

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

**Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020 – 7 P.M.**

**NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. with Commissioner Staab presiding.

**ROLL CALL:** Dooley (Absent), Staab (Present), Joshi (Present), Pratt (Absent), Riggins (Present), Smith (Present), Torimoto (Present), Student Representatives Ananya Kamalesh (Absent), Saketh Ogirala (Absent).

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

It was moved that the agenda be approved as amended by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A. Approval of Jan. 16, 2020, minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for January be approved by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Riggins.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioner Riggins & Smith  
Commissioner Smith said they had a meeting tonight and talked about the prioritization schedule for the upcoming years. New members were welcomed and a few citizen comments were talked about it. Commissioner Riggins said there were also some engineering updates for things in the works for the sidewalks. She said she was taking it all in.
  
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Staab & Torimoto  
Commissioner Torimoto said the last meeting was 1/27 and reflected back on Pour on the Shore and what that event should be. We expanded the beverages last year and we discussed whether we want to or should do that, and what message that sent. Still ongoing is how we want to position Pour on the Shore as an event and what services are there.  
Director Muck said a subcommittee was formed to refocus and take a look at naming rights. Commissioners Staab said the subcommittee is himself, David Landry, Kim Capello and Muck. They've yet to meet.
  
- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Joshi  
Commissioner Joshi said there was not a meeting today, but possibly next month. Director Muck said they try to avoid the Walkable Novi schedule, so they should meet next month. Staff is continuing to actively monitor properties that may be available for acquisition. We're not looking at submitting development grants to the DNR this year mainly because we have very little chance of getting those, but also because they are looking at changing the funding for development

grants versus acquisition grants. The Rec Passport and potential SJRO ballot initiative that he'll keep everyone posted on, but haven't heard any update on. There's a Public Policy meeting tomorrow, so he should hear more about it at the state level.

D. Parks Updates

Commissioner Dooley gave an overview of how the parks updates are conducted.

1. Pavilion Shore Park – Commissioner Riggins

Commissioner Staab said she went out last Thursday afternoon just after a snowfall. It looked like a winter wonderland out there. When she arrived, there was one other car there enjoying the view and reading. The playscape area looked good and intact. She said she checked on the bathrooms and they were all locked for the winter. Everything looked nice.

Commissioner Torimoto asked whether all the pathways in that park are shoveled? Director Muck said they are maintained year round.

Commissioner Staab asked whether icicles on the side of the building are of any concern since there aren't any sidewalks under there? Director Muck said he could check, but the building's been open for a few years now and the sidewalks are not below a drop zone for the icicles.

~~2. Village Wood Lake Park – Commissioner Pratt~~

~~3. Meadowbrook Commons (Dec.) – Commissioner Pratt~~

**MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION**

A. Annual Report

Deputy Director Ringle said this is probably her favorite report to do because she gets a chance to toot the horn of all the great PRCS staff members who work diligently to keep us in the top 10 percent of park districts in the state and probably even the country with our accreditation and so on. We did use our values from our master plan: inclusion, excellence, integrity, environment and innovation. That's how we categorized the items we wanted to share. In inclusion, the KultureCity certification is something new this year and that was led by Recreation Supervisor Jessica Mistak. That allows us to be certified to be able to serve the community, maybe the autistic community or any other differing needs. We have packets here at the Civic Center that have noise-canceling headphones, weighted blankets, fidget spinners and things along those lines. That'll allow us to be able to bring more folks to our community events, as they can borrow while they're visiting. We talk a lot about transportation program and it continues to climb since the free and expanded transportation initiative Council pushed through. We keep increasing our ridership, this year by 7 percent, our miles by 8 percent and our wheelchair uses by 10 percent. OAS Manager Stogner and Mistak sent out a survey about how riders are feeling about the service. Overall satisfaction is 4.8, courtesy and professionalism is 4.8 for the drivers, 4.7 for the schedulers and they've felt like they've saved money. We've heard positive reviews and the icing on that cake is we had one of our drivers as a finalist for Employee of the Year here at the City of Novi, recognizing externally and internally that we've got a great group here taking care of our community members. "Events made Easy" sound like a small thing, but it makes it easier for folks to reserve shelters and make requests to staff to bring in a bounce house or some sort of rental piece to enhance their rental at our shelters. We

found we've had to do a lot of back and forth, our staff has to get those pieces from the insurance companies, so we've put out an RFP to provide us with insurance for the full year so we don't have to go back and forth. Those folks are listed on our website so people have that resource. It sounds small, but it does take a lot of time off our staff to follow through. Just great ideas being implemented by our staff. Lakeshore Park is even further ahead and we look forward to Memorial Day next year and being able to open that park. Integrity, you know we finished our Strategic Recreation and Master Park Plan, and we did it using community input. We feel it gives us a really strong piece and allows us to move forward as a department, as well as provided to the DNR so we qualify for grants. "Swinging for the Fences," our adult softball program has seen a decline. It's not just here, it's across the country. We didn't want to see that happen without understanding why, so Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris led an input visioning session with our softball managers and we'll be implementing some things this spring that they had asked us to look into. Listening to our users to improve their experience. Bosco Fields will be opening in fall 2020 for soccer play. Nature. Nurture. Novi. is being led through our Older Adult Services office through Brittany Leick. It's an effort between multiple departments here; Community Relations, our forester and our landscape architect are all involved in that, just bring more nature-based education programs to the community. Everything from butterfly gardens to composting and rain gardens. Something new for us that we need to tackle as parks and recreation is conservation. The ITC Trail opened this year. Construction began in 2013 and we hear the trail is being used on a daily basis in rain, snow, sun. We're happy to see that completed. We continue to go out for grants and the Grant Committee takes a look at some of those opportunities with us. Our digital reach continues to change. We're looking at our target markets, where things are shifting. Twitter is the lowest user group for us. Facebook continues to grow on ours and the City page, as well. Instagram continues to grow and we take advantage of our Studio No. VI team productions to tell our story even further. We continue to analyze that and make changes there as we need to and the digital age changes. Commissioner Joshi said she thinks it's really neat we have the adaptive and noise-canceling headphones. She hopes it's advertised well and a lot of City of Novi residents know about it. Deputy Director Ringle said we're putting that logo on our activity flyers, it's on the front door and there's a sign at the welcome desk where people can check it out. It will be an education piece. Commissioner Torimoto asked whether Older Adult Services Transportation, with 98 percent recommending it, why the service is ease of use seems lower? OAS Manager Stogner said the way the survey was structured, it had a series of statements where people could check boxes and it wasn't just yes/no.

B. mParks Conference

Director Muck said Novi hosted the mParks Annual Conference at the end of January for the first time. It's all the statewide parks and rec agencies converging on one agency for educational sessions, trade show. First time ever in Novi, we're pretty proud of that. Studio No. VI put a recap video together for us. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EleJ6MHSbcA> video shown, summarizing the event and Novi staff's participation.) Muck asked for commissioner feedback who attended.

Commissioner Riggins said she thought it was really informative and she was able to network with other park professionals, which was really nice. She said she liked the setup as far as the different things you could walk by and interact with. The all-around presentation, it started on time and she really enjoyed all of it. Commissioner Smith said it was really good to hear how parks in Michigan have been funded and how well we do funding parks. There were a lot of very passionate professionals from the various communities in the state. He said he got to talk to people who put in splash pads and he learned a lot about splash pads. One of the things they talked about it is reclaiming the water and using it for irrigation, rather than dumping it. Some solar lighting providers, he said he hopes we can incorporate at Lakeshore or as we build out so we don't have to use all that power off the grid. It's a great opportunity. Director Muck said it was a great opportunity. As the director's chair of the statewide committee, he worked with SEMCOG to offer up a day full of sessions for appointed and elected officials. It was the first time we've really done that and more than 100 people came for that. He sat in on some of the sessions and heard from some major corporations on how they value parks. The Michigan State Fair also helped sponsor making that day happen. We put our best foot forward for hosting that day in Novi and hopefully we'll be in the mix for hosting future ones.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

#### 1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck said it's the middle of winter, so just a few park project updates. Pickleball is in the design phase for Wildlife Woods Park. He said he met with the engineers and design team, so we'll be getting some of those options back shortly and we're still planning to get those constructed this year. Our ice arena management contract is up for renewal this year. We did put that out for bid and only our existing contract company, Suburban arena management, has submitted a proposal for that. We're extremely happy with their services, so we'll be recommending that to City Council for approval for another five years. Lakeshore is planning on having the trusses delivered and onsite in the next two weeks. Once that happens, that building will really take off with the roof and the interior. Expecting a lot faster work there.

Commissioner Torimoto said the bridge on Beck near Bosco field has been torn down and rebuilt. He recalled it being fairly new. It's between 10 and 11 Mile. One of the boardwalks and he was wondering if something happened there or if it was unstable. Director Muck said they did an evaluation on all the boardwalks in the city maybe two years ago while Torimoto was still on Walkable Novi and that was one that Muck believes was designated as having had structural issues and had to be replaced.

Commissioner Joshi had a question about what they're doing to the one on 10 Mile near the land the City acquired right next to Churchill Crossings? Director Muck said he'd have to follow up on that one. There was an agreement with the developer, but he'll have to send that out as an update to everyone. He said he believes it was paid for by the developer.

#### 2. Recreation Center Committee Update

Director Muck said the committee last met 1/27 and discussed amenities and existing facilities in the area. The most pertinent discussion that came out of that was timeline. We really shared with the committee what it would take to get on the August ballot. That would mean Council would need to approve any kind of ballot language by the beginning of May. Muck said Commissioner Smith spoke at public comment and pointed out how absentee ballots would affect that. Absentee ballots would come out in July, so your education period would be even shorter. That discussion led a lot to last Monday's City Council meeting and goal setting that Mayor Gatt announced he thinks we should slow down the process and August of this year does not seem feasible. We want to do things the right way, evaluate everything and, based on the timing, everything would be a little bit rushed. We're pumping the brakes slightly and will have another meeting in March to look at our survey results to look at the citizen survey that was sent out. We'll keep moving forward, but it does not look like we'd be going for an August ballot proposal.

Commissioner Staab asked if they're looking at 2021 and, if so, what month? Director Muck said 2021, but a month has not been determined. We're still moving forward with committee meetings, where it's going, what's in it all being discussed this year.

Commissioner Smith said people have been talking to him about it and are generally in favor, but want more details.

Commissioner Torimoto said there were yellow and green surveys. Director Muck said the second was a follow-up to the first if it hadn't been received by a certain date. Commissioner Smith said he returned both. Muck said they match those up so you can't skew it. Smith said it wasn't clear on the card which one was the follow up. Torimoto said he didn't return the second one and figured it was a follow up.

Director Muck said the date for the next meeting will be posted shortly, but the main point of conversation will be the survey.

## B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

### 1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said we finished up a successful Daddy Daughter Dance, as we always do. We've received good survey results so far. We had made changes based on last year's survey results and they were received positively. Camp Arctic Adventure was this past Monday-Tuesday and was well received. Spring soccer registration ends next week already for those not playing the full year already. The Novi Concert Band has a concert 2 p.m. 3/15 at the Civic Center. Eggstravaganza will take place 3/29 at Fuerst Park and in the High School Atrium. Camp registration begins at 12 a.m. 3/2. That includes Camp Lakeshore, Camp PowerPlay, sports camps, cultural arts camps and we know those will be busy days in our office and online. People are looking forward to that to make their plans. A new program Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller is putting together is a Leprechaun Hunt 6:30-8:30 p.m. 3/15. They'll hunt for a leprechaun, a pot of gold and other activities. That's new and tied to the season.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if the Daddy Daughter dance did not sell out this year? Deputy Director Ringle said the Saturday had some openings still. Torimoto asked if the overall attendance was the same? Ringle said she didn't have the

final numbers, but it was very close. There wasn't anything significant that needed to be addressed.

## 2. Villa Barr Planning Update

Deputy Director Ringle said the last meeting was 4-6 p.m. earlier tonight. We are working on a strategic plan specifically for Villa Barr Art Park. We're doing that so we can focus on things like programming, marketing and capital improvements down the road. We wanted to get the opinions of those engaged since the beginning, as well as some of our commission members: Parks Commission, Historical Commission, Beautification Commission, Friends of Villa Barr, school members were invited, Council members were invited and attended. We had had a great cross section who attended and were interested in giving us their feedback, but also where we need to go in the future. It'll also drive our community recreation master plan and give us objectives to look forward to for the next three, five, 10 years depending on what the outcomes are. We've had two meetings so far, with the second one today of what we call mind mapping sessions. Large topics: programming, accessibility, what we want it to be in the future with marketing and so on. We have another meeting 3/16 with the two groups combined and will focus on operations, capital items, maintenance and things like that. We'll come together for one final meeting with a date TBD to really get into the goals and objectives. Hopefully, with the advocacy we're building, we can rope them in to help move this forward. It's a good group with good suggestions so far. We appreciate those who have been able to attend and provide feedback.

Commissioner Staab said the meeting he and Commissioner Riggins attended was an active group with a lot of people with vision of what needs to be done and how to do it, not only for Novi, but for the region, state and country. He said he's looking forward to the March meeting.

Commissioner Riggins said it was nice seeing all the vision everyone had and how passionate they were. She said she learned a lot about Villa Barr Art Park and the vision he had of what the park would be.

Commissioner Smith said he had driven by many times and not even known what was back there when Mr. Barr was still alive. Now he skis through the Michigan Legacy Art Park and didn't know those were connected. Getting the word out on this will be really good for the city.

## C. Older Adults – Older Adult Services Manager Derek R. Stogner

### 1. Program & Services

OAS Manager Stogner said a good percentage of the transportation survey respondents were new to the service and hadn't used it before the fare locally became free. So they weren't saving money because they hadn't used it before, which was a piece we found correlated with that data, too. We're doing a lot of planning right now. A lot of things are in process right now between Memorial Day, our next Cultivate Novi event and Senior Socialites' Casino Night in May. We received a stipend from the Area Agency to host some census completion events in the spring and get the word out for that. A lot of things are in process. Last month, we did submit to AARP for the FitLot grant and the Age Friendly Community application, which was accepted and we are part of that now. There's a reporting/planning process that goes along with that and we'll launch in about six months for spring/summer. In March we have Nature. Nurture.

Novi. with an "All About Bats" presentation 3/12 in correlation with a small donation to purchase bat houses that the forester is going to put in different parks. Villa Barr is already installed. As we get more funding, we want to install more of those, as well. Another March topic is "Community Cats" and April topics include "Benefits of Planting Trees" and "Spring Foraging." For our special events, we had our Valentine's luncheon 2/14 with 107 people in attendance. We have tickets on sale for St. Patrick's Day 3/12 and a new one of April Fool's Day on 4/1. We also have our 2020 Euchre Tournament coming up 4/24. Tax aide is going really, really well. We were able to add some appointments and are still full through the first week of April. There are a handful appointments still available for anyone who wants their taxes done for free via this great program through AARP and the City. We're partnering with the library for a Medicare 101 seminar 3/7. On 3/25 we'll be hosting a talk for "Practical Action Plans for Retirement." Commissioner Joshi asked about the bat houses. OAS Manager Stogner said they're little houses that give them protection from the elements, whether it's the cold in the winter or the heat in the summer, and keeps your bat population going. Bats are good to have. They eat harmful insects and are good for your local ecosystem, so it's a good way to encourage your local bat population. Commissioner Smith said he hopes we have better luck with those than with the one he put up at his house, which has no bats. Stogner said one of the reasons Villa Barr was chosen first was because Forestry was aware there was a bat population there already, so that'd be a good place to start. Commissioner Staab asked how the Valentine's lunch number compared to last year. OAS Manager Stogner said it was 120 last year and 107 this year, but winter programs are sometimes down because a lot of the people who come to those don't live at Meadowbrook and don't want to drive there if the weather's cold and nasty. Commissioner Joshi asked when they would know about the FitLot? OAS Manager Stogner said it would be fairly quickly since their own timeline wanted a May groundbreaking if we received it. He said he expects to hear in a few weeks.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

None

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Joshi said there's lots of news in a short meeting, especially with the updates.

Commissioner Smith said it's been a busy month and he's glad to hear we're lifting up on the gas a bit for the rec center proposal. He said he's looking forward to getting into the spring and getting more stuff going.

Commissioner Riggins said, when Deputy Director Ringle was going over the annual report, Nature. Nurture. Novi. resonated with her. It made her think about the planning being done for Villa Barr and she likes how that sounds.

Commissioner Torimoto said thanks for the updates. It's good to hear a lot is going on even though its winter. He had a chance to attend the Villa Barr planning meeting today. He had his own vision of what it should be, and he listened to everyone else's idea, and he's not sure anymore. The possibilities are there. One of the short-term goals is to come up with a master plan for that park. It was a great opportunity, so thank you for that and all the opportunities. It's very engaging.

Commissioner Staab said thanks for the updates. A lot of activity is going on and planning for the warmer months. He's looking forward to attending the March Villa Barr meeting. He said he's also looking into the next Foundation meeting as they get into planning for Pour on the Shore this year, and other many activities. There are a lot of things in the pipeline with Bosco coming online, Lakeshore, and the Tim Pope rededication. A week ago Monday, it was a cool day and he said he went out to Tim Pope and he was amazed. It was 2 p.m. on a Monday and there were 2-3 cars of kids having a great old time. When we brought the pickleball funding in and the Tim Pope funding, we covered the spectrum with our Foundation funding in conjunction with our partners from City of Novi.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Staab at 7:47 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

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Jay Dooley, Chairperson

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Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson