

PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

THURSDAY MARCH 11, 2010 – 7:00 PM

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

DRAFT

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

ROLL CALL: Blair (Present), Dooley (Present), Iszler (Absent), Jewell (Present), Policicchio (Present), Staab (Present), Wingfield (Present), Kerbrat (Present) Raina (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Blair to approve the Agenda as written.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARING:

- A. 2010 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Grant Application for the initial development of City owned property located at 13 Mile Road and Old Novi Road (Landings Property).

Superintendent of Recreation Nancy Cowan stated that the Public Hearing is for the 2010 MNRTF Grant application for the development of the Landings Property as a park property. She stated that there is a basic concept site map where the park location is. This project site is approximately eleven acres of City land held since the 1980's and was purchased in parcels. Due to a study undertaken last year, the Landings Property under direction of City Council and leadership of the City, has been designated formally as park land. It went through a rezoning process in the last few months from a business zoning to a residential R4 zoning, which is the zoning that all of our parks are under. The City has a basic concept plan, which we are offering to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as an option, for an application to apply for a grant to develop this property. The development is very basic at this point and keeps the park open and natural. It mainly consists of landscaping, some trails and pathways. There is shrink safe treatment along the lake shore to help preserve the area. There are two ADA parking spaces. There is also historical signage to denote the history which has taken place on the land.

Terry Croad from McKenna and Associates stated that he would be glad to answer any questions anyone might have. Mr. Croad stated that the intent is to apply to the State Department of Natural Resources for a grant to provide up to seventy-five percent of our phase one development which is estimated at \$625,000. The Grant application is due on April 1st and requires a minimum twenty-five percent match from the City. As Superintendent Cowen previously indicated, the phase one parcel for the Landings Park is approximately eleven acres. It includes about eight hundred and fifty linear feet of waterfront development. It is our intention to use soft engineering to develop the waterfront in more of an ecologically responsible manner to benefit both wildlife and fishing

habitats. The project includes continuing the bike path across the park linking East Lake Road with South Lake Drive and eventually tying in with Lakeshore Park. It will include a large promenade for pedestrians and access to water viewing and fishing through a small fishing pier. A substantial number of trees and landscaping that will be incorporated into this passive park. To make the park more accessible to persons with disabilities, two barrier free parking spaces have been incorporated close to the promenade and near East Lake Drive. The park will be accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. There will be additional programming linked with Lakeshore Park. Additional components of the park include interpretive signage, which talks about the history of the site. It ties in with the larger ecological wildlife corridor that exists at Lakeshore Park which is made up largely of regulated woodlands and wetlands.

The Public Hearing was opened by Commissioner Dooley.

Doreen Poupard, of 41360 Fox Run Road in Novi, MI 48377, stated that she has already given a letter to Commissioner Dooley which is her statement. She is chairman of the Resident Advisory Council, which represents approximately one thousand residents who live at the Fox Run Senior Community. It is located within walking distance of the proposed Landings site. Their Council strongly supports the City of Novi's grant application to develop Landings Park as a regional destination. Because of the close proximity, our residents frequently walk and or bike to the Landings site. For many of our active residents it is a major source and destination of both beauty and nature within our own backyard. Additionally, our community promotes activities which support, preserve and protect the natural wetlands that lie within our own property. We are well aware of the importance of Walled Lake and its connection to the Rouge River watershed. We want to support the proposed plan to protect this area as a green space to be enjoyed by our local community. We commend the City Council for its sustained efforts not only to preserve but also to treasure our natural resources. The current plan is another example of their stewardship and long term planning. The residents of Fox Run strongly urge the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board members to approve this important request for funding of the Landings Park project, which meets its boards 2010 priorities of trail development and projects located within urban areas.

Steve Angus of 145 Linhart stated that his property is next to the Park. He also stated that he appreciates the City for involving the community to help develop this land. There is a rich history of this site. Many of the residents who live nearby enjoy the facility. Everyday you can see that people are out at the beautiful location. This is something that Novi should value and that other cities don't have. He appreciates that the City is looking at improving this park land. He brought his letter to support the grant and hopes that the City will get it. He suggested that the City look at what Howell has done on some lakefront property.

Mark Adams who lives ten houses from the site, at 145 Linhart, stated that he is one hundred percent in favor of the property being a passive park. Things he would suggest to make this a better plan is to do a natural waterfront. He brought in a brochure. What does not appeal to him about the boardwalk is that it is not natural. He does not know what material the boardwalk will be made from. He feels the waterfront should have natural areas and features and seawalls. He does not think that plastic, wood and concrete enhance the property. When he was on the Lake Property Study Committee years ago, they did a City wide survey. A boardwalk was one of the things that people wanted.

Most of them wanted to see special events on the site. That is something you have to put in your initial planning to make it work. The only way to make it work would be to bring people in on shuttle busses because there is not enough parking. The portion of the property east of East Lake Drive is natural for parking and shuttle bus drop off. He asked how you would get to the area shown as drop off in today's plan. The drop off should be planned better. You should plan for long term and for special events and have a more natural frontage. He likes the circle idea but the walkway that comes off of South Lake Drive seems to be a walkway to nowhere. The crosswalk that crosses South Lake Drive at 13 Mile Road is bad. There are two sides of the crosswalk with a traffic island in the middle. Cars drive up on the shoulder where people are supposed to be crossing. In the park he would like to see a smaller boardwalk and more natural features. He understands that there is a letter in a report from the State that suggests archeological monitoring during construction. He understands that there have been many artifacts found on this property and believes that this should not be ignored.

Elaine Lafer lives in Novi and states that she does not live within walking distance of this park. She is concerned about Novi's budget, the building of the park, maintenance, utilities and policing the area. Novi is having a difficult time with their budget as it is and she is concerned about the added expense. She thinks the park is nice but wonders if we can afford it now. She read the saying, "buy what you don't need and you'll soon need what you can't buy." She feels this park falls in to that category.

Jeff Potter stated that he is the Oakland County Commissioner for District 8, which encompasses the part of Novi where the proposed park is. He lives about ten miles from the park. He is present to stress the importance of Novi's rightful claim as a recipient to restore this rare property to it's rightful place in Novi's history and as an asset for pedestrians and park users. He wants to offer his strong support to unlock this unique property for our residents. This application will support the development of a recreational identity which has gone wanting. There will be increased momentum with the integration of trail systems and small passive parks, which are now beginning to dot our area. The Huron Valley Trail System and many other endeavors, both completed and planned, are conveying our residents outdoors into their neighborhoods and back in to a sense of place in our community. It is important to have a place to be from and when we augment and build upon our path access we give people gathering places which they can use to identify their home. Landings Park is going to offer people a starting point for many existing bike lanes and non-motorized pathways located in Novi, Wixom and Walled Lake and those following on. It is not just an isolated strip of green space we are improving. It is an asset which will help the growing success of our trail system. This property stands alone at the present time, isolating the very active culture of walkers, joggers and cyclists which has grown up around the lake from the full circuit. Ultimately, this project will provide a significant trailhead and link to greater utilization of nearby trails making it not only an asset for residents of Novi but for the State. This property occupies a time honored mark in the lakes area once being the site of the Walled Lake Casino and recreational park going back to 1919. It has had a very colorful and remarkable history which might otherwise go ignored. In the 1920s and 1930s, thousands of people would come out from Detroit to use the 120 to 140 foot dance floor and use the venue for nationally acclaimed entertainment. The Walled Lake Casino and the lake itself were so attractive that all of the property was bought up around the lake. Originally they were affordable small family

cabins and are now expensive, beautiful homes which afford little or no access to Walled Lake for those who do not live on the lake. This is a green space gem which would restore our citizens to their rightful place and appreciation of this wonder. Presently it does more to separate our residents from the lake. Envisioned are eleven acres of public park opening a gateway to this lovely vista with parking for visitors, a seawall, fishing pier and boardwalk. It is an additional eight hundred and fifty linear feet of public waterfront viewing. More importantly, it is an opportunity to preserve and restore the luster to one of Oakland County's few green space gems in populace lakeside areas. In this case, only a brief walk from a City park. The DNR's consideration in affording this planned and much need project will go a long way in providing our residents the rightful pride of ownership in this Michigan jewel. Not only as an Oakland County Commissioner for this part of Novi but as a person who has enjoyed the growth of our trail system and related attributes, he strongly urges the Michigan Natural Trust Fund Board Members to approve this application as it is consistent with the 2010 priorities of trail development and projects located within urban areas. We enjoy seeing our residents out on their bikes and with their strollers and walking around our civic areas. It is important for us to speak up for this development because the very same people who enjoy and appreciate this often go home and do not appear at these kind of advocacy opportunities. There is a very strong groundswell of support for putting people back on the sidewalks we remember as kids. This is something we can do to give people back their communities. He strongly urges that this application be approved.

David Staudt, who lives at 23715 Nilan in Novi, stated that he appreciated the excellent comments by County Commissioner Potter. He stated that we have been working on this for a long time, dating back to his days on the Parks Commission and working with the Walkable Novi Committee. We are looking at this as a very integral part of our trail system. He is a member of Novi City Council and is very supportive. He hopes it is unanimously supported.

Terry Croad stated that he appreciates all of the great comments we received tonight. He wanted to clarify that on the natural shoreline issue that it is their intent to use soft engineering for the entire length of the shoreline wherever practical. There have been some preliminary discussions with Nativescape, who have done a lot of work along the Detroit Riverfront in using the screen technique. This is just a preliminary concept plan. Once the grant is approved we will work out some of the details like the parking, the drop off and the shoreline. It is our intent to have a naturalized shoreline. He stated that, on a personal note, he was at the property this weekend and was amazed at how many bikers and joggers came through the site in the twenty minutes he was walking there. This is part of a larger greenway system and a larger trail system.

Gary Towns, a Commissioner from the Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division, stated that he became aware of this because he was asked to write a letter of support for the fisheries aspect. He appreciates the open space nature of the park and the soft engineering. It doesn't look like soft engineering but he appreciates that it is being developed. He has a concern that a large amount of public funding is being requested and there is no opportunity for the greater public to park and enjoy the park. He expressed concern about this last week and few parking spaces were added for ADA but he questions why there could not be more for general parking, even ten spots. He thinks if you are serious about fishing and anglers using this facility, because they use a lot of equipment, they can not be too far from their vehicles. You can not expect them

to park a quarter of a mile away and try to walk the road. The other aspect is restrooms. He did not see any plan for those. He asked if it was truly a public entity if you don't have those facilities. He does not know how deep the fishing pier is. The lake map shows it to be five feet deep two hundred feet from shore which is a long distance. The map also shows that there were two, what look like piers, extending from the amusement park area. He is going to assume probably it was dredged between those piers and deepened. If the fishing pier ended up in that area it would be bigger than if it were in just a foot of water.

Commissioner Dooley closed the Public Hearing after asking if there were any other speakers. He thanked the speakers for their comments.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- A. Approval of December 10, 2009 meeting minutes
A motion was made by Commissioner Jewell that the December 10, 2009 minutes be approved as written. It was seconded by Commissioner Blair.

Voice Vote Unanimous

- B. Approval of February 11, 2010 meeting minutes
A motion was made by Commissioner Jewell that the February 11, 2010 minutes be approved as written. It was seconded by Commissioner Blair.

Voice Vote Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Iszler & Policicchio
Commissioner Policicchio stated that there was a meeting this evening. He had to leave in the middle of the meeting to attend this Commission Meeting. Prior to his leaving they discussed the Landings Property and the Committee decided to send a letter of support. There was also a discussion on the grant request for acquisition of property by Walled Lake and Wixom in Commerce Township to develop a trail. This grant will not compete with any we will be requesting for the Landings. This ties in to the overall concept of tying in all of the trails, bikeways and pathways with other communities. There was a discussion concerning utilizing and accessing pathways around Providence Park, the hospital area, so we can use existing sidewalks to connect to pathways ultimately to get to Beck Road. Director Auler and Commissioner Capello were there to try to bring Oakland County in to some of the things that the Committee does.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Dooley & Staab
Commissioner Staab stated that in their most recent meeting they discussed a letter of support for the grant application for the Landings Property. It was finalized this week and went to Superintendent Cowan's attention. They also talked about the ITC link to the trail system and approaching the Walkable Novi Committee on part of that. He contacted City Council Member Mutch to give him an update on that. They discussed the Golf Outing for the first Thursday in August. They also have a pending meeting with Novi Youth Baseball. Commissioner Dooley stated that the Novi Parks Foundation is once again becoming very active with the Naming Rights Program.

STAFF REPORTS:

- A. Administration Division – Randy Auler, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Director Auler did not present a report.
- B. Recreation Division – Nancy Cowan, Superintendent of Recreation
Superintendent Cowan stated that the Annual Daddy Daughter Dance was held in February. There were over seven hundred participants this year which is up over two hundred people from last year. Many volunteers worked that event including High School Students.
We are wrapping up winter basketball and volleyball and getting ready for spring. Our DPS crew is hard at work getting ready to prep fields. Soccer deadlines occur this month. Our lacrosse program is already full so we are looking at ways to expand that. The “Anything Goes” production opened last weekend and has three final shows this weekend.
We have partnered with the Arts Institute to display art work in our Atrium. Home Depot provided support in the donation of materials. We started the Home Depot partnership during “Ring in the Holidays”.
Camp registrations are already going on and our camp publication is out. Our next edition of “Engage!” will be out in a few weeks in the beginning of April.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:

- A. Approval of recommendation to City Council to submit a 2010 MNRTF Grant Application for initial development of City owned property located at 13 Mile Road and Old Novi Road (Landings Property).

Commissioner Blair made a motion that as a Commission they make a recommendation to City Council to submit the 2010 MNRTF Grant Application. Commissioner Dooley opened the floor to discussions.

Commissioner Blair stated that the Commissioners are involved with Walkable Novi and with the Parks Foundation. The park is a great idea and this could be a beautiful asset to the City of Novi. He urged the Commissioners to be responsible. He is torn because, to him, this symbolizes what is wrong with Novi. It is the City where the sidewalk ends. There is a boardwalk that goes from one end to the other and is awkward to join to Lakeshore Park. It will eventually connect. The problem is there is never any money for sidewalks and connectivity. The difficulty of usability and connectivity of it to Lakeshore Park and the lack of parking are good points. It could be a great site. We should build infrastructure first and then build a gem. He is torn because if we build a gem then people will come and we will have to build some sort of connectivity. The area is populated now and we didn't build the infrastructure to get around, other than for vehicles, and it will be this isolated, beautiful park that no one uses is his concern. He stated he may be off base and maybe there is more connectivity potential with regard to Walkable Novi and potential funds. He knows there is a lot in the works with the County and with Walkable Novi.

Commissioner Policicchio stated that he has spent some time walking in Lakeshore Park and hiking there, biking around Walled Lake and walking as well. He has been participating from the onset when the Public Hearings first started regarding the Landings. He would say it is a valid complaint in this economic environment about concern for finances. He thinks that with knowledge, all of those are addressed quite well. He thinks it is a win-win situation for this community. First, for those residents who live in that area, it will enhance their property values and they will benefit directly from it from a financial standpoint as well as from a quality of life standpoint. It is a win for the rest of the community because it compliments and opens up Walled Lake to the entire

public. It is not that open because most of the land around Walled Lake is privately owned and it is difficult to access it other than Lakeshore Park. There is room for more refinement with the plan and how it will work. He feels this is the appropriate way to go. Any project is a work in progress and you need to develop it as it goes along. He would agree with some of the comments made only to the extent that they could and should be considered by the planners and incorporated if possible. The boardwalk would utilize all of the public land that is available there for the benefit of the public. If there is a set back, he is not sure that would be an additional cost, you can have a natural area for wildlife. There is a parking problem since Novi is divided geographically, north and south, by I-96. It is difficult, if not impossible, from the south side, to get there by bike or walking so you have to drive there. There is parking at Lakeshore Park and there is some sidewalk access from Lakeshore Park to the Landings Property. He was there last week and it is difficult to get from Lakeshore Park to the Landings and there is mud. Maybe we should pave Lakeshore Park parking lot. He does not know what the solution is. There may be some street parking along the streets adjacent to the park or add more spaces like the gentleman from the Fisheries Division stated. He thinks it is a great utilization at low cost. We are using twenty-five percent of our money to access seventy-five percent of outside grant money. We are in an environment where not many communities can afford to even do that so our ability to get this grant may be enhanced at this time rather than in the future when there may be more competition. It complements not only Novi but also the surrounding communities where there should be some reciprocal work with Walled Lake and Commerce Township in completing all of the access to the trail ways. The initial cost in developing this park seems to be kept a minimum because many of the things like building structures and restrooms are not incorporated now. They could be done later when there is more money. The maintenance cost in a passive park, he would assume, would be small since we are probably already mowing it now. There will not be a lot more road maintenance because the roads that are there now are the ones we will use in the future. We would be using some money to leverage a lot of money. There are certain times when you have to say that it may not be the best of times but this is an opportunity that is best right now. In terms of infrastructure, it is a good point if you have to get to it. There is some walkway but he does not know how much more would be needed to access Lakeshore Park. He doesn't think that there are the problems of accessing the property from Lakeshore Park in the summer that there are in the winter. He thinks that could be resolved by adding bike and parking spots. He strongly supports this and is pleased that Commissioner Potter took the time to come here as well as Commissioner Capello at the Walkable Novi Committee. He asked if they had not personally sent letters of support if they would do so and also if they could encourage the County Commission as a body for support. He strongly supports it. He hears the objections but basically it is timing and money but he feels this is reasonably addressed and feels there is flexibility by our planners and developers.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he fully supports the grant application. When he opened the packet the first thing he noticed was the parking issue but it has been discussed. You are going to spend roughly eight hundred thousand dollars on the park. It will enhance the area. There will be some connectivity with other trails down the line. He would like to see additional parking.

Commissioner Jewell stated that he fully supports the project. His only concern is the parking. He thinks that the green space east of East Lake Drive could be made parking for twenty or thirty cars. Like the gentleman from the DNR stated, if you are going to use it for fishing, you will be hauling a lot of equipment back

and forth. If there were a spot to unload then they could park and go fish. He thinks that we should move forward with the project. With a little time and money it will be well worth it.

Commissioner Staab stated that he understands Commissioner Blair's dilemma. We fought that dilemma back in 1994 when we built Community Sports Park at Eight Mile Road and Napier Road. Now we are finally catching up to connecting it with trail systems. He supports the program. He had a note handed to him so he will read it.

The note reads, I suggest hold off on boardwalk or cut in half center only. Take money and put parking and save crosswalk on east side of East Lake Drive. Retain existing asphalt parkway.

He agrees with Commissioner Jewell. He thinks that would be an excellent idea on the other side of East Lake Drive to come up with twenty parking spaces there. As the DNR person mentioned, people who like to fish like to have their equipment readily available. He thinks that would be an excellent compromise. He has seen this property for years and is glad that our City fathers have the foresight to bring this to us as a park. He strongly supports the endeavor with the amendments mentioned.

Student Representative Kerbrat stated that she supports this because in the summer she goes to the parks a lot. She usually goes to Lakeshore when she can and bikes and goes to the beach. She supports the idea of having a natural waterway instead of a seawall. Last year we were talking about budget cuts. She asked if we are doing budget cuts should we add this to our budget because it will cause us to make more cuts.

Student Representative Raina stated that he still does not understand how beneficial or advantageous this park would be to the citizens of Novi because it is so far away from the center of Novi and he is unsure as to how much it would be used. It seems it is for older people to walk. It still is not close to the center of Novi and everyone in Novi is going to spend money to get this grant from the State because we need to come up with twenty-five percent of it. We should think about how much it will benefit everyone in Novi instead of just the people around the park and close to it.

Director Auler stated that he wanted to clarify some of the things that have been said. When we went through the Landings Analysis Study we came up with several options for the parcel. The conceptual plan for the park includes parking, up to 40 parking spaces. When we are preparing this Grant Application, we have to keep in mind that it is an initial development not a total development. What we have heard this evening is that there is a need to include additional parking as part of the initial development. There is still ample time to have the parking included in the initial development. He does not see the parking item as an issue. The parcels that are adjacent to the project which are part of it have always been a vision, initially, as overflow parking. The initial development, in terms of the concept plan, call for parking using a paver system so it looks like a natural grass area when cars are not there and also design it in a way that is environmentally friendly. We are looking in to including that in this initial development Grant Application. The parking issue really won't be an issue when we submit the application. In terms of some of the other comments this evening, such as having a path to nowhere, he has a different philosophy. It is part of a regional and larger trail system. There is already a pathway there that is extensively utilized. You connect it by using the bike lanes that were designed along South Lake Drive to get you to Lakeshore Park, that get you to West Park Drive which connects you to the twelve foot wide pathways that then connect you north and south. It is also part of a larger system in vision in terms of how you connect it regionally. No one is going to have the funds to build it all in one night,

for a pathway system. You start with building it at some point and connecting it as you go along. The infrastructure is a key component of it and the future plans call for a restroom facility. If you put a restroom facility in on an initial development it will take most of your grant dollars right off the top. The thought is to get people using the park or coming to it and then you put the restroom in later. This is similar to what we have done with the other parks. You may have to use port-a-lets for a while but you come back and build them. An important thing to keep in mind is the historical significance of the site and preserving it. It is an opportunity to keep that heritage of what made our community, our community. It is also important to recognize that this parcel was zoned business. City Council saw the importance and changed the zoning to be consistent with park land at a time when the economy is struggling and when lakefront property would be prime opportunity for development. He does not think that comment was addressed tonight but he wanted it on the record because it is a significant item in terms of the future for the park and the importance of tying it in to a regional pathway system. This system is something that Walkable Novi Committee is working on through grant dollars we received to develop a non-motorized transportation plan. That will not be developed over night or installed over night but one piece at a time as it falls in to place. In terms of addressing the benefit for the community, he believes it offers huge benefits for the entire community. Part of our role is to have a balanced system through out the community that offers destination types of parks and special use types of parks. It is our role to have a balance of both active and passive parks. This park falls within that goal. Parks and Receptions are really the fuel for the community's economic engine. He will show this through his power point presentation tonight as it ties to our Strategic Plan. In terms of access to fishing, it provides the opportunity, utilizing the fishing pier that is included in the initial phase of this plan, to take your children or your grandchildren out and teach them to fish. He does not want that to get lost in the comments and discussion. He thinks the initial grand development fulfills the needs, with additional parking spaces. Commissioner Dooley stated that everyone's comments speak to passions and convictions each person has. The common thread he has heard from everyone is that it is a jewel in the City. Conceptually, even though it may not be the perfect design for everyone, it is a first stage. The agenda item is just to seek the initial approval of this Grant.

The motion had been earlier made by Commissioner Blair that as a Commission they make a recommendation to City Council to submit the 2010 MNRTF Grant Application. It was seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

B. Discussion and/or approval of the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department 2010-2013 Strategic Plan

Director Auler stated that he is giving a power point presentation and what they have is a draft of the Strategic Plan. There is still work that needs to be done on it and he has additional information which needs to be included regarding opportunities to connect with the library and opportunities in terms of financial assessments.

A Strategic Plan defines the strategies for us to move forward in terms of achieving community outcomes. When we are doing a Strategic Plan we are looking at where we currently are, where we want to be and how we get there. It gives us an opportunity to look at a higher level picture and think about the issues facing the community as a whole and then address those issues.

Our present position is Parks and Recreation services are perceived by some citizens to be a relatively discretionary nonessential government service. The future position would be for Parks and Recreation services to be perceived as a central contributor to alleviating major problems that the community is facing identified by the citizens. The critical issue we are now facing is the economy. In Novi we have a reduced tax base which results in a revenue reduction. Novi is doing better than other communities. When you assess Novi you assess the quality of life. When you assess the quality of life you can not look at quality of life without the Parks and Recreation department and the role that it serves. Parks and Recreation provides four engines which are business attraction and retention, real estate values and property tax, tourism revenues and stimulating the creative economy.

Large Corporations rank six factors when they are looking to relocate their corporate headquarters. They are living cost, education, safety, recreation, culture and health care. It is important to note that recreation and culture are in the top five. For small businesses, recreation is first and foremost for businesses relocating or staying in their current location. Culture is still in the top five. We are a major contributor to why businesses locate and stay in Novi. Quality of life attracts quality employees. Park sports facilities stimulate retail sales. According to the National Association of Homebuilders, Parks and Recreation areas may enhance the values of nearby land by up to twenty percent. You may not think of Novi as having tourism. Sports tournaments that the school district, Parks and Recreation department and user groups put on bring business to our community. People stay in the hotels, eat at local restaurants, shop at the stores and stop at the gas stations. Theatre productions, figure skating competitions, hockey competitions, mountain bike races bring people to Novi. One of the things we will be doing this year is tracking the events and the total impact they have. He gave an example from a similar community in California. He noted that their events had an economic impact of over six million dollars for that community in 2007. The investment we have made in Power Park has already yielded a return in the first year with the State tournament which we hosted and the number of hotel beds sold. We are hosting the Nationals this year. Impact also comes from our partnership with the Novi Jaguars and the soccer tournament they host. The Hockey Invitational tournament hosted at the Novi Ice Arena this past year brought in thirty-two teams. This number may double next year. We are a fuel of the economic engine but how many people realize that?

Attracting a creative class and becoming a talent magnet. The creative class age segment population is really about choosing quality of life. We choose a quality of life, choose to move there and we choose to get a job. The Baby Boomer population is an opportunity for economic development. That is becoming an economic development strategy for many communities.

Demographic information shows that we are expecting a two hundred and sixty-nine percent increase in that population in Novi over the next twelve years. We have a major role in economic development.

Our mission is to create community through people, parks and programs. Our values are what we hold ourselves accountable to. These values are creativity, excellence, integrity, and service.

Our future position is that Parks and Recreation services are perceived to be a central contributor to alleviate any major problem in the community identified by citizens. Part of a paradigm shift that has to happen with our staff and with everyone is that we have to think beyond our users. He will provide information at future meetings on how we will go about doing this and ask for the Commissions' input.

We came up with seven key strategies. The first is to provide support to neighborhood business relations department to assist with business attraction and retention efforts. Second is to strategically partner and leverage resources with other agencies and businesses to enhance, secure and further provide economic benefit to citizens. Third is to develop venues and events which attract the people to the community resulting in economic benefit. Fourth is to provide recreation opportunities to attract the Baby Boomer and the creative class population segment as an economic development strategy. Fifth is to continue implementations of strategies to be financially self sustainable. Sixth is to continue implementation of strategies for employee development. Seven is to utilize scientific evidence and repositioning techniques to share how Parks and Recreation fuels the community economic engine message to the citizens. He gave an example of a poster from another community for getting the information out to the citizens on the benefits they were getting for their tax dollars for park millage.

He stated that he is not looking for approval this evening but that he is just getting the information out. He still needs to add some financial information in to the plan and also add some information about the library and finish up end notes on the scientific evidence. He asked that the Commission look at the plan when they get the additional information for consideration for approval at the next meeting.

Commissioner Staab thanked Director Auler for the presentation. It will give him a better sense of the Strategic Plan once he reviews it in finer detail.

C. Discussion of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services FY 10/11 budget

Director Auler stated that at the last meeting he provided the Commission with a memorandum which is also in this packet. In the past, the Commission has always been asked for capital improvement recommendations and operational recommendations. Some suggested opportunities were provided which he would like the Commission's feedback on, in the event there needs to be a budget reduction. We are preparing the budget and City Council begins consideration of the budget in April and concludes in May. He believes they have found a way, with some of the minor changes they have made, to live within our means. This refers to our park millage and our user fees in terms of operating. Capital has generally in the past been done through General Fund dollars. For the next few years that may have to come from the Naming Rights dollars. That is a decision which rests with City Council. He wants to highlight some of the options which may be on the table or may not. We have decided to eliminate the intern position. We will not need any dollars which are currently allocated for professional design and engineering services unless any capital dollars are allocated with that. Capital outlay items and community promotion items have been removed. We don't generate a return on our investment at the concession stand at Lakeshore Park so we are looking at not having that available this coming year but it is up for discussion. In operation we are changing small things like going from trophies to medals for youth sports. We are looking at reducing our theatre design and costume item and using our partnership with the artists in terms of graphic design. Some of the items may be more painful and he would like the Commissions' thoughts on these items. One of the items is the lifeguards at Lakeshore Park. We spend around fifty thousand dollars on events like Ringing in the Holidays, the International Festival and the Memorial Day Parade. Some of the other things we might consider in terms of revenue generation are to charge user groups for practice time. We now charge for games but practices are free. We may charge a fare for Senior Transportation from the Senior Center to the Civic Center and the Library. Right now we provide that service for free but we may charge a nominal fee which could generate

approximately eighteen thousand dollars. He believes we are within our means without having to make any major adjustments however; he does want to get these on the table in the event that we do have to make other adjustments. Commissioner Dooley asked how some of these items or potential items for elimination were prioritized.

Director Auler stated that they didn't necessarily prioritize them. The ones they have already elected to enact, like eliminating the intern position, were cost conserving and ways to operate more efficiently.

Commissioner Policicchio stated that he commends the department's approach to minimize the impact on the permanent staff. He feels that the staff is the main component in establishing the relationship that is necessary for the community to have a successful Parks and Recreation program. He wondered if there is a list of other revenue enhancements to offset the three hundred and twenty thousand dollar deficit.

Director Auler stated that we are looking at this as three hundred and twenty thousand dollars over a three year period. This first year he believes we are within our means with the changes already made. We are already trying to think in terms of next year. One of the things we are thinking about is how we expand our partnerships with sponsor relationships. Even though we are having tough times in our economy we are still getting many people who want to partner with us. The Parks Foundation has a committee who is working on the Naming Rights opportunities.

Commissioner Policicchio stated that he didn't realize that the three hundred and twenty thousand dollars was over a three year period.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that he noticed the item, eliminate concession operation at ITC Community Sports Park for soccer. He asked if baseball would continue because it is more self sustaining and will it be run like it has been in the past.

Director Auler confirmed this. He also stated that he has talked to the president of Novi Youth Baseball league in the past about concession as another opportunity for them to earn revenue. Director Auler is open to discussion. The soccer concession stand is questionable because many of the soccer teams bring snacks after the games.

Commissioner Jewell asked that if we did not have lifeguards that there would be no increase in liability.

Director Auler replied that this is correct. We have been in contact with our insurance company.

Commissioner Staab stated that he is an insurer himself and that he would have a deep concern about that.

Director Auler stated that they have consulted with the State park system and at a swim at your own risk beach with no lifeguards there has been no increase in cost. He is not advocating that we do that but how we can operate there in a different manner is something we are looking at.

Commissioner Staab stated that another issue was the elimination of the senior citizen subsidized cab program. He thought we had money, that we were subsidized by different areas in the community by things like grants.

Director Auler replied that we do get SMART money which is about forty-four thousand dollars a year. We did receive a letter recently that amount is going to be reduced. We basically run two transportation programs out of the Senior Center. We run the Senior Van transportation program which has set hours with day hours and some evening hours. We also run the subsidized cab program which, for four dollars, will take you anywhere in Novi twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. We pay five dollars additional for that. We currently have forty-five citizens that utilize that service. The eighteen thousand dollars we

spend on that is for forty-five citizens. You can ask how we can still serve those citizens because they may be going to a job in the evening which may be beyond the hours of our van transportation. You don't want to lose those people but that is eighteen thousand dollars for forty-five citizens. But those citizens have a need for that service. We get forty-four thousand dollars in SMART money. We get eight hours a week in terms of pay for a shared position and we pay thirty-two hours through OLSHA. In the past the hospital has purchased the van but in the last several years the City has had to purchase that out of our capital budget which has been City General Fund dollars.

Commissioner Blair stated that he liked the term paradigm shift. Anytime we have the opportunity we should partner with outside companies, outsource and privatize some services. He would like to see more of these types of things.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he is glad the issue of the lifeguards was brought up again tonight. Someone from the Commission had stated that is underlying concern of theirs. He personally would like to see the lifeguards at the beach this summer. He believes there is a liability there. He thinks that revenue generation is untapped and is glad that user group fees are being considered because he believes that is a huge money making opportunity.

Commissioner Jewell stated that as a department they are doing a great job in the eyes of the City and of City Council. We are talking about grant money and naming rights. We are making cuts and being responsible where we can be. He is a little concerned about user fees. We are doing our part to try to be responsible.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Oakland County Commissioner Potter stated there were some things on the Landings project that caused him a little concern for the people of Novi. It has been mentioned that we are in down economic times and people aren't applying for grants. In down economic times, people apply for grants just as much as they do in good economic times. Sometimes they do so by throwing further enticements over and above the twenty-five percent in to the DNR. For that reason he is going to suggest and recommend, that because of the cautionary note that was already put down here by the representative from the Fisheries Division, that in your application to the DNR you do suggest and recommend future enhancements to cement the identity of this property as a regional asset. Were he a DNR trustee looking at multiplicity of applications that come before him, he might wrongly and unknowingly look at this as a "boutique" neighborhood park without the parking and other things that have been mentioned as adding to the regional structure of it. Secondly, the incremental nature of park and specifically trail way development was kind of averred to during your discussions. He would like to say that it is confusing sometimes to take a picture of something and say that this is what we want it to be and all of elements aren't in place at the present time. That is how that park will become part of our regional trail structure. It won't be all at one time. It will be with additions and phases and further recognition of development by the Oakland County Parks System in mapping various regional assets and including the Landings Park on that. He wouldn't be deterred by the fact that this is not, of a piece, a complete picture. But it is very important to note that, in his opinion, for grant dollar success to recognize that aspect of it, as a regional trails project. Fifteen years ago he was Mayor of South Lyon and they had a disused, abandoned, unmowed stretch of property called the Grand Trunk Railway. The Oakland County Parks Department and many others were enthusing about this becoming part of a regional trails project. They didn't really get any sort of response from their neighbors nor did they get a lot of enthusiasm from some residents who felt like they were building an asphalt strip that is a mile and a half or two miles long and ends nowhere. They were undeterred and went ahead and did it. It became a beckoning and welcoming point for the neighborhood. It eventuated into a

second phase which now includes a path to Wixom. It stimulated further interest in the development from Milford because now they know they can go down to the Metro Parks, cross under the freeway and go to South Lyon. With that future in mind, what you have before you is an opportunity that is really much greater than what the specific grant request entails. He is saying this because grant dollars are very competitive to reach for. He will support any action City Council would like him to but it is very important to speak very proudly and directly to the world that that little piece of property is a piece of an evolving system. To talk about the sense of place and the historical value of the Walled Lake Casino is very important to create a civic identity. It has been zoned park property and that various ideas have been tossed around in the past about various uses for it. It is really very important in establishing a legacy to put facts on the ground. In the same way it was zoned from business to parkland it can be zoned the other way as well. You are talking about a lot more than five hundred thousand dollars here. You are talking about the permanent identity of that piece of property unequivocally as a piece of parkland. Once you do this he doesn't believe that will ever change. He gave each Commission person his card and stated that if there was anything in his comments or his letter that needs to be expanded or addressed for the Council meeting he would be glad to do that. The City Council meeting is going to be on March 22nd.

Commissioner Jewell asked if the archeological artifacts on the property give it weight as far as grant applications go.

Commissioner Potter stated that he would throw everything at it. He stated that he had heard earlier that some meetings had been held with Commissioner Capello and someone from the County. The County is not going to fund something like this right now given the north/south issues that we have going on with parkland dollars and the general retrenchment that is happening. What you might want to actively pursue is to get a letter from the County Parks Department stating that it is consistent with Oakland County's overall design.

Director Auler stated that they have had contact with Oakland County and requested a letter.

Commissioner Potter stated to make sure that letter is in your file. He does not know who the trustees are but this should be presented as a benefit to the residents of the State of Michigan, whom they are entrusted to support with their granting of application dollars.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Student Representative Raina stated that his is not sure what population or specific age group you are trying to target with the Landings Park. He liked the power point presentation by Director Auler it shows the insights that the Parks and Recreation department has on the community. He thinks educating people about that is important.

Student Representative Kerbrat stated that she knows a lot of people her age that would use the park. She is looking forward to the outdoor sports session because her Dad and sister are doing soccer.

Commissioner Blair stated he is very positive about the meeting tonight. He believes, for all ager groups, if the Landings Park is connected with bike paths and walking paths through all of the trail system it will eventually get more sidewalks in this town over the years that will all connect together. It is all positive. It is tough times now but he thinks we are balancing it all very well and commends Director Auler and the department for their work. He wants to tell the citizens, City Council that we and the department are doing our part.

Commissioner Jewell thanked Director Auler for his presentation because it gave a great idea of what the direction, vision and goals are. He thanked Commissioner Potter for his participation and his overview of the park and Landings Property and also for his support.

Commissioner Staab thanked Commissioner Potter for his words and direction which are very helpful. He also thanked Director Auler for the information on the Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Wingfield stated that the direction we are going with the Landings Property is very positive. He does think there is some "tweaking" that needs to be done with parking and some other issues but he is sure they will be worked out because this is just the initial stage. He stated to Director Auler that it is a good Strategic Plan and that he learned some things that he didn't know.

Commissioner Policicchio stated that it not only the older people who are out walking at the Landings Property. He suggests that if this comes to fruition we are going to see a lot of young people looking for a cheap place to take a date and hang out.

Commissioner Dooley thanked County Commissioner Potter for coming out. He congratulated him for being an ex-mayor. He thanked the citizens for coming out and speaking out on the Landings Property. We always encourage people to come out and be a part of the Commission Meeting. We always learn a lot when we have audience participation. He stated that Director Auler's presentation open his eyes on many things.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 9:25 PM.

DATE APPROVED:

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Paul Policicchio, Vice Chairperson