

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

Thursday, December 18, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Commissioner Jewell presiding.

ROLL CALL: Jewell (Present), Torimoto (Present), Bauss (Present), Ferrell (Absent), Pratt (Absent-Excused), Staab (Present), Wingfield (Present), Student Representative Kodali (Absent), Student Representative Thakore (Absent-Excused).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Director Muck asked that under Staff Reports, Administration Division that as item three, Michigan Recreation and Park Association Conference be added.

It was moved by Commissioner Bauss and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield to approve the agenda as amended.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Approval of the November 20, 2014 minutes

Commissioner Bauss asked to make an amendment to the Public Hearing section. It states that she was speaking "as a subdivision board member". He wanted to make a clarification that she was not speaking for the Board but just as a member.

Commissioner Staab asked how he would like it amended.

Commissioner Bauss stated he would like it to read that she was speaking "as a homeowner" on behalf of some of her neighbors.

She is a Board Member but she was not directed at a Board Meeting to speak for the Board.

Director Muck stated the minutes will be amended with the Commissioner's comments on the approval.

It was moved by Commissioner Wingfield and seconded by Commissioner Torimoto to approve the minutes with an amendment that Eleanor Thompson was speaking as a homeowner.

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Torimoto and Bauss

Commissioner Bauss stated there has not been a Walkable Novi Meeting since the last Commission Meeting so there are no new items.

Commissioner Torimoto had no comment.

B. Novi Parks Foundation - Commissioners Staab and Ferrell

Commissioner Staab stated yesterday evening they had a meeting prior to their Open House at Interior Environments. At the next meeting Director Muck will be

bringing a proposal regarding economic outlay, purchases and commitments for the Villa Barr Park. There are two items totaling around \$70,000. They are going to start meeting every other month. Their Executive Director, Rachel Zagaroli, will be preparing and presenting marketing brochures for review, which will print in early 2015 to be used for solicitations and mailings to prospective donors and naming rights participants. He and Executive Director Zagaroli will be working on the renewal for Tom Holzer naming rights at Ella Mae Power Park. He thanked the Parks Department and Commissioners for their help with this year's golf outing. He also thanked City Council Member Casey, City Manager Auger and everyone else who attended the Foundation Open House. He thanked Randy Balconi and Interior Environments for hosting the Open House.

Commissioner Wingfield asked for confirmation that they would not be doing the Golf Outing this next year.

Commissioner Staab stated they are looking at alternative funding. They are looking at a fundraiser to be at Pavilion Shore Park on a Friday in June or July. It will be a reception with beer and wine tasting. They hope to then do another fundraiser in the fall.

STAFF REPORTS:

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Capital Needs Assessment

Director Muck gave an overview of what the report contains and covers. What the report came back with is a thorough analysis of park inventory and general condition. Based on this report there is a need across the park system of almost ten million dollars over the span of ten years for both short term and long term projects. The process has begun of breaking down those projects in to immediate needs, three-year, five-year and ten-year plans and started discussions on how these can potentially be funded. We have been working with our Department of Public Services to prioritize repairs, projections and confirm amounts on some of those projects. The report is included in the Strategic Community Recreation and Master Park Plan. It will be used in future budgets and is being introduced in to the budget cycle now.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if this is the final report.

Director Muck stated that it is the final report.

Commissioner Staab asked if Director Muck would go over the priorities for 2015/2016.

Director Muck replied the main ones we are looking at is restrooms/pavilion at Pavilion Shore Park and pathway repairs at ITC Community Sports Park. Some of the other larger ones we will not be looking at until later years.

Commissioner Staab asked Director Muck if he has had any further contact with Novi Youth Baseball League since they were at the Commission Meeting in October.

Director Muck stated Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris attended their Board Meeting last week. They were discussing field schedules and upkeep. They have been moving forward on the plan that we would collaborate with them and our Department of Public Services on training for their staff on field maintenance and upkeep so that they understand the standards of care for those ball diamonds. That should alleviate some of the problems. The Department of Public Services has

done field improvements to alleviate some of the lips and some of the issues with drainage.

Commissioner Staab asked if we are faced with possibly shutting down a field or two and just rehabbing them and letting them come back.

Director Muck stated that is something which is recommended in the report. Especially some of the soccer fields at ITC Community Sports Park, which were built with the crown method where water drains off from the middle. The standard is now where the water drains from under the fields. The only way to repair and replace them is to shut the fields down for a period of time. In the Capital Needs Assessments one of the recommendations is to upgrade the fields at Wildlife Woods Park. If we gain fields at Wildlife Woods Park, we could then shut down some fields at ITC Community Sports Park and start the rotation.

Commissioner Staab talked about past problems at the fields.

Director Muck stated these are large scale projects with a significant impact. If we do them strategically and we allocate funding appropriately we will not see an impact on our programs and can operate in different locations temporarily.

Commissioner Staab asked if possible alternative funding has been looked at for restrooms at Pavilion Shore Park like donations and naming rights.

Director Muck replied we would aggressively be looking at all options.

Commissioner Wingfield stated, for Novi Youth Baseball, from the first of May through the middle of July is their season. They have Monday through Saturday programming on those eight fields of about 95%. It would behoove us to go to Wildlife Woods. They do use those fields for practice. With a little work they could be used for game fields for the younger divisions allowing the fields at ITC to be closed for updating. This would add to the number of fields since there is already a shortage.

Director Muck state that NYBL is making plans to play in to the fall. They have been in discussion with Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris. We support that.

Commissioner Wingfield asked about the two fields at the back of Ella Mae Power Park and are they going to be made in to extra softball fields. These would be a good source of more revenue.

Director Muck stated fields five and six at the back of Ella Mae Power Park are recommended for lengthening and adding lights. We are looking at return on investment on those now. Those fields could also be used for Cricket which is expanding and Cricket tournaments.

2. Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Update

Director Muck stated they may have recently seen correspondence, news releases from the DNR and in the Novi News. We recently put in for a grant with the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for some property on Twelve Mile Road east of Napier Road. Total estimated project cost is \$550,000. That includes a thirty percent City match of \$165,000. The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commission recommended it. City Council approved it. We did receive notice the Trust Fund Board approved it so the next step is for the State Legislature approval then the funds would be released to the DNR. We would then enter in to a project agreement and work with the seller on securing the property and move forward. Future plans are to develop a neighborhood park very similar to Brookfarm Park with some open space potentially a playground and possibly a pathway. He thanked the Commissioners and Councilmembers who supported it.

3. Michigan Recreation and Park Association Conference

Director Muck said the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) annual conference is coming up and will be held in Lansing this year. MRPA has put out packages that are recommended for local officials and legislators. Wednesday, February 11th and Thursday, February 12th are two days that are recommended. He and Deputy Director Ringle reviewed the budget to see what was available and they are able to offer each Commissioner to attend one day per Commissioner. He encouraged the Commissioners to attend. The schedule will be e-mailed and they can call the office to choose a day to attend. Their registration will be taken care of by the department. He went over some of the recommended sessions. He noted the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board is meeting on Wednesday. There is a trade show that has vendors from playgrounds, park designers, landscape architects, etc. Several staff members will be attending different days of the week.

Commissioner Torimoto stated he had a chance to look over the Master Strategic Park Plan and it was fantastic. Page 124 shows the Parks Project Summary 2014-2020. He asked how we handle the new park, which is not on the summary and what the process is.

Director Muck stated that with the combined plan it is a 5-year plan but is reviewed every year and an addendum will be added to the Strategic Master Park Plan every year and that will update our inventory and Capital Improvement Plan.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if most of the staff attend the MRPA Conference. Director Muck replied that most of the professional staff does attend. He will be unable to attend this year but Deputy Director Ringle will be there and she is organizing the rest of Recreation Supervisors. We are sending our Recreations Coordinators for one day also.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Township Hall winter closure

Deputy Director Ringle stated as a department we have decided not to open our historic Township Hall this winter, which is located in Fuerst Park, as a preservation and cost saving measure. She gave reasons such as closed, winterized bathrooms, lack of insulation, heating costs and parking issues due to plowing and salt damage to the wood floors. Most of the use at this time of year was internal programming, which we could accommodate at other locations.

2. Programs & Facilities

Deputy Director Ringle stated on Friday, December 5th we held our annual “Light Up the Night” event welcoming thousands of community members. It involves hundreds of participants and volunteers making it truly a community event. It involves our partnership with the Library, Schools, and local businesses. It is one of our keystone events and most well attended. We had a nineteen percent increase in sponsorship this year. Following the event, planning for the future, we looked at enhancements including increased sponsorships and utilizing the Civic Center more.

“Breakfast with Santa” was held last Saturday, which is in partnership with Novi Rotary Club. We had High School staff volunteers. There was a 52 percent increase in attendance from last year.

We are winding down our current programs with new programs starting in January. The Engage! recreation guide will soon be in community members' mailboxes. A lot of our programming can help people with their New Year's resolutions. At this time of year, with less programming, we do some general building cleaning, like waxing floors, and get the building ready for updated programming and the New Year.

Director Muck added the Novi Ice Arena is undergoing an extensive project. The arcade has been removed. The area has been opened up and new couches will be coming in. There will be a nice seating area with docking stations for electronics. Some tables will also be added and birthday parties can be held in that area. Video cameras will be installed with live feed so people can look on the monitors and see what is going on at each rink. It will be a more functional space and can accommodate larger events. The project will be done by January 1st. He encouraged all of the Commissioners to stop by and see it.

Commissioner Torimoto asked about some of the new winter activities. He is interested in snowshoeing.

Deputy Director Ringle stated registration has just started at the beginning of December for some of those programs. There has been interest in the Softball Showdown and a couple of teams are registered and Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris, has been receiving calls on it. Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller, continues to work with Maybury State Park on the programming for the snowshoeing.

Commissioner Wingfield asked if there are still classes and meetings at this time of the year or if everything is shut down.

Director Muck stated it is quiet and it is a great time for staff to look forward to upcoming months.

Commissioner Staab asked Director Muck what profitability the Ice Arena has. Director Muck stated the Ice Arena returns a profit every year. It has exceeded expectations. This can be discussed at a future meeting.

Commissioner Staab stated he was on the Commission when it was first built and did not return a profit under the first management company.

Director Muck stated they are extremely pleased with the current management company and their ability to complete capital projects out of the Ice Arena fund without taking General Fund dollars.

Commissioner Wingfield asked where the money came from for the current project.

Director Muck stated it came from the Ice Arena Funds.

Commissioner Torimoto asked about the time for the "Learn to Play Hockey" for free opportunity.

Director Muck stated he did not have the information in front of him but they encourage kids to come out and try it. It is for boys and girls. The information is on the website.

3. Online Pavilion Reservations

Deputy Director Ringle stated in 2013 the department began using a new registration software and have had some time to successfully implement that software and acclimate our staff. We have decided it is time to move to online reservations for park shelters. Using the system via cityofnovi.org, people would be able to view the availability and make a reservation online from the convenience of their home at any time. It will reduce the congestion at the front counter and

eliminate some phone calls. Traditionally, we have had a line up at our front counter the opening day. In 2014 we had over 10,000 people in our shelters between June and September so they are very well used. Most of the weekends are completely booked.

C. Older Adults – Older Adult Services Manager Karen Kapchonick

Director Muck stated Manager Kapchonick could not attend the meeting this evening but did leave reports.

1. Meadowbrook Commons update

Director Muck stated that Older Adults Services always have a volunteer of the month. This month they recognized three different groups. They are VFW Post 1519, American Legion Post 147 and Paralyzed Veterans of America. They ran key components in the programming over the past month and we thank them for their volunteer service to the community.

2. Programs & Services

Director Muck stated under our social services division we offered one on one Medicare counseling. Part B was very popular. We assisted 20 individuals this year which is up from 9 last year. We attribute this to many who are trying to manage the significant increase in the cost of their Medicare.

The annual food drive at Meadowbrook Commons was very successful this year. They had eighteen boxes of non-perishable food donated to the food pantry of the Church of the Holy Family and to Novi Emergency Food Bank.

We had 45 households provided with food commodities distribution as part of our Emergency Food Program. That is from an average of 38 last year. We are seeing increases in all of these areas. You can see the need is there.

Our AARP tax preparation program will start on February 5th. This is a very popular program.

3. Transportation

Director Muck stated in the month of November we had 858 riders in our transportation program. Three hundred and twenty-nine of these went to medical facilities, one hundred and seventy-two of those live at Meadowbrook Commons. Six hundred and eight-six were Novi residents. We were open 22 of 28 service days.

Commissioner Bauss asked if there was an unmet need and how you would measure unmet needs.

Director Muck stated that would be a question for Karen at the next meeting. She manages those details. There are days when we have maxed out our vehicles and these are usually doctor days and appointment days.

Commissioner Bauss suggested a service call UBER. He wondered if seniors with smart phones could be trained to use the service. It is relatively inexpensive.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION: None

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Wingfield thanked the Park Foundation for their nice event last night. He attended "Light Up the Night". It had been about 12 years since he had last been. It has evolved in to a major event. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

Commissioner Staab asked Director Muck, as senior services, what do we do to provide services or transportation services to Fox Run or are they self-contained.

Director Muck stated that he believed they are self-contained but would have to defer to Manager Kapchonick for an answer.

He thanked everyone for a great 2014. He congratulated Deputy Director Ringle and is looking forward to working with her again. He also congratulated Director Muck as he and Deputy Director Ringle begin their first full year. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

Commissioner Bauss thanked everyone for their hard work in 2014 and is looking forward to 2015. He congratulated Director Muck, Deputy Director Ringle, the staff and volunteers and thanked them for their work. The Park Foundation evening was appreciated. Light Up the Night was enjoyed by his family. He received his Engage! this week. He is looking forward to 2015.

Commissioner Torimoto stated he also attended Light Up the Night and it has turned in to quite an event. It is great to see the shared facilities and the very efficient running of the event. His favorite was the magician. He missed the last meeting but stated his family always looks forward to coming to the theatre. He knows the production company relationship is no longer there but hopes we can continue and improve the theatre. He thanked the staff for everything they do and wished everyone a Happy Holiday.

Commissioner Jewell stated he also attended Light Up the Night and it was a great event and thanked everyone. The Novi Appreciation Night at Suburban Showplace was well attended and many of the Commissioners were there. Whoever put it together did an outstanding job. He thanked Randy Balconi for the Parks Foundation event at Interior Designs. He thanked everyone for a great 2014 and looking forward to 2015. He wished everyone a safe and Happy Holiday.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Wingfield.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Jewell at 7:48 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jerry Jewell, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson

