

Natural Resources Trust Fund money or not? The locals could see more funds if the DNR must use the federal funds first. In addition, last November the state had an election that passed a proposal that would allow more funds to be shifted from acquisition to development. The hope is there is more of this would come to Novi through grants or stipends. We are in good position to stay informed because I take office in August as the president of MParks, the state parks and recreation association. We will have a seat at the table with the DNR to discuss these opportunities and details.

Commissioner Joshi added that potential land acquisition and 2022 grant priority was discussed at the meeting. Director Muck summarized that it was an idea generating meeting. He was given direction on what to bring back to the table. The next meeting will be in September.

Commissioner Joseph asked if it was too early to understand if there is any specific stipulations or hurdles for a specific project to get approved. Director Muck answered "it is a bit early to tell. CIP projects planned for the next five years are being looked at to see if they would fit in the existing grant structure. There is a lot of priority on trails and water access in grant scoring. The committee did give me what was needed as far as projects to target for funding."

D. Parks and Facilities Updates

1. Furest Park – Commissioner Joshi

Tabled until August meeting

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. OAS Advisory Board Update – Director Jeff Muck

Director Muck provided background on the Older Adult Advisory Board. It was formed in 2013 through a City Council initiative to provide input and feedback regarding OAS programming, social services, and communications. The board advocates for older adults and promotes community involvement. The board consists of Novi residents and staff liaisons from the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department. Members meet every other third Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm. The meetings were suspended due to COVID for a while then resumed electronically last August. Meetings are returning in-person next month. The positions are appointed by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Director with recommendations from older adults and parks and recreation staff. The current membership includes Dr. Joslen Letscher, Michael Longo, Mary Storch, Neha Kiru, Janet Censoni, and Cecilia Gallagher. The staff liaisons are Sandy Fisher our OAS Social Services Coordinator, myself, and Recreation Supervisor Jessica Mistak has been actively involved the last several months. Deputy Director Ringle has assisted in my absence.

Recent agendas and discussions have centered on OAS transportation, Meadowbrook Commons operations, aging in place initiatives and the Special Outreach Services program. The advisory board provides a valuable sounding board for us, most recently with the playground at Power Park with the handicapped accessibility. We are also looking at older adults when we create a hundred percent inclusive park.

We will be discussing how best to reach our residents to ensure those in need or

want the services provided know that they are available. Parks and Recreation is also reengaging with AARP to discuss the age friendly community program where we design activities for all ages and abilities. We are also listening to what items of value we may need to add to increase the quality of life for those in the OAS age range. A survey will be launched that is focused on programs and desired locations in the next week.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there is a need for one of the parks commissioners to sit in on the OAS meetings? Director Muck answered that it would be more than welcomed. The meetings are every other month on the third Tuesday and last about one hour.

B. Cultural Arts Advisory Update - Recreation Supervisor Alyssa Golles

Recreation Supervisor Alyssa Golles gave a similar update on the Cultural Arts Advisory Board. The Cultural Arts Advisory Board was formed in 2013. It provides feedback and input on our cultural arts programming in Novi, everything from classes, events, and infrastructure regarding cultural arts. The board helps promote our cultural arts programs and advocates for art in Novi. The board is made up of Novi residents who are passionate about the arts, and many are artists. The board has two staff liaisons, Alyssa Golles and Mary Robinson from the library. There is currently six active members Stephanie Hall, Mary Kondrociuk, Becky Staab, Laura Williams, Sondra Sutton Phung, and Mahesh Wasnik. The meetings are held monthly on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:00.

Recreation Supervisor Alyssa Golles added she anticipates going back to in person meetings in August. Yearly the board assists with jurying the art shows in the atrium. We have had enough artists of late to do monthly shows. Looking through the submitted art is one of the favorite projects of the board. Several members have displayed their own art as well.

Recent agendas have centered around our cultural arts programming and how we can continue to grow those programs through COVID shutdowns. Including changes in what other communities have brought forth and what we can bring to Novi. A big future project coming up for CAAB is utilizing the display case in the atrium. We are going to gather photos and descriptions highlighting work in our parks and other locations around Novi.

C. Website Enhancements

Commissioner Smith began the discussion on website enhancements to highlight the accessibility features of the parks. Commissioner Smith began with "I was speaking with a resident with a special needs child, she knew I was on parks commission. She was asking about Power Park" he added, she mentioned it would be useful to have one spot on the website to see special features with pictures of equipment so it would be easy to decide where to go. Information about shade would be helpful for people with issues controlling body temperature. Commissioner Smith brought this suggestion to Director Muck.

Director Muck asked to hear some feedback from the commission on how they would envision this looking. He asked should highlights be major areas, added on each of our park's webpage or a separate stand-alone page.

Commissioner Dooley added he thinks it is a great idea. Anything the city can do for special needs I am all in favor based on my daughter and wife's involvement with Miss Amazing. He questioned what is the unmet need for the person that came to you? What did they miss on the website? What would they like to see? Commissioner Smith answered pictures to help see the exact the equipment. He added it is a win-win the website enhancements can help people with a need and highlight the good things we are doing for suppling accessibility for parks. The commissioners had a great discussion regarding ideas, features, examples of established similar webpages and how best to meet the need. This will be a discussion matter for next month's meeting. Commissioner Smith said it can also be used as a learning opportunity for needs that we are not able to fulfill today.

Commissioner Joshi said she thinks it is a great idea. She questioned since we have a page for each park would it be beneficial to add something just to each park or to have a separate page that mentions each park. Commissioner Riggins stated adding it just to the page with more pictures on the webpage would be better than a separate page. Commissioner Smith said he likes one stop shopping so if I'm looking for details, I can go to one place and see everything. Commissioner Joshi asked which would be more feasible and easier to modify. Commissioner Joseph agreed with Commissioner Smith. He continued the DNR website for a state park has tiny squares that reference a need or accessibility which can get confusing depending on the size of the park and features. If you are an individual with special needs and specifically seeking out an activity to be part of it is easier to go down to focus. It is going to be difficult to touch on each disability that we are able to service and maybe it is a fluid page or document. But if you can list it by need in a special section it would be easier than going through each of the park's webpages.

Commissioner Staab questioned how in depth are we going to go on this special page because the parks all have accessible features right now. How specific do we zero in? Commissioner Smith said "I would go as specific as we could just to make it easy for people because she was asking specific questions for the needs of her child."

Commissioner Riggins asked if the special need would be listed and then the parks you should go to if you have this particular need. Commissioner Smith clarified Commissioner Joseph was suggesting a grid with the parks and features. Commissioner Staab asked how many items would be on the grid? Commissioner Smith answered as many as we have, it could even include regular features not specific to special needs. It could be a PDF file which could easily be updated.

Commissioner Dooley requested an example of what one of the parks webpages would entail if we went on the website right now. Director Muck added he thinks it is a great idea as we figure out the scope. I lean more towards highlighting significant projects such as Power Park and the Mobi Mat at Lakeshore Beach that have increased accessibility. Then each park site has the icons and map to detail. Commissioner Joseph mentioned he fears that it is a little difficult to appease everyone's needs. Commissioner Dooley suggested that Commissioner Smith speak to the family regarding the website to see what they were missing.

Director Muck added that the city website has been enhanced with a more robust search function. It was also suggested to look at other communities however, Director Muck feels most are on an individual park page. This will be a discussion matter for next month's meeting. Commissioner Smith said it can also be used as a learning opportunity for needs that we are not able to fulfill today.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Projects Update

Director Muck started with an update on the ITC Trail. The connectors on Ten Mile still have not been done. Guidewires are still down. DTE was delayed with some other items (big storm) so we will continue to wait. The boardwalks north of Nine Mile just south of Eleven Mile will need to be shut down for a couple days next week to repair some headwalls. The rest of the trail will be open, but the boardwalks cannot be crossed. Information will be updated on the social media pages. Replacement landscaping is ongoing at Lakeshore Park. Unfortunately, the Lakeshore open house was cancelled due to weather. Instead, we are having pop-up events. Programs such as Sizzling Summer have returned to Lakeshore and are held on Wednesdays. The Tree Fam Relay is going to be held on July 24th. It is an important event for the Motor City Mountain Bike Association, as their largest fund raiser each year. We could not have the mountain bike trails at Lakeshore without this group. After the storm there were downed trees on the trail. The Motor City Mountain Bike Association was out in mass taking care of the debris and had it cleared in a day so people could use the trails. Therefore, this is an important event that we wholeheartedly support.

There are new colors on the water tower. Progress is being made however, the crew is fighting the weather, rain, and wind. The graphics on the tower are next. But it is probably at least three weeks out from a complete wrap up. The safety surface at Power Park is yet to be installed with the common theme of weather delays.

Director Muck is encouraged with Bosco fields. The contractor is still being asked to fix some low-lying areas and drainage. It is getting close since the turf adjustments have been made. We are looking at opening in spring of 2022 for play. The turf needs to come in before we start putting hundreds of kids out there on the soccer fields.

There is no news on the Northwest Park grant. It is a long process. Initial scoring should be in August or September with final status in December. Commissioner

Joshi asked when it was submitted. Director Muck replied the deadline was April 1st.

Questions were asked about the gates at Bosco. Director Muck explained the gates are open when the landscapers are working. The public can use the walking trails, but people need to stay off the fields. The gates are closed when there is not work being done.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Tracie Ringle stated the weather has been a challenge. We did a pop-up event in lieu of the cancelled open house with yard games, popcorn, and popsicles. There will likely be another one in August to introduce more people to Lakeshore Park.

Deputy Director Tracie Ringle continued with the updates. We are halfway through the camp season at Lakeshore and PowerPlay. One hundred spots have been opened for the Piston camp. It is really nice to be able to get big groups coming back in and interested in sports. Fall softball registration is now open as well as volleyball and basketball. A fencing program will be offered at the Lakeshore Park building after Labor Day.

Sports revenue looks to be higher this quarter than it was in 2019 (pre-COVID). As of today, we are \$7,000 ahead of 2018 shelter rental revenue. It is measured against 2018 due to Lakeshore Park being closed for construction. At this point there is only one weekend half day available at Lakeshore Park for the summer. The half day rentals have been well received since we have been able to accommodate more parties. The park attendants help move the parties along and clean up with another party coming up behind them.

The dance summer session numbers are higher than in past years. We are planning to have a fall full stage theatre production in November. Attendance has been great at Sizzling Summer events. We are working with Choralaires and Concert Band to come back and perform for some of our programs and their own. They are both in reorganization / rebuilding phase and we are anticipating them being back in the fall. We have offered outdoor rehearsal space to both groups and the band has some dates scheduled.

A new Jack-o-Lantern Jubilee Halloween program will take place at Wildlife Woods and the ITC Trail. There will be sponsors on the treat trail of that event. The Older Adult Service team and our event team are working together for Veteran's Day event which will take place November 10th. It will have a different feel, USO style with music and entertainment.

Commissioner Joshi asked if the fencing program is for adults or children. Deputy Director Ringle responded it is a family program with multiple age groups.

Commissioner Joshi asked if the Sizzling Summer movie night would be held inside? Deputy Director Ringle explained the experience is better outside which can have more people and also benefits the sponsors. Commissioner Joshi also asked about Lakeshore not having lifeguards this summer. Director Muck has not received any complaints. It is common practice now. There have been lifeguard shortages across the state.

D. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Special Outreach Services Update

Director Muck started with our staff has been busy returning recreational programs for older adults such as card, hobbies, daily lunches at Meadowbrook Commons, blood pressure checks and fitness classes. City Manager Auger provided a report to City Council on Monday night which Director Muck provided an abbreviated version. All of us know the impact the shutdown had on senior services from staffing, facility, and program shutdowns. We are returning and restructuring the department in order to add programs both in quality and quantity of activities and services we provide. We are currently in the process of hiring a full-time Recreation Supervisor. This position will focus on OAS with direct interaction with the target population. They will develop and run special events, games, travel, fitness and build on the SOS initiative. The position will also support department wide large events such as Veteran's Day and Memorial Day. These types of duties were previously handled by part-time employees. Currently there are 35-40 applicants. We hope to have a new member of the team soon.

The SOS program has been very successful with 1,100 calls made to residents age 60+ and 90 home visits to residents we could not reach by phone. We reached out to 20 churches, 25 medical therapy providers and 40 homeowner associations. 53 residents were referred to services that they were previously unaware of such as senior housing, ask a lawyer, estate planning, transportation, and the medical loan closet. In addition, 250 files of life were distributed in conjunction with the Novi Fire Department. These files go on a refrigerator door with important information.

After the recent storm there were a lot of power outages. The department made 115 calls to seniors 85+. We were able to assist a woman who had a tree fall on her house to facilitate her service needs.

Director Muck continued that the staff has been working with the Meadowbrook Commons management team to provide as many programs and services as possible throughout the shutdown. It was challenging due to government mandates, federal, state and county restrictions. This did send mixed messages to the Novi OAS population. Our team has worked with KMG, who operates Meadowbrook Commons, on ways to improve engagement and better connectivity if we should ever have that kind of drastic measures again. KMG has also restructured a staff position which will be responsible for program offerings and services directly to the residents of Meadowbrook Commons only such as book club, technology club, games, tournaments, and singalongs. This position was never in place at Meadowbrook Commons. Those type of activities were programmed by the PRCS team. This provides an additional benefit to residents. Furthermore, it allows us at PRCS to focus on programming the Meadowbrook Activity Center, the new Lakeshore facility, and the Civic Center for the entire senior population in Novi, in addition to the Meadowbrook Commons residents. The luncheons, events and bingo will continue but we want to expand with fitness, nature walks and activities in the parks. We saw during COVID how important parks were to or physical and mental health which we want to encourage the older population to get involved. Intergenerational

programming is being addressed to focus on programs for mental health during the winter months.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Joseph

It is great to be here and see everyone live and in-person versus Zoom. This being my first meeting live it is very helpful versus the tiny square on the computer. There was a lot of great updates especially the Lakeshore rentals and revenue increase.

Commissioner Smith

It is great to hear the revenues are up. That means people are out using the facilities, having fun, and getting back to normal. It is good to be back and see everyone in-person.

Commissioner Joshi

I would echo the same comments. It is nice to hear the revenue is up even from 2018. It is nice to see everyone in-person. We have some homework thanks to Commissioner Smith.

Commissioner Riggins

I am happy to be back seeing everybody. I wanted to give everyone a hug which I did. It is exciting to hear about everything that is going on in our parks, people getting out and enjoying themselves.

Commissioner Staab

I want to congratulate the department for never missing a beat during the pandemic, coming out of it strong, especially with revenue, information, and activities going on. Thinking ahead and visioning different ways to align the department and services to meet the needs better. Over the last month I had the occasion to travel from New Buffalo to Traverse City and went to several splash pads and beaches. There is a lot going on there, but we do well here with softball, soccer, volleyball and so on. The whole country and world are itching to be outside and do more activities and we provide an excellent way to do that.

Commissioner Dooley

I had an opportunity to show off some of our parks recently. I was with a member of my work team planning for a two-day meeting in Novi at the end of July. We were looking for an activity. I took him to Pavilion Shore, Lakeshore Park and went around the lake. He could not believe the condition of those two parks from where they were prior and where they are today and all the improvements that have recently been made. I showed him city hall, drove down Ten Mile and he was impressed with the City of Novi. My team is going to be very impressed when they come out in July. I want to thank this department and commission for the passion that we instill in our belief in what Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services provides.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Joseph and seconded by Commissioner Smith

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 7:57p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson