

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION

Thursday, Dec. 20, 2018 – 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), Thomopoulos (Present), Joshi (Present), Muzzin (Present), Pratt (Present), Staab (Present), Torimoto (Absent), Student Representatives Jooho Lee (Present), Alice Wou (Present).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

It was moved that the agenda be approved as amended by Commissioner Thomopoulos and seconded by Commissioner Staab. Item 6D4 moved to next meeting.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Approval of Nov. 15, 2018 minutes.

It was moved that the minutes for November be approved by Commissioner Staab and seconded by Commissioner Thomopoulos.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- A. Walkable Novi – Commissioners Muzzin & Thomopoulos
Commissioner Thomopoulos said there are no new updates since the last meeting.
- B. Novi Park Foundation – Commissioners Staab & Torimoto
Commissioner Staab said they met at their newer member's establishment on 12/10 at Ascension Brewery. Adam Czap from there brings a lot of insight and vision for Pour on the Shore on 8/2/19. They're looking to expand beyond craft beer and wine to maybe bourbon.
- C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Pratt
Commissioner Dooley said there was no meeting tonight, but they expect to have one in January.
- D. Parks Updates
 - 1. Lakeshore Park – Commissioner Joshi
Commissioner Joshi said she went on a sunny weekend and it was beautiful. It was below 30 degrees and there were still some people there, still some leaves on the ground. Asked about the water fountain tube exposed as a winterization method. The "growing, not mowing" signs were more visible than during her last trip.
Commissioner Staab asked about the condition of the underside part of the shelter roofs. Commissioner Joshi said they seemed in good shape. Commissioner Staab asked whether all the shelters were getting replaced during the park construction? Deputy Director Ringle said the newest one of Shelter 2 will remain, but the other two will be replaced. Commissioner Thomopoulos said the last

version of the plan she saw only included the northern-most Shelter 1 getting replaced and it would look similar to the newest shelter, just larger.

2. Meadowbrook Commons – Commissioner Thomopoulos

Commissioner Thomopoulos said she visited the parkland where the adult activity center and housing is located. The asphalt was recently replaced and looks nice. The pathway toward the church next door is very clean and well maintained. The gazebo is a focal point and leaves had already been removed. Two plaques note the butterfly garden and a contributor appreciation plaque. There's also a fitness station that is more for mobility than for strength training. She tried them all and they all worked and were well maintained. There are signs there explaining the equipment and how to use them. The only issue was goose droppings. There were residents walking around with walkers, so it could get caught in the wheels. She's aware this is something we struggle with. She said she recently read something about possible strobe light technology that people claim like they're having success with. There are lighted bollards along the pathway that we could try it on a small-scale basis. That's the only critique at all. The whole park is well maintained.

Commissioner Staab says he agrees about the good poop. It's also along the sidewalks along Cherry Hill, west of Meadowbrook. There are some patches that get puddles and could ice up in the winter.

Commissioner Dooley asked Commissioner Pratt what options are there to deal with geese? Pratt said he could send out the info the DNR has on the strobe lights. They have not worked. They tried dogs on Belle Isle. It worked, but just pushed them to another area. The DNR plans to do a study by next year of how well the strobe lights work on trails. Dooley said there are also dog windmills of silhouettes that blow in the wind.

3. Brookfarm Park (Nov.) – Commissioner Muzzin

Commissioner Muzzin said Brookfarm is located between Willowbrook and Ripple Creek, adjacent to Village Oaks Elementary. She had visited it previously and it was in repair with a tree being removed due to disease and there was also some trash at the back of the park in the wooded makeshift trail. The Boy Scouts must be cleaning it up, as it was all clear. The soccer nets were still up and appeared in use. There were no drainage issues. The thing that was most impressive was how healthy the tree line was between the residential area and the park, which is great for privacy and the noise level with the school playground nearby. The tree leaning over the trail was interesting, but could be an issue in the future. The bridge from the park to the school was clean. The only negative aspect is it is clearly a residential park, as parking along the area is limited.

Commissioner Pratt says his family loves that park.

Commissioner Dooley said that was one of his favorite parks when his daughter was growing up and he was coaching youth soccer.

4. Rotary Park (Sept.) – Commissioner Pratt

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Park Project Updates

Deputy Director Ringle said we ended the holiday season with staff and Director Muck emailed out some highlights she wanted to share. They include opening Villa Barr and starting the artist-in-residence program and approval to move forward on Lakeshore Park renovations. We secured an agreement with Novi

Schools and planning construction of Bosco Fields. We had successful events including Memorial Day, Light up the Night, Family Luau, Pour on the Shore and National Tournament. We completed long overdue office renovations. We started a pickleball program that was in great demand and are developing a plan to build courts at Wildlife Woods. We opened a new playground at Pavilion Shore. We are nearing final construction and completion of the ITC Trail. We expanded senior transportation services. We saw a marked increase in our dance programs and attendance. We received over \$370,000 in grants. It was a great year for our staff.

Deputy Director Ringle said we are not going to rent the shelters this summer at Lakeshore Park in anticipation of a construction schedule. We do not have that construction schedule yet, but in anticipation of being responsible for people, we wanted to get the message out now for people making plans. The beach will also not be open since we'll be doing the shoreline stabilization project at the same time. We anticipate having trail access available at the park, but there's minimal parking in the back. We're directing people to our Web page and will be updating there and on social media as we get a construction schedule.

Commissioner Joshi asked what would happen with Camp Lakeshore? Deputy Director Ringle said they haven't dotted the "i's" yet, but we have a good place we're looking forward to having Camp Lakeshore.

Commissioner Pratt asked if we're not reserving shelters, will we take walk ups? Deputy Director Ringle said anticipation at this point is that we close the park as far as shelters and such. We aren't going to do any reservations. If the park remains open and people are using it, we don't see any reason people can't use the shelters. We don't have a construction schedule or know what that date will be to stop access for those.

Commissioner Joshi said there's a flyer at the shelters saying shelter reservations begin Jan. 8. Deputy Director Ringle said we have a team member who will be going there this week already planning on updating those.

Commissioner Thomopoulos said the Pavilion Shore playground looks great and she's already seen children playing on it despite it being bitter cold. Fantastic playground for younger children mostly. It achieves the goals Director Muck stated. It doesn't distract your eye from the lake, the location is such that it doesn't distract you and it's not a very heavy-looking structure. There's quite a bit for kids to do. It'll be fun to see it fuller when it's warmer weather, but it's nice to see it being taken advantage of now.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle said we are closing out the year. We celebrated with Light Up the Night, Happy Pawliday's, Skate with Santa at the ice arena, "Elf Jr." Novi Civic Theatre performance with more than 1,400 tickets sold for the run of that show. The next show coming up will be "Lion King Jr." in May. Fitness classes are ready to start the new year with sessions in January. The Chorales are having open rehearsals 1/8 and 1/15 at Novi Middle School.

Deputy Director Ringle said the National Citizen Survey is completed by the City every two years. It is a statistically valid survey that captures residents' opinions within the three pillars of the community; community characteristics, governance and participation, and then eight central facets: safety, mobility, natural environment, built environment, economy, recreation and wellness, education

and enrichment, and community engagement. Parks and recreation touches on some of those items. The overall quality of life in Novi has a 93-percent rating for "excellent" or "good." That continues to be in the 90s since 2008. The paths and walking trails continue to do well at 57 percent. We are looking to improve those areas, as well. Ease of walking continues to increase. Sixty percent of the community sees that as "excellent" or "good." The recreational opportunities, 75 percent of the community thinks that is "excellent" or "good." That continues to be in the 70-percent range, which is similar to the national benchmark. Cultural arts, music and activities is 66 percent range "excellent" or "good." Those are great. Those are people who may or may not participate in our programs. Our social events or activities are at 67 percent "excellent" or "good." And our opportunities to volunteer keeps increasing at 77 percent "excellent" or "good" opportunities. City parks is at 82 percent, the recreation centers is at 80 percent and special events is at 77 percent. That was an increase, as well as the recreation increases over the last few surveys since 2014. Sense of community is at 72 percent, which is a positive rating. Recommend Novi is 93 percent would recommend Novi as a place to be. That's great news for our city as a whole. Forty-nine percent said they used recreation centers and 79 percent said they've visited a City park. And 43 percent had attended a City-sponsored event. That's our events and Community Relations' Spring Palooza, so that's across the board and those are good numbers. The full information on the citizen survey is on the front page at cityofnovi.org with a summary sheet.

C. Older Adults – Older Adult Services Manager Karen Kapchonick

1. Program & Services

Manager Kapchonick said 2018 is winding down and the last big party will be the New Years Eve party on 12/31. We start at 11 a.m. and celebrate at noon. We finish up with some dancing and finish up by 1:30 p.m. It gives residents the opportunity to go with their families later in the evening. It'll be the third year doing it and it has worked out very well. Looking forward to 2019, we're looking forward to the fitness class. We need everyone to look at their new year's resolutions and get out there with a healthy, active lifestyle. Registration is going on right now and 1/7 will be the first week of the session. Tax time is coming up with AARP with registration starting 1/2. We'll have 7-8 tax preparers every Wednesday from 2/6-4/10. We can service approximately 200-300 individuals for the season. We're also starting a new program with Novi Woods Elementary on 1/14. Our fourth graders are going to come over and visit our residents over at Meadowbrook Commons, sit down with them, do some interviewing and try to create memoirs. They'll tie that in with their writing and history classes, then come back a few weeks later to share those with them. A week later, we have a Taste of China luncheon new event. It's almost like a travel log. We have a representative from Grand Vista Travel who will be talking, having props and a movie. We'll have Chef Jason from Novi Lakes Health campus cooking. They've done a lot of our lunches and he's awesome in what he prepares. They'll be doing an Asian cuisine. We encourage individuals to sign up for that by the 1/15 registration deadline. We've been in connection with Ascension, formerly Providence, offering a few classes and workshops. One in January will be the Diabetes PATH. PATH stands for Personal Action Towards Health. That's a six-week workshop. For those with diabetes, it's a great workshop to come to to find out ways you can change the healthy lifestyle. Something new is Living Gluten Free

(Is it Necessary or just a Craze). Ascension will have representatives talking about the benefits of avoiding gluten, tips for dining out and also how to read labels. That'll be held 1/30. Another new class is Every Heath Matters, held in February. February is Healthy Heart Month. She wanted to thank Wellbridge of Novi for sponsoring last week's holiday party. We've been fortunate to have a lot of sponsors in the community. She wished everyone a merry Christmas and a great New Year.

Commissioner Thomopoulos said there's phenomenal programming coming up. Commissioner Dooley agreed.

MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

- A. Sports Update by Recreation Supervisor Greg Morris
Deputy Director Ringle introduced Supervisor Morris and said he and Recreation Programmer Chase Root work in the sports division and do a great job coordinating sports, parents and volunteer coaches.
Supervisor Morris said this will be kind of a year in review of sports. We've had a lot of program enhancements over the past year. One of those is youth field hockey. We are partnered with Amy Kilgore, the head coach at Novi High School, a University of Michigan graduate who was a regional All-American. She has a lot of those accolades and brings a lot to that program for first-fifth graders. It's two six-week sessions with 11 and 21 kids. When we do a new program, we survey the participants to see what they thought. We got a lot of positive feedback from that program. We look forward to continuing and building that program to see where it goes. The community wants adult pickleball. We've partnered with The Practice Zone, a business at 10 Mile and Haggerty. They have basketball courts inside and pickleball courts that are already lined. The owner is Fred Proctor and his son has been a coach in our basketball program for years. Fred is a big pickleball player, so he's teaching the participants how to play. The first session had 23 and we have three more six-week sessions scheduled when the new year starts. There's one time slot almost full already, so it's definitely something people are interested in. Additional clinics for youth sports; in the past, we've run our leagues. We've added introductory clinics to a lot of our sports at the beginning of the season. It helps coaches and players and coaches get a fresh start and get the season off to a positive start. Tonight, our basketball coaches were with coach Proctor learning basketball skills. We've done that with a lot of our programs and received positive feedback on that, as well. Chair volleyball is for our older adults 55 and older. It is so entertaining to watch and the people who play it are so nice. We noticed it as a trend around the United States as something popping up, so we thought we'd try it. We had four Novi residents come to the first one, but now we average 16-20. It's its own little community. This past Tuesday, they brought cookies and cards for each other. Its Tuesdays at 1:45 p.m. At first, we were just going to run it in fall and winter, but we ended up running it all year round and expanding it to two courts. You sit in a chair and play with a beach ball, but it gets pretty competitive and is fun to watch. Participation in our sports is strong. We had 687 in the fall for youth soccer participants. In the past 6.5 years he's been here, he said those numbers have gone up. This year was kind of a plateau, but a plateau of 680 kids is still a lot of kids for a program. Especially as we continue to improve our fields, we anticipate that program will continue to be strong. We had 221 adult softball teams. A lot of people think softball is in the

decline, and it is nationally, but we've actually maintained for the most part the number of adult teams we have. A lot of players who used to play 2-3 nights are only playing one, but with the format ours is as a doubleheader league, they get a lot for their money for that night, so we've been able to maintain a pretty consistent amount of teams over the past couple years and even increase a bit from last year. We have 377 tennis class participants, which is almost up 9-10 percent. Chase Root oversees that program. We work with FunStart Tennis and Todd Beyer, two local vendors who are absolutely awesome to work with. They offer a variety of after-school programs and classes, but to see that increase has been really nice for the tennis program. We've also updated our field rental process. Field rentals and fields in the City of Novi are in high demand and, in the summer, that's a high focus of his position. We've made it easier for people. They can go to cityofnovi.org/rentals, fill out an informational sheet for either fields or indoor rentals and within 24-48 hours of a business day, we reply to that. It helps us plan for them better. We might not have the specific park they want, but we might have another park that works for their rental. By them filling out that form, it really clues us in. Morris played a 90-second field rental video for commissioners to view. Morris thanked park maintenance staff and Studio VI for their work on the video. We are hosting the USA 2020 U18 Northern National. It's the same tournament we hosted in 2018 and it was successful. We typically alternate with some other local communities who host and we try to host every other year. We do a really good job with our tournaments here, especially Northern National. It's a volunteer organization of people who just love the game of softball. If you attend one of these tournaments, it's an amazing experience to watch these girls play. They're really good.

Commissioner Pratt said, when the tournaments are in, every single restaurant is packed. It's great. Supervisor Morris said the economic impact is definitely substantial since they're coming from all over the Midwest, as far as St. Louis & Minnesota.

Commissioner Dooley asked where the video would be posted? Supervisor Morris said the video will be at cityofnovi.org/rentals and on social media to promote soon after the new year.

Commissioner Pratt asked whether someone can go to cityofnovi.org/rentals and see whether a field is reserved? Supervisor Morris said we haven't gotten to that point yet.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

A. Dorothy Duchesneau of 1191 South Lake Drive said she's been involved with the City of Novi since Twelve Oaks Mall in 1977, when she opened the Sears store and could watch a mouse run across it because there was nothing in it. She thanked the Parks Commission for the playground at Pavilion Shore Park. They were amazed at how quickly that voted on, approved and built. They're going to use it a lot. She also thanked the Walkable Novi Committee with their help regarding the Pavilion Shore Village by Robertson Brothers at 13 Mile, South Lake Drive and Old Novi Road. They helped get the sidewalks relocated to make that development much more user friendly for both the new residents and getting access to the parks walking and riding. There was no need to put the sidewalks where they were in the original plans. When Lakeshore Park gets finished out, we are hoping you bring us into the 21st century both there and at Pavilion Shore Park with some Wi-Fi, at least near the shelter areas. We've surveyed some

neighbors and they've said they'd love to be able to connect while watching their kids or doing something else to give them something to do if they're not going to be totally active. If there's going to be a library kiosk in there, then there's got to be some Wi-Fi hopefully close by. The final subject she said she wanted to speak on is geese, in particular the Canadian goose – not the American goose – who belongs in Canada. She said she's spoken with the Lakes Area Homeowners Association and, many years ago, she and her husband took the classes with the DEQ on who to go after the eggs. You have a very, very tight span on when you can harvest the eggs. The DEQ said you destroy the nest, destroy the eggs, you make them think you're a raccoon or a fox and you make it so it appears as a neighborhood they don't want to live in. She said they've had members of their association who have gone out and did the egg collecting every year for a few years, but have since turned it over to a company named Goose Busters. They are licensed and approved by the State of Michigan. We have cleaned up Walled Lake from these geese. The problem is Lakeshore Park has a beautiful shoreline on Shawood Lake and they have their nests there. They no longer nest in Walled Lake, they nest in Shawood Lake and then come over to Walled Lake lake for breakfast, lunch, dinner and that grass lawn at Pavilion Shore Park. For those who are not aware, a goose can live 25 years. That's a long time to have him as a neighbor. She said she's been able to identify a few pairs who she knows on sight and they know her on sight. Those eggs can go anywhere from 10-15 eggs per batch. If you oil an egg, the goose doesn't realize it's not a safe place and comes back the next year to lay some more. If you make the nest unfriendly, he decides to move up north where he really belongs. They have a GPS system in them. When those 10-12 or 15 little goslings hatch, they're programmed to come right back to that spot for the next 20-25 years after. There's only one to break that cycle and, unfortunately, we don't have enough coyotes and foxes to do it with nature's help. For the people who own cats and dogs – and she's personally lost a Siamese cat this year to a coyote – she does not want any more coyotes. They're already being driven out by other development. Please consider getting in touch with LAHA and work with us to help that influx. She thinks you'll find the amount of geese and their droppings can be lowered.

B. Mike Duchesneau of 1191 South Lake Drive and 125 Henning said in multiple occasions, primarily at City Council, he has asked the parks and rec group to take a look at Lakeshore Park as far as 12.5 Mile Road and to expand parking there to be 30-40 cars in size. He didn't know if that was in the plan and said it seemed like there was urgency to get the project out and quoted to get it started. There's going to be large equipment as this gets started, so he recommends taking a look at increasing the parking along 12.5 Mile and Dixon Roads to accommodate 30-40 cars on wood chips or gravel. He's not looking for pavement or concrete, as there's already too much of that in the park as it will be. He'd like to see the 12.5 Mile access point made available. If you coordinate the development of the park, you should be able to make the parking spaces there so the mountain bikers can use the southern half of the park without interfering with what's going on to the north. It's also good access for cross country skiers in the winter time. He encourages the City to pursue adding 30-40 parking spaces, as opposed to the 10-12 that are currently being used at that access point. He observed that, when you Google "City of Novi," the websites are saying things to do in Novi. He was pleasantly surprised to see our marketing

messages are getting out there to where you put in "Novi" and it pops up. The kind of the video that was just shown – short of the rental part – is the kind of thing that should be easily linked. He knows we have an excellent Web manager who does a good job of marketing. Sheryl does a good job of adding things. He'd like to see this continue. City of Novi is getting more and more recognition for its parks in a positive light, so he'd like to see that continue. Wanted to thank the group and wish everyone good holidays and to keep doing the job they're doing.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Muzzin said wanted to thank the Commission and the staff at PR&C. It's been a great learning experience and wonderful working with all of you. She looks forward to 2019.

Commissioner Joshi said she also wanted to thank everyone on the same note and thanks for making her feel welcome in her first year.

Representative Wou said she didn't have much to add, but it's good to see the parks and sports programs are doing well. Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Representative Lee said, going back to the Meadowbrook Commons report, he's noticed the bird poop is an issue in other parks in Novi. Either the presence of bodies of water or the terrain – the dampness of the grassy areas such as Fuerst Park or in larger subdivisions – those grassy areas tend to collect water really well and could be a cause attracting geese and other types of birds in general that Commissioner Pratt could analyze. Just an idea he wanted to propose. Knowing that this is his last term on this committee ever since starting sophomore year, he's seen how much the parks have developed and changed over the years, even the existence of Brookfarm that he's never heard of until today. He said he's thankful for his time on this committee and hopes that, once he's gone, that other students will step up. He hopes the parks will continue to be this way and, as he comes back over the years, he'll see them continue to develop.

Commissioner Pratt said great work. He's looking forward to 2019 and additional stuff you guys are doing. He wished everyone a happy holidays. He applies being on this board, as well.

Commissioner Staab thanked staff for an excellent job, as always. Thanks to Recreation Supervisor Morris. Not only should this be on the website, but we should have it on the City of Novi television channel, as well. It's really well done and people are always looking for things. He said he's looking forward to 2019 and wished everyone a happy holidays, Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Commissioner Thomopoulos said she also wanted to congratulate the staff for their significant accomplishments and running through them tonight so we could all enjoy the glory of your accomplishments. Geese this year were a bumper crop. She's not sure what happened. They seemed to have it under control on the lake year after year after year, but this year it seemed to get out of control. She's not sure if that was the case throughout the city, like the situation she saw at Meadowbrook Commons or Commissioner Staab saw at Fuerst Park on a previous reports if that's unusual throughout the city or if it was just a good year for geese or geese on Walled Lake. Hopefully the City and LAHA can work together to do something about that. She did put in a request to Planning in the past week to see where the plans for the Lakeshore redevelopment are at. Although Director Muck had indicated we'd go out to bid in December, it does sound like it'll be postponed at least one month. Maybe next month

when he returns we can get an update since it has not gone out to bid yet. She thanked the new commissioners for being here. It's great to have them here and she's glad they feel welcomed. It's good to have a diversity of thought throughout the Commission to represent our city. Thanked the students for their continual support of the Commission. Hopefully, when they do finish their terms, they encourage other students to join the Commission. She said it's really beneficial to have them on the Commission. Happy holidays and happy New Year.

Commissioner Dooley asked if Representative Wou's term expires in 2019? Wou said she thinks so, but is a senior and was not sure. He asked if this was really Representative Lee's last meeting? Lee said he recalls an old email that had his term date ending. Dooley said he thought they may be staggered. He said, even if they're not on the Commission, they're always welcome at the meetings. Dooley asked Lee if he's decided on a school yet? Lee said he would be going to University of Michigan. Wou said she would be going to U-M, as well. Commissioner Pratt joked that he would get them both Michigan State shirts as a going away present. Dooley thanked staff for their presentations and said it was great to see Supervisor Morris. He hoped Morris wouldn't be a stranger to the meetings since it's always nice to get a different perspective despite the great job done by the rest of staff at the meetings. Dooley said it's a wonderful Commission. Everyone's engaging, there's robust discussion, everyone comes to the meetings very prepared and the various parks in the City of Novi are never in better hands than one of our commissioners present. He said he hopes everyone appreciates what they do for you and the City. Talking to various City Council members, we'll be very busy next year. There are a lot of projects that will come to us for our expertise and discussion, so buckle up. It'll be a fun 2019. Happy New Year and happy holidays. Representative Lee said thanks to all the members of this committee. He's not aware next year would be very busy, but hopefully other new member students interested in joining can carry on the state of Novi parks. Dooley thanked both student representatives.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Pratt (honorarily done by Representative Lee) and seconded by Commissioner Thomopoulos.

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:07 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Shelley Thomopoulos, Vice Chairperson