

Commissioner Torimoto stated the last meeting was on June 22nd. At that Meeting Director Muck had discussed the potential Recreation Center and how to operate it, especially staffing. He had discussed what is being looked at in terms of professional staffing.

The Tim Pope Memorial playground dedication was discussed and is in August and he believed it had originally been in May. The promotion of this was also discussed.

The last item was Pour on the Shore which was cancelled. The Foundation wanted to thank the past sponsors and promoting the possibilities for next year. The sponsor money that was already paid was to be returned. Many of the sponsors wanted to still donate the monies which was a great gesture on their part.

Commissioner Staab stated several sponsors choose have the Foundation keep their money and we appreciate their donation. He stated that he was out of town for the last meeting but the next meeting will be on August 17th.

Director Muck stated he wanted to thank the Foundation again. The Parks Department did receive a donation of \$150,000 for the Tim Pope play structure, which is an amazing gift. We are planning a rededication event. One had been planned in May and we rescheduled, which he would go over in his Parks Report. The full replacement of the play structure wouldn't have happened without the Parks Foundation. Thank you for their support. Commissioner Dooley thanked Commissioner Torimoto and Commissioner Staab for all they do with the Novi Parks Foundation.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Joshi

It was determined that Commissioner Joshi had lost connection with the meeting.

Director Muck stated the Grants Committee hasn't had a chance to meet due to the shut down from the COVID pandemic. Grant funding, from what we are hearing, is drying up significantly. From what he has heard from our State Parks and Recreation Association the public policy is still there and is still the ballot initiative that is going to be in November to make some changes to the Trust Fund. He will do a bigger presentation on that most likely in September or October before the vote because the information can be a little confusing. It is basically trying to reallocate more dollars toward development and redevelopment, not taking it away from acquisition but freeing it up for development.

D. Parks Updates

Commissioner Dooley stated we will skip Park Updates. When things settle down we will have a schedule for those with Park Updates from months we were unable to meet and catch up to stay current for those who are doing Park Updates in subsequent months.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

STAFF REPORTS

- A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck
1. Covid 19 Updates

Director Muck stated the Commission has not met since February. When the stay at home order came down, all of the Park staff disbursed and worked remotely from home. All of our green spaces, trails and Dog Park remained open. He thinks what is important about the green space and trails is that those were specifically outlined in the Governor's initial Stay at Home orders as essential to community health and well-being. We did not close any of our Parks. There were park systems all across the state that closed their gates and shut things down. We did not do that. He is proud of that and our community for how they handled the stay at home and social distancing. We received very few reports of people not following those guidelines. Our playgrounds were shut down for a time period which was mandated by Oakland County. Oakland County was one of the last to reopen playgrounds as we approached some of the Executive Orders moving in to the different phases. All of our playgrounds are now reopened. Our shelter rentals, restrooms and tennis courts were closed for a time. Tennis courts were closed due to social distancing but were able to open based on the guidelines that came out from the U.S. Tennis Association. The Civic Center and Ice Arena closed. Construction was suspended for approximately six weeks which shut down construction at Lakeshore Park, Bosco Park and anything we had going. Our parks maintenance team still worked doing basic maintenance because going back to the original executive order, parks maintenance was called out as an essential service. This was good because they were able to keep the parks clean since our parks were getting used throughout the order. Meadowbrook Commons was locked down to essential visitors only. It still remains locked down to essential visitors only to protect the residents. He commends the KMG staff that manage Meadowbrook Commons for what they have done for the residents there. They have kept them safe, involved and informed without any issues.

We have kept Senior Transportation running through the COVID shutdown. We dialed it back to medical rides only. We have residents who need dialysis or other necessary medical services. We have a core group of drivers who continue to work who were really on the front lines. They were driving every day for our most vulnerable citizens. We have now opened for other users and are trending back up with people getting back out to do more social types of activities. We do limit one rider per vehicle and are able to accommodate most.

Sadly, this is probably the worst update, we did lay off two full-time positions and three permanent part time positions within the department. This was basically because of our budget constraints. Those positions are very much related to our Older Adult Services department. We are not able to offer a full array of programming right now or even until we move in to Phase 6 and are just not able to support those positions and had to take that step for the benefit of the City and the entire Department.

This is where we are from the COVID history.

Director Muck asked if there were any questions related to the timeframe and there were none so he continued to park projects update.

Director Muck stated Lakeshore Park had six weeks of construction delays and and the project is still being impacted by COVID because we have issues with contractors who have been unable to get people to come back to work.

There have also been weather issues that have impacted the schedule. If you

have driven by the park lately you have seen progress since the construction restart. Paving is supposed to begin next week on the parking lot and pathways. The contractor who was scheduled today to do the paving had a death in the company which impacted their ability to marshal people out. This was supposed to start last week so it's continuing to impact us so we are looking, at earliest, late August before we can open Lakeshore Park back up. We maintain trail access off of Twelve and a half Mile and Dixon Road. The Trail access from South Lake Drive is currently shut down in anticipation of the paving project. That is going to be about a two week project.

The gathering for the Tim Pope play structure will be on Saturday, August 15th, from 9a.m. to 10a.m. This will be limited. Park Commissioners will get an invitation as well as City Council, the Parks Foundation and the members of the Tim Pope family. If for some reason the social gathering restrictions are lifted greater, then we would invite the public. Director Muck thanked Commissioner Staab for his work. He and his wife helped get the word out to some of the original builders of the play structure and were able to track down about ten of them.

Commissioner Staab stated we have also invited former City Councilperson, Nancy Cassis, who had also worked on this from the beginning and former Parks Director, Dan Davis as well as the workers and team leaders on the project.

Director Muck stated that we will monitor what the social distancing and the stipulations are for public gatherings. It is by private invitation currently. It will be a short ceremony.

At Wildlife Woods Park there are plans to build pickle ball courts, which are in high demand in Novi. We did open bids this week and we should take that construction contract to City Council in August for approval. We anticipate the build of those pickle ball courts this fall.

We did paint pickle ball court lines on the tennis courts at ITC Community Sports Park. We have posted priority play for pickle ball in the morning on certain days by signage. Unfortunately, the portable nets we have ordered are on back order. We did promote that the lines are there and available and some people have their own nets. We have been getting weekly comments and anticipation of people wanting to play pickle ball.

Commissioner Staab asked what timeline we are looking at for the pickle ball courts.

Director Muck stated the ones at Wildlife Woods should be completed this fall. Bosco Fields at Eleven Mile and Beck are well underway. The stay at home order did impact the contractor there. They have been out there and we have worked with them on some additional seeding, they have adjusted some of their fertilization and weed control and also adjusted the watering schedule. We have seen a great improvement from two or three weeks ago. They have been working on low spots and added additional screening. We anticipate play in 2021. People are using the walking paths through the property on a daily basis. Every time he has been there for a progress meeting or drive in there have been lots of people walking their dogs on the pathway.

Commissioner Dooley stated every time we go there we are seeing all kinds of improvements. There were a lot of people in the parking lot a couple of months ago when the three vintage aircraft flew over Providence Hospital.

Director Muck stated the shoreline restoration projects are almost complete at Pavilion Shore and Lakeshore Parks. We did do a walkthrough of those on Tuesday and there were only minor issues. He would anticipate within the month we would be able to sign off on that. He thinks Pavilion Shore looks great with the rocks and how it is reinforced. We have gotten a lot of positive feedback on the look of that. The improvements at Lakeshore beach will help a lot when we can reopen that.

The ITC Trail is getting heavy, heavy use. Some of you have commented on that. It was a significant topic at the Walkable Novi meeting we had prior to this meeting. Council members and Commissioners were making comments about that. We do want to remind people about the rules of the trail and put out some social media post about it yesterday. We were just reminding the Community that this is a dawn to dusk trail. There are no motor vehicles, which means no dirt bikes, ATVs or golf carts on the trail or in the corridor. We really want people to respect that and if there is any of that activity the police should be called in order to keep everyone safe in the corridor, protect ITC property and protect the structure of the trail. If you see something, say something is our message. Also, just pack in and pack out your trash. There is no need to throw a water bottle in to the weeds. It is not that long of a trail. That covers, right now, a long list of the park projects that are ongoing. He opened up for questions related to any of those projects.

Commissioner Torimoto stated that he and his family started using the ITC Trail quite a bit. They live at Ten Mile and Beck so they either go up Eleven Mile and get on the trail or just go west on Ten Mile and take that crossing. There is no sidewalk still on the north end of Ten Mile so they end up riding their bikes into the road and then going to the crossover. When he was on Walkable Novi years ago that was one of the higher choice strips to put a sidewalk in. But it is still not done. He asked, with the completion of the ITC Trail and the Crossing there, if that would help prioritize it. He did not know what the priority is in terms of finishing that sidewalk. It would be nice to have an east-west sidewalk on Ten Mile. When they drive by there by car there are sometimes people actually waiting in the street as they try to cross if they are coming from one of the neighborhoods. He does not know if that could be considered in helping to prioritize it.

Commissioner Smith stated that he believed that sidewalk was on the top twenty list.

Director Muck stated that is scheduled. It is in the engineering and design phase now. Some of that requires getting easement from property owners which can draw it out. It is a priority and it is scheduled for construction.

Commissioner Joseph asked if the intent was to go to Wixom Road to the Island Lake subdivision or connect to the ITC Trail.

Director Muck stated the intent is from Wixom Road to the ITC Trail.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if the courts being built in Wildlife Woods Park will be just pickle ball or tennis courts and draw pickle ball lines on it.

Director Muck confirmed they will be dedicated to pickle ball only.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle stated that March 24th was our staff's first day working at home looking to an unknown future. Today we are in the office planning

for that future and we modifying, pivoting, and putting in major efforts to offer recreation in the community. While we were at home the team got to work looking at options for keeping the community engaged. While we weren't able to run in person revenue generating programs, we used our social media channels, Novi.org and a special edition of Engage magazine to promote virtual ideas like home art projects, sports shows with our volunteer coaches and other easy to do projects at home and in your yard. From there we moved to virtual fitness and dance classes. Some of these were offered for free and some were offered for a reduced cost. Our Older Adult division and our Nature Nurture Novi programs were offered online as well. We also began an E-Sports league. At the same time, while we were at home, we began creating a tiered recreation plan. This included virtual programming, options for hybrid in person and virtual programming, and to where we are now based on current executive orders, as well as investigating available seasonal staff and supplies to be able to move forward. The tier system allowed us to pivot faster when restrictions were lifted and get some programs rolling rather quickly. There was an expectation that once the executive orders were lifted that we would be able to get things going.

Before getting to our current state of recreation she wanted to express how proud she and Director Muck are of their team. None of this is easy. One program that we are running is not anything we have done before. Everything being offered is custom. It is more work to do everything we are offering now than what we have done in the past. We received wonderful comments from community members and we received comments from those who disagree with our program limitations. They want to see more. She believed the Commissioners all received a memo of current programs. She wanted to highlight a few that we were able to move forward with. The Sizzling Summer Art Series is one of our biggest programs for the Community every summer. Like the Foundation, we were able to continue to receive a significant sponsorship from Community Financial Credit Union that allowed us to continue this program. Our June, Wednesday morning performances were done virtually on a social media channel without any audience at all. They were done prerecorded from performer's homes. This month, in July, those Wednesday morning performances are being attended by our campers only. They are being live streamed on Facebook from Fuerst Park amphitheater with a very limited audience of those attending our day camp. In August, we will be looking at the same format. We would like to say we would open it up to the community for more attendees, but we have to see what the executive orders are and what they would allow us to do. We have two outdoor movies scheduled on Saturdays in August. Those will be on the Power Park ball field. That allows us to control attendance, look at numbers and make sure people are spaced out. Our numbers are going to depend on what the executive orders are at the time. Right now we are at one hundred. If the number allowed goes up we will accept more people to be in the ball field.

Camp Lakeshore and Camp Power Play typically had as many as one hundred campers each week. They are being offered as a Day Camp here at the Civic Center and is limited to thirty-two campers each week. It is a much smaller program following the guidelines of the CDC and the Michigan

Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. We had a great start and we are in to week three. The majority of the camp is being held outdoors. Our camp counselors are being extremely compliant with wearing masks and making sure the kids, as much as we possibly can, are social distancing. Specialized games are promoting that. Most of it is all new types of programming that allows us to stay within those guidelines. For sports and fitness, the Adult Softball League is going on with an abbreviated six week season. We took a limited number of teams because we are only playing on two fields in the evening to make sure we are hitting the executive order number. We are planning a fall season as well. How many teams we register is going to be based on what we are allowed to do. The fifty-five plus morning softball league is running similarly to that. We have been offering a sixteen week season at Riverbank Golf Club. Golf was one of the first things in the sports world that was allowed to reopen. Due to the positive response we are going to extend and do another league in the fall.

E-sports is something new for us. It has been growing across the country. It is basically people online using their Playstations, Nintendos, etc. playing with each other games like Fortnite, Mario cart, Smash brothers and NBA 2K20. We had more than sixty players registered in our first offering of this. We will do this again and expand on the offerings for the fall, entice with some great prizes and look at offering even more games to be played. This is something new to us. They have been playing it on college campuses for a couple of years. It is a nice way for people to be able to talk to and socialize with others if you are in a state like we were when we were at home and you are limited to your interaction with others.

Fitness classes are being offered virtually and outdoors. We did social distancing circles. Our parks maintenance staff painted social distancing circles at Power Park and Fuerst Park just to give people an idea of what six feet looks like and helped the instructor lay out where they wanted to host a class. There were good responses with that.

We are doing dance classes outside as well in Fuerst Park amphitheater. We have sold out. People want to do things and in a safe way. We will keep offering what we can to meet that demand and stay within the guidelines we are given.

Tournament rentals have been on hold thus far, again because of the numbers that are allowed to be congregated on our field. In order to do that we would have to look closely at staggering game times and limiting the numbers. Tournament Directors aren't there yet in determining ways that they want to run those programs so we haven't offered any yet.

We had one Engage go out and will have another come out later this month. That will include a number of fall outdoor programs including our largest which is soccer. The registration is going on now and continues through later this month. We are moving forward as if we are going to be able to run the program as we typically do. However, we are looking at options and scenarios. We are continuing to monitor all guidelines and investigate best practices. We have a great network not only through the state but thorough other states that have been harder hit and have different guidelines or have been able to open up sooner than us. We are looking at ways of moving forward no matter what direction we are given.

Deputy Director Ringle asked for any questions.

Commissioner Torimoto asked about camps. He stated he had filled out a questionnaire because his daughter had signed up to be a counselor in training but he cancelled. He wanted to know how the day camp worked and what the survey results showed.

Deputy Director stated that Cristin Spiller did a great job putting the survey out. It helped determine if there were enough people interested to run the camp. We had people who needed to go to work, some were essential workers looking for options for their children. It did show us that we needed to move forward and get our camp counselors. The thirty-two campers is what we are limited to by the State. The number of people who are staying registered is fluctuating a little. Most weeks we are at the maximum number of thirty-two.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there are any predictions on fall soccer and what the final numbers may look like.

Deputy Director Ringle stated it is a little too early to tell. Our select numbers have come in but she does not currently have them with her. Chase Root has been doing a good job monitoring those. It is too early to say where we are going to be with numbers and number of teams.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there was a registration deadline.

Deputy Director Ringle stated July 23rd is the deadline. We will then look where we are with numbers and if we think there is more to be gained we can look at extending registration

C. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Program & Services

Director Muck stated Older Adult Services is our hardest hit service area. We are not able to offer the programs and services we are used to be able to due to social distancing and based on the vulnerability of the population based on indoor gathering restrictions. We still have Sandy Fisher on duty and still responding and still offering programs. Transportation is still running. We are still running our Focus Hope program which is a food commodities distribution program which some of our residents really need. Sandy coordinates that. The Loan Closet is back open and running. We had people ready to donate. We had people who really needed items as soon as the Civic Center was opened back up to the public. We were able to start issuing those items like wheel chairs, commodes, etc. and assist those who need them in the community. Sandy is also in contact with those in the community who need referrals to the County and State agencies for assistance in a variety of different matters. She is also providing Medicaid and Medicare assistance to people. We are hoping to have in person programs in September, but if not, we will make these virtual. She is planning some things such as a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group, Caregiver Survival Workshops, Medicare 101. She also works with Ascension on virtual programs like healthy eating and diabetes prevention. Her focus is on social services and aging in place initiative. We are trying to do what we can for that population in trying times.

Director Muck stated he wanted to reiterate Tracie's report regarding how proud we are of our staff. Being the social people and planners that they are

it was a trying time for them staying at home. It was Deputy Director Ringle who came up with the tiered services plan and get our staff to start thinking in that mode of what can we do if we can have ten people or what can we do if we can have 50 people. That was one of the first conversations that any parks departments had. When he was on phone conversations with other Directors in the state and mentioned we were working on a tiered program for services they right away asked if it could be sent to them. So many people copied that and started with that model. The question was asked about our summer camp. We were weeks ahead of what other departments were doing. That is a testament to Cristin and her working with licensing regulation and adapting. We have had a softball program for several weeks now and there are communities that haven't thought about opening the softball program. We are not out of this. In the fall a lot of what we are going to be dealing with is what happens with the schools. He stated, our department's response and the amount of programs and services we are offering now he would put up against anyone in the State right now.

Commissioner Joshi stated that at the last meeting a Fit Lot grant application had been discussed and wanted to know if anything had happened.

Director Muck stated we did not receive that grant. It was given to another community right as the COVID shut down hit. He asked who it was but they told him they had not officially announced it. He stated we did get a grant for some pickle ball nets and to support the building of some additional amenities at Wildlife Woods Park.

Commissioner Dooley commended Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle for all of the things the department has been able to achieve in during this time. It is remarkable.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Smith seconded Commissioner Dooley's comments on the staff and the job that they have done keeping things going and adapting to a very fluid situation.

Commissioner Torimoto thanked the professional staff for what they are doing. He has been able to enjoy influences and services of the parks. He often walks his dog at Bosco Fields and has watched the fields evolve and he uses the ITC Trail. He started the Adult Tennis League but there are not as many players so he got bumped up to the good player league and is not doing as well but at least he is outside and meeting people six feet apart. COVID has changed the way we work and our lifestyle. Costs are going up and there are many unknowns and additional safety precautions. Revenues are going down for everyone so we need to come up with some ideas to support the department. Thank you for everything you are doing.

Commissioner Joshi stated that it is good that she lives in Novi. She has been outside enjoying the trails and parks which are beautiful. She thinks we are lucky to be in a city with a wonderful parks department. It is amazing how many programs we are still offering. Congratulations despite the challenging times. Fall will be different with the weather changing and we have to see how we can move things indoors. It will be a challenge.

Commissioner Dooley introduced the newest Commissioner, Ryan Joseph and asked him to introduce himself.

Commissioner Joseph stated he is excited to get into the mix. It sounds like a lot of great things are occurring even with the situation we are in. He would echo the commissioner and director comments associated with the City and the activities that need to go on with the times. On the pathways and trails he has visited during this time, Novi is by far the most respectful in many cases. There is some animosity between bikers and walkers and others and you don't see a lot of that in Novi. That speaks loudly for the community as well as the facilities we have. He is glad to be here and excited to get things back up to speed as we figure out what we are able to do.

Commissioner Staab welcomed Commissioner Joseph. He wanted to again mention the rededication of the Tim Pope play structure on August 15th. It is a tribute to Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Commission to putting in a new play structure at our most active play structure in the City with a \$150,000 donation from the Novi Parks Foundation. With some Novi Parks Foundation funds the pickle ball courts will be going in at Wildlife Woods Park later this year. He gave kudos to the department for persevering through the pandemic.

Commissioner Dooley stated that all of the commissioners have had the opportunity these past months to take advantage of what the City has to offer. To actually see people out there staying healthy is great. It is the best medicine to be active and get exercise. It is a great tribute to the City that we have the resources that we do in order to do these things and do our best to stay ahead of what is going on in our world right now. He commended Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle. He asked Director Muck if he anticipated a live meeting in August.

Director Muck replied the Commission will resume meeting from here on out whether it is live or by Zoom depending on what the current regulations are.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:06 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson