

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

**Thursday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 7 P.M.**

Novi Civic Center – Council Chambers

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

**ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners: Dooley (present), Staab (present), Joseph (absent), Joshi (present), Riggins (present), Tolkacz (absent/excused), Torimoto (present)  
Student Representatives: Bheemineni (absent/excused), Raghunathan (present)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Agenda items 6D1 ITC Community Sports Park was removed and tabled to February since Commissioner Joseph was not in attendance.  
Commissioner Riggins motioned for approval of agenda and second by Commissioner Joshi.

**Voice Vote    Unanimous**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**    None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

It was moved that the minutes for the December 15<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved by Commissioner Riggins and second by Commissioner Staab.

**Voice Vote    Unanimous**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz  
Commissioner Dooley stated that there was not a meeting this month. The next meetings will be held March 16<sup>th</sup> and in June.  
Director Muck added that the staff had another steering meeting with the consultants earlier this week.
  
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Joshi, Staab & Torimoto  
The last meeting was December 5<sup>th</sup> and the next will be January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:15 at the Civic Center. Commissioner Staab said that the meeting will focus on planning for Pour on the Shore which is July 28<sup>th</sup> at Pavilion Shore Park. This event is the number one fundraiser for the Parks Foundation. Commissioner Staab has been working with Brian Adams on food trucks. He is disappointed with the pricing and trying to negotiate the best deal for quality food. The foundation anticipates upwards of 350 attendees. There will be a DJ or band, numerous craft breweries with different beers and a bourbon tasting table.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Riggins

Commissioner Riggins said there has not been a meeting. Director Muck anticipates a meeting in February. A new cycle is coming up for the trust fund grants. Unfortunately, the Ralph Wilson Grant for the splashpad was denied. The message stated the scope of the project does not fall within the focus that was determined by their board of trustees. Most of the funding appears to be centered around the Detroit metro and downtown areas. He was not surprised by this outcome. Official notice of the pickleball grant has not been given. However, for round one there were 460 applications totaling 280 million in requests. The first round has 15 million to hand out. Novi will probably not make the cut. Whether the department applies for the second and third round based on those kinds of figures is to be determined. Director Muck recommends going for a trust fund grant.

D. Parks and Facilities Updates

1. ITC Community Sports Park - Commissioner Joseph. Tabled to February.

2. Novi Ice Arena– Commissioner Riggins.

Commissioner Riggins showed many pictures of her trip to the Novi Ice Arena. She said there is several welcome and rules / regulations signs at the entrance. She went at 8:00am thinking it would not be busy however, many skaters start at 6:00am. Tom, one of the managing partners, gave Commissioner Riggins a tour of the facility highlighting the red and blue rinks. The blue rink had international figure skaters training. The red rink had people skating as well.

Pictures were shown of the Blue Line Café which serves snacks. The arcade games were moved to the lower level and the area now is used for eating. Events such as birthday parties can be held at the ice arena. The ice arena offers skating lessons, even for those who have not skated before. The downstairs has a locker room and some of the arcade games. The bathrooms were clean. However, the chairs and couches should be replaced in the café area.

Commissioner Riggins met Kiki. She showed her a drawing of a design of what the building could look like by removing the shrubs and adding a water fountain.

Commissioner Riggins walked around a bit after the tour. She had a great time and would recommend the ice arena. Commissioner Staab reminded the commissioners that the ice arena was not the most embraced project by the people of the city but over the years he thinks it has really shown well.

**MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:**

**STAFF REPORTS**

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. ITC Community Sports Park Master Plan

Director Muck said the staff has been working with the Spicer Group on the ITC Master Plan. Emails were sent by Chase Root inviting stakeholders to a meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup> from 1:00-5:00 at the Civic Center. Park commissioners are invited to attend as well to observe and listen. We will be getting feedback from tennis, pickleball, Michigan Jaguars, flag football, OAS Advisory Board, Cultural Arts

Advisory Board, Novi Parks Foundation, Novi Youth Baseball, Detroit Cricket League, and the Michigan Generals. All of these groups have a vested interest in ITC. The second component is a community open house and input session February 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00pm at the Civic Center. Residents will have an opportunity to share their thoughts. This will launch into the survey. The survey will be available through a QR code which will be posted around the city and blasted through social media. The online survey will be open until March 13<sup>th</sup>. The Spicer Group will compile and utilize the data to draft conceptual plans to share with city staff by early July. The conceptual plans will be shared at the July Parks Commission meeting to get feedback and comments. The plans will be brought to City Council in August. It is a regimented timeline. Director Muck displayed the flyer that will be distributed.

## 2. Jessica's Splashpad

Director Muck shared the good news that on Monday, Blair Bowman and family donated on behalf of the Michigan State Fair another \$10,000 toward the splashpad fund. The total is now \$25,000 from them. The donations stand at \$212,000 of the \$400,000 the Starr family is committed to raising. Money is still being collected.

Director Muck shared the site plans for the splashpad. The plans have been reviewed by the city engineering and community development staff. There is a meeting tomorrow with OHM Advisors to get ready to put this out to bid. An overhead view of the plans were shown featuring the restroom / changing facilities, artificial turf area for playing and breaks, and the rectangle area where the splash pad will be. There will be a lot of shade around the sides since landscaping and trees will be planted. The entryway is a dramatic arch over a swale from the parking lot. Bosco Fields has this long drainage ditch filled with native plants. The entry way will mimic the sun. A lot of color and weather themes will be used because Jessica Starr's meteorology background. The building will look similar to Lakeshore Park in colors, stonework, and columns. There will be three non-gender restrooms.

The project will be going out to bid very soon. Tomorrow we will be discussing the three components to this project: running water and sewer to the area, the building, and the install of the splashpad. We were hoping for a mid-summer opening.

## 3. Lakeshore Park Tunnel

Director Muck provided an update on the Lakeshore tunnel project from the bid opening. Bids were received on December 20<sup>th</sup>. The lowest qualified bid came in at \$600,000 for construction. This was double the original engineer's estimates. The consultant, AECOM explained that increases are being seen across the board with every project dealing with roads and construction. Concrete prices have gone up. An expense for DTE to move and replace the electric poles was almost \$100,000. These increased costs are going to City Council on Monday night for approval. Unfortunately, prices are escalating on all construction projects, but this is a much-needed replacement. After the approval the residents will be notified of the road closure. We are not anticipating having to close the park because will be able to maintain access from the west. The goal is

to complete by Memorial Day so the beach can be opened at the traditional time. If the current weather continues and there is an early spring it would be good for the project. It could also get the splashpad started sooner.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Introduction of Katherine Scozzari, Recreation Supervisor – Facilities and Transportation

Deputy Director Tracie Ringle introduced the newest Recreation Supervisor, Kat Scozzari. She is a Michigan native who spent some time in California and is now enjoying our mild winter. Kat Scozzari provided a bit more information regarding her background. She said she started her career in aquatics and this is her first position in recreation outside that realm. She started as a lifeguard and worked her way up. She attended Western Michigan University then followed a lifelong dream to move to California. Living outside San Diego for two years she continued on her recreation and aquatics path. This September she got married and decided to move back to Michigan for family and friends.

2. Programs & Services

Deputy Director Ringle began with the youth and teen division. Registrations are underway for the Daddy Daughter and Mother Son dances. Per usual, the Saturday evening Daddy Daughter Dance was the first to sell out. There is still availability in the Friday evening and Saturday afternoon events. The Daddy Daughter Dance will be held February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. The Mother Son will be February 24<sup>th</sup>. Registration is also open for the Eggstravaganza which will be held April 2<sup>nd</sup>. It will take place at Furest Park with the high school atrium as the check in area. This is a comfortable place to hold the event. Finding Bigfoot is coming back in February. There will be prizes and drawings for finding the twenty-five hidden Bigfoots throughout the park system.

The dance recital took place last month with nearly 800 tickets sold. Recreation Supervisor Golles has been working with the Berman Center which is part of the Jewish Community Center to hold the spring recital. It has a 600-person capacity, larger stage and can help film the show. It is a twenty-minute drive however, it is not anticipated to be a problem. Tickets are on sale for Novi Civic Theatre's full length show Cinderella. The amount of work that has gone into the set is amazing.

There is a new running group that Recreation Supervisor, Madison Lachance, and resident Lee Mamola will be leading. Twenty-one people have registered. Bi-weekly group runs will take place on Thursdays and Saturdays. The group will also have guest speakers, communication, and support. The runners vary in ability from beginners to 5K and 10K participants.

Winter youth basketball and volleyball games begin this weekend. The basketball leagues continue to fill therefore, Pistons Camps and smaller programs have been added to accommodate the amount of interest in the sport. Adult three on three basketball is full this winter. Leagues will continue to be offered in the spring and summer. Novi is one of the few communities that offers the three on three instead of the five-on-five format so this will draw people from around the area.

Lightning travel soccer tryouts will take place in June and people have already started to register although teams do not start playing until August. Registration has opened for the T-Bolts tennis team. Last year nearly 150 players between ages four and eighteen participated so we anticipate even more this year. Recreation Supervisor, Greg Morris is working with the adult softball teams and managers to create an adult softball league advisory committee to share ideas and opinions about rules and schedules. This is a great way for people to be engaged and to hear different ideas for having a successful league. Recreation Supervisor, Kat Scozzari is already making her mark on the facilities area since she started around Thanksgiving. Two additional site supervisor / event specialists have been hired. She will conduct a staff meeting with Greg and Chase for all site supervisors including sports and event staff this Sunday. These are the young adults who represent the department in our buildings, at the schools and out on the fields. It is a great opportunity to continue to train and encourage them to take their job seriously. Shelter rentals began Tuesday January 10<sup>th</sup>. Fifty-four reservations were made which was more than the first day last year. Lakeshore Park was the most in demand. Due to the tunnel project shelter one reservations are being blocked through mid-June. The construction noise, equipment, and staging would impact the experience people would expect. Deputy Director Tracie Ringle finished by saying that the local business community is great supporters of our department by contributing monetarily, gift cards for prizes or supplying food. Every year a comprehensive sponsorship guide is available on the website (under parks / sponsorship tab) for people to reference. Businesses have already started calling because they are putting together their 2023 marketing plans.

### 3. Cultural Arts Advisory Board end of the year report

Deputy Director Ringle explained that the Cultural Arts Advisory Board was formed to provide input and recommendations for offering arts in the community. This includes choosing the artists for the atrium art exhibit, helping select the artist in residence at Villa Barr and supporting programming in the art realm. It is an eight-member board with Alyssa Golles and Mary Robinson serving as staff representatives. The group meets bi-monthly on the first Wednesday of the month. This year's accomplishments include the relocation of the David Barr sculptures to Fuerst Park which were on loan to the City of Farmington. They worked on program ideas to attract new participants to classes and activities such as an adult / senior painting program and the glass fusion class. There is also the potential to add a large art piece to the future park property at Beacon Hill, perhaps a David Barr sculpture. In addition, a public art plan for the future of sculptures and art throughout the Novi parks has been a priority as well as attracting artists who want to bring their work here to display with the potential of sales. The Cultural Arts Advisory Board is coming up with a plan for funding options. This is a really good group of people who have an interest in making sure we continue to be creative and offer arts in the community.

## C. Older Adult Division – Director Jeff Muck

### 1. Programs and Services

Director Muck said OAS is bringing back the monthly calendar which has been revamped. It will list recurring activities and highlight upcoming special events. It will also list important information such as transportation and phone numbers. For the first time Recreation Supervisor, Alyssa Golles has partnered with OAS to offer a free special senior showcase of Cinderella put on by In The Mitten Productions on Saturday January 21<sup>st</sup>. February 14<sup>th</sup> is the date for a Valentine's luncheon at Meadowbrook Activity Center featuring entertainment by Harmony Town Chorus. During the recent Meadowbrook Commons forum, it was discussed that better food was needed. This luncheon will be catered by Moe's on Ten. Nature Nurture Novi is holding a seed swap on Friday January 20<sup>th</sup>. Gardeners are encouraged to bring seeds, bulbs, and plants to swap with other gardening enthusiasts. Rick Meader the city's landscape architect will be there to answer questions about what looks and grows best in their particular yards. February 1<sup>st</sup> Christine Hahn from MSU Extension will be hosting a lecture at Lakeshore on the importance of pollinators to the food system. AARP Tax Aid appointment scheduling began January 5<sup>th</sup>. 119 appointments were made the first day which is consistent with 2022 data. Currently there are 396 available time slots created but AARP expects to add more appointments as the counselors finish their training this month. The Cutting the Cord program continues to be a popular topic. The presentation was today at Meadowbrook Commons and thirty people attended. Sandy Fisher is working with the volunteer to hold additional sessions. OAS is working with Oakland County Veterans Services to host an Oakland County Veterans Resource Fair on April 6<sup>th</sup>. It is available to all veterans, active duty, guard, reserves and their families. Giveaways include food boxes and community resources. Last year's event was well attended.

## 2. Older Adult Services Advisory Board end of year report

Director Muck said that the OAS Advisory Board was established in 2013 giving an opportunity for members to share feedback from the community, new ideas about programming, and provide insight about services and programs. The board consists of six at large citizen members, commission liaison Riggins and two staff members. The group meets bi-monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm (six times per year). The group is updated on programs including the special outreach services, social services, and park projects. Highlights from the past year are discussions of the services offered by the City of Novi and how they align with Oakland County's Blueprint for Successful Aging. The group provided ideas and input on the new monthly activity calendar. They brainstormed ways to attract older adults to the Winter Wine and Whimsy event which led to the showing of It's a Wonderful Life. Plus continuing to discuss programming ideas for 2023 to attract younger, older adults. Suggestions of names for Older Adult Services rebranding has also been a focus of the advisory board. The group has been complimentary to the staff on the increase in the diversity and programs that have been offered after COVID.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

#### Commissioner Riggins

I thought this was a great meeting with letting us know how the Jessica splashpad is

coming along. Raising 212K so far is really good however, we just need to push a little bit more for the rest. It is going to be a wonderful park. The Lakeshore tunnel is going to be a lot of money because inflation is up very high. Hopefully, they (City Council) pass it because it does need to get done.

I recommend everybody take advantage of the different activities that Novi has because we are always trying to make sure everyone is included.

#### Student Representative Raghunathan

Thank you for the ice arena update, it was nicely organized and presented. The Jessica Splashpad layout looks great. I am looking forward to seeing the final product.

#### Commissioner Torimoto

I think the common theme tonight was reaching out to really get a full perspective of the end users who will really be using the facilities whether it is planning for the future vision of the ITC Park, cultural arts, and even softball. I think constantly involving the stakeholders is really important. It is just amazing how much the department engages the community. It feeds into the quality of the programs that are being offered and the facilities. Thank you.

#### Commissioner Joshi

I just want to echo Commissioner Torimoto. It is exciting to know what is coming up for the ITC Community Sport Park and the input on that and Jessica's Splashpad. I think the Lakeshore tunnel is important. I have walked through the tunnel, and it is a much-needed project that will cost a lot of money. I am excited for all three. Thank you for updating us on the Cultural Arts and OAS Advisory Boards because it is nice to know what is happening behind the scenes and how it went the past year.

#### Commissioner Staab

I would like to wish everybody a Happy New Year. Welcome to Recreation Supervisor Kat. I appreciate your comprehensive and diversity of the many programs that are going on. Echoed by Commissioner Torimoto the solicitation of the community for input is great because everybody is a stakeholder not just the Parks Commission and Foundation members. We all have a piece of the rock and have ability to provide input.

#### Commissioner Dooley

I really can't add anything, well done commissioners. Kat welcome to the team. We are so glad to have you and we are going to expect great things. Thanks for coming out tonight and being part of the meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

#### **Voice Vote**

#### **Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:58p.m.

DATE APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jay Dooley, Chairperson

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Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson