

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, May 16, 2019 – 7 P.M.

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Present), Thomopoulos (Absent), Joshi (Present), Muzzin (Present), Pratt (Absent), Staab (Present), Torimoto (Absent), Student Representatives Alex Fortsch (Absent), Ananya Kamalesh (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved that the agenda be approved as amended by Commissioner Joshi and seconded by Commissioner Muzzin.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Resident Maureen Zack of 359 South Lake Drive said Lakeshore Park is a beautiful natural park with a beach on Walled Lake and has “up north” ambiance that everyone loves and is the jewel of Novi. Novi is very fortunate to have a park and beach combination like this. As more and more land is developed in Novi, natural areas are becoming more valuable and scarce. Lakeshore Park should be treasured. However, the need for an expanded building for the kids camp has somehow morphed into a large community center with paved parking and resulting detention ponds, many trees being removed and street lights and bollard lights along the bike pathway. Thank you for removing the bollard lights along the non-bike pathway. It's a big improvement. This manicured look would greatly take away from the “up north” feel of the park. Please size the new building for the kids camp only and include additional changing stalls for swimmers. The present plan shows only two changing stalls, one in the women's beach restroom and one in the men's beach restroom. This is not enough for all the swimmers who need Lakeshore Park. Only pave as needed for handicap parking. The existing gravel parking lot provides water filtration, which eliminates need for detention ponds. Bollard lights are dangerous for children who might crash into them while riding their bikes. A community center, with their classes and activities, add to the traffic on South Lake drive, which already has a treacherous mix of cars, bikes and pedestrians; especially in nice summer days. In summary, a community center is a nice thing to have, but it is not as valuable as what would be lost, the “up north” ambiance of Lakeshore Park. Please put the community center elsewhere if you really think we need it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Approval of March 21, 2019, minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for March be approved by Commissioner Dooley and seconded by Commissioner Joshi.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Muzzin & Thomopoulos

Commissioner Muzzin said last month's meeting reviewed progress on the five-year plan and they received an update on the boardwalk repairs made throughout the city. They also reviewed and evaluated the criteria used for ranking projects so it best reflects the changing needs of the community.

B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Staab & Torimoto

Commissioner Staab they met this past Monday & discussed Pour on the Shore Aug. 2 at Pavilion Shore Park. They went over contributions and many are still outstanding. This Pour on the Shore will be expanded with 10 breweries, wine tasting and a bourbon tasting. Food trucks are being negotiated right now. Executive Director Rachel Zagaroli has done an outstanding job to date. On May 6, President David Landry made a presentation to Novi City Council and we are contributing \$250,000 to two different projects. One is the remodel/rebuild of Tim Pope play structure at ITC Community Sports Park and also \$100,000 toward the development of pickleball courts in the future. As City Council members acknowledged and Landry captured, we're doing book-end projects from kids to seniors, as pickleball has become a hot activity for seniors. It's good to see us spread our contributions around and see our money go to work. The play structure rebuild will hopefully be able to be finished this fall by the end of the season. They also made a commitment Monday to fund the artist-in-residence at \$3,000 per year. That program will be well-funded by the Foundation contribution also. Director Muck said thanks on behalf of staff. That's a big item and provides flexibility in selecting artists or a number of artists.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Joshi

Commissioner Joshi said there wasn't a meeting. Director Muck said they will meet again in the next 2-3 months, as there are some grant applications upcoming. They did receive information that Major League Baseball's Baseball Tomorrow Grant put their funding on hold. Kudos to Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris and Management Assistant Chris Jackett doing work to get the materials for that. They've also worked with our Parks Maintenance and Facilities, and Community Development Department. The materials are there and ready to go if Major League Baseball opens that back up. We'll certainly go back at it again.

D. Parks Updates

1. ~~Wildlife Woods Park – Commissioner Pratt~~

2. ~~Rotary Park – Commissioner Thomopoulos/Student Rep. Fortsch~~

3. Brookfarm Park – Commissioner Muzzin (Apr.)

Commissioner Muzzi said she went on a sunny, non-rainy day in early April. The only issue she saw was – like everywhere in southeast Michigan – was water retention. But the fields were dry and the nets were in good repair. The low spots were to be expected considering the spring we've had. Everything was in great shape and the sidewalks did not need repair. She said she ran into one woman who was walking with a child who said she did appreciate the park when she came to visit her son and daughter-in-law in the area. Trash bins were clean and empty, everything was in fabulous shape and the bridge was clean. The boy scouts or whoever is doing work on the trees in the area to keep it clear are doing a great job.

4. ~~Village Wood Lake Park – Commissioner Pratt (Feb.)~~

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. Strategic Community Recreation & Master Park Plan

Director Muck said we are well on our way to developing our five-year Strategic Community Recreation & Master Park Plan. He wanted to thank several commissioners. On April 23, we held focus group meetings and Commissioners Thomopoulos, Muzzin and Torimoto sat in on those. Those focus groups were made up of stakeholders from throughout the city. We had representation from Novi schools, user groups such as Novi baseball/softball leagues, Madness, the Jags, Fox Run, our Cultural Arts Advisory Board, OAS Advisory Board, Novi HS Athletics. We had four separate meetings throughout the day and were really able to drill down into what people wanted to see in Novi. The next step is we've launched our online survey on Monday, May 13. It's out on social media and we'll have it on our website. We really encourage all citizens to take part in that because it really gives us a truer picture of what people want in our parks and gives us a truer direction for the next five years. Also, tomorrow at Spring Palooza, we'll have opportunities for people to take that survey here in Council Chambers and also do some activities for kids. We'll be doing some things right here at the dais to see what kids want to have in parks. The online survey will stay open through the end of July and then we'll also do one more public input session July 10 at Pavilion Shore Park as part of our Sizzling Summer series. Commissioner Muzzin said she thought it was eye opening to see the goals and perspectives we're trying to get across, but to see some of the communication. People don't realize all of the opportunities that we have. It's interesting to listen. Director Muck said next steps will be to take the summaries from the focus groups and the data from the surveys, and staff will also be working on action steps/action items for the plan. Ultimately, the goal is that this is done and comes back to commission in November for review. It does have to be open as part of a public hearing and go forward to City Council for approval, and then we submit to the State of Michigan and have that on file. That does need to be done by December at the latest.

B. Lakeshore Park Playground Options

Director Muck said to let's have some fun with this one. He said he wanted to get some input as to what they'd like to see in the Lakeshore Park playground. It needs to be replaced as part of the renovations. Playgrounds have about a 15-year lifespan. He said he'd provide some options tonight and, they're not voting, but he wanted to get some direction since there are thousands upon thousands of playground designs, iteration, features and schemes. Muck said he said down with playground designer Penchura and set up three designs. When talking about the Lakeshore renovations overhead, basically the site plan for each of these is the same area. They'll have an area for tots 2-5 and a larger play area for ages 5-12. They're together and connected by a pathway and within sight of each other. All of the final plans will have some benches and/or tables in there, along with swings. You'll see swings in every iteration. In Concept 1, there's a Crab Trap that our staff is interested in. To the right of that is a tot ground structure with sensory items and slides for kids. At the bottom is the NetPlex is a combination of slides. It's a taller structure that gives kids the opportunity to climb higher. We don't have anything like the Crab Trap or NetPlex in any of our parks. These would be brand new features. Moving on to Concept 2 is a little bit larger structure with a different version of the NetPlex. You start having a larger play area and platforms. You have another waveboard-type item similar to what we have at Pavilion Shore. What we like about this is it's something different that you don't have anywhere in the city and relatively new concepts and designs in playgrounds. Concept 3 is one of the most impressive our designer brought forward. There is not one of these in Michigan anywhere. Now we're getting into taller structures and slides with a platform between

the two. So there's a lot of play value in this and it's very unique. It's not even located in Michigan. The smart play loft is a 2-5 play structure that's also not in any of our parks either. Muck said what he's looking for tonight is general direction, not to make a decision tonight. What he'd like to do next is – pending City Council approval of the entire project Monday – then he'd know the budget is available and he can go back to our playground designer with the budget and what we have direction from our Parks Commission, and really get some final versions mocked up on some display boards. Some of the things that we're in these that we did include in all of them are swings and there are spinner items we could put on the ground. There's a structure we want to install where you can wheel a wheelchair into a spinning globe along with a parent or sibling and the whole thing spins like a merry-go-round, but not like the old school ones where the kids will get dragged. These are much safer. Those will fill in based on budget and everything meets current playground safety. Some of these are higher than we have. With the new playground designs and how they do the platforms and tiers, they all meet safety standards.

Student Representative Kamallesh said she really likes the Crab Trap idea. The second one looks a lot like Novi Woods' play structure. She said she used to like that a lot.

Director Muck said we can merge and pick and choose.

Commissioner Muzzin said she has a preference between Concept 1 and Concept 3 because they encourage continuous movement. We're supposed to be teaching waiting your turn, but there seems to be a number of items in Concept 2 – even though the hoverboard looks cool – where you would get in a line to move through. She said she likes the idea of continuous design and molding ideas together. Director Muck said he appreciates hearing the observations on Concept 2 regarding playability. All of these have great playability, but how many kids at one time can access them.

Commissioner Joshi said she likes either Concept 1 or 3. She likes the sensory table and wheelchair in Concept 1 and would like to see that added to Concept 3. She said she likes Concept 3 better than Concept 1 because of high you can climb and how spread out Concept 1 is. Concept 3 is something different that we don't have. If we could get a wheelchair rollup with a sensory table to Concept 3, that'd be great. Director Muck clarified that she like the tall structure from Concept 3, but the tot structure from Concept 1. Joshi said Concept 2 is similar to Novi Woods, so the uniqueness of Concept 3 would be great.

Commissioner Staab said he prefers Concept 3, primarily due to the expanse of it and that it's unique. As far as the tot piece, he said he likes the Concept 2 one that seems more open; plus it has a bench where you can sit down and do something. He said a lot of times, with his 3-year-old grandsons, they'll have a car or something to put together and that'd be a perfect thing to do. The tot 2-5 piece has a lot to do with climbing up and steering wheels.

Commissioner Dooley said he likes the Crab Trap. Can someone actually get trapped in there? Director Muck said no, only an adult maybe. Dooley said he thinks it's really cool and he'd like to see the Super NetPlex from Concept 3 implemented into Concept 3. He likes the SmartPlay Motion in Concept 1. He likes that it's accessible to those in a wheelchair. He said he likes the Super NetPlex in Concept 3 better than the one in Concept 1. He likes that it's higher and no one else in Michigan has that. Muck said he doesn't think we can get the Crab Trap and Super NetPlex in the same footprint, but he'll ask. Muck said one other thing to keep in mind is there will be other playgrounds coming online in the next few years. We have the Power Park south playground that needs to be replaced this next fiscal year. Northwest Neighborhood Park will be coming online in the next few years, too. Staff also like the Crab Trap. Dooley said the other

observation he wanted to make was cleanliness and how are we able to maintain them. He said he thinks Concept 3 could get real dirty real quick. Muck said he appreciates that observation and it doesn't sound like there's much support for Concept 3's Smart Play Loft. He said he was personally not a big fan of that one either because it provides a lot of hiding spaces. You could get a lot more bang for your buck out of Concept 1, more play value. He said he has enough to take back to our designer. It sounds like the Crab Trap, Super NetPlex were really favored, as well as the tot structure on Concept 1. He said he'll go and bring back two concepts, probably one with the Crab Trap as the center piece and one with the Super NetPlex as the center piece, and stuff around it.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck said the Bosco Fields project at 11 Mile and Beck has some setbacks due to the weather, but they are still in the process of installing storm sewer and underdrain. They're still anticipating seeding in 4-6 weeks. The ITC Trail construction crews are continuing to go out and place the boardwalk. The pavement and asphalt will really be dependent on the weather. Weather has really impacted construction everywhere across Novi. Lakeshore Park on Monday, May 20, we are taking the approval of the construction award. This would be Council telling us to go forward with the selected contractor and breaking ground potentially the day after Memorial Day. We met again with 10-12 residents last night and showed them a photometric lighting plan for the park. With the lighting plan we have, there's no light spill outside of the park boundaries. They'll see that in the Council packet, as well. We had a lot of comments and questions and comments about that, but we worked hard to address the concerns of how much light would bleed out into the neighboring residents and we've been able to show there's zero from the lighting plan. When you take into effect the screening we've added onto both sides of the park – we've added in berms and evergreen screenings – we've really worked at adding up all the screening, as well. That'll go to Council on May 20 and more detail will be online on the motion sheet and packet at cityofnovi.org. Commissioner Staab said it'd be appropriate at this point in time after all of the work that's been done since this was approved in 2016, and all the concepts that have gone through town hall meetings, that we as a commission make a motion to approve we support the plan, the part that will be presented to Council Monday night. Commissioner Dooley seconded and the rest of the Parks Commission approved unanimously. Director Muck thanks the Parks Commission for their support. Staab said he's looking forward to seeing our millage dollars going to work.

2. OAS Manager Position

Director Muck said, as announced via emails, Older Adult Services Manager Karen Kapchonick has announced her retirement and is now a short-timer with us. She is feverishly getting the Memorial Day Parade ready and will be retiring effective May 28. Kapchonick said it has been a pleasure and an honor working for the City, especially serving the older adult population and learning how we can grow as older individuals later in life and taking advantage of those many things available out there. It is bittersweet, as we all move on, life goes on and it's

good to enjoy that as we can. It's been a pleasure working with all of you and getting to know each of you and the qualities you have to offer the residents of this community. Applause ensued. Muck said next steps included a thorough search to find the next older adult services manager. There were five excellent candidates who all showed great strengths throughout the process. We had three internal candidates. They all showed great professionalism and dedication throughout the process, which was recognized by our assessment center panel, as well as City management and was greatly appreciated. Thank you to Commissioner Dooley for your participation on the panel. We put people through the ropes on this one. We do something unique as an assessment center. Muck said he went through it when he was hired as deputy director and Deputy Director Ringle went through it. You bring all of the candidates into the room at the same time and they have to do a professional presentation on their greatest professional accomplishment. So they're all presenting in front of the assessors and in front of us. They had to do a formal interview, some talk-through scenario discussions and they had to do a written exercise. We also did some group discussions and the assessors watched them as they went through those. We had Commissioner Dooley assist us, Deputy Director Ringle and myself, a member of our Community Relations team, our Older Adult Advisory Board and our Meadowbrook Commons Manager Casey Carr. The second stage was the final two candidates went forward and met with the City Manager's office and our HR Department and we have extended an offer to our final candidate and he has accepted. Mr. Derek Stogner will be joining our team Tuesday, May 28. He has a strong background working with older adults, experience with social services programs, strategic planning, grant writing and program development. He recently moved back to Michigan after working for the FiftyForward program in Nashville, Tennessee. He's excited to join our team and begin working with all of us to provide the best programs and services possible. We'll give him a few days of transition so Kapchonick can teach him everything she knows, but he's looking forward to it. Muck said he and Ringle had coffee with Stogner the other day and he's ready to go and very excited about it. Dooley said he was glad he was on the other end. Interviewing people throughout the years, that was probably one of the most thought-provoking interview processes. He commends the City for having that particular type of outline. We had five outstanding applicants and the two they selected as a group were the right two, and certainly the person who accepted the position to fill the shoes of Kapchonick is going to be dynamite. He's going to be a great addition to the team.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said Spring Palooza is the City's open house 6-8:30 p.m. on campus; led by Community Relations, but supported by the whole City. It's an open house for City departments, there's police and fire live demos and we hope to see a lot of the community out there. Ringle commended Chase Root and Greg Morris from the Sports Division. The rain has caused a lot of issues and lots of rescheduling and innovative ideas to have soccer this past week. A lot of our younger children's games were moved indoor as part of a partnership with Farmington Futsal Center, so they were able to get games in indoors rather than being on the fields. We moved some of the 7v7 fields to Grand River Park, across from Suburban Collection Showplace, so we were able to get some games in

there and use the best fields at ITC that we can. We were able to put this together and salvage fields for our own program, but also for the Jaguars tournament that takes place Mother's Day. A lot of juggling for them and they did it well, so kudos to them. We shared information about the weather issues and how that impacts our weather programming through an email that came from Director Muck about ITC Community Sports Park and what we realize is happening there. We're moving forward with Bosco Park and what is happening there, and how it'll help us with ITC moving forward. It was important to share that to show we know water impacts our fields and impacts our families. Our summer camp season starts June 17, so our day camps, sports camps, cultural arts camps will all hit the ground running. As you walked in today, hopefully you noticed the colorful things wrapped around the trees. Those are tree socks, set up through collaboration with the All Things Yarn group. They're folks that come together to knit with donated yarn and donate blankets to hospitals and folks in need. The tree socks will be there for about four weeks. Then they will be removed and repurposed into dog blankets. Amelia Purdy-Ketchum has led that initiative with the All Things Yarn group, so we're very thankful for that. Also in the cultural arts area was "Lion King Jr.," which had more than 1,800 people attend the six shows that ran Thursday through Sunday. It was the biggest show we've had in five years here at the Civic Center. It was amazing, the children were wonderful, the costumes were excellent and the parents were very appreciative. It was fantastic and we're very excited for that. Another cultural arts event that is happening is Paint the Ice. Amelia Purdy-Ketchum and Ashlee Harmon have been meeting with Erik and his staff at the ice arena. They'll have the opportunity to paint the ice there. Each year they melt down the ice for resurfacing. We are supplying all the paint to do that. There will be prizes and an opportunity to get creative. There are 100 spots available online. Sizzling Summer Art Series are coming up 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays starting June 19. They'll have June at Fuerst Park, July at Pavilion Shore Park and August back at Fuerst Park. The flyer is reminiscent of The Beatles because it's the City's 50th anniversary. Our Sizzling Summer Nights also begin June 21 at Fuerst Park. It's themed "peace, love and parks" and the movie is "Mary Poppins Returns." Novi Concert Band does their "Sounds of 1969" Sunday, May 19, here at 2 p.m. for a free concert. We have a lot of fun events with colors this year. Also, at Villa Barr, we've come up with four dates we're going to offer programs. Thursday 6-7:30 p.m. they'll be docent-led tours. We're still seeking volunteer docents from the community if anyone is interested they can contact us. Aug. 1 is Plain Air Night, Aug. 8 is Astronomy Night, Aug. 15 is live music and Aug. 22 is an art tour that will start here and tour where there's Barr art throughout the community. Villa Barr, here and at Pavilion Shore Park by transportation to see all of that throughout the community. Lots of fun things happening through our Cultural Arts Division. Our dog park is offering Yappy Hour mocktails and a chance for dog park community members to get together June 13 from 6-7 p.m. We're having a summer social July 10 from 6-7 p.m. to give a chance for people to get together and have a good time as members of the dog park.

Commissioner Dooley said it's amazing what the department does.

- C. Older Adults – Older Adult Services Manager Karen Kapchonick
 - 1. Program & Services

OAS Manager Karen Kapchonick said we started out the month celebrating the Tigers' opening day. That was supported by Mindful Homes Transitions and Waltonwood Twelve Oaks. A lot of our programs are sponsored by individuals and volunteers. Without their help, we wouldn't be able to do a lot of the programs we do. We also had our annual Euchre tournament with 58 participants. That was sponsored by Manor of Novi. With the help of the Novi Police Department, we had Det. Jeremy Stempien come and talk about financial crimes, scams and identity theft, which he does an outstanding job. Lots of questions came out about it. He'll usually give you updated things about what's going on and happening. We had our volunteer appreciation breakfast. It's something new we've done as a department. We had about 100 volunteers in 23 of our programs. We had 50 individuals come to have breakfast, sponsored by the Lakes of Novi. We also had podiatrist Dr. Saperstein and Gary Allen from the law firm. Great Expressions Dental also sponsored that morning. Thanks to Commissioner Dooley for being there and talking about his volunteerism he's done for six or more years. We're starting to expand on outdoor awareness programs. We had our first Birding 101 class led by a new team member and had a Native Plant Gardening led by Drew Lathin. Through doing demos, a new fitness class is Chair Yoga, which turned into a full fitness class with 19 individuals over at Meadowbrook Commons. We have a new opportunity to do monthly field trips. With transportation, we're offering a new trip to Northville Farmer's Market next Thursday. It gives opportunity for the older residents who may not drive to get out and do something during the day. We appreciate one of our drivers stepping up and offering new suggestions for that. Registration for our summer classes is open. Classes for fitness run July 8-Aug. 23. With fitness, instead of being indoors all the time, we are doing outdoor fitness over at Pavilion Shore. This will be the second year we're offering yoga classes in the evenings and on Saturday mornings. And then we have a yoga & pilates class on Thursdays. This is in cooperation with Walled Lake so, when it does rain, we have a place to go at one of their facilities in Walled Lake. We started our walking program at Meadowbrook Activity Center every Tuesday at 9 a.m. There's a walking path along Meadowbrook Commons that we encourage people to walk. It takes 10-30 minutes depending on the individual. Everything's at their own pace. We have the outdoor fitness center's four units and we stop there if they want to use it. The next lunch is the Fourth of July celebration June 27. And we invite all of our Novi residents to participate in the Memorial Day Parade 10 a.m. May 27 from Karim down 10 Mile to the Civic Center. We'll have a nice ceremony here, followed by a luncheon for the veterans.

Director Muck thanked all of the commissioners for the support given with master plan, interviews and the volunteer breakfast over the past couple months, plus the Parks Foundation.

Deputy Director Ringle said Saturday is picture day and Dooley Dog Day, which everyone looks forward to twice per year, and we want to thank Commissioner Dooley for that.

Commissioner Dooley said thanks for the kind words and we'd say the same back to you, especially Kapchonick with it being her last meeting. You don't miss a beat. It's wonderful listening to you and all the things you've done for Older Adult Services. Another fantastic report.

Manager Kapchonick said thank you, it's been a pleasure.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Muzzin said there aren't words to express how great it's been working with Kapchonick all that she and her staff does. It seems to be done effortlessly and with a smile. Thank you and she wished Kapchonick all the best, and hopes to see her at the activities she used to plan.

Commissioner Joshi said congratulations to Kapchonick. Even in the short time working together, Kapchonick doesn't miss a beat and it's been nice knowing her. Retirement sounds fun. Joshi also thanked Muck and Ringle for the work they've done and the updates given, including input given on the play structure at Lakeshore.

Representative Kamalesh asked thanked everyone and said it was nice to work with Kapchonick.

Commissioner Staab said he wished Kapchonick well in her retirement and said he's envious. He said he appreciates all the hard work and keeping the Older Adult Services Division top notch through her leadership, programming and expansion of programming over the years. Staab said he appreciates all the hard work from Ringle and Muck to get things online and working through weather issues. He said he wished everyone would come out and join the Memorial Day Parade festivities.

Commissioner Dooley said, if you haven't seen Kapchonick work a Memorial Day Parade, it's an amazing endeavor. The organization she displays starting early in the morning through the early afternoon is the pinnacle of what this woman is all about and how much she cares about the City of Novi and those we have interaction with and cherish and remember every single day. It all starts with someone like yourself and the passion and belief you have. We've said a lot of nice things tonight. It's because of the passion and the parks that the commissioners have talking about the various jewels we have in the city so people can talk about the resources we have. It starts at the top with your leadership there. Dooley encouraged people to come with their friends and speak and be passionate, like Mrs. Zack who comes and speaks passionately about what she believes in. Let your voice be heard about what you believe in. We're so passionate about what we do. Let us know what you believe in. Thanks to those who do that.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Muzzin and seconded by Commissioner Joshi.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:04 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Shelley Thomopoulos, Vice Chairperson