

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, March 19th, 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 (absent/excused), 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 February 19th meeting be approved by Commissioner Staab and second by Commissioner Riggins.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

PRESENTATIONS

A. Parks Foundation President Sheel Desai, Executive Director Marcel Badia & Event Coordinator Victoria Johnson

Sheel Dasia introduced himself as the President of the Novi Parks Foundation. He said he works alongside Charlie, Salene, Harry, Jeff and Ryan. He is excited to be the president and work with everybody to continue the work and implement new ideas. Marcel is the new Executive Director, and he has already brought a lot of fresh ideas.

Marcel added that he is very excited to be on board. His background is in entrepreneurship, and he is passionate about building things from scratch and bringing fresh ideas to the table, finding solutions and improving processes. He is honored to work with a talented group and people from the PRCS Commission. Let him know if you have any questions or need help with anything.

Marcel and Sheel gave a quick overview on some of the changes being made to Pour on the Shore. They will be building on the successes of the past. It has been an event with a lot of great feedback but two of the areas that could be improved is food and music. New vendors are being researched to create new partnerships along the way. The food will change from food trucks to a caterer serving hors d'oeuvres through an international food journey. Bartenders will be utilized to serve drinks at different stations. The event will be elevated. There will also be a photo booth. The Foundation has an intern doing social media to grow the event and bring the community together. Other ideas include emphasizing other parks and involving the Villa Barr artists to showcase their talent.

Victoria is a new member to the Parks Foundation as an event coordinator. This position will divide the responsibilities between her and Marcel. She will not only work on Pour on the Shore but do other events.

By sharing the responsibilities, the Foundation is able to do more in the years to come. They are working to make the Foundation more effective and tie into the community

better. The website is being updated with guidelines, action plans are being created plus a social media strategy.

The tickets for Pour on the Shore are not available yet. The goal is to reach out to past attendees and give them a favorable price to attend the event again. Then there will be a \$10 increase, at the door tickets would be another \$10 more. Therefore, the payment structure is being changed.

Commissioner Staab updated the Commissioners that a \$250,000 commitment was received last week from ITC for naming rights of the park for five years. The paperwork is currently being finalized. Sheel Dasia added that it has been a month-long effort. This will be an example for other businesses who want to continue to invest in the community. Marcel added he is working on a draft of a timeline for the April 7th meeting to show the contributions received over the years by different donors. This would include accomplishments and improvements made to show potential donors. This solid plan would aid the Foundation in attracting larger corporations. Commissioner Staab mentioned in the twenty-two years since the Foundation was formed there has been one million in financial commitments.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Novi Parks Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Riggins, Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Staab said the next meeting is April 7th. We are working on getting everything ready for Pour on the Shore July 24th.

B. Active Mobility Committee – Commissioners Gopalakrishnan & Dooley
Commissioner Dooley mentioned the last meeting was in the past hour and it was a good discussion. The Novi neighborhood sidewalk program was highlighted. The city engineering technician has looked at two factors for sidewalk repair. The first being fix all greater than two-inch sidewalk deflections citywide that present greater safety concerns. The second was work with entire subdivisions based on the number of repairs needed per sidewalk. Twenty-two neighborhoods have been identified to be tackled in 2026. Homeowner associations will be given advanced notice that they will be under repair. This will lead to further neighborhoods after the initial twenty-two.
Another topic discussed was the City of Novi annual non-motorized prioritization. 125 different areas were listed. The top ten – twenty will be prioritized based on a number of tier one categories. The city engineers can make improvements as needed.
The next meeting will be scheduled in two months. There will be more updates at that time.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. CIP Millage Renewal

Director Muck told the Commissioners they will be hearing about the CIP millage renewal a lot in the upcoming months. He wanted to discuss it last month but was detained at the Finance and Administration Committee meeting for three hours. The last CIP millage was approved by voters in August of 2016. It was a ten-year millage up to one mill for only capital projects. Payroll expenses or operations cannot be paid of the millage. The money was spread around the city with parks, facilities, pathways, fire apparatus and infrastructure. Parks were a huge part of the money raised. The Lakeshore Park building renovations, park land acquisitions, ITC trail, splash pad, pickleball courts, boardwalk repairs and fire trucks were a big part of this. In addition, the Department of Public Works expansion, Lakeshore tunnel replacement, 160 acres of land including ITC expansion, Shawood Lake island, Northwest Park, Bosco Field renovations, and more. The DPW expansion was very needed. The trucks were

previously kept outside. Since the expansion they are now inside helping the longevity of the vehicles. Also, the building offers a much better work environment.

The current millage expires in 2027 with the last tax collection being this July. It is needed for stable funding of capital needs and supports long range planning. City Council has already decided to go forward with it on the August 2026 ballot. It will be a ten-year renewal with five million annually for this fund. This is a renewal; therefore, taxes are not going up.

Council has called for ITC renovations with development of recently acquired land as part of their goals. Another highlight of the potential CIP is a community center, senior activity space, and fire apparatus. A fire engine can cost over two million dollars and needs lead time. These funds can also include land acquisition and preservation, and continued sidewalk investments.

Director Muck asked the Commissioners to be aware of the CIP milage since they are passionate parks people. Please spread the word in your neighborhoods and with connections in the community. It was added that in 2016 the millage barely passed so it is important that we educate the public on what we did and the plans for the future. There was additional conversation with the Commissioners about talking points and the ITC master plan. Commissioner Bagley shared she experienced a millage renewal with the county. There was a lot of misinformation from residents and Facebook groups, and it can grow quickly. We need to have talking points and get ahead through messaging. The current CIP plan has items such as replacing the Rotary Park pedestrian bridge, Wildlife Woods fields and playgrounds. The plan would significantly change with millage approval.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project & Initiative Updates

Director Muck started by saying we are ramping up coming into spring, the better weather comes the increase in projects. The contractors will mobilize as soon as the weather allows, and ground conditions warrant at the Villa Barr pathway. At the Bosco / ITC trail connector the subcontractor has completed removal of tree stumps within the proposed pathway and boardwalk limits this week. Next drilling for the helical piers will begin for the boardwalk.

Resident Larry Cicancio reached out to the city expressing concern about the paint peeling on the Novi Special water tower. A drone inspection checked the status of the water tower and found that the paint is degrading in several places. Larry offered to reach out to PPG and we are waiting on the next steps.

Director Muck shared that last year City Council's Finance and Administration Committee began discussion on the future of the Novi Ice Arena. They reviewed data on the budget projections, future capital improvements projects, lease and sale options, elimination of the debt service, an appraisal on the arena and other items. All this has been reviewed by the committee for the past year. In February the committee directed city administration to bring forward three options for City Council to discuss on Monday night.

1. Solicit bids for sale of the ice arena with potential deed restrictions on any potential resale of the property and building.

2. Obtain bids on additional studies such as a twenty-year capital needs assessment, due diligence studies, operational and ownership option analysis. The studies can range from \$10,000 to \$45,000.

3. Maintain current operations. City staff will continue to monitor the financial performance and projections of Suburban Arena Management including capital needs of the arena.

There were additional questions from the Commissioners. Director Muck explained there is a detailed packet with more information.

Director Muck concluded his report on a positive note. The first week of March the members of the team attended the annual Michigan Recreation and Park Association conference in Lansing. The team participated in educational sessions, advocacy at the capital, networking and engaging with vendors in the exhibit hall. We were very proud to celebrate Madison Lachance, earning the new professional award. Ever since she joined the team, she has made a positive impact through her leadership, collaboration, and passion for the power of recreation to enrich lives. The video staff and commissioners were a part of was very well received.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Programs & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said Camp Lakeshore and PowerPlay are completely full since the first day of resident registration. Other camps are now open including farm camp, dance, and theatre. Discussions will occur with the dance and theatre partners about offering a full day option for camps. Currently these camps are 9:00-1:00 or 10:00-3:00. Parents need full day activities for their children. Space remains the challenge.

Camp Invention, which is a STEM-based theme camp, will take place at the Civic Center during the Novi Community School District spring break.

Aladdin Junior with In the Mitten has 109 actors in two casts. The show will take place April 9th – 12th at the Civic Center. In the Mitten are pros at keeping kids engaged and happy while learning new skills as they go through the process of putting on a show. Madison Lachance and John Gillingham are hosting a joint Nature Nurture program from Seeds to Sprouts at Lakeshore Park. Earth Week is quickly coming up, and several programs have been scheduled throughout the week. Monday 4/20, birdwatching at Lakeshore with Wild Birds Unlimited. Tuesday, City Forester Keith Salowich will host an educational talk at the Civic Center about proper tree planting and maintenance. The 22nd is Earth Day and there will be a park cleanup at Pavilion Shore. The activities will conclude on the 25th with an Arbor Day celebration and garlic mustard pull at Lakeshore Park.

Deputy Director Ringle highlighted staff member Jeremia Pilarski who is the heart and soul behind the RC Raceway. He presented an opportunity to do a swap meet at the RC Raceway on May 23rd. It will be free for attendees but a \$20 fee for a ten-by-ten spot for people to sell items.

The staff is prepping for summer as we are cleaning out storage spaces, bidding uniform suppliers, interviewing camp counselors, and answering phone calls from people coming out of hibernation. Spring soccer schedules for leagues are due next week to coaches to begin games April 16th. Softball begins mid-April. We are hoping for consistent weather for the park's maintenance crew. Basketball finished up a week later due to the water issue, closing the facilities at the schools.

Erin Junge, the newest recreation supervisor is sending out her first program survey to gain insight. We are going to ask how important the medals are for rec leagues 3rd grade and above.

Deputy Director Ringle provided an update on the no smoking and vaping signs. Community Relations is working on graphics on the signs that will be installed at the parks. The student idea was considered; however, the timeline and resources would delay getting the signs in the parks.

The Cultural Arts Committee meeting was earlier tonight. The committee is tasked with creating a public art strategy plan to share with council. We will engage with Community Development about sign façade, landscape regulations and things the business community deals with when developing their businesses appearance such as murals or art in front of their buildings. This would have no cost to the city and be able to

increase opportunities through the business community. The committee will meet monthly before commission meetings.
Summer Engage is scheduled to hit homes mid-April for the May – August magazine.

C. Older Adult Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Programs and Services

Director Muck gave the Older Adult Services report since OAS Manager Kit Kieser was in Kansas for leadership training. The Spring Travel Fair will be Wednesday April 8th from 5:30-6:30 at the Civic Center. All five of the travel companies are scheduled to attend and showcase their 2026 trips. We are offering a trip to a Detroit Tigers game on August 26th. It includes access to the Tigers Club with air conditioning, unlimited food and non-alcoholic beverages. The annual Euchre Tournament is Friday April 17th at the Civic Center.

The AARP Tax Aid program has all 503 slots filled with an active waiting list. Many neighboring communities are filled too. The Oakland County Veteran's Resource Fair returns to the Novi Civic Center on March 26th from 9:00-12:00. Currently 450 people have registered. Each will have a designated time to help with long lines and traffic within the event.

Tuesday the Michigan Department of Education along with Livingston Human Service Agency conducted a site audit to confirm we are still operating within TFAP and USDA guidelines. There was positive marks from the auditor.

The Memorial Day event webpage is active, and registration is open for parade entries. Invitations are going out to last year's participants. Director Muck reminded the Commissioners to save the date for Fuerst Field of Honor Wednesday May 20th from 5:30-7:00.

Commission Staab asked how Madison's duties will be divided when she is on maternity leave. Director Muck answered that the majority, including Memorial Day activities, will go to Kit and John Gillingham will assist with the nature programs.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Bagley

It was a great meeting. I appreciate the Novi Parks Foundation presentation. I am excited for the elevation of Pour on Shore since it is my first one. Thank you for the presentation on the millage. It is great to get a heads up and I am looking forward to doing whatever I can to support it within the community. I love medals as a mom. It is a personal thing, but I save all my kid's stuff. I like all the awards, medals and trophies.

Commissioner Riggins

I think it was a great meeting too. Thank you to Sheel and Marcel for the presentation and all the information. Pour on the Shore will be bigger and better and I can't wait. I was happy to hear about the additional options for full-day camps. That is what I needed when my daughter was young. I am voting to keep the medals. I save all of them in box. I want to wish everyone a Happy Easter.

Commissioner Torimoto

The millage is going to be very important. The messaging is crucial. We need to ensure that we have the opportunity to continue growing throughout the next ten years. I want to congratulate Madison. The education and leadership opportunities provided by the city are great. It is a tribute to the capabilities you have, letting them grow and continue to contribute.

Commissioner Staab

Thanks for the update on CIP. I look forward to getting that information out to talk to neighbors and friends to educate them on what we have done in the past.

Also, thank you Marcel and Sheel for the presentation this evening. I am looking forward to Pour on the Shore, it is just around the corner, and it will be bigger and better.

Pavilion Shore is an excellent venue. If we have the same weather as last year, it will be a smashing success.

The medals are an interesting discussion. I ran across one of my medals from track recently. My grandson was in a basketball league, and he posed biting his medal like an Olympian. I would vote to keep the medals.

Commissioner Dooley

Thank you, Jeff, for the presentation. I agree with all the comments, talking points and getting the message out so there is not any misinformation or misrepresentation. The fact that there is not a tax increase people should react favorably.

I echo Madison's wonderful honor. It was nice to see her pictures on her Facebook page. I can't think of a more deserving person in your department. She is amazing. We have seen her in action working on Memorial Day and with the veteran's presentation at city hall. Thank you both for leadership and guiding employees in the right direction. This weekend the City of Novi / city hall is coming alive. For six years Michigan Miss Amazing has taken place here in the auditorium. Stop by this weekend to see what the parks department does, putting everything together. It is spectacular! This year twenty-eight contestants with special needs will participate. They all have a talent and passion. All will have an opportunity to vie for the title of Miss Amazing in various age groups. Ten of the contestants are between the ages five and eight. My wife, daughter and I are co-chairs for the event. The event is fun to watch and see the innocence of the contestants. We have great sponsors and I will list them at the next meeting. The organization is 100% nonprofit. It is a rewarding and special day. Thanks to Tracie, Jeff and the parks department for everything to get this ready for us.

Commissioner Joseph

Thank you to the Parks Foundation for making the presentation this evening.

Congratulations to Madison. That is incredible news and well deserved.

I wanted to mention I am really excited about the new presentation format that is kicking off next month. Talking to the departments will be exciting, opposed to visiting the parks and giving updates that have aged. This will shine a light on the people doing a lot of work behind the scenes and things we do not see on a regular basis.

Go Blue and Happy Easter.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Bagley and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Joseph at 7:52p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Joseph, Chairperson

Dooley, Vice Chairperson

