

**.PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

**Thursday, December 17, 2020 – 7 P.M.**

**ELECTRONIC MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. with Commissioner Dooley presiding.

**ROLL CALL:** Dooley (Present), Staab (Present), Joseph (Present), Joshi (Present), 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 written by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Riggins.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Approval of November 2020 minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for November be approved by Commissioner Joshi and seconded by Commissioner Smith.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioner Riggins & Smith

Commissioner Smith stated there has not been a Walkable Novi meeting since before the last Commission Meeting.

- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Staab & Torimoto

Commissioner Staab stated there has not been a Novi Parks Foundation since the last Commission Meeting. He stated they are working on some administrative details. There are pickets for sale on the Park Foundation website.

Director Muck displayed the updated form that will be on the website.

Commissioner Staab stated the pickets were for the Tim Pope Memorial Play Structure at ITC Community Sports Park. The pickets are one hundred dollars each and will be engraved. The proceeds will go to sustain the play structure. Commissioner Dooley asked the dimensions of the pickets.

Director Muck stated the engraving was limited to twenty-two characters including spaces but did not know the exact dimensions of the pickets.

Commissioner Staab noted that the original pickets were sold in June of 1997. He also thanked Director Muck, Deputy Director Ringle and Foundation Executive Rachel Zagaroli for their parts in getting the picket information online.

Commissioner Dooley stated "Pickets for Play" is a very good idea.

Commissioner Staab added there are a few administrative things they talked about this afternoon.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if on the Foundation website you clicked on donating to the Tim Pope play structure it would automatically go to the pickets.

Director Muck stated they sent directions to the web designer to update this and

they said they plan to have this done by the end of the week. The donation to the play structure will be separate from the picket form.

Commissioner Joseph has not yet had the opportunity to attend a meeting.

Director Muck stated Commissioner Joseph's contact information has been sent to the Executive Director.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Joshi

Commissioner Joshi stated there was not another meeting after the one in November.

Director Muck stated that staff has taken the recommendations from the Grants Committee, especially the one on the Northwest Park. He did attend a DNR Trust Fund webinar today and found out that the DNR is going to be using a new software program for grants. It needed an upgrade and will allow you to retain your applications. If you do get denied a request, it will carry over your request to the following year that you can modify. He found out that the Land and Water Conservation Fund has increased their grants up to five hundred thousand dollars. They are expecting around four million dollars available in Land and Water funds, twenty-one million dollars in Michigan Natural Resources Trust funds. There will be another workshop in January. They will get into the nuts and bolts of applications. April 1<sup>st</sup> is the application deadline, so we have started the process of getting some of our estimates and documents put together in preparation of submitting the grant. January, February and March move fast when you are trying to put these items together. It will come to this Commission for approval and a recommendation to City Council and then go to City Council. You can expect some agenda items most likely in February and March.

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

A. PRCs Marketing Plan

Deputy Director Ringle stated the department is required by our CAPRA accreditation to have a marketing plan. This is our fourth iteration of a marketing plan and was in the Commission packet. Some of our divisional goals and methods in the plan don't necessarily reflect the current COVID 19 situation because this is a three-year plan. The majority of this plan, we hope, will be working beyond the pandemic. There were some modifications made but we want it to look forward as far as what marketing and our goals will continue to be. For this report she wanted to focus on pages 28 and beyond. Content marketing is different than traditional marketing as it focuses more on stories rather than a sales driven message. It is a focus on the human element, which is what we in Parks and Recreation do best. We aim to have a fifty/fifty content marketing versus traditional marketing. We feel this engages people more than seeing the same sales message. They are understanding from different perspectives, why some of our programs are important to take part in. That is something we take pride in doing and we continue to raise our numbers. Fifty/fifty is our goal and we continue to do better on that goal every year. Next is the content calendar. "The benefits of Parks and Recreation are Endless", was an old slogan for the field from mParks years ago, but they truly are. We want to focus our marketing on what we do best and that is benefits. She directed the Commissioners to an outline of benefits and what program fit under those themes. This is a guide we use for marketing through the years.

Our program marketing template is what our team uses. When we create a new program, there is a template we work called program planning. It includes, budget, staffing and all the things to think through before launching a new program. On the marketing end it is based on the who, what, why, when, and how to make sure our message is getting across.

Our target marketing mix are the avenues we have and the targets that are best suited for those avenues. We know our older adult population tends to want to engage through print. Our decision makers, our parent decision makers are engaged on Facebook and Instagram. We look at our populations and at our avenues and try to make sure we are targeting that and how we are interacting with the people in the community.

In our after action report we want to understand how people are learning about our programs. We do that through a post-program survey and also when people register we ask them how they heard about the program. Engage is still our most effective marketing tool. It goes to every mailbox in Novi. People tend to look for that and pick it up. It is a great piece for us and we are thankful that the Community Relations Department helps us put that out. Engage used to come out three times a year and is now every other month. It is in a magazine type format. The after action reports are used to evaluate the programs from an internal standpoint on how we measured our marketing outputs. It is very hard to measure marketing inputs when you do not have a tangible product, so we measure outputs a lot more than we measure inputs. We do know our engages tabular, when we post something on Facebook and people engage with it. Website analytics is a tool that we use to track what we are doing. She presented the top twenty webpages for the month of August 2020. This is done on a monthly basis and we look at it on an annual basis. It gets tracked every month by web administrator. You can see that four of the top twenty websites on the City of Novi page are parks related. This is really common. Registration is always going to be one of them. Sometimes it ties to jobs when we have seasonal jobs or positions. It is pretty typical that we have four or five web pages that are the top hits for the website. That is a great resource for us. Community Relations does a fantastic job of making sure we are keeping that up to date, as does our staff.

We also track our reach. We send out an E-newsletter to more than 10,500 subscribers, two times a month. We put four or five programs in there, so it is a quick email read. It has a twenty-eight percent open rate, which sounds really low, but that is above the government industry average for open rates. Inboxes tend to get a little clogged so that is why we went to this very short, brief information and linking back for those people who want to learn more.

Our Social Media continues to increase. We can look at demographics across the board. We find that Instagram and Facebook are our heaviest hitters. Twitter we do not use a lot because it is not a good fit for our marketing, and we find we do not have as much engagement. Community Relations is heavily into Next Door and they promote our items there as well. We continue to look at the industry for additional opportunities.

The Marketing Plan is pretty comprehensive and is everything that is required for CAPRA.

Deputy Director Ringle asked if anyone had questions.

Commissioner Riggins noted that on page 10 of the document it talked about laying off two full-time and three part-time people during Covid-19. She asked if there were plans to bring any of those people back.

Director Muck replied not in the immediate future. Since we are still in a pause and still semi shut down it has definitely impacted our revenues. Until we see a rebound of programs and loosening of social gatherings, those positions are going to have to remain in layoff status.

It has impacted the department. We have had to distribute the responsibilities of those positions across the remaining staff. We also have a Recreation Supervisor out on family medical leave at this point which has impacted as well. We are hoping to get him back in the spring or early summer. We are down three full-time and three permanent part-time and the rest of the staff are doing what we can with those job duties.

Commissioner Dooley asked if City Council has seen the Marketing Plan. If not, when do you anticipate they will be seeing it? He asked if they as Commissioners should be in attendance for that City Council meeting.

Deputy Director Ringle stated they would not need to attend. It will go in their weekly packet as an informational piece. They have the opportunity to ask questions. We send it out and see if we hear anything back and then we will move forward with this as part of our CAPRA documents and working document for the department.

Commissioner Torimoto stated he thought the document was put together really well. With COVID you haven't fully been able to assess its impact. He asked, since people are going to be outdoors more now and will probably continue, not just for exercise but for hanging out in the parks, if you want to invest more in Wi-Fi. People are also gathering in small groups being outside doing things they would normally have done inside. He asked if we were seeing hints of things that we could do.

Deputy Director Ringle stated we saw more people in parks all summer. Even now, there are mountain bikers and hikers. We know this is happening and for some of it we had to make adjustments. It would be nice to leave out picnic tables and leave up tennis nets, but it is not great for those items in maintaining them. We are running some winter programs that we are going to take advantage of. As far as marketing outdoors, we want to evaluate, so we have park kiosks in five of our parks and also one at Maybury State Park where we are able to put information out. More people are taking a look at those. As we continue to see people coming outside we have talked about things like a storybook stroll or art displays on storyboards and put them along a trail walk. We are looking at different ways to bring things outdoors. She thinks that in spring and summer we are going to see another explosion of outdoor activity.

Commissioner Riggins stated she also thought the Plan was well put together. She knows we have a YouTube channel and that it was not mentioned on the Plan. She asked if that is because there is not much engagement on YouTube.

Deputy Director Ringle stated she didn't name it YouTube because we call it Studio Six. We referenced it here a few times here and there. She referenced it instead of a Social Media as video production. It is social and people do share things from YouTube. She does not have any analytics on that but she could look in to Community Relations to see how many hits they are getting on those.

She did not know if we will demographics or if YouTube has that information. Studio Six does a great job for us.

Commissioner Joseph asked if the analytics for the hits to each of the websites are unique hits.

Deputy Director stated she does not know without having the key. We do keep all of that information.

B. Park Shelter Rentals

Director Muck stated he will turn this topic over to Recreation Supervisor Jessica Mistak who is in charge of our facilities and transportation. She will lead the discussion on some potential changes to our shelter rental rates and policies Recreation Supervisor Mistak introduced herself. She oversees facilities, senior transportation, and the Dog Park. She will talk about shelter rentals and specifically the direction we want to move in 2021. In 2020 we had unprecedented demand for our shelters because it was a safe place for people to socially gather. We saw an increase, and this is without Lakeshore Park. Lakeshore Park was closed this summer as we were getting ready to open the new facilities. We saw an increase in rentals of over sixty-two percent from last July through September 30<sup>th</sup>. To better serve our residents, we are looking at running a pilot program through Lakeshore Park of half-day rentals. This will allow flexibility for our own programming. For instance, we may need to use a shelter as an outdoor classroom for fitness. We will definitely need to use outdoor shelters for Camp Lakeshore. That includes Shelter One and Shelter Two. Shelter One is the shelter at the front of the park and Shelter Two is the middle shelter. We are looking to have these rentals run the first half of the day from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The second half of the day will be 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Our parks close at dusk or 9:00 p.m. We are going to have a slight rental increase of twenty dollars at the rest of the parks and with Lakeshore to help us pay for the staff that we will need to have at Lakeshore Park to make sure that when people are switching their rentals, those shelters are clean.

The large shelter at Lakeshore Park, prior to what we are proposing, for a resident was \$125 for the day and \$175 for a non-resident. We are going to raise that by \$20 a half day. It will be \$75 for a half day and \$150 for a full day. For non-residents it will be \$100 for a half day and \$200 for a full day. The second and third shelters at Lakeshore park were \$100 for residents and \$150 for non-residents. They will now be \$60 per half day for residents and \$85 per half day for non-residents.

ITC Community Sports Park shelter is our second most popular shelter. For residents it was \$125 per day and will be \$145 per day. For non-residents it was \$175 per day and will now be \$195 per day.

Rotary Park is one of our few shelters that does not have electricity. It is a nice community park. It is off of Nine Mile Road on Roethel Dr. It was \$100 a day for residents and will be \$120. For non-residents it was \$150 a day and will be \$170 a day.

Wildlife Woods Park, which is receiving a pickleball court, is \$125 a day for residents and \$175 for non-residents. The fee will now be \$145 for residents and \$195 for non-residents.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak presented a slide show of the shelters in Lakeshore Park. Shelter one is toward the front of the Park and has a capacity of over one

hundred people. Shelter two is the smallest shelter in Lakeshore Park. It has a capacity of fifty people and is also very popular. It will be used a lot during the summer for our Camp Lakeshore because there is an open field there. Shelter three is near our trailhead for our mountain bike trail. It has a capacity of 80 people.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated she would be happy to answer any questions the Commissioners may have about why we are thinking about increasing the rental rates and why we are looking at doing half day rentals.

Director Muck stated we are required, with Lakeshore Park, to take any facility fee changes to the City Council. That is why we are bringing it forward for your input and then a recommendation that we could take to City Council in January. Deputy Director Ringle or Recreation Supervisor Mistak can answer any questions the Commission might have.

Commissioner Joshi asked why only the Lakeshore Park shelters will have half day rentals.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated we wanted to do a test run on Lakeshore shelters because they are the most popular. We started with them because there will not be as much demand at the other shelters and we can see how it goes this summer and see how it works for our customers.

Director Muck added that there is also a staffing issue. At Lakeshore with the park opening and the building opening we will have someone on site, especially on weekends, who can clean up the shelters. We would not have that necessarily at the other shelters. That is why we are looking at this as a test run.

Commissioner Smith asked if there is prioritization for full day rental or is it first come first served.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated, as of right now, again we are seeking input, it would be first come first served. There is an option for people to do a full day rental. If that person gets there first and rents both the morning and afternoon, they will have that full day rental prior to anyone else being able to rent it.

Commissioner Joseph asked if they see a risk from a revenue generation standpoint. If an individual is not able to get the full day, they are going to look elsewhere or you are only able to fill maybe the front half of the day.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated that is an excellent question. This is why we want to start at Lakeshore. As Director Muck indicated, we know we will have more staff at Lakeshore, so we are better able to test. Last summer due to the COVID-19 pandemic we did have a lot of demand, including weekdays, for shelter rentals. People generally are not using the shelter the whole day. We are hoping to see if we have people utilizing a morning and an afternoon and see if that better serves our customers. We do anticipate, even through 2021, there still being capacity limits due to COVID-19. We had rentals that we have never seen. We can see if we can serve more of our residents this way and take it from there.

Commissioner Smith stated he was only thinking of the weekends.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated generally we don't have a lot of weekday rentals but this year we saw we had at least two to three days of the week, which was something we had not really seen previously to 2020 with the pandemic.

Commissioner Staab asked if we had asked previous consumers what they thought about the increase in cost and the half day and see what kind of reaction you would get.

Recreation Supervisor stated we have not.

Director Muck stated Recreation Supervisor Mistak did analyze a number of our surrounding communities and it is a mixed bag of policies. It is not unprecedented that people offer half days. Not every community is the same. Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated, to add to that, we do have summer camp there which takes up most of the weekdays. We want to make sure we are saving some of the shelters because this summer we will have a need for outdoor classrooms. We want to make sure from our programming perspective that we are able to utilize shelters for some programming. If we split the days, then we know on Thursdays we could use the morning for fitness or nature programming. That is something else we are looking at too, how we utilize shelters and outdoor space if we know or in case we cannot bring everything back indoors for programming.

Director Muck stated that is a little bit of a point to Commissioner Joseph's comments about the risks. In some ways this could be better for people because if we are taking up the park shelter until four o'clock with yoga, or whatever else we may need to run outdoors, someone is not going to want to pay a full day rate if they don't get the shelter until five o'clock. In this case, they could still rent it for a half day with that option. It could potentially see some increases in our revenue as well.

Commissioner Dooley stated he would agree with that. He asked if someone rented for half a day and someone else rented for the other half are you going to guarantee everyone that everything will be cleaned up and picked up before the second renter comes if they are renting the same place on the same day.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak replied yes. During the week we know we will have building attendants to be able to switch that over. With the increase in fees, we will also be able to guarantee you that on Saturdays and Sundays we will have a building attendant position there who will clean up, empty the trash and sweep out the shelter so when people come in at four o'clock it will be clean. That is something we can't guarantee right now because we do not have the staff to do it. That is what we are looking at with the fee increase.

Commissioner Dooley stated that will be a concern for everyone coming in, that they have a clean shelter coming in particularly for that half day.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak replied absolutely. That is why we want to make sure staff is there to facilitate that.

Commissioner Joseph stated he looked at the different capacities of each of the shelters. An hour, potentially, doesn't seem like sufficient time to get the hundred people out of the location as well as clean. The other shelters are a little smaller. He asked if there is a standard approach to the cleaning and the transition or are we saying it is flat nine to three and then four to nine.

Recreation Supervisor Mistak replied we are basing this on our experience, not only with shelters, but our experience with facility rentals within the Novi Civic Center. That is why we have to have staff there. Generally, what we do when we have facility rentals is, starting an hour before the rental is over, we have the

staff person bring cleaning supplies to the people renting the particular space and remind them when their rental is up. They give them the cleaning supplies and ask them how they can help them. That is what we would do at Lakeshore Park also. The staff would ask them how they are doing, remind them when they need to be out of the shelter and ask how they can help. If the people are not out by 3:00 p.m. then we just start cleaning and that also helps move people along. We start emptying the trash cans and saying, "Thank you for joining us", and start clearing everything.

Commissioner Riggins asked if there are any processes for someone who rented the space but changed their mind and couldn't rent the space. Do they or do they not get their money back? Do you have a list of people to call to take that spot?

Recreation Supervisor Mistak stated we did not have an issue with it this year. We started taking rentals on Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>. We generally start rentals the second Tuesday in January. The people who had originally rented had no idea COVID-19 was going to take place, obviously. We did refund those people if they let us know that they did not feel good about having a large gathering. We did get to a point when we got to June and July and people were having graduation parties and we had been in the thick of COVID-19, by that point for quite a long time so we were not refunding those people. Going forward, because we are going into the summer, this will be over a year of COVID-19, we will have a disclaimer that you will not get a refund if you cancel at the last minute, and generally we don't. Our general policy is if you cancel you will get a full refund minus fifteen percent if we can rebook the shelter. We will be adhering to that this summer. Last summer we were flexible because as soon as people were cancelling we rebooked them. This summer is a little different because people are fully aware of what is happening. We are going to go back to the policy of if you cancel we will refund you, but someone has to rebook that shelter.

Commissioner Joseph asked if it is common practice in the area for city parks to have a resident non-resident split. Is there any way without discriminating to give priority to city residents over non-residents?

Recreation Supervisor Mistak replied it is more common than not to have a resident rate because our residents pay taxes and subsidize our services.

As far as the second question, every community does it a little differently. We have historically put all of our rentals up. She will have been here five years in February and have always put ours up online. We used to actually have people come into the Civic Center. We would put up chairs and they would wait. Now they can do it online. We do not have a separate date when residents can rent and another date when non-residents can rent. There are some communities such as Canton Township that do that.

Commissioner Joseph stated he just looked at it through the lens of the taxpayer. The discounted rate makes sense. If non-residents take up the rentals that leads to nonuse of the folks who pay taxes.

Director Muck asked that the Commission either discuss or make a motion that this would go to City Council as a recommendation or if there are any changes that you want to make or recommend to the staff and incorporate that as well.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he thought the big concern was making sure

the shelters at Lakeshore Park are clean especially for those who have the second rental of the day for a shelter that also had a rental the first half of the day. The price increase to have this done is small. This may increase revenues due to the fact you can rent the shelters for half days and the opportunity to take advantage of those resources. He likes it as it is.

He asked each Commissioner to make comments.

Commissioner Staab stated his recommendation is to support it as presented. Commissioner Dooley suggested that unless anyone has an issue as you have looked over the Marketing Plan that there be a motion and a second for the recommendation to take it to City Council.

Commissioner Staab asked if we were talking about the Marketing Plan or the rental fees.

Commissioner Dooley stated it is for the Park Shelter Rentals.

Commissioner Staab made a motion to support the 2021 rental rates as presented.

Commissioner Joseph seconded the motion.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

Commissioner Dooley asked if there was anything that needed to be done as a Commission before the Marketing Plan is put in City Council's packet.

Director Muck replied it will go in an off-week packet that is not required to be approved by City Council. It will go in as an information item.

Commissioner Joshi stated it will be interesting to see if the rental on Wildlife Woods goes up compared to previous years once the pickleball courts are done.

Director Muck stated he agrees. He also mentioned the new entryway in to the park. He anticipates it will be much more visible and may come into much more demand.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

#### 1. Park Project Update

Director Muck stated as we are rapidly moving toward the New Year we will be anticipating more announcements coming out in January about Lakeshore Park. Director Muck presented pictures noting that the camp room in the building will be called the Dodge Brothers Room and a nod to the history of Lakeshore Park and the Dodge brothers who donated almost thirty acres back in the early 1900's. We will be recognizing that with some signage within the building.

Director Muck continued to give an overview of the new building and the features and layout of the park and noted differences between the old and the new. He noted that the new layout of the park is better for pedestrian flow. He also noted some of the features of the new playground structures are some of the first ones installed in Michigan.

Commissioner Joshi asked if they could go see it.

Director Muck stated you could drive by or ride your bike in. He believes

Commissioner Joseph rode his bike in.

Director Muck stated he is happy that we have been able to maintain access

to the park through the entire construction process. The construction company has worked with us in keeping that temporary pathway along the edge of the property. He and Deputy Director Ringle were out there about a month ago, with the Motor City Mountain Bike Association and were amazed at how many people were riding and walking. He had never seen so many people on the trails at Lakeshore Park and they were all using the temporary pathway.

Commissioner Dooley stated Commissioner Smith was going to have a good time doing his report on Lakeshore Park in June.

Commissioner Smith stated it looks like something he would expect to see out West in a national park.

Commissioner Staab thanked the staff, architects, and construction people for taking to heart the recommendations of the citizens in the north end. The look does remind him of places like Yosemite or the Grand Canyon.

Commissioner Dooley stated that he hopes those who came and made citizen comments last year will be very happy with the soon to be end result. He asked Director Muck if there would be any AV opportunities to for the Commission to have a meeting there in 2021.

Director Muck state it was a great question, and we can look into it. We have done many things by Zoom and the building will have WiFi.

## 2. CAPRA re-accreditation update

Director Muck stated he wanted this on the agenda because we have several new Commissioners who were not with us when we went through our original accreditation. CAPRA accreditation is the only national accreditation for park and recreation agencies. It is a measure of an agency's quality of operations management and customer service. Not only was the original accreditation a multi-year process in which we had to demonstrate compliance in planning, administration, human resources, financial management, facility and land use, public safety, risk management, research, and evaluation. We have had to keep going and continue that to maintain our accreditation. We were first accredited in 2016 and are now up for reaccreditation. We are one of only three agencies in Michigan who currently have CAPRA accreditation. We are one of 186 out of almost 10,000 agencies around the country. This is elite territory when you talk about those numbers. We are scheduled for reaccreditation in 2021. Staff is working toward an internal deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup> of when we would have our documents, narratives, standards, and our website updated. That then leads to March 8<sup>th</sup> when we have our self- assessment due to CAPRA accreditation so they can start reviewing us. We are scheduled for a virtual visit on May 17<sup>th</sup> through May 21<sup>st</sup>. He stated when we first went through accreditation we had three visitors who came into town but now due to COVID everything has moved to virtual. His understanding is that will be just staff with the visitors. It is not necessarily a Council or Commission function due to the virtual aspect. If we receive the reaccreditation it would be granted at the NRPA conference, which is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup> in Nashville. Hopefully, it will be in person and not virtual. That is the schedule we are working toward.

Director Muck stated he would answer any questions.

Commissioner Staab asked if we would know before the NRPA conference

whether we had the accreditation.

Director Muck replied that they give you an indication that they are recommending approval to the accreditation board. He has not heard of anyone being denied after the visitation is recommended. You know going in to be prepared.

Commissioner Staab asked if members of the Commission would be able to attend.

Director Muck stated if they want to journey to Nashville at their own expense and come into the meeting with the department, they probably could.

The Commissioners briefly discussed attending the conference.

## B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

### 1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle stated our great team has been rolling with the punches in this COVID era. She hoped everyone had received their recent edition of Engage which was in mailboxes last week and hopefully a little earlier. It covers December and January. She also suggests to always keep track of our social media because we are able to pivot and add programs as we move through this MDHHS directive that we are in right now. As we are able to open things up we will always be adding more on our social media. The book is a little lighter in programming. We were putting it together when the first directive came together in November, but we are looking wholeheartedly toward spring.

She wanted to recap that the drive-thru Santa event on December 4<sup>th</sup> was a success. We had more than 200 families literally roll through the Civic Center parking lot to visit with Santa. Not only did it boost the community but it boosted our staff, too. The responses on surveys that our Recreation Supervisor, Cristin Spiller, put out are very positive.

Some outdoor programming, we know we have coming in January include some night hikes. Night hikes and S'mores are going to take place at ITC Community Sports Park. Our Finding Bigfoot, which we have had for multiple years is returning to the Novi community. He will be hiding around town. People will look for clues and seek him out and have a visit with Bigfoot. We were just able to put together an e-sports holiday break tournament. It will take place starting on December 26<sup>th</sup>. She believes it will be a three-day tournament and will be perfect for those people receiving gaming systems for Christmas.

Following the success of our fall Parks and RECESS program we offered in the fall, we added a Parks and RECESS family style program. It launched this week and will run through mid-February. It is a program where families can sign up and compete with fun, goofy games and projects and share their submissions with us. We choose a winner, and that winner will be shared virtually. We have had some good local business support to help with prizes and gift cards. It is something fun to keep people and families engaged while at home. We look forward to seeing how that goes.

Fall basketball and volleyball remain on hold. We are hoping to move those programs forward again in early January. We are also hoping to fit in a winter session as well. We are waiting for our directives to see if we are able to do

that. We have a plan in place. Our Recreation Programmer Chase Root has done a great job of putting together game plans and scenarios for when we get the directive of what we are able to move forward with.

The team is working on the February through March Engage and we are submitting that information to our Community Relations team to get them working on the printed piece. It will include information on things like hockey leagues, archery, basketball skills training, tennis, and another boost for spring soccer, which we have a feeling will be going this spring.

Our virtual fitness classes, virtual dance classes and 55+ golf league had tremendous success this past spring. We expect these to be a big hit for us as well. Adult Softball Leagues were fantastic last spring and summer and are anticipating the same this year. Camp Lakeshore and Camp Power Play registrations will begin March 1<sup>st</sup>. We are looking forward to spring.

She asked for any questions.

Commissioner Joshi asked if spring soccer would be at Bosco Fields or ITC Community Sports Park.

Director Muck stated it could be a combination of both. The majority will be at ITC but we do think that there will be some fields ready at Bosco but maybe not all of them. When the snow clears we will start walking those fields and look at how the restoration they did in the late fall took. We will make a decision then.

#### C. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

##### 1. Program & Services

Director Muck stated there was an Older Adult Services Advisory Board Meeting this past Tuesday. We have a re-energized Board. We added three new members and they are bringing a lot to the board. One of them is a former ambassador. This meeting focused on some updates about some of the programs and services OAS are continuing to offer. The first one was done by Sandy Fisher, our Social Services Coordinator, who focused on the food assistance programs we currently run. These programs are Focus Hope for Seniors and TEFAP, The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Focus Hope has been running for about forty years. It is targeted at 60 years and older, income eligible seniors. TEFAP has run about thirty-six people taking advantage of that and is based on income. We promote these through Engage, social media, Next Door, all of those. If you are ever aware of anyone who needs food assistance in Novi definitely refer them to Older Adult Services.

We also discussed a new collaboration with SOAR, the Society of Active Retirees, that Sandy has been working on. These are lifelong learning programs run through Wayne State. They are a fee-based program but the board had a couple of members who are actually taking those classes and they had nothing but good things to say about it. We are planning to launch those, he believes, in February, and that will be a nice stay at home type of activity for seniors who want to continue their lifelong learning.

Jessica Mistak also joined us at the Senior Advisory Board meeting and gave an update on our Meals on Wheels program that operates out of Meadowbrook Commons. We have seen about a five percent increase in the

meal deliveries since March. We have also done some additional things such as distributing some items and care packages that were given to us by the Michigan State Fair for the Meals on Wheels participants. We also distributed some Oakland Health quarantine kits to them as well. Jessica also gave an update on our transportation program which has been running for thirty years in the City of Novi. Currently numbers are down due to COVID and capacity. We are taking individual riders and not group loading. People are still using it and it is a very needed service for their medical appointments. We ran this service all through the shutdown going back to March. It did not stop. We limited it to medical transports for a while but we had some dedicated drivers and schedulers. Jessica pushed through that and we ran those through the middle of COVID. Thinking back to April and May when you did not know how bad this was going to be, we still had people showing up every day to drive some of our most vulnerable citizens to medical dialysis appointments. Kudos to them.

The other thing we did at the meeting in trying to make this a working committee is we challenged them to do some homework and bring to us some ideas for programming for seniors over the winter in case the shutdown continues and gathering restrictions continue. We did get some really good recommendations and feedback that staff is going to go back and evaluate. We were already looking at some pen pal programs and that one did come up. We are also looking at increasing some of our marketing efforts and communication on resources, virtual volunteering, care packages and other things like that. The meeting was just on Tuesday, so we have not circled back around on that but it is a discussion we will be having. As Deputy Director Ringle mentioned we are waiting for those gathering restrictions to loosen. Our County Commissioner, Gwen Markham, reached out to him and she is looking for a senior age sixty or over who might be interested in serving on the Oakland County Senior Commission. They meet four times a year. She is looking for a Novi resident who may be interested in getting involved on the County level on that Commission. If you know anyone who is interested please forward them to him and he will get them in contact with Gwen Markham. Our Meadowbrook Commons management contract will be coming up next year. It is currently held by KMG Prestige. They have held that contract for many years and are one of the best, if not the best, at managing properties similar to Meadowbrook Commons. He knows they will be submitting that bid again. Every five years that contract has to go out for an RFP. The staff at Meadowbrook Commons are monitoring the vaccine distribution. They are on the list for the CVS program so as soon as they can, they will be coming in to give the vaccines at Meadowbrook Commons. As a reminder, you may have seen a lot in the news about long-term care facilities, and assisted care facilities. Meadowbrook Commons is not that type of facility. It is an independent living facility. Those other facilities may be in line first. Director Muck asked for any questions or comments.

**COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Joseph stated with all of the adversity this year, the group has definitely come through. Everyone is appreciative of all the facilities and great parks we have. Kudos to the team. It looks like we have had a lot of very successful programs.

Commissioner Riggins stated tonight's meeting was very informative and we got a lot of things done. Hopefully, the new year will be a better year, we can figure out some new things and things will open up. She wished everyone a Happy New Year and Merry Christmas.

Commissioner Torimoto stated it has been a hard year for everyone but to be able to maintain the quality of services and also look out for the future with a plan, whether it is a marketing plan or being more effective with our facility rentals is positive and encouraging. He wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Commissioner Smith stated it has been an interesting year and hopefully next year will be good and a little less interesting. He is looking forward to getting out to Lakeshore Park. It looks awesome. He wished everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Joshi stated, to put things in perspective, last year at this time she did not attend a meeting because she was in India. This year is completely different, and she knows everyone is just waiting for this year to be over. She wished everyone Happy Holidays. The department did a great job coming up with many ways of navigating this year. Lakeshore Park is hopefully a symbol of what 2021 is going to be, hopeful and bright.

Commissioner Staab stated he agrees with everything previously said. He wanted to thank Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle for maintaining the quality services and quality parks that we have in Novi through the toughest of times. He is looking forward to 2021 kicking off and using the new facilities at Lakeshore Park. Everything he sees is first class all the way. He appreciates the hard work. He wished everyone Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Commissioner Dooley stated he continues to be amazed at everything that is going on in our city. He thinks we are the envy of the surrounding communities because of all the resources we have and what we develop. He reminded everyone that Director Muck had put together a calendar for the 2021 park reports and who is responsible. In January Commissioner Torimoto will do the presentation on the Ice Arena and Commissioner Riggins will have Villa Barr. He is looking forward to those presentations. He commended the Commissioners on the job that they do. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and Happy Holidays.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:31p.m.

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

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Jay Dooley, Chairperson

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Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson