

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, Nov. 21, 2019 – 7 P.M.

NOVI CIVIC CENTER – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

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

ROLL CALL: Dooley (Present), Staab (Present), Joshi (Present), Pratt (Present), Riggins (Present), Smith (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 Pratt and seconded by Commissioner Staab.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Approval of Oct. 17, 2019, minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for October be approved by Commissioner Pratt and seconded by Commissioner Riggins.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioner Riggins & Smith
Commissioner Smith said there was no meeting this month, so no report.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Staab said Brian Burke was a past member of the Foundation, chairman of the many golf outings and assisted the Foundation tremendously with the naming rights kickoff. There's a holiday get together the first Tuesday in December.
- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Joshi
Commissioner Joshi said they talked about the grants they received funding for. They included the grant from SMART for OAS transportation, from Ascension Providence for Older Adult Services to get a new Ford Escape and the Michigan State Youth Soccer Association for the Bosco Fields. Other pending grants for 2019 are the MDOT Transportation Alternatives Program used for either the Wildlife Woods trails or the trails from Bosco to ITC. There's also a grant from Michigan Walks! that would be used for the ITC Corridor Trail for wayfinding signage. We should be receiving word on these grants in December. We talked about some grants for 2020 that we will be applying for. One was the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs that we've received before for the Sizzling Summer series and we're planning to ask for improvements to the Theatre for curtains and stage. Another one for 2020 is the Michigan Humanities Council possibly for the Sizzling Summer series. The last one would be an AARP FitLot fitness. It's geared toward the older adult population exercising outdoors and we were discussing location for this FitLot.

Commissioner Dooley said one thing we had tasked the Commission with is location. We talked about location with the Council members who were on the committee; Mayor Pro Tem David Staudt and Councilmember Kelly Breen. Our director had a thought, as well. To his credit, he's going to empower us to make a selection and, once we have a selection in place, we're going to take it to City Council to make the announcement. It allows us to have a say on where we're going to put this FitLot. It's a great piece of equipment not only for AARP members, but folks that are younger, as well.

Commissioner Joshi said the last thing we talked about was property expansion of ITC Community Sports Park, acquiring land and Shawood Lake access next to Walled Lake and Lakeshore.

D. Parks Updates

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

1. Brookfarm Park – Commissioner Staab

Commissioner Staab said he was out there last Sunday post-Snowmageddon. All the paths were cleared of ice and snow. There was lots of activity from dog walkers and he wanted to remind them we also have a dog park behind the ice arena. Good shape and soccer nets were still intact. The trail that ends at Ripple Creek was cleared and accessible. It was a nice Sunday afternoon. Pathways were cleared and it was active despite having snowy weather. The area has improved tremendously over the years. It wasn't as pristine as it is now. It gets good use out of it with the soccer nets and being right next to Village Oaks school.

~~2. Novi Ice Arena – Commissioner Torimoto~~

3. Wildlife Woods Park (Sept.) – Commissioner Pratt

Commissioner Pratt said he did a video of the new road going in, but couldn't get it to a computer. He asked whether there would be little entrance points from that new neighborhood into the park? Director Muck said he wasn't aware of any such plans and they would use the road into the park they had created. It could always be something they do in the future. Pratt said he'd email the video to commissioners. He said all the work being done next to the new parking lot is sidewalk going up to the shelter. There will be enough parking lots there. He said there's an area where we could add green visqueen, if allowed. He said there were some trees marked and numbered. Muck said, if these were the ones close to the roadway, they were all tagged for preservation or movement. Pratt verified that anything taken down was then added back. Muck said we were waiting for the parking lot to be established and now our landscape architect can come in next year once everything is established and add. Pratt showed the entrance in from the school grounds and said the City keeps it all nice and neat and closed it down well for winter. He gave kudos to our staff for keeping that looking good. He asked if there were plans for the shelter roof, as it's starting to come down and we don't want any animals in there. Pratt said he also noticed a light was on during the day before it was dark yet. It was very colorful going in. That entire green field is just mud pit where his foot sank in. Getting out there was a little difficult, but it was beautiful out there. There were soccer and lacrosse goals, so it is getting used. The upper diamond was dry, so it all goes downhill to the bottom. He said he sees a lot of attention going into Wildlife Woods. The last time he did a report, there were a lot of flags. Now you see it all coming together and you couldn't have added a better entrance into that park. It's all coming

together and works very, very well. Great work on that entranceway and it puts you really close to the shelter now. People are really going to appreciate it. Commissioner Joshi asked if the orange silt fence was where the pathway to the shelter would be coming up? Director Muck said it would be from the parking lot to the shelter. He said it's been discussed at Grants Committee and Parks Commission, but the plan was to install four pickleball courts east of the shelter in 2020.

Commissioner Pratt said that park is beautiful in itself and picturesque, so adding there is great. The only thing he didn't see was park rules. He did see a dog running around and he had his DNR shirt on, so she asked if her dog was allowed to run around. There wasn't anything posted saying whether they had to be on leash, what specific type of leash or what's supposed to happen there. Muck said, as part of the development agreement with the new road and housing, is that you'll start seeing new signage going in. There's a monument sign going in soon for the subdivision that will also have Wildlife Woods Park on it. As you come down the road, we'll have one of our traditional large Wildlife Woods entryway signs and we'll also be placing new rule signs by the parking lot as you come in. Commissioner Riggins asked what the pickleball courts are? Director Muck said pickleball courts have been in demand for years. It's basically a scaled down version of tennis with paddles and more of a whiffleball used. It's very popular with 55 and older population, but a lot of people are doing it. They're even doing it in gym class at Novi public schools. Muck noted Student Rep. Kamalesh was nodding her head in agreement. You can fit two courts on a regulation-sized tennis court, so we'll get four courts.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

A. Presentation on 2020-24 Strategic Community Recreation and Master Park Plan Draft

Director Muck said you've been hearing about this for almost a year now. We began this process in March and it is almost a one-year project to get our five-year Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Strategic Recreation and Parks Master Plan put together. You may have noticed Management Assistant Chris Jackett is in the audience today. He doesn't usually come to these meetings, but Jackett has been instrumental in working with the rest of our staff, with the other departments in the City and with Bob Ford from Landscape Architects and Planners in Lansing, who is going to take over for the presentation as our consultant on the project.

Landscape Architects and Planners' Bob Ford said it's a pleasure to be here and it's been real nice getting acquainted with your staff. We've been together now for a little bit better than a year. It does take some time, but we do appreciate it and you've got a great group here doing a wonderful job. He said he'd take Commission through the presentation, but feel free to stop him to ask questions. Feel free to interrupt and he'll take it as it comes. The process overview is pretty simple. Public input is one of the first things we do when we make these plans and then putting together a draft plan for review. After that internal review, it goes to a public review. We're just finishing that public review, so that is now complete. And then we send it to DNR where they get to review it, as well. Finally, we have a plan that is ready for project implementation. The purpose of community input is updating the recreation plan. It provides an opportunity to stakeholders and other folks who came forward with information for us. The

reason for doing this is grant eligibility for state and federal funding, and other funding, as well. Also, state requirements for the MDNR in terms of compliance. Every five years, you are required to update your plan. We look at a lot of the previous information that has been done before us and we also get guidance from staff. We provide an inventory analysis where we're able to not only provide aerial imagery, but we go into the field and study the parks. In addition, we analyze that and synthesize that data so we have a good, solid base of physical inventory, program inventory and funding. And then the community input process involves stakeholders. We met with 26 individuals representing various groups like sports groups, Chamber of Commerce, arts and culture, and a variety of others. We had two public events; one here with Spring Palooza and the other at a Sizzling Summer Art Series at the park. We had an online survey with more than 1,200 respondents. Then tonight's meeting and, after this review, we'll go on to Council.

LAP's Bob Ford said, during the survey, we had some interesting results. It was almost a perfect bell curve in your demographics, with the center being 30-50 year olds. The gender was 60-40 was pretty much the split, with 60 percent being female and 39 percent being male. The average respondent has lived in Novi for an average of 15 years and all ZIP codes responded, with the highest number coming from 48375. Use and access, most people that visited the parks – and they were allowed to pick multiple answers – said Lakeshore was their favorite that they visit. Novi Civic Center followed very close, followed by ITC. “Can you easily access parks without driving” was about a 50/50 split, so you might want to think a little bit about that. “Have you participated in Novi Parks programs before” was 68, almost 70 percent said they did. “What did you like about the programs you participated in” – which you could pick as many that apply – the answers were the program was fun, which is good; that the price was right, which is probably even better; people liked to go with their friends as part of a social group; they liked the exercise and they also thought the ease of registration was very good. When it comes to interests, the City parks and facilities, “what would use the city parks and facilities more often if they offered” – again multiple answers – splash pad rated pretty high, as did restrooms and leisure pool. Followed behind that was connection to non-motorized pathways and paving the non-motorized pathways where they were not paved. “Which parks would you most like to see improved” was Lakeshore Park, the ITC, a group picked “none” that must be satisfied with what they have, Pavilion Shore Park and then Rotary Park. In terms of the community center, “do you think the City of Novi should build a community center,” 61 percent yes, 39 percent no. The following question followed up on that to “please choose the top five amenities you would like to see if a community center were to be build:” 71 percent leisure pool, 55 percent fitness/weight equipment, 45 percent splash pad, 38 percent lap pool and 34 percent indoor playscape. In terms of communication and how well you communicate, the City is doing a pretty good job. Seventy-six percent said good or excellent, 18 percent said fair and only 6 percent said poor. That's astounding, from our experience. “What form of communication helps you the best stay in touch?” Email 73 percent, newsletter 45 percent, Website 39 percent, social media 36 percent and direct mail 31 percent.

LAP's Bob Ford said the goals and objectives were developed with the help of the public and the stakeholders, and they pattern after the City's goals. We followed your program, where “N” stands for “nurture public services that

residents want and value." Your long-term goals included to "Fund, build, and operate a Public Recreational Facility;" "develop strategy to assist seniors in 'Aging-in-Place,'" a pretty high priority; "plan to add a sprinkle/splash pad to a City park" didn't specify exactly where. It could be multiple. "Complete full length of ITC Corridor Trail" and, here we are, "develop pickleball courts and programs." Not only are they popular here, they are popular everywhere in Michigan that we work. It really is amazing as a trend. Ford said he went to one of the parks, Rotary, and all of a sudden, a pickleball game broke out. It was great. "Create an ADA assessment," which is already happening. "Look for opportunities to ensure all residents have a park or school playground in a common area within a 10-minute walk (0.5 mile)," a pretty great goal. Short-term goals were to "complete direct sidewalk connections to ITC Trail on at least one side of 10 Mile Road;" "accelerate funding of neighborhood park improvements at Wildlife Woods, Novi Northwest and Village Wood Lake Park using CIP millage;" "increase marketing and programming efforts to connect with 40-60 year old age groups;" "research and implement sensory-inclusive programming, facilities, and amenities;" and "create a master plan for Villa Barr Art Park." Long-term goals under Operations are "naming rights as a fundraising mechanism for parks;" "complete CAPRA re-accreditation," which is a rigorous program by the way and you already have that accreditation thanks to Muck and his staff. There aren't many in the state who have that. "Consider millage for park improvements and trails;" "explore further service consolidation and joint opportunities with neighboring governments and school districts;" "add art displays throughout parks and facilities;" "evaluate marketing methods in the parks;" "develop and program undeveloped parks such as Novi Northwest Park, Bosco Fields" which are getting attention now, ITC Trailhead Park, etc. Short-term goals are to "rebrand Older Adult Services' marketing materials in order to reach a broader range of adults;" "increase fitness programming and opportunities at parks;" "collaborate with other departments to evaluate potential sustainability initiatives and efforts." These would include things like invasive species controls, native, pollinator and rain gardens. "Update the department's programming plan and include a specific plan for Lakeshore Park's new building." Now we move into the Value section where we "value and build a vibrant community for residents and businesses both now and into the future." Long-term goals are to "monitor and pursue properties to acquire land to put into park use, and for conservation purposes;" "identify properties that would be beneficial to redevelop for park use." The short-term goals are to "create an aggressive plan to acquire land" and "develop a fund to pursue properties leveraging grant funding opportunities." Finally, "I" for "invest properly in being a safe community at all times for all people." Long-term goals are to "provide access for emergency vehicles in parks and trail systems," easy to get to; "provide identifiers for trails, including wayfinding, communication and signage;" "evaluate wayfinding and mile-marker signage in all City-owned trails;" "collaborate with public safety officials on safety measures, including mile markers and safety plans;" "support neighborhood watches and 'eyes on the park' initiatives." The short-term goals are to "maintain park maintenance staff certification records for Playground Safety Inspection and other certificates." LAP's Bob Ford said the Capital Improvement Plan was developed by the City of Novi based on community input, projects in process, and current & projected needs. Funding sources include the City general fund, state and federal grants,

donations and foundations. The plan includes a projected schedule of anticipated projects for 2020-2024. The plan is a long-range document that will continue to evolve and is reviewed on an annual basis. All projects listed are subject to the availability of funding through the grant source and general fund approved by City Council. Capital Improvement Plan highlights are things that are front and center. They include ITC Community Sports Park renovations, pickleball court construction, ITC Trail connections, Northwest Park construction and playground replacements. Ford said he and the LAP team wanted to thank you very much for being a part of this program and developing this top-of-the-line plan. We do this very routinely, you have a very vibrant system, people are very much engaged in your parks. When they're active, they're very active. When they're not, they're leisure.

Commissioner Smith asked what the definition of "long-term" and "short-term" were? Director Muck said the goals are a hybrid of what Council sets and what staff has set in conjunction of working with Ford and his team. Short-term goals we look at being less than three years. Long-term goals we look at being four years plus.

Student Representative Kamalesh said one of the long-term goals was about having a recreation facility. How long do you think that would take since its four plus? Director Muck said the recreation center facility is going to be kicking off very shortly with a committee. We've been directed by City Council and we have already started the process of forming the committee, which includes the Mayor Bob Gatt, Mayor Pro Tem David Staudt who will chair the committee, Council member Kelly Breen, Commissioner Dooley and a few other citizens. The plan is for that committee to start meeting with staff and outlining everything from funding to location to what amenities would go into it as they start to move forward, especially in 2020.

Commissioner Staab said, if they didn't know any better, they would have thought Ford lived in Novi.

Commissioner Smith said he was concerned with the long-term plan of acquiring land. With the rate of development and the shortage of small parks people can walk to, he said he's afraid by the time we get to that point, there won't be anything left to acquire. Director Muck said we have been very aggressive in acquiring park land, especially in the past five years. We have acquired about 70 acres of parkland for both active and passive recreation use. We've also reached agreements with Novi public schools on Bosco. Our Grants Committee meets yearly, if not several times per year, to pursue land opportunities when they become available. Staff is always monitoring when properties may become available. We have Council members who will contact us and say to check out this piece of property or this property may be available. And then we have development options, as well. The recent Terra development on Nine Mile and the property development agreement on that included 30+ acres that would be dedicated woodlands. By using all of those methods, we have the opportunity to acquire parkland. While we don't set aside a specific number of dollars in every budget year for acquisition, we do have it available for us, at Council's direction. Commissioner Smith said there were a few things on the park atlas he didn't recognize and Terra Park was one of them. There was also 10 Mile South, Novi Core Habitat, Garfield Road. Director Muck said those are all conservation or have been set aside as protected woodlands.

Director Muck said he again wanted to thank Ford and his team; they've been a pleasure to work with. We have a real solid document that we're going to tweak a few more things on before that goes to City Council for the public hearing and City Council adoption. He said he also wanted to thank Deputy Director Ringle, Older Adult Services Manager Stogner and Management Assistant Jackett for their work on this document, as well. We appreciate all of you who have come to these input sessions and citizens who have given their input. We look forward to taking this to Council before we put our final submission in to the DNR. Commission unanimously approved the 2020-24 Strategic Community Recreation and Master Park Plan Draft via a motion by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Pratt.

B. Presentation on Transportation Survey Results

OAS Manager Stogner said they've been surveying transportation service clients over the past few months. The services provides free or low-fare rides to residents of Novi ages 55+ or any adult with a disability in the City. Since July 1, 2018, the service was made free within the city limits. So, after a year, we wanted to get a look at what effect that change had – positively or negatively – on those people who use the service. Since he started in late May, he got a little bit of antidotal feedback from residents having a hard time scheduling or occasionally getting a cancelation. Stogner said he wanted to get an idea of how widespread that was, in addition as to whether our customer service standards were being met, as they're pretty high in our department and City. We mailed the survey to 389 clients who used the service at least once in the past year. Of that, we got 119 of those back. A few more than the numbers reported last month, so we got a response rate of about 30 percent, which is what you're looking for when you do a survey like this.

Stogner displayed several PowerPoint slides showing survey results. He said our overall client satisfaction with the program is very high at 4.6. We're very happy to see that and it's a very popular program in the city. Even when issues come up, it's because it's a popular program and people want to use it. Other than that, there's the professionalism, courtesy and friendliness of our schedulers. We have three part-time schedulers who work together throughout the week mainly by phone call, which seems to be the way most people schedule their rides more than 90 percent of the time. Direct customer service with a lot of moving pieces. Our capacity for the day, our wheelchair capacity, how long people are on the buses for. We try to keep them no longer than 30 minutes on there and it's good to see the clients are satisfied with what they're getting. Even higher for our drivers. Most of our drivers are retirees working part time in the heart of the same service of volunteerism. They're not doing it to get rich, they want to give back to their community and they really care and go the extra mile for the people who ride the service. That's reflected in the comments we've gotten and the overall score for the customer satisfaction. After that, the survey results get hard to read. We had one section where they could check all the boxes they wanted. The question was "Since the service became free, I have ___." The highest response was not surprisingly 57.84 percent have saved money. If they're doing anything in town, they're no longer getting charged for it. Forty percent said there's no change in how they use the service or experience it, 31 percent said they heard positive things in the community and 30 percent said they found it easier to use, which is tied to the economics of it. The biggest negative we heard was 22 percent had been denied a request for a ride more than once. We do prioritize

medical appointments, so when this happens it's usually social appointments, something like shopping or getting a haircut or nails done. Socialization or personal errands are important, but just not as prioritized as medical. After that, 17 percent had trouble getting rides scheduled; 17 percent use the service more often, which makes sense with the lower cost; 10 percent are getting delayed more often or had a run request rescheduled. The real negative ones are really low. "Denied for a request regularly" only had three people say that, so it seems to be just an occasional problem where they're totally denied a ride. Its maybe more often where they're not able to go where they want to go or have to reschedule something. Stogner said the question of what's the "overall satisfaction with the program since rides were made free" had 90 percent say it remained the same or 30 percent are new clients said their satisfaction increased. Only 10 percent said their satisfaction decreased since we made that rule change. The big number there is really that 30 percent. That's a big number of people who didn't use it until it was available to them without fare. Ninety-eight percent of respondents said they would recommend the program to others. About half and half 51-49 said they used it for shopping/social compared to medical only. Some of the more negative or constructive comments seemed to show a correlation between those who used the service from the beginning for their social activities. They're probably the ones who have seen the reschedule or deny. A new person would think it's great that the service exists at all. Some of the existing customers who use it a lot may see more difficulty in getting this scheduled. Stogner showed a word cloud based on general comments left at the end. Some of them were "good drivers," "good service," "needed service" and "thank you," "medical." This gives you a general idea of the comments we received and how generally positive they were. It's just a lot of people being really appreciative that the City offers this program and, with aging in place as a Council goal at the heart of his division in Parks, this is a big program for that. It allows people who no longer drive to still be able to go to the doctor, go to the grocery store, come to the Civic Center to participate in a program. Going forward, it's great to see the feedback we've received with this being mostly positive and a great program. We just want to keep an eye on capacity that we can meet the demand. We have three schedulers now. We just hired two new drivers. With the Council-approved budget, we'll be adding a new vehicle that has wheelchair capabilities and will increase our capacity. Stogner said he things these are all positive steps with where we're going and we'll address some of those concerns.

Commissioner Riggins asked why rides might be denied and whether there's a capacity for the day? OAS Manager Stogner said there's a capacity for the day and also for the number of wheelchair riders sometimes. There's a certain number of wheelchair rides that can be given in a day. If those have medical appointments and someone wants to go shopping, we might not be able to accommodate that. We usually try to reschedule it, but if it's something like "I want to meet a friend and need to go now," we might not be able to do that. It happens pretty rarely, but it does happen.

Commissioner Dooley said if 839 were sent out and we got 30 percent back, when was the last time we did this survey? OAS Manager Stogner said he believed the last one was in 2017. Director Muck said this one was specifically targeted toward what have you seen change since the fare change. Stogner said there was a general satisfaction survey done in 2017. Dooley said that's a

pretty good percentage. He asked if there was anything the commissioners could do in the future to help with a higher percentage rate of return? Stogner said, if he brings it forward in the future, commissioners could pass it along through their channels. Dooley said staff should be proud of the results they got. Stogner said it's a great program with a lot of great people working for it. Commissioner Pratt asked if the surveys sent out were all strictly mailed out? OAS Manager Stogner said they were mailed out with a business reply mailer where the City paid for the postage to return it.

Commissioner Smith asked how many rides are provided per year? OAS Manager Stogner didn't have the exact number available, but said it was tens of thousands. Smith asked how big was the fleet? Stogner said there are six with approval pending for a seventh. Most are smaller minivans and jeeps. We have some larger. One is nine passengers and the other is 14.

Commissioner Joshi asked if multiple people can be taken at once? OAS Manager Stogner said we do and the nine- and 14-passenger vans also get used when there's a bigger event like Veterans Day or the Senior Day at the State Fair where we have a lot of people going to one location. It's usually less than 30 minutes. We don't usually use those larger vehicles to take people to day-to-day appointments. It's mostly the smaller vehicles in the fleet. Depending on what direction it is in town, we can multi-load people 2-3 at a time.

Director Muck said, in 2018 when City Council directed us to include the free rides in the City of Novi and bordering shopping areas, and expand the service hours and add the additional run on Saturdays, the free rides and expanded hours resulted in an 18.25 percent increase in trips, 50 percent increase in handicapped passengers and more than 100 new riders.

Commissioner Riggins asked what the service hours were? OAS Manager Stogner said its 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and shorter on Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. he believed. Riggins asked if people with a doctor's appointment have a round trip? Stogner said yes, but it might not be the same vehicle that takes them back. We have route software program it and drop them off, then the driver goes along their route. It might be that driver or another driver that comes back to pick them up.

Commissioner Pratt said he's ran into a few of the drivers at Busch's or Twelve Oaks Mall and they're some of the friendliest, courteous people, helping them off the bus and laughing as they're going in. For the staff you currently have, it's great to see them interacting the way they do. OAS Manager Stogner said that was the satisfaction level based on the numbers and the overwhelming comments for how great the drivers are and how nice they are with helping out. Pratt said even when they don't have someone and are just driving, they might pop into Busch's to get a drink, they're always very friendly. They represent you very well in the community.

C. Dec. 19 Meeting

Commissioner Staab said he put this item on the agenda. In the past, we've had trouble getting quorum for this meeting and he wanted to see where everyone's at. Commissioner Joshi said she will not be in the country, so she won't be here.

Commissioner Staab said he has a surgery planned for the day before, so he doubts he will be here. Commissioner Smith said he should be available.

Commissioner Pratt said he will not be here, as he'll be in Roscommon.

Commissioner Riggins said she'd be there. Commissioner Dooley said between

himself and Commissioners Riggins and Smith, they'll need confirmation from Commissioner Torimoto to ensure quorum.

Director Muck said staff will reach out to Commissioner Torimoto directly and we should have that December meeting to get feedback on that FitLot so we can take that to Council in January for the grant deadline.

Commissioner Dooley asked if someone would be able to call in via proxy?

Director Muck said the only exception, he believes, is if someone is serving in active duty military. He said a 2018 law change allows that. Commissioner Joshi said it would be about 5 a.m. where she is. Dooley said it looks like we'd have three present and three absent as it is.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Updates

Director Muck said the shoreline projects are continuing at Pavilion Shore and there's a progress meeting tomorrow morning out there. They were still going even though we got the 10 inches of snow last week. He said he's not sure how the early onset of winter is going to affect the Lakeshore shoreline, but they're able to keep working on the Pavilion Shore shoreline at this time. Moving down to Lakeshore, the civil work is complete on the site. They're planning over the next week or two to lay the first and second course of stone for the parking lot and pathways. That's very important because that'll allow them to go with the asphalt in the spring as soon as possible. The building foundation is expected to be poured and all the block work start at the start of December.

Commissioner Staab asked if there were any updates on the new play structure? Director Muck said he visited the Tim Pope Play Structure last Friday and, although there was a slight delay because of the snow, most of the equipment is installed and up. There is some sidewalk and access point, and the pickets needed to go back up, but most of it is done. He said he posted a pic on the Parks Facebook page. It's coming along well.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said, at the last Commission meeting, we talked about adult softball and how we're watching our program went through a slight decline. It's not just us in Novi or the State of Michigan, it's across the country where less people are participating in leagues. We wanted to take the opportunity to be proactive and engage our softball players and umpires to understand what we're doing well, what they think we can make improvements on and why they continue to come here or why we feel some of those folks don't return to our softball program. Led by Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris, we engaged about 15 team managers in late October and categorized their input into four topics: communication, rules, schedule and reward. We were able to have a really robust session with them and get their feedback so we could prioritize three targets in each one of those categories that they took as a priority for us to look at some solutions or additional ideas for that. Moving forward, some of the items we're going to tackle first are, under communication, we are going to let adult softball teams know of weather cancelations. We're going to work with our Integrated Solutions team on that, as well as we're going to add a history of the league – including division winners and playoffs – to the Adult Sports

tab on our website to kind of give it some history, as there's some pride there for some teams who continue to win. We're going to continue with our weather hotline and social media, but we're looking at texting opportunities through the City of Novi app that's relatively new. So we're looking at ways to engage people, especially those that play the late games that are on the road when we're making decisions or when they're on the road when weather comes through and they're not thinking to call our hotline at that time. Rules, there's some confusion with balls that are deemed indefensible by the umpires, which are balls hit up the line to the pitcher. We determined to have that called every time it's hit up the middle or not at all. So that's some subjectivity our officials have that we're going to work with our officials to make some clarifications to that rule and make some decisions as to whether that's something that's clarified or something we won't participate in. Schedule 6:30 p.m. games at the earliest. Right now, the earliest games are 6:20. That gives them an additional 10 minutes in rush-hour traffic and allows them to participate on time. That's an easy win for us, a low-hanging fruit. We're going to make sure we swap our fields a bit more. It seems some teams get scheduled on the same field more often than others, so we're going to do some switching around on that. Again, that's an easy improvement for us. As far as awards, that was easy, as well. We'll eliminate 50/50 cotton t-shirts for division champions and move to drift while also providing a windbreaker option. Typically, we'll give t-shirts to the division winners and then for playoff winners provide an option for a booklet order. We really got some great feedback and invited as many people as we could with managers from 2018 and 2019. We also received some calls and emails. Those are some of the highlights. We had 3-4 items in each topic that we could really address as we get further down the line.

Deputy Director Ringle said last weekend was the Novi Civic Theatre's "Mary Poppin's Jr." production. Each show had a minimum of 235 and a maximum of 320 audience members, which is our maximum capacity. We sold out shows. We are reaching capacity as far as audiences in the theatre now, so we are looking at how we do the setup of that room so we can accommodate as many people as we can. Do we look at doing additional shows? We're also looking at space to do a whole other production. Right now we do two big productions per year. Is there an opportunity to do a smaller production just to give kids that extra exposure at a different time of the year. It's really looking at space and opportunities, and looking at moving some of our programs to the new Lakeshore building that's going to open up space here for Theatre programming. It's definitely something we hope to do. The next theatre production coming up is "The Little Mermaid Jr." in March, which we also know is a very popular show, so we anticipate that to sell out, as well. In the performance avenue, the Novi Choralaires will have their holiday concerts Sundays 4 p.m. Dec. 8 at Church of the Holy Family in Novi and Dec. 15 at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills. Tickets are available at our counter and at the door for those shows. The Novi Concert Band will have their holiday show Sunday, Dec. 8, at 2 p.m. We roll right into the holiday season with those performances. Light Up the Night is coming up Friday, Dec. 6. We expect to have a crowd of about 5,000 people like we always do. Recreation Supervisor Cristin Spiller continues to bring new and exciting elements to the event. She does a great job. She secures sponsorship to completely cover the cost of this event, which she does a fantastic job doing it. All the amenities are paid for

through sponsorship. This year, we were able to purchase an igloo. People who purchase their food from a food truck will be able to go into that and enjoy it. It'll be very popular. Hopefully it's not -3 where everyone will want to be in there. We were also able to secure a snow globe, so there will be photo opportunities in the snow globe and families will enjoy that. And then a winter slide is new for this year. Fun things. She added another food truck option so we'll be able to feed more people at the event. Fireworks will continue and the trackless train and all the fun things we've come to expect at Light Up the Night. She suggested coming early and said Santa would be here, too. Throughout the night, people will be able to come back in 15-minute reservation increments to get a photo with Santa. No need to spend your whole evening in line when you can quickly come back to visit. Commissioner Dooley said there's also a very famous emcee to be emceeing the Light Up the Night of Novi. Another opportunity to visit with our North Pole friend will be Dec. 14 with Lunch with Santa. Tickets are available now on our website. That's 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Dec. 14 and a good time to enjoy a meal and some family time, and an opportunity to share wishes with Santa. Commissioner Staab asked about the winter slide. Deputy Director Ringle said it's a winter-themed slide with an inflatable. Staab recalled an ice slide in Gaylord at Opryland where they'd give you a rain coat to wear. Ringle said this is much more comfortable.

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

1. Program & Services

OAS Manager Stogner said two weeks ago today was the ninth-annual Veterans Celebration. It was a nice event and he said he can't speak more highly of everyone who participated in it, all the City people and Parks people who helped out. We had 258 in attendance, which was capacity for the way we were set up. There were 144 veterans on hand. Remarks by City Manager Pete Auger and a good keynote by retired Army Capt. John Branstetter was also a community leader in the area. Stogner said he wished Student Rep. Fortsch was here, because he was part of the Novi singers from the Novi High School that were incredible. He had heard they were very good, but they blew the doors off the place. We'll have to have them back for other events because they were wonderful and the veterans really appreciated their support. Stogner said they had support from sponsors Edward Jones who gave every veteran who attended a throw blanket, Mission BBQ provided food for the event catered from them. There will be a forthcoming picture page in the admin packet probably this week. He said all four of the top sponsors for this year have already committed to doing it again next year. The thing he was happiest about is the VFW group came back and said this was the favorite one they've done and it was much appreciated, which is the highest thing he could hope for. Stogner said he attended the Michigan Association of Senior Centers conference in Mt. Pleasant last week. It was a good chance to see what programs are available out there in the state since he's new to doing this kind of work in this area, since he had been in Tennessee previously. A lot of policy and program and idea sharing. One thing he said he came away with helping him appreciate what we do. There were two – one from Madonna University and one from Eastern Michigan University health professionals – who were talking about seniors' health levels. Both said the number one health factor for older adults was socialization and not being socially isolated. A lot of the things we do that may seem like fun

and games, whether it's bingo or card groups or the parties we have at Meadowbrook Commons, that's actually a big part of keeping people healthy and social as they age. Stogner said the Nature. Nurture. Novi. program is still going on, with a talk going on across the hall right now on how to compost at home. On Dec. 3, we're doing a talk via the public library screening a documentary called "Bag It: A Plastic Solution" about plastic usage. A lot of our holiday programs are coming up. We just had our Halloween and Thanksgiving, both which were well attended. We had 89 for our Halloween dinner party and 108 for our Thanksgiving party. Our holiday luncheon is Dec. 12 and we sold out today with 120 people for that. We'll have live music and Santa for that. Santa's very busy within our department this season. Dec. 5 Novi Rotary is doing their holiday lunch and we're helping out with their registration and transportation. Dec. 7 we'll be hosting our annual afternoon of caroling. Dec. 10 is our partnership with Ascension Health on how to eat healthy during the holidays, which Stogner said he'll need after all the parties they have going on. On Dec. 31, we'll have a noon New Year's Eve party where it's a countdown to noon. People won't have to stay up so late to enjoy New Years. We have a lot of great programs coming up. We're well into our 2020 planning. For social services, Oct. 18-Dec. 7 is Medicare open enrollment to help Medicare beneficiaries make good choices. We host one-on-one counseling sessions with the Medicare/Medicaid State assistance program. We started with six dates and had so much demand we added three more. In 2019 so far, we've had 40 one-on-one reviews for people needing Medicare help. Last year, we had 29, so there's an increase in that this year. With tax season coming up, AARP has tax services. Social Services Coordinator Sandy Fisher was part of a team that put together a Caring in the Community volunteer fair back in October. From that program, AARP tax aide was able to recruit 25 new volunteers who are currently doing training during the day at the Civic Center getting ready for tax season coming up. If all those people make it through their training, we'll be able to assist a lot more people. Last year we did 519. If we have the capacity of volunteers, we should be able to do over 600 this year. That's a really great program. We say AARP, but it's not age based. Anyone who wants help on their taxes with a basic 1040A can come in and get tax help on that.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Smith said thanked everyone in Novi who took the survey for the parks and the staff who worked so hard on it, and current and past commissioners who worked on it, as well. It was a lot of work and looks like a good plan moving forward.

Commissioner Joshi wished everyone a happy holiday season and Thanksgiving, and said she'd see everyone in 2020.

Commissioner Pratt said we continue to stay above the curve and Novi continues to lead in the field of parks and recreation. Continue doing that and he said it's great to be a part of that.

Student Rep. Kamalesh said happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Riggins said she's excited for the master plan set forth with 2020-24.

There's a lot of good things that'll be coming to Novi. She said she's excited and wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Staab said it's a busy time of year starting with Dec. 6 from 6-9 p.m. for and Dec. 8 Concert Band at 2 p.m. and Choralaires at Holy Family at 4 p.m. He said he gave all the commissioners a little postcard, but told everyone to put that on their calendar, as well. He wished everyone a happy holiday season and happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Dooley said he echoed all the comments and thanked staff for a very robust meeting. Great presentations from everyone and he said it's a joy to hear everything going on with the City and when commissioners are invited to participate, as well. It makes them feel very welcome. We have great commissioners and staff, starting with the director and deputy director and older adult services. Happy Thanksgiving to everyone and safe travels.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote **Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:15 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson