

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, December 21st, 2023 – 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), Riggins (present), Dooley (present), Joshi (present), Staab (present), Tolkacz (present), Torimoto (present)
Student Representatives: DiDomenico (absent/excused), Sid (absent)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Joshi had an addendum to move the Meadowbrook Commons report to January. Commissioner Dooley motioned for approval of agenda and second by Commissioner Joshi.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Dooley & Tolkacz
Commissioner Tolkacz said there was no update for this month.

- B. Novi Parks Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Joshi, Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Staab mentioned he was nominated and accepted to be the President of the Parks Foundation, Bryan Adams will serve as Vice President and Commissioner Joshi will be the Secretary.
Pour on the Shore will take place July 26th. The next meeting is in February.
Commissioner Joseph added that the Jessica Splash Pad account is now over \$300,000 which is an impressive feat. Commissioner Staab mentioned that Carol, Jessica's mom was on WJR and gave a testimonial about her excellent relationship working with Novi, Mayor Gatt and Director Muck to build the splash pad. Everybody is looking forward to its opening in the summer of 2024.
Commissioner Torimoto praised Executive Director Melissa Agosta's fantastic job on Pour on the Shore. 80% of the sponsors from this year have verbally committed to next year. The food trucks and tents have already been secured.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Joseph & Riggins

Commissioner Joseph said there has not been a meeting. Director Muck added that they did receive a grant application for the \$200,000 for the splash pad through the State of Michigan appropriation that was secured by our State Representative Kelly Breen. The application is due January 15th. The money would come to the city not the foundation.

Director Muck added that the opening on City Council was filled Monday night. Now they will move forward to appoint representatives to committees including Walkable Novi.

D. Parks and Facilities Updates

1. Novi Dog Park – Commissioner Torimoto

Commissioner Torimoto said he was a dog park member when his dog was younger and has not been recently. He borrowed a key fob from the office so he would have a chance to visit, which he did at two different times. He presented pictures of the entrance sign which displayed park hours and rules. The dog park is behind the ice arena. He showed Google Maps photos along with pictures of the walking paths and park itself. There were people walking from the ice arena parking lot, the apartments, and condos.

Commissioner Torimoto went to the website to understand the membership process. He explained the informative training video. Since the park is self-governing the video does a good job of explaining the expectations. The park has approximately 400 members, which he feels is a good participation rate. Pictures were shown of the gates and how the fobs work which are the most important features. The park has a very solid double gated entrance and exit. After the entrance participants can go to the small dog side on the left or forward to the large dog side. There is even a spot to hang a leash. The fob functioned well releasing and locking back up when the gate is closed. The water fountain is great but currently winterized. Commissioner Torimoto walked the perimeter of the park and checked the fence which is important to ensure the dogs are secure. The trees were trimmed and looked fantastic. The grass did look sporadic in places. The dog waste bags were fully stocked, and the garbage cans were nice and organized. Benches, drainage, pooling of water were also discussed. A dedicated tree in memory of a former Novi employee who used the park often was also highlighted. Finally, the membership cost and requirements were addressed.

2. Meadowbrook Commons – Commissioner Joshi – tabled to January.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

A. ITC Community Sports Park Concept Plan

Director Muck gave the commissioners information on the final conceptual plan for ITC. It all started at the City Council budget session 4/6/22 when \$50,000 was approved allocating for park updates to the ITC Community Sports Park. Due to the variety of needs from the community, a consulting firm, Spicer Group was hired to assist with the planning of the park update. Spicer Group and city staff developed

conceptual plans based on information gathered from stakeholder meetings, an open house, and community survey. The concept drawings were revised based on feedback from this commission and staff and consolidated into one proposed plan. Some of the highlights of the final plan include renovation of existing baseball and softball fields including grading and leveling of infields, fence repairs, restroom renovations, adding dugout covers and shade structures. Restructuring the layout of the soccer fields along with the addition of two turf fields with lights. The Jaguars have submitted a letter of interest to work with the city for funding of the turf fields. Adding a tennis and pickleball complex in the southwest corner of the park with lights. Building a multi-use pavilion and basketball courts in the southeast corner of the park. Construct a traffic circle in the center of the park to assist with traffic calming and flow. This will allow specific areas to be blocked off for tournaments and events. Develop a trailhead plaza, pave parking throughout the park and add an expanded concession / food truck area. Director Muck stressed that this is only a conceptual plan. When construction begins things can change, items may be moved around due to budgetary issues.

Spicer Group has an initial estimate of 19.65 million which does not include engineering fees and contingencies. We are planning to put forward a minimum of 25 million to City Council for the budget. January 6th city council will meet for goal setting and talk about prioritization of big-ticket projects including the widening of Beck Road, rehabilitation of 12 Mile, new police and fire headquarters, and a senior / recreation center.

Director Muck asked for feedback from the commissioners. There was discussion regarding cricket, the roundabout, irrigation, detention ponds, funding by the Jags and NYBL, and how the project will affect the sports programs schedules. Overall, the commissioners had positive feedback. Commissioner Dooley motioned to move forward with taking the plan to council, second by Commissioner Tolkacz and all commissioners were in favor.

B. Commissioner Park Report Schedule

Director Muck provided a draft proposal for assigning the park reports. Nine parks with seven commissioners and two student representatives. The months of November, December and January will be omitted due to the holidays and weather. The parks will be assigned alphabetically with the student representatives being assigned in the summer when they are out of school. All the major parks including the splash pad and Bosco will be in rotation. The Civic Center, due to the amount of programming could be considered as well.

More discussion will occur for the exact plan however, the proposed schedule will begin but may be altered.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck said that the plans to reconstruct the southern end of the parking lot at Lakeshore Park are moving forward. This would eliminate the existing cul-de-sac and kiosk, create additional parking spaces to service the trail system, playground, and shelter. The Motor City Mountain Bike Association plans to build

a change station and storage facility. The plans were advertised for public bids on November 27th. Eight were received and opened on December 18th. The award is expected to go to City Council in early January. The amount is \$278,615 which is \$100,000 less than budgeted. Construction is expected to begin next spring and last approximately two weeks.

Director Muck and Meadowbrook Commons Community Manager, Ginny Hallam did a final walk through for the replacement doors, window, and door wall project. The sound dampening and decreasing of drafts was successful. In addition, the windows are easier to operate. The project took longer than expected, however, staff and the residents are satisfied with the results.

2. Potential Park Property Acquisition

Director Muck updated the commissioners that City Council recently approved a tentative purchase agreement for the vacant property on Eight Mile Road adjacent to ITC Sports Park. The property is approximately 88.32 acres. The purchase has been approved for \$4 million which includes closing and related costs. This was first discussed in 2016. At that time there was no agreement on the purchase price. Talks restarted last summer which were re-energized by the grants committee. The city is in the process of doing its due diligence on the property including a land survey and expanded environmental studies.

Additional updates will be reported after the new year as we determine if this is an appropriate property for the city to acquire. Additional conversation took place among the commissioners concerning environmental issues and uses of the property.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Programs & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said the department wrapped up the 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge with a variety of programming from sports – crafts – night hikes. There were mixed results. Our department hosted eight of the twelve programs four of which were cancelled. Some programs did better than others such as Lunch with Santa, and the free outdoor programs, Night Hike and Owl Prowl. Drum the Halls with Madison Lachance and the glass fusion class were a success. Since it was the first time doing these programs, we will take the feedback received to help plan next year's holiday happenings. The building itself looked great with décor inside and out. The windows were painted with winter scenes by Brush Monkey, an Ann Arbor window painting company. The paintings will remain the rest of the season.

Deputy Director Ringle continued saying the registration for the T-Bolts begins January 1st. Another partner was added, Southeaster Livingston County Recreation Authority. Adult softball returning team registration begins January 2nd. The winter pickleball ladder league is full.

Sean Penndorf has been part time on the sports team since summer. He will be assisting with a slightly expanded role managing rosters, training site supervisors, and helping Steve and Chase manage the growing sports programs. He recently retired from his previous career and will be a great resource for the department due to his computer and Excel skills.

John Gillingham started on December 11th. He is moving full steam ahead with

the Daddy Daughter Dance and Mother Son Night. He is also digging into summer camp by meeting with the returning head camp counselor, researching folders with materials from previous years and reading comments from past surveys. He is interested in what we have done and how to enhance. Summer camp registration begins April 1st.

Stella Johnstone started on December 4th. She is digesting the Arts and Events division by planning entertainment for the Sizzling Summer Art Series, working with theatre for the April production of Disney's Descendants, and overseeing the atrium art slate. She will help Deputy Director Ringle with all the happenings and artist in residency programs at Villa Barr. We plan to have both new recreation supervisors at an upcoming Parks Commission meeting. Currently, site supervisors and camp councilors are being hired.

C. Older Adult Division – OAS Manager Kit Kieser

1. Programs and Services

OAS Manager Kit Kieser began with recapping some of the December programs for seniors including a few during 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge. A holiday luncheon was held at Meadowbrook Commons with fifty people in attendance. The dinner was a traditional ham from Moe's that the participants enjoyed the food. Jimmy K was the entertainment.

OAS hosted the Oakland County Veterans Resource Fair. Over 300 veterans registered. \$100 gift card from Meijer and food boxes were given away.

Brain Health 101 has been a fantastic success with over fourteen people in attendance. A Lakeshore Lodge program called Novi Holiday History was presented by the Historical Commission with Kathy Crawford speaking. Twenty-four people listened to the presentation. It was a success because it has been a struggle getting older adults to programs at Lakeshore.

Upcoming is the large program, AARP Tax Aid. Appointments can be scheduled starting January 4th, over 100 calls are expected. Appointments begin in February.

Cutting the Cord, Michigan Day, National Seed Swap Day, and Powerful Tools for Caregivers are all scheduled in January. Another luncheon is planned for February. Registration opens for the Mackinaw trip in February which is scheduled for October 15th -18th. Commissioner Staab mentioned the Choralaires ice cream social fundraiser February 7th.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Tolkacz

A lot is going on as usual. First, I would like to give kudos to Commissioner Torimoto, nice reporting on the dog park, very informative, thank you for putting that together. I was very interested in the ITC sports park discussion. There are a lot of possibilities. I look forward to being part of the planning if we can make it happen. Deputy Director Ringle I think you underestimated the results of the outdoor fest, to me it seemed like a smashing success for the first year. There was a lot going on in the Older Adults Division as well.

Commissioner Joshi

I want to echo the same comments. Thank you for the presentation and information, however, I don't think I'll ever go to the dog park.

I am looking forward to seeing how ITC Community Sports Park turns out. It is nice to see it right from the beginning with the conceptual plan to the end.

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Dooley

I agree with the previous comments. A lot is going on. Tracie and Kit do a tremendous job as leaders in your departments. Thank you very much. It is amazing the amount of activity in both departments.

Overall, the conceptual plan with ITC Community Sports Park is needed. The fields have come a long way since my time coaching. I have dirty cleats in my garage as a reminder of the fields previously and how magnificent they will look in the future. The partnership with various soccer groups and kudos to the department bringing them to the table to work with us. I like the fact we had the opportunity to look at three different plans and see the strengths of each. I think the conceptual plan is a step in the right direction. I want to thank you for allowing us the opportunity to be able to look these over and make recommendations to City Council.

Merry Christmas and a very safe and healthy New Year.

Commissioner Staab

There was a lot of good information, very comprehensive.

I look forward to City Councils' reaction to the ITC re-do and then look forward to tracking what goes on in the East ITC property.

Thanks to Commissioner Torimoto for the excellent dog park presentation.

Commissioner Torimoto

Just echoing what everybody else said. I am pretty excited about this master plan for ITC Sports Park. Incorporating soccer and baseball with the up-and-coming sports like pickleball with more capacity for tennis and basketball. I am excited about how this is going to proceed.

The 12 Days at Lakeshore Lodge had programming for every age group and demographic. I thought it was really fantastic.

Happy Holidays, Happy New Year.

Commissioner Riggins

I agree with everything that has been said already. I want to urge everyone to sign up for Flash Vote. It will engage you with the community. It is a quick and easy survey to get everyone's feedback.

I want to congratulate and welcome the two new employees, Stella and John.

Have a great holiday, get lots of rest and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Joseph

I would like to add the Choralaires had their winter programs which were put together to ring in the new year and wonderful all around.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and I hope everyone has a happy and healthy New Year. See everyone in January.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

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

DATE APPROVED: _____

Ryan Joseph, Chairperson

Salene Riggins, Vice Chairperson