

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, March 16th, 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 (present), Joshi (present), Riggins (present), Tolkacz (present), Torimoto (present)
Student Representatives: Bheemineni (absent/excused), Raghunathan (absent/excused)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Line item 6D2 will be tabled until the April meeting.

Commissioner Staab motioned for approval of agenda and second by Commissioner Joseph.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved that the minutes for the February 16th meeting be approved by Commissioner Riggins and second by Commissioner Joseph.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz
Commissioner Tolkacz said there is no update because the meeting was moved to April. He will be out of town for the April Walkable Novi and Parks Commission meetings. Director Muck suggested calling the alternate to attend the Walkable Novi meeting. He encouraged everyone to complete the non-motorized survey because the committee needs more input. The April meeting will be robust with the survey results so the alternate should definitely be there.

- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Joshi, Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Joshi stated that the Parks Foundation meeting was cancelled last time too. There have been a lot of emails back and forth about the next meeting and Pour on the Shore. It was clarified that April 24th is the meet and greet with the Ambassadors.
Commissioner Staab added that Pour on the Shore will be July 28th from 6:00-10:00. The cost will be \$50 which will include wine, beer, and bourbon. The committee is close to nailing down the food trucks. There has been a commitment from Nothing Bundt Cakes to be the dessert sponsor.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Riggins

Commissioner Joseph said the meeting was cancelled for this evening until there is more information for grants which is worked through by the state. Director Muck added that the scoring has not come back on the Wildlife Woods Spark Grant, so we are in waiting mode. He has not heard any additional deadline dates. The DNR looks like they will not be funding as much from the trust fund this year because of poor market performance. It will be a down year on grants. The committee will circle back with the grants and start talking about strategy for 2024.

Commissioner Staab asked for an update on the Oakland County grant for the pickleball courts. Director Muck replied that design work has started. There was a focus group meeting with some residents. Updates have been made to the estimates and looking at the feasibility of the location of the courts. The design award will go to Council in April or May.

D. Parks and Facilities Updates

1. ITC Community Sports Park - Commissioner Joseph.

Commissioner Joseph introduced the ITC Community Sports Park with mentioning it is the biggest park in the city with walking trails, playgrounds, and many sports fields including baseball, softball, and soccer. Photos were shown of his walking tour of the park. A snippet from the website showing all the amenities and an aerial view were displayed. A picture of the kiosk with the news, city happenings and advertisements started the presentation. This shows park visitors what other activities are going on around the city. Everything around the sign and parking lot looked very nice. Commissioner Joseph said it was nice seeing the benches / sitting area by the Tim Pope Memorial Board getting use. However, the concrete meeting up with the pavers was giving way to erosion but it might have already been addressed. General landscaping and concrete work could be cleaned up a bit to get back to the original form. The playground and equipment were in great shape. There was a nice pad of mulch across the entire surface area. The posts were shown which are available to purchase to benefit the parks.

Commissioner Joseph explained the two tennis courts can be converted to four pickleball courts. The nets were down for the season, but the concrete and lines were in great shape. The basketball court was in great shape too. However, there were some signs of wear which can be expected from an outdoor basketball court. A picture was shown of the covered structure (shelter) with lavatories and picnic tables. He commented that some of the tables looked weathered but could easily be fixed with sanding and paint.

He was personally not aware of the second play structure. It is more focused for smaller children with a nice rubber pad instead of mulch. It was put in recently and provides activities for the siblings of individuals playing sports. It was in immaculate shape.

Commissioner Riggins asked for more details on how to donate. The initiative was explained, people can donate then their name will go on a picket. When the park was renovated in 2019 the posts from 1997 were kept as a key component. The Tim Pope family really wanted to maintain and preserve those pickets, and some have been added. The cost is \$100. They are available for sale on the Novi Parks Foundation website.

2. Brookfarm Park & Village Wood Lake Park – Commissioner Torimoto – tabled to April

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 survey closed on Monday and the results are starting to be digested. The consultants, the Spicer Group, sent a sampling of information which we have started analyzing. 865 surveys were completed and an additional 202 were partially completed. Those are significant numbers for a park master plan. This is a testimony of the popularity and what ITC Community Sports Park means to the community. 70% of the respondents were Novi residents, 30% non-residents, with the majority being from Northville or South Lyon, obviously being in close proximity to the park. The top five amenities people would like to see are lighting on select fields and courts, additional restrooms, enhanced trailhead / trail amenities for the ITC corridor, more tennis, and another play structure. The play structure was a surprise since there already are two nice ones. There was a lot of response with pickleball, tennis, and trail themes.

Recreation Supervisors Greg Morris and Chase Root will attend the next Parks Commission meeting to give a full presentation of the survey results. The next step will be the conceptual plans to be shared in July. Director Muck finished by saying it was a great job by the community telling us what they want to see at ITC. He appreciates the marketing team and Recreation Supervisors for getting the information out.

Additional questions were asked by the commissioners concerning soccer field usage relating to Bosco plus turf fields being mentioned in the survey.

2. Park Project Updates

Director Muck explained that the department is in a shoulder season transitioning winter programs into spring. Deputy Director Ringle will be talking about what this means for programs next. Some construction is happening. Everyone at this table should be excited to hear that the purchase of the southwest corner of 11 Mile and Beck Road will be on Monday's City Council agenda. The property is 3.93 acres, with just short of 500 feet of frontage on Beck Road and has a portion of a pond. The pond is along 11 Mile and extends to the northwest area of the property. This site was potentially going to be the location of a new funeral home, but the owner decided to sell to the city. It will be a great acquisition to help fill in the Bosco Fields Park once the land swap with the schools is complete. This is going to City Council on Monday night for approval.

Monday three bids were received for the splash pad however one was just for a small component of the entire project. OHM, the engineering firm, is analyzing the bid proposals. This should go to City Council on April 3rd.

Most likely a master plan process will take place for Bosco fields especially after the land swap occurs.

The Lakeshore Park tunnel project is progressing. The contractor has installed the new tunnel and culvert. Backfill and construction of the new concrete wing walls and retaining walls will be starting. These need to be put in place which will take approximately one month to complete. Access to Lakeshore Park is available from the west. Pictures of the project have been posted on the parks and recreation social media accounts.

The design award for Northwest Park is going to City Council on April 3rd. Deputy Director Ringle said she was able to walk the park with the consulting firm for design, engineering staff and Rick Meader, landscape architect to look at the layout to preserve as many trees as possible. They are also looking at the layout for the playground. The parking lot adjacent to the road was shifted to save some great trees.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Programs & Services

Deputy Director Ringle agreed that the department is in shoulder season, doing a lot of prep for spring as well as tying up the ends of the winter programs. In the sports division registration is underway for youth baseball and softball. Adult softball registration is also ongoing. Currently, all league night numbers look really good, and we anticipate having full leagues. Registration is happening for the adult spring basketball league. There is a lot of interest in the summer league which will be held outdoors. This will be a different experience for the players. 825 soccer players are registered for the spring season which is a record turnout. The Youth and Teen division held a Nerf Night last weekend that went well. There will be a survey sent to the attendees to gather their ideas to continue to improve the programs. Possibly doing a mix of indoor and outdoor locations depending on the seasons.

Eggstravaganza is sold out with 300 kids. It will be held in the beginning of April (4/2).

Summer camp registration begins April 3rd. We are still looking to hire six to eight camp counselors. Deputy Director Ringle asked the commissioners to refer any individuals ages 18+ that would be interested.

Tickets go on sale tomorrow for the Seussical Junior production. The show will have two casts with a total of fifty-four actors.

The staff across all divisions continue to fill the duties for cultural arts as we continue to seek to fill that position. Everyone is doing a great job keeping Cultural Arts moving forward.

C. Older Adult Division –Director Jeff Muck

1. Programs and Services

Director Muck reported on a few items happening in OAS. The Shamrock Shuffle took place yesterday with a total of fifty-five people signed up to go on a two-mile St. Patrick's Day themed hike at Lakeshore Park. Seventeen shamrocks were hidden along the trail. Participants were encouraged to dress in green and find the shamrocks as they walked the trail before heading inside for hot chocolate. The OAS St. Patrick's Day luncheon will take place tomorrow. Eighty-one people are registered. Moe's on Ten will be providing corned beef and cabbage, boiled carrots, and potatoes, Guernsey will be providing the ice cream. A guitar player

and harpist will entertain the crowd with classic Irish tunes. This a nice uptick in attendance, contributed to the menu changes.

Transportation is going to be taking a group of older adults to Schoolcraft College on March 29th for a classical concert. The concert will be performed by professionals and talented students from the Schoolcraft College Music Department. The Novi Choralaires will be bringing Broadway to Meadowbrook on the evening of Tuesday April 4th. Director Muck reminded everyone that this concert is free and open to the public. It is a nice concert for the residents and allows the Choralaires a chance to rehearse in front of a group before their big performance.

The annual euchre tournament will take place on April 22nd from 2:00-7:00 at the Civic Center.

All appointment times are filled for the AARP tax aid. Novi is one of the largest tax aid sites in Michigan. The people who are taking advantage of the program are grateful for the volunteers helping with taxes. A Financial Crimes Scams and Identity Theft seminar will be presented by Novi police detective, Jeremy Stempien on March 22nd at 1:00 at the Novi Civic Center.

OAS is holding an Area Agency on Aging 1-B Aging Mastery Program on Thursdays April 20th – June 22nd. Smart Money Week is coming up and Eric Glick will presenting an OAS Planning with Special Needs Trusts on April 21st at 6:00.

OAS is hosting the Oakland County Veterans Resource Fair on Thursday April 6th form 9:00 – noon. All veterans and their families are invited to attend this free event. Last year around 100 veterans attended, and we hope for similar participation. Memorial Day planning is in full swing. Invitations have been sent out to community groups and past participants. Three applications have been submitted. Director Muck asked the commissioners to help get the information out to community groups. They are hoping for a nice parade with an increase in attendance as they build back from COVID.

Director Muck addressed the Older Adult Needs Committee. The group met on Monday night. There was a presentation from the Area Agency on Aging's wide range of programs and services including Wheels on Wheels, fall prevention, and Aging Mastery. The committee asked several questions that will be followed up on such as adult day care services, the number of clients from Novi and what is the most requested service. The committee wanted to obtain data and know what residents want. The committee will get a lot of follow-up information from the Area Agency on Aging at the next meeting in two weeks. The police and fire team will come to discuss what they are seeing in the community as it relates to seniors and older adults. The code enforcement department will also give a presentation in regard to home repair.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Joseph

It may feel like the shoulder season but all that was outlined the department is still extremely busy and quite humble. It looks like spring is shaping up already to be another record year. I look forward to hearing everything that comes out of it.

Commissioner Tolkacz

Believe it or not that was my exact comment about shoulder season. If you happen to walk into the room at the time, there does not seem to be any decrease in activities. Nice work. I did have a question if there were any updates on the Parkrun presentation from last week. What are the next steps forward to investigate whether the proposal is feasible?

Director Muck answered that the department has not coordinated any follow up with those young gentlemen yet.

Commissioner Torimoto

It was good to hear how much engagement there was from the master plan. I had a chance to attend. The number of responses from the general community; 850 plus 200 was pretty fantastic. I am looking forward to seeing what it looks like. In addition to Bosco Fields this opens another possibility of really nice facilities. I am looking forward to that. Thank you very much for the updates.

Commissioner Riggins

I just want to say it is always good to hear about all the great programs and everything Novi has to offer because we offer for little kids to older adults, everyone is included. It is really inclusive. I really love that about our city.

I can't wait for the survey results for ITC. It is going to be really good to get that information. Good luck with the 11 Mile and Beck Road initiative.

Commissioner Joshi

I am echoing the comments from Commissioner Riggins and Torimoto. I am looking forward to seeing what is going to happen the next few meetings and even in July. Thank you for the presentation on ITC Sports Park.

Commissioner Staab

Commissioner Staab asked Deputy Director Ringle how close the department is to filling the Supervisor of Cultural Services position. Deputy Director Ringle responded that there are some applicants and initial short video interview / chats have taken place. The next steps would be to determine if we want to move forward with any of these candidates. Director Muck would be involved in the next steps, and we are working around his schedule.

Commissioner Staab then asked for any updates from mParks last week. Director Muck said it was a very good conference. Four staff members attended the entire program and three others attended for a day for great education sessions. We actually debriefed in the staff meeting today. I think, to a tee, everybody brought back some things that really stood out. We did receive a park design award for the RC Raceway. Jeremiah Pilarski came to accept it as he was the lead. There was a picture posted on social media of the awards. The award will be put up in the park's maintenance office. Commissioner Staab said he appreciates everything you do. He wished the audience a very blessed holiday season with Passover and Easter coming up in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Dooley

I am glad the ITC Parkrun was mentioned. I wanted to compliment you for allowing those two students to come in last month. They were awesome and certainly don't

want to lose sight of their passion. I think it is very important and am glad it is in the conceptual planning as well. Commissioner Riggins, I wanted to compliment you as well for the diversity that you talked about the department excelling in. Whether it is young children, middle age, adolescent, high school, or older adults there is something for everybody in the City of Novi. Not a lot of cities / municipalities can say that. We are very lucky and blessed that we have the opportunity as commissioners to listen every single month and spread the joy and get the word out. Thank you for continuing to excel and commissioners for a robust discussion and insights that you all provided.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:44p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson