving forward, it will be seen by the Planning Commission on February 9th. The public is welcome and there is a presentation where questions can be asked and opinions expressed. Written comments can be submitted or you can speak publicly. It is a dream connector of parks by connecting all of our parks through pathways. She wanted to make sure that the Commission got this update since Commissioner Policicchio was not able provide this tonight due to his excused absence.

Acting Director Cowan stated that there is an opening on the Parks and Recreation Commission. Interviews will take place on Monday, February 7th at the City Council Meeting. Hopefully we will have that position filled in the next few weeks.

Acting Director Cowan stated that the posting for the Director of Parks and Recreation and Cultural Services has been submitted and is up through the beginning of March. That is on our website.

She also stated that we have a Recreation Supervisor position that has been posted. We have been accepting applications for the last couple of weeks. That position is one where we had several part-time programmers and were able to merge in to a full-time position for about the same pay range but hopefully provide more consistency and dedication to that position. That speaks a lot toward where recreation is in this community and how we have done in the past few years that we are able to have this in a time when most places are cutting positions. We are self supporting so what we make in fees we help support all of our other programs. We have a lot of free community events and we work a lot with sponsorships. It speaks well of our team that we are able to have the funding there to provide the full time position as well.

Commissioner Dooley asked if, for those who cannot attend, the Wednesday Planning Commission will be televised.

Acting Director Cowan stated that the meeting will be televised and the plan can also be viewed on our website. There will also be some printed drafts available next week.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there is a brand name or particular verbiage she would like used for the pathways that link the parks.

Acting Director Cowan replied that it is the Non-motorized Master Pathway Plan. It is all inclusive and encompasses everything.

Commissioner Staab asked that as far as the Recreation Supervisor job, should both internal and external candidates be anticipated.

Acting Director Cowan stated that we have one part-time person who has expressed interest. Internal and external applicants are welcome to apply.

- B. Recreation Division – Superintendent of Recreation – Nancy Cowan
Superintendent Cowan stated that we consistently look for partnerships with businesses and local communities. Last year we purchased the movie screen between Novi and four other communities. She has been working over the last few months with Northville Parks and Recreation on

possibly sharing some activities and partnering. In the next brochure, which is our summer brochure that is for May through August, some Northville programs will be included and vice versa in the Northville brochure. We are looking to promote and not duplicate some activities. For instance, they have a Dog Park that they would like to share some activities and put in our book which is open to anyone who is a resident of Northville as well as outside of Northville. They have some other youth aquatic programs for three and under in a warm water pool which we can't offer in Novi. We are then looking to put some of our items in their brochure. Flag football is program that they don't run. We have been brainstorming with them to have them be a part of our Fire Up Fest in the fall and they may do a winter type Fire Up Fest in Northville so that we have sharing and build stronger bonds between our High School students. We both have strong youth basketball and volleyball programs that run at the same time for most of the same grades and ages. We know that there is a strong competitive fire between them and are looking at next year planning some end of the season Novi and Northville tournaments. This will allow our recreation kids an opportunity to experience a tournament.

The second partnership we are working on is with Community Education. She stated that she met with Bob Steeh today and there are some preliminary plans for fall, to hopefully put all Community Education activities in the Parks and Recreation book so that there won't be separate publications. As you know, we moved the Library in to our publication a few years ago as well as the "It's your City" section. It will be a large but comprehensive guide. In doing that, we are talking about the kind of activities we both offer to make sure we don't overlap but still serve the community in a positive way. She will share progress with the Commission. The merge is expected to happen in the Fall of 2011. Superintendent Cowan stated that coming up is the Daddy Daughter Dance. Disco Fever is the theme this year. We typically have around 800 participants. It will take place on February 11th and 12th. We are still taking registrations.

Basketball and volleyball are going strong. Our basketball numbers have continued to rise. Volleyball is one we are trying to rebuild and we have some clinics in place that the High School coaches are working on with us. The kids have been excited to meet the High School players.

We are already registering for Spring Soccer and Adult Softball.

Our fitness programs have been very strong this year. One of the top items that people were looking for from the community survey we recently did was fitness programs. That is something we have continued to build upon. Nearly all of the fitness programs we have in the guide are running this first session. Our Conference Rooms A, B and C which were just carpeted conference rooms are now like fitness studios. Through Rob Petty's group and facilities group they have done a phenomenal job coordinating with us and Wendy DuVall in creating our back rooms in to a fitness area. We now have a hard wood aerobic dance floor and mirrors. It looks and feels like a fitness studio. Those who are taking fitness classes

love it. That will be a big piece in our next Engage guide. We have gotten it out in our Recreation Reminder and Facebook. The renovation was done with money that was budgeted for that project. It was just slated to be carpet but through some work together we were able to put in some nice multipurpose floor that will still work for meetings but is great for programs of fitness and dance.

We have a new "Heart of a Woman" exhibit in the atrium. February is "heart" month so it ties in nicely.

Our team is completing the budget process. We are looking at next year's revenue and expenses and how we have done so far.

Commissioner Tecklenburg asked if we have issues with gym availability for basketball.

Superintendent Cowan stated that we always have problems with gyms. Not because we don't try hard or because the schools don't work with us, because they do. We are able to accommodate nearly all of our numbers but our challenges come with elementary school gyms which are smaller. If we are assigned to play in an elementary school there is not a lot of space for parents to watch which is integral to our program. Commissioner Tecklenburg stated that working with Northville Parks and Recreation was mentioned and he knows that they have High School age leagues and asked if we would be working with having this in our publication.

Superintendent Cowan replied that it is something that has been talked about because we do not have the gym space to provide those leagues and Northville does. That is something we will be looking at promoting in next year's brochure and doing together.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he is glad we are joining with Northville because it will provide opportunities for our High School students. Northville has a 4th through 8th grade lacrosse program and has doubled it this year and they still have a waiting list. Novi has a 4th through 6th grade lacrosse program. But when you get in to Middle School they have one team. For the 15 to 20 kids who get cut there is no place to play lacrosse.

Commissioner Staab asked how partnering with Community Education may affect the Parks and Recreation department down the road.

Superintendent Cowan stated that she cannot foresee the future as to where that partnership will go but one of our goals is to provide a consistent continuum of programming for Novi residents. She feels it can only make us stronger and eliminate some confusion.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

Commissioner Staab asked if there was any word on the capitol improvement budget plan that was worked on in December and has it gone before the Planning Commission already.

Superintendent Cowan stated that she did not think that it had gone before the Planning Commission. She believes that it went to the City Manager to be compiled with other departments. By the end of February or early March that information will go before the Planning Commission. She will check the date.

Commissioner Staab stated that he saw that next week Superintendent Cowan would be attending the MRPA winter meeting. He asked if there was any special emphasis at this conference.

Superintendent Cowan stated that there was and on Tuesday afternoon she is going to a session because the DNR no longer has the recreation passes where you pay for the park pass but you can add them to your license plate each year when you renew. From that funding the DNR is looking at creating a grant for the upcoming year to allow Parks and Recreation departments to provide for improvements. There is an open session where public input can be provided. She is attending to provide her input and look for more grant opportunities.

There is also a very strong focus on the economy in Michigan and how Parks and Recreation are weathering it. It will include trends and programs and how to react to them. Sponsorships and marketing will also be a part of that.

We have a couple of members from our team who are going so we are planning who is going to which session and bring information back to the team.

Commissioner Staab asked where the conference would be held.

Superintendent Cowan stated that it will be in Acme, Michigan at the Grand Traverse Resort.

Commissioner Staab then asked if it would be possible for the Commissioners, individually with their own funding, to become members of the MRPA. He always thought it was very worthwhile, when he attended many years ago. During the time of emphasis on the Americans with Disabilities Act they had some really good workshops that allowed them to better understand what it was about and how it impacted the community.

Superintendent Cowan stated that she will provide the information to the Commission. The MRPA has changed their membership structure in the past few years.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he was thinking the same thing. About 10 to 12 years ago the City would pay for the Commissioners to go to the conference one or two days but the Commissioners would have to pay all of their own expenses. He felt to go even for a day or two as a Commissioner was very advantageous. It gave the Commissioners a chance to see things from a different perspective and bring back valuable information.

Superintendent Cowan stated that she could share this with a conference committee. What they have had in the past was have a community representative day where sessions were focused toward Commissions and Boards. She is excited to hear that the Commissioners are interested. Next year's conference is in Dearborn so it would be good travel wise.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Tecklenburg stated that he is excited about the partnering and to hear that it opens up a lot of opportunities both for our residents as well as Northville and builds a sense of camaraderie in the younger ages. With Community Education the clarification make a lot of sense.

Commissioner Jewell commended Superintendent Cowan for reaching out to Northville and Community Education. It is great to hear about the growth in basketball and other programs.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that the partnerships with Northville and Community Education enhance our programs. He is enthusiastic about being involved with the MRPA.

Commissioner Staab agrees with what the other Commissioners have said. He stated that he would be more than willing to pay his own registration especially due to the economic times. He would also like to know what other volunteer activities he and the other Commissioners can participate in and things they can do.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he also agrees with what the other Commissioners have said. A partnership that has formed in the City of Novi is involving the Novi Athletic Boosters and especially Parks and Recreation and Cultural Services. On March 12th, Novi Youth Assistance is having their 29th Annual Bowl-a-thon. He challenges any organization, like the Novi Athletic Boosters Club, to the Bowl-a-thon. Novi Civic Theatres will present the musical "Gypsy" on the weekends of March 11th and March 19th. This will be a fun production so if you have the opportunity come and see "Gypsy".

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:34 pm

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Paul Policicchio, Vice Chairperson