

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, June 16th, 2022 – 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:

Dooley (Present), Staab (present), Joseph (present), Joshi (absent /excused), Riggins (absent), Tolkacz (Present), Torimoto (Present)

Student Representatives: Bheemineni (Present), Raghunathan (Present)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Joseph apologized for moving the Rotary Park presentation to the July meeting.

Commissioner Staab motioned for approval of agenda. The agenda approval was second by Commissioner Torimoto.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of May 19th, 2022, minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for the May meeting be approved by Commissioner Joseph and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz

Commissioner Tolkacz said the main part of the hour had great discussion from the Northville Riverwalk Task Force Team. The dual purpose is to try to uncover as much of the Rouge River as possible in Northville. A good portion is covered by Northville Downs. They feel they can add some park space and do a better job of managing water that flows downstream to other communities. There is a threefold plan. The short term is to try to connect Mill Village via Griswold to cross Eight Mile into Chase Farms. The medium term / intermediate connections are to build a walkable path underneath or be part of the CSX railroad bridge. The third was an extension of what they are calling the Riverwalk along the Rouge River and opening up that section of the raceway.

Commissioner Tolkacz mentioned he was impressed with the homework and research that they have done, working with Wayne County and SEMCOG. An ARPA grant will be submitted along with working with the Wilson Foundation. The next steps are for Councilman Fischer to update Council, Director Muck to update the Grants Committee and have further discussion in those two forums.

Commissioner Tolkacz added, Walkable Novi's meeting continued with standard

business including Rotary Park conservation easements, along with agreement that connecting the cities (Novi and Northville) would be beneficial and the ability to walk to the landmarks which would be an attraction. The committee went through twenty sidewalk segments but decided to push further discussion to the next meeting in August to have more time to review the presentation and engineering report.

- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Riggins, Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Joseph stated that the next meeting is Wednesday of next week. Events for the rest of the year will be discussed. There will be an update at the July Parks Commission meeting.

- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Joshi
Commissioner Joseph said that the Grants Committee has not had a recent meeting. However, Director Muck explained the American Rescue Plan Act which was brought up at the last Parks Commission meeting. He said the State of Michigan has been allocated 65 million of its funds to local parks and recreation. Details are yet to be finalized. Funds will be administered through a competitive and equitable grant program call SPARK Grants. These grants will range from a minimum of \$100,000 to a maximum of \$1,000,000. Grants will be distributed in three rounds – 15 million by end of 2022 / 25 million spring of 2023 / 25 million summer of 2023. The first-round application will launch later this year then gives applicants eight weeks to apply. The priority projects the Grants Committee outlined would all qualify (four new pickleball courts and expanding parking lot at Wildlife Woods, Power Park pathway, Bosco Field parking and pathway paving and Northwest Park development). Director Muck said he will be working with the engineering team on updating estimates for these projects in preparation for grant applications.

- D. Parks and Facilities Updates
 - 1. Rotary Park – Commissioner Joseph
Tabled to July meeting

 - 2. Lakeshore Park – Commissioner Tolkacz
Commissioner Tolkacz felt he won the lottery being able to report on Lakeshore Park first. His presentation included slides taken in different seasons. One featured a bridge as part of the mountain bike / cross country trails. During the presentation he highlighted what he liked and thoughts for improvement for the park. Commissioner Tolkacz thought the entrance was very impressive. The facility which holds classes is awesome as well as the accessible library facility. The bike trails are very well marked with clear direction which he believes would be nice if it was done throughout the city. The pavilions were being used during his recent visit. There is a lot of diversity of things to do at the park with something for everybody. His ideas for improvement were salting around the restrooms in the winter for safety, road maintenance, and clean up from the geese. Commissioner Tolkacz looks forward to going back this summer to use the beach. Chairman Dooley like the comparison of the seasons in the presentation and asked about the condition of the park. Commissioner Tolkacz answered the park

is in great shape and the grass is well maintained. He added that it is amazing when you turn the corner off Novi Road you feel like you are 200 miles away.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck started with park project updates. The roof replacement at Meadowbrook Commons is going to Council on Monday night. The project will be done in segments with the pitched area being first. The Ice Arena has had the gutters replaced and some of the landscaping work in the parking lot has been completed. Live Barn video has been installed which allows viewing of games and programs on a subscription service. This is common at ice arenas around the country. It also generates a small revenue stream. Plans are still being made for the Ice Arena roof to be repaired and replaced this year.

Director Muck added that the first soccer season at Bosco Fields has been completed. From a field / usage standpoint we are extremely satisfied with the conditions. Not a single day or night was lost (cancelled) due to field conditions, this would not have been the case at ITC. There will be lighter programming at Bosco in the summer which will allow the fields to recover.

The preliminary site plans for the splash pad were shown on the screen which Director Muck provided explanations and details. EGLE will need to approve the plans which takes six – eight months and it will need to go to Planning Commission. This is a big step in the process which kicks off the next six-eight months.

After questions from the Commissioners, Director Muck explained that the parks maintenance team will be analyzing the soil, adding spot seeding, aeration irrigation and fertilizers for the turf at Bosco Fields to make it even better.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said it is mid-June and our staff is making sure our programs are up and running, answering questions, and registering people. Both Camp Lakeshore and Powerplay started this week. It has been a smooth start because our staff is amazing. The challenge has been at Lakeshore because the counselor who is lifeguard certified has taken time off pre-camp therefore, the camp has not been able to swim due to LARA state licensing. The other summer camps (dance, theatre, basketball) are full or almost full.

The Sizzling Summer Art Series kicked off this week on Wednesday when it was really warm out. The program came into the Civic Center. There were 250 attendees for the Wildlife Safari. Tuesday Tunes begins June 21st. It is a family friendly band performance at Fuerst Park.

There is some renovation work being done at Villa Barr, replacing pavers and leveling in the driveway. In addition, two sculptures are being sandblasted and repainted for general maintenance. The plans are to do at least one piece per year.

The Generals Tournament, the first large one of the summer is at Power Park next weekend. This large girls' softball program takes place Thursday – Sunday. Typically, Power Park is reserved every weekend for varying size tournaments throughout the summer, including cricket. These are a good revenue source for the department.

The Nature Nurture Novi program that was underway pre-COVID is picking up steam by offering adaptive gardening, Novi Birders, Nature's MythBusters and edible plants. People are interested, wanting to learn, and interacting with nature.

Deputy Director Ringle continued with the updates from the large soccer program. There will be twenty-two lightning teams forming from the tryouts that took place last weekend. This is an increase of 33% from last year and 77% from the '18-'19 season. Kudos to Chase Root who works extensively with soccer year-round. \$100,000 in revenue is expected for soccer during the month of June from registrations for our select teams.

The July – August edition of Engage should be in mailboxes next week so we expect many busy weeks in the office especially for the front desk staff.

There was additional questions and discussion about cricket, soccer, and Nature Nurture Novi programs.

C. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Programs & Services

Director Muck began by saying a lot of programs and services are going on right now. Medicare counseling session requests are on the rise up to pre-COVID levels which is five – seven appointments per month. The income eligibility requirements for our food assistance program have changed, therefore Sandy Fisher, Social Service Coordinator is in the process of updating all the documentation. She is also helping onboarding the new office assistant for Novi Youth Assistance. There will be a smart home automation program to help residents understand the possibilities of bringing today's technology into their home.

Director Muck continued, highlighting the recent events Recreation Programmer, Madison Lachance has organized. Sip Sip Hooray took place last Thursday, June 9th at Lakeshore Park from 7:00-9:00 Fifty-four people ages thirty-eight to eight-five attended. Listening to music, cornhole, food and drinks were the activities. Based on the responses from the survey after this event people would like to see a lot more similar programs.

Happy Trails is a walking group that circulates through the Novi Parks and has about ten- fifteen people attend each week. Last week the group met at Mayberry State Park. A volunteer from Friends of Mayberry shared information abouts plants, the history of the park, and wildlife.

Forty-six people registered for senior trips during the month of May. There are only eight spots left for the Mackinac Grand Experience.

The Backyard Classic will take place outside Meadowbrook on June 23rd. There will be yard games, popsicles, popcorn, and a sing along led by Fox Run's men's choir. The 4th of July luncheon will be held on June 30th.

Director Muck recapped the Memorial Day events. Furest Field of Honor was a big success. It took place on Wednesday, May 25th. The evening included a

patriotic concert, free hotdogs for the community, a dinner for eighty-five veterans and their guest sponsored by Mission Barbecue, a patriotic concert, and remembrance ceremony. VFW Post 1519 paraded the flags, thirty girl scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance, wreaths were laid, Mayor Gatt spoke, and the conclusion had a 21-gun salute and playing of Taps. Everyone was encouraged to walk to trail of honor and read the stories of the hometown heroes. The trail displayed 200 American flags and thirty-two medallions. The medallions gave the history of Memorial Day, each branch of service and told the story of local heroes who passed while in service. The flags remained in place for a week to give the community opportunity to walk through the trail and reflect on their own time.

The 10th annual Memorial Day Run was held with 240 participants for the 5K and One Mile Fun Run. The proceeds were donated to the Jessica Splash Pad Fund. Residents, veterans, and City Council were invited to attend a continental breakfast at Meadowbrook Commons prior to the parade. The parade started at Meadowbrook Commons and ended at the Civic Center. There were twenty veterans and seventeen parade entries.

2. Meadowbrook Commons Awards

Director Muck provided background on Meadowbrook Commons saying it is accounted for in the city's senior housing fund and is an enterprise fund, same as the Ice Arena. The source of funding for the project was through building authority bonds which are paid from rents received from the residents of the facility. The city has been contracting with KMG Prestige to operate it since 2006. KMG is one of the largest residential property managers in the United States with a portfolio of more than 455 communities. KMG has consistently shown appropriate resources and capabilities to meet the city's quality standards for overall management of the complex, marketing, maintenance, and daily operations. For over sixteen years KMG has run a high-quality customer service orientated operation with nearly 100% occupancy rates. At the KMG's annual awards ceremony, Meadowbrook Commons was the recipient of several awards including best occupancy, best apartment turn around (3-4 days between move out and move in), best collections (not late on payments or collections). Meadowbrook Commons Community Manager, Ginny Hallam received the good steward award that recognized her for developing a harmonious satisfying living and working environment while staying focused on creating happy property owners. It also credits her as a role model for other KMG staff for her management techniques.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Talkacz

Last month I attended the Choralaires concert which was very enjoyable. I was impressed with the quality of the singing and the director was just amazing. This is a great asset for the community. I did have a chance to run in the Memorial Day Run. The event was very well done. It was nice to finish at Fuerst Park and have the chance to walk through the Field of Honor. I was impressed with the number of WWI participants from Novi due to the size of the community then. There were issues getting back home

due to the parade route and road closures. More accurate communication might be needed.

Commissioner Joseph

It was a great first presentation by Joe. Lakeshore is a fun one to do – great job.

Commissioner Torimoto

The Ice Arena live video feed is a great idea for an additional service and revenue stream. It is good to hear about the upgrade for Isiah. I did mention that in my Villa Barr audit. I am amazed at the Lightning situation. Having a facility like Bosco now paired up makes it very attractive. Congratulations to the team.

Student Representative Raghunathan

It's great about splash pad we are getting. I do have friends who could be lifeguards. I can spread the word

Student Representative Bheemineni

I just wanted to say that it is really great to see a lot of people showing up for the recreational activities even after the hiatus of COVID-19.

Commissioner Staab

The soccer numbers are really impressive, the effort is appreciated. I had the occasion to go to the Field of Honor presentation. It was a first-class program with very interesting information. I talked to a few vets and heard their stories. It was good the parade was back after a hiatus for a couple years. I contribute to the caretaking of my granddaughter. I took her to Power Park and noticed a hole in the spongy landing area. It was taken care of a few days later. I want to congratulate parks maintenance for getting it done right away. First class, we are light years ahead of other communities.

Chairman Dooley

I'll add the grass at Bosco Fields was kept a little higher this year to establish a root system. Once the roots are established you will notice that the fields may be a bit quicker and grass shorter. Surrounding communities will cherish Bosco Fields and want to visit. Thank you to the commissioners for your spirit and passion in what you do as commissioners for Novi Parks, Rec, and Cultural Services.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:54p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson