

D. Parks and Facilities Updates

Commissioner Dooley stated one of the great things about being a Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Commissioner is to be able to visit the various parks. Commissioners have been assigned parks to visit in 2021 and do a presentation and updates on the parks.

1. Novi Ice Arena – Commissioner Torimoto

Commissioner Torimoto gave a PowerPoint presentation. He stated he had visited the Novi Ice Arena yesterday. The snow from last Tuesday had all been cleaned up and the parking lot looked good. He wanted to highlight that there are two doors at the entrance. With COVID they have implemented one-way traffic. The right-hand door is the entry and the left is the exit and is enforced. They have done a nice job with the Ice Arena website, communicating, and clarifying the protocols for safety regarding COVID. He has been watching the website for a while and they have opened online registration for limited classes with capacity and class size limits. They were not open during the holidays, but he was able to get in yesterday in the public skate. You register for the classes, but the public skate has a limit of sixty people during limited hours. He talked to Eric, the general manager, and with COVID the risk of too many people showing up on the weekends is a challenge. He is discussing a pre-register to control the capacity and for contact tracing after if there is an incident. They have a video on social distancing and what to expect when you go to the Ice Arena on the website. Commissioner Torimoto showed photos of the inside of the Ice Arena with examples of the protocols in place. He noticed a few places with some minor wear, but everything was in good condition. He thanked Eric for his time.

2. Villa Barr Art Park – Commissioner Riggins

Commissioner Riggins stated the Villa Barr Art Park is a unique park displaying unique pieces. She showed pictures of the Isiah sculpture. A place on the piece looked like it was peeling. She wondered if it was weather related and if there was possibly a way to cover them or protect them during the winter months. She then presented a picture of the Filigree sculpture with a couple of the other sculptures in the background. These you can walk up to and just enjoy. The next piece presented was Salisbury Spiral. She was not real familiar with the piece and did not know if it was cracked a little or if it was the artist's design. The next picture was Koan, a beautiful piece which is orange. She went to the Villa Barr Art Park two different times. The first time was on Christmas Eve when there was not any snow. The second time was yesterday with the snow. The Koan looks beautiful in the daytime when the sun is out or in the snow. Equiknossos is another beautiful piece that looks amazing. You can see from the footprints in the snow there are still people walking through the park and enjoying it. She presented a picture of the Villa Barr Studio. When she went on Christmas Eve there was a lot of debris like sticks. The next picture was the frozen pond with the Venus Holding sculpture in front of it. The Sun Swirl looks good and is intact. The next picture was the Villa Barr garage with the basketball hoop with everything intact. She took a picture of the shed and wonders if that is something we can get fixed. She took a picture of the roof with water dripping from it. She was unsure if it had rained the day before, but she wanted to remind herself about the water. It may not be anything but

wanted to make a note of it. She tried to get an angle of everything at the park so you could see everything. The Source was intact and is a very nice piece. She then presented pictures of benches and other structural features. Yesterday the snow was cleared so you could get in the parking lot. Commissioner Joshi asked if we did anything with snow on the gravel path like shovel or clear it. Director Muck replied we do not. They tried the first year but were not supposed to and it damaged the gravel path.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

- A. Northwest Park Development Grant Application Approval
Commissioner Dooley introduced Director Muck for his presentation on Northwest Park.
- Director Muck stated the park is almost ten acres on Twelve Mile Road east of Napier Road. We acquired it through a Trust Fund Grant. We do have twenty-seven hundred Novi households within a two-mile radius. In November of 2019 we did a public input meeting. We have taken most, if not all, of what the public had recommended into the final conceptual plan you will be seeing. He presented pictures of the conceptual plan. Director Muck stated we are proposing crushed stone perimeter trails. We estimate it is about a half mile around the entire perimeter. The interior trails are planned to be natural. Part of the benefit of getting this grant and completing the park is we will complete the Twelve Mile pathway across the frontage of the park. Right now, there is a gap between where the Angelina Ridge subdivision property ends and where the Catholic Central property begins. That will complete the pathway. The park will include prairie restoration and overlook in the southern part and interpretive signage throughout. We got feedback not only from our residents and Grants Committee but also from the Parks Commission last time and a twelve to fifteen vehicle gravel parking lot is what is being proposed. A natural play area is one of the main features of this park. A natural play area is not a typical pre-packaged structure. You may have some pre-bought, precast, preformed kind of features but everything is meant to blend into the landscape. It is made with natural elements.
- Director Muck showed some examples of natural play areas.
- Director Muck stated based on input we went back and shored up our construction costs. The total project budget is around where we thought at \$569,000. The Land and Water Conservation Fund requires the City to do a matching grant of fifty percent. We are proposing that the City will fund \$284,721 and is what we are submitting for. He then pointed out the breakdown of the different costs for construction.
- What we are looking at for a timeline now is important.

Tonight, we are looking for your recommendation to go to City Council. We are going to be holding a virtual public meeting next Thursday. March 8th this will go to City Council.

We are required to have a public hearing which is different than the virtual public meeting or any public inputs. That is a very formal public hearing at City Council, asking City Council to approve the resolution that is required for the grant. We then have until April 1st to apply. As a reminder, we will not hear on any kind of approval on the grant until late 2021. We would not anticipate construction being possible to even start until late 2022. That is just the way the funds are released by both State and Federal agencies.

We have decided to do something we have never done in regard to our parks and that is to have a virtual public meeting. We are going to invite anyone who is interested in this park parcel to join him on Thursday, February 25th at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. They will see this presentation and are going to have an opportunity to answer questions and receive feedback. We just started spreading the word about this yesterday. This is something brand new that we just came up with late last week. We thought this would be a great opportunity especially in a time of COVID for the public to have another shot at this rather than just attending one of our meetings virtually or going to the City Council meeting virtually. All of you are obviously welcome to attend and would love to have you on board.

He would be willing to answer any questions or clarify any items.

At this point, if the Commission is so moved, we would love to have them recommend support to City Council to submit the Grant.

Commissioner Dooley asked the other Commission members if they had any questions or concerns for Director Muck.

Commissioner Riggins stated she had no questions.

Commissioner Joshi stated she had no questions.

Commissioner Torimoto stated at the last meeting there had been discussion about the potential of putting the parking lot on the north east corner but also of some discussion with Catholic Central. He asked if there had been any progress with that.

Director Muck state Catholic Central has written a letter of support for the grant but we have not been able to have any discussion of any sharing of the cost or position of the parking lot.

Commissioner Smith stated other than Commissioner Torimoto's question about the parking lot, it looks great.

Commissioner Joseph asked how we are are trying to garner support or get attendance up for the virtual presentation. He asked if it was just the normal social medias or are there going to be mailings.

Director Muck stated we are mainly doing the social media. He attempted to try and find a contact for a Homeowner's Association for Andelina Ridge but has

not been successful, so we are going to have to rely on social media and the City's broadcast methods.

Commissioner Joseph stated that was all he had. It looks really good.

Commissioner Staab stated he totally supports as submitted.

Commissioner Dooley stated his question about parking has been addressed.

He stated there are a lot of positives. He asked Director Muck if he wanted a roll call on a yea or nay as far as the next step of going to City Council.

Director Muck stated it should be motion and support and can be an all call.

Director Muck added if anyone in the public is watching this meeting, he wants to make clear this is still a conceptual plan. There are a lot of times we must move the trails, move the play area or we may have to move the parking lot.

Once you start getting into the actual design and engineering when you break ground things can happen. Things can change.

Commissioner Dooley stated the grant could be less or more based on the final cost.

Director Muck stated that is absolutely correct. If we do not receive all of the funding, we may have to think about doing this in stages. That is a great point.

Commissioner Dooley thanked Director Muck for answering all the questions.

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the presentation from Director Muck on February 25th and the Conceptual Plan going to City Council on March 8th.

Commissioner Joshi seconded the motion.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Projects Update

Director Muck stated Lakeshore Park is open. All outdoor amenities are open. We are still working through getting our temporary certificate of occupancy for the building. We are still dealing with some lighting issues, fire code issues and some things like that. We are probably three to four weeks away and are working through those issues for the building with our contractor and architect.

Wildlife Woods Park is located off Wixom Road and we received a Transportation Alternatives Program Grant to continue the ITC path north, then into Wildlife Woods Park to connect with the pathway in the

park up by the shelter. That is going to City Council on Monday night. We have to do a license agreement with ITC for approval. The reason he is bringing it up tonight is just to make the Commission aware that just within the last two weeks, we have had some discussions with Ascension Providence Hospital. They came to the City and are very interested in expanding their pathways and their trail system throughout their campus. They would like to connect with the ITC trail, potentially as soon as this summer. So what we'll be doing is asking ITC to take out the license to construct a small little stub across

the corridor so that the eventual trail, when Providence builds it, can connect everything together. Director Muck showed an illustration of the area. Right now, if you are traveling on the ITC Trail, north, you can see where you have to head east, and this takes you back around. It may be that some of you have gone that route. With this you will get a whole connection which is going to make it much easier to get to the school, the park shelter and the pickleball courts. This is really going to open that park up as well. It will also provide more opportunities for people on foot and on bikes to access the entire school district facilities. On Monday night at the City Council meeting, they will be asking for approval of the ITC licensing agreement. There is nothing you need to do as a park commission but he wanted to share the information with them.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if the picture presented was older.

Director Muck stated it is older, but this is the one he showed because this is the one being submitted to ITC. It does not show the housing development, the access road or the new parking lot.

Commissioner Torimoto stated he was there two weeks ago. The concrete foundation was there next to the pavilion and the fencing was up. He asked what is the next step for the pickleball courts.

Director Muck stated for the pickleball courts we need to come in back in, when the weather is suitable, to put down the acrylic base, like you put on tennis courts that has the lines and then install the nets and they will be ready to go.

Commissioner Riggins asked if Ascension spoke about what their motivation was for wanting to connect to the trail.

Director Muck stated it is part of their health and wellness initiative, not only for their employees and people visiting the campus but also for the greater community.

2. Awards and Recognitions

Director Muck stated Account Clerk, Julie Nickels, will be retiring after 22 years of service to the City. Her last day is next Friday.

We want to congratulate Chase Root, our Recreation Programmer, for obtaining his Certified Park and Recreation Professional certification. That is the national standard for certifications in our profession. It shows he has commitment, knowledge, and understanding of parks and recreation practices. He got this last week. He joins five of our other team members with that certification. Not only are we a nationally accredited department but we have a staff full of certified professional as well.

Recently, MParks, Michigan Parks and Recreation Association held their virtual Conference. At the conference we did win an award, a special agency award for our COVID 19 response. That was the Engagement Award.

Hopefully, this is the only time the agency has to issue those awards. But it was good to get.

Director Muck stated that this is what was submitted to capture why we received the award.

“The old adage says, March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.

2020 proved otherwise. By the middle of March the COVID 19 pandemic was impacting all facets of life, including Parks and Recreation. As a CAPRA accredited agency, the Novi community has high expectation for our services,

even during the pandemic, we didn't shut down. We worked from home. Our team immediately began refunding participants, engaging residents with at-home activities through social media, reformatting the Engage magazine, encouraging use of parks and communicating budget shortfall with City administration. Within days, staff started developing the tiered system for returning to recreation as the Governor's orders relaxed. This allowed us to pivot quickly and offer innovative programs as soon as possible. Novi Parks was one of the first to offer a summer camp, adult softball leagues, dance, and fitness classes. We launched new programs and services that are around to stay, e-sports leagues, Parks and RECESS, virtual fitness and more. We recreated recreation with new policies, programs and procedure that reflect the new normal and we will continue to adapt to best serve our community." Director Muck stated we accepted that award virtually and we will hang the plaque proudly in the atrium of the Civic Center.

Our next presenters were at the forefront of a lot of this.

B. Recreation Division

1. Summer Camp Program Update – Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller

Director Muck introduced Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller.

Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller stated she will give some background for the newer Commissioners. Both Camp Lakeshore and Camp Power Play are state licensed camps. With that, we are required to follow specific guidelines that are put in place by LARA, which is the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs through the State of Michigan. This year, for each of our camps we will start registration with 30 kids each because we feel we can properly social distance those campers, at Camp Lakeshore between the Dodge Brother room and our multipurpose room, and at Camp Power Play between our Event Quarter and the Activities Room. With running a camp last year, she feels we are a little ahead of the game and are returning success and are pretty comfortable with the guidelines we already have to follow. Some of the guidelines we will have to follow is that our campers have to stay in the same group of 10. They will be able to play games and interact and feel a little bit more comfortable throughout the weeks and with that are safe. They are also paired up with the same staff that stays with them. Upon entering camp, each camper and staff member has to complete a health screening form and then midway through the day we do an additional temperature check with all of our campers to make sure that they don't have a fever since they are telling us that fever is the main sign of having COVID 19 symptoms. We have increased our handwashing between every single activity. Our campers are either washing their hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer. We have increased the amount of cleaning we do of our surfacing and equipment. The state does require that our surfaces and equipment have to be wiped down at least once per day. We actually do that multiple times. It is usually at lunchtime and at the end of the day we are sanitizing our surfaces. As for masks, both staff and campers are required to wear masks when they are indoors. Outdoors masks are not required for campers and staff if they are able to maintain social distance. If they are participating in a high intensity activity we ask our staff wear the masks just to keep that little bit of safety and precaution. The one thing we are not able to add into our

camp programs is our field trips so what we are able to do is bring in presenters and entertainment to our campers. So we are doing on-site field trips for our campers to enjoy an enhanced camp program.

Commissioner Torimoto ask how hiring Camp Counselors was going. He asked If they are going to do CIT (Counselor in Training).

Recreation Supervisor Spiller replied that we are not doing the CIT program this year. She has an e-mail out to our licensing consultant to see if we can work with the CITs that applied last year, because we had five really good CIT applications last year and see if they can come in and volunteer. They would be assigned a week where they could come in during a certain hour time.

That would be a clearly volunteer basis in a free program we would offer those five applicants from last year. As for hiring, we currently have 12 returning counselors from last year that we have their applications and we need another eight counselors to still apply. Compared to past years we are pretty much at the same spot. We usually do interview the second weekend in March and then hire additional counselors as needed.

Commissioner Staab asked when registration starts.

Recreation Supervisor Spiller replied that registration starts March 1st. If you are interested in registering your child for camp she highly suggests registering them on March 1st since we are limited in number to 30 campers. We are only offering full week registrations. We are not doing the one and two day registrations this year.

2. Spring Sports Update – Recreation Programmer Chase Root

Director Muck introduced Recreation Programmer Chase Root.

Recreation Programmer Chase Root stated we have a lot of in person sports going on right now with a lot coming up this spring. It is not something we have always been able to say over the last year. All of the programs we are running are following the directive advised by Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Some of these things are like wearing masks and all of the schools are limiting indoor spectators to two per athlete. For the programs currently running, our basketball and volleyball leagues are a continuation of the fall season. We started out with non-contact practices on January 19th and we were given the go-ahead to do contact scrimmages and games on February 8th. This upcoming Saturday is going to be our first return to games. The season will go through March 6th. That one season for what was the fall is actually spanning what was our entire fall and winter seasons in the past, We have our youth floor hockey league that is going to start up this Sunday. Our youngest division filled with a waiting list. We also have contracted programs with tennis and basketball ongoing right now. For the spring, we weren't able to run a Winter league for basketball and volleyball but we still wanted to provide an opportunity for kids to either continue playing if they are interested or provide an opportunity for players that weren't able to join our leagues because we didn't offer a winter league, the opportunity to play. He created this basketball and volleyball mini league option. It is only a four week program where each session comprises a 25 minute practice and then a game following that practice. We already have over 120 registrations so far and we just opened it up about a week ago. The registration deadline is on

February 25th. That program will start the week of March 8th. That is something new we are trying out and hopefully will go well.

For Spring Soccer we will be getting outdoors. The registration deadline is next week as well, February 25th. We are seeing similar registration number as this last fall season. We have a little over 200 registrations so far for recreational soccer. He would expect another 100 or so the next week, the week of the deadline. Our select soccer program combines both the fall and spring. Those players are already registered and that is around 180 players. We also have other leagues this spring such as archery, which is in conjunction with Farmington Hills at the Riley Archery Range. He knows that they were only able to accept about half of what we normally do and there was a waiting list for the younger division, the fifth through eight grade division. We also have a High School division as well. We are also doing flag football through National Flag Football. We also have our adult league registration that is open as well for adult softball, 55 and over softball, adult golf, and adult tennis.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if there is potentially anything planned for Bosco Fields this Spring.

Director Muck stated we will know more when the snow melts but he would expect no sooner than summer at the earliest.

Director Muck would like to acknowledge that we have had a lot of help with Novi Schools and their staff, working with them on facility space and on the policies. He has had multiple conversations throughout this entire pandemic with the athletic director to make sure we are on the same page with processes. Chase is actively, always in discussion with the Community Education Department about facilities and with custodial staff. They help us make these programs possible when we are in the school buildings. We want to acknowledge that as well.

C. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Program & Services

Director Muck stated that the Meadowbrook Commons contract with KMG, our management company, goes to City Council on Monday night for a new three-year contract with optional one year or two-year renewals. They were the only bidder. That is quite alright because they have provided many, many years of strong customer service for us over at Meadowbrook Commons and strong management of that property. I am also happy to let you know that last Thursday our residents and OAS drivers and the KMG staff that work at Meadowbrook got their second dose of the COVID vaccine. The vaccine is Moderna. He knows Commissioner Staab asked last time. They are doing well over there. The residents are very excited, once this sets in, after they give it some time they want to start opening some of the common areas back up and let them start gathering socially again. Then we will be able to start taking some programs in there probably late March and get some of our typical programs back in there.

We have a brand-new quilt project that you might have seen advertised that has a March 31st deadline. We are doing a St. Patrick Day drive thru targeted towards seniors on March 11th.

The SOAR program is getting a good response. Right now people can sign up on a trial basis. That launches in April.

Our older adult transportation team has been working with the Novi Schools Adult Transition program to educate those students that they are eligible for that transportation because it is for age 55 and over and those with disabilities. We are trying to encourage them that they could use that to go to work if they have a part time job or a volunteer job.

Some health and wellness, Tai Chi, Stretch and Strength and those types of programs are starting back up, as well as karate.

We have been able to hold the AARP tax preparation. Yesterday was the second set of appointments. There was a period there where we were not even sure if AARP was going to offer that nationally. It goes to the COVID fears but we are doing it here in Novi. We are one of only a few places that are able to do it. So, unfortunately we have our spots all filled and we have had to close the waitlist. We are trying to accommodate as many people as possible but we won't be able to take any more. We will not be able to do as many as in past years. Just another of the impacts of COVID. Commissioner Staab stated it is good to have the management company back on board because they do a good job. His only issue, it came to the forefront will all of the snow, is the pushing of snow on Cherry Hill. It is across the side entrance of Meadowbrook Commons. He read something in the Engage discouraging residents from putting snow on to the street. Now they do go all the way across to the curb. Cherry Hill is not wide to start with. He asked if there was any way they could redirect the snow.

Director Muck stated he would follow up with that.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Torimoto stated he got to report on the Ice Arena tonight and it has been exactly a year. He looks back at what he submitted a year ago and we are getting back. He thinks the City has done a really nice job figuring out what the right way is keeping everyone safe and keeping the best parts together. Thank you for everything that is being done. He knows it is a lot more work.

Commissioner Joseph stated it was a great job on the presentations by Commissioner Torimoto and Commissioner Riggins.

Commissioner Riggins stated it was a great meeting tonight. It was very informative, detailed and a lot of new things coming up. She congratulated Chase Root on his certification. She wished Account Clerk, Julie Nickels, a happy retirement.

Commissioner Smith congratulated Chase Root and Julie Nickels. The reports by Commissioners Riggins and Torimoto were excellent and informative. He stated he is going to have the inside line on Meadowbrook Commons. His parents will be moving in on Monday. He had a chance to go through it and it is an excellent facility. It will be nice to have his parents close.

Commissioner Joshi congratulated, Chase and wished Julie a happy retirement.

She stated it sounds hopeful at this time compared to where we were nine months to a year ago. She went to Lakeshore Park and it looks amazing. Talking about all of the programs that are coming up it is hopeful.

Commissioner Staab stated the presentations by Commissioner Torimoto and Commissioner Riggins were excellent. The bar is set high. They had good insight and good information. He congratulated Chase on his certification. He wished Julie all the best in retirement. It was a good meeting tonight and he is looking forward to the

Northwest Park virtual meeting next week and the presentation to City Council in early March.

Commissioner Dooley stated he echoed all the comments this evening. The presentations by Commissioner Torimoto and Commissioner Riggins were fantastic. It helps those in the City who want to visit those two locations. Chase and Cristin are invaluable. Congratulations to Chase on his certification. Commissioner Dooley told a brief story of when he first met Account Clerk Julie Nickels and said she was a good ambassador for the City. He wished her well in her retirement,

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:14 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson