

it showed the value of certain parks and recreation assets. He asked if they were able to prioritize to those based on them showing their value during this time. Trail usage has really gone up.

Commissioner Staab stated they did talk about outside activities and things like lighted trails, like those a Meadowbrook Commons, but nothing came to fruition.

Director Muck stated the Foundation asked him to come back in October with some of those projects that are tangible. Instead of just asking for money they want a portfolio of tangible projects such as playgrounds, trail connectors or fitness stations along the ITC Trail. There was a lot of talk about budget and where the City is. We will be moving into the budget season this Fall and will have a better grasp of how COVID is going to affect the City budget. He will be prepared in October to bring some price items and the Foundation can prioritize what they would like to pursue first.

C. Grants Committee – Commissioners Dooley & Joshi

Director Muck stated they have not met as a committee. There is not much out there. We did not apply for any State grants this year through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. He did attend their meeting on Wednesday, virtually. He spoke during public comment both on behalf of the City of Novi, thanking them for their support over the years, and also, as a leadership position, thanked them on behalf of MParks. He also made a comment on a project on their agenda for another community. We are actively seeking and keeping our eyes open for grants. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of them out there. However, one we are keeping a very close eye on and hoping to see an application process for is through Oakland County. Oakland County is allocating money to Senior Centers for COVID related items whether it is programming, PPE or other initiatives. We have not seen all of the wording on that but he understands it has been passed by the Commission. He believes it is about fifty thousand dollars eligible for each community with a Senior Center. We will share that information with the Grant Committee and the Older Adults Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Dooley asked if there was a potential opportunity to meet in September prior to the September Commission meeting.

Director Muck replied we will see what the timing is on the Oakland County Grant. He could see wanting to meet for that.

STAFF REPORTS

A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Park Project Update

Director Muck stated the Tim Pope Memorial play structure re-dedication was a wonderful morning with about forty people, which was well under the social gathering guidelines. He thanked Commissioner Staab for being one of the speakers and telling the history and also being one of the main people bringing the original play structure to life. Mayor Gatt said a few words as well as former Mayor Landry and Sara Pope-Starnes. There will be a video to follow. We got some nice comments from one of Tim Pope's sons. He thanked Commissioners Joseph and Smith for attending. It was special that during the ceremony there were children of community members playing on the play structure in the background. He thanked Deputy Director Ringle for

getting everything set up for the event.

The pickle ball courts at Wildlife Woods are still coming. He anticipates having a pre-construction meeting with our engineering team and construction company. It should still be on track for Fall construction.

Lakeshore is still coming along. We are potentially looking at a late September or early October completion. We are continuing to see the impact of COVID affecting materials, supply chain issues, construction issues in certain areas but we will continue to push forward. As Commissioner Staab mentioned, we will be doing a video virtual opening with hopefully a public gathering in the spring for the community. We want to get that open as soon as possible. The trails are still getting heavy use by walkers and mountain bikers.

The water tower is something new to talk about. He has the intention to go August thirty-first to City Council with the proposal to have the water tower refurbished. It is the iconic water tower on Novi Road with the Novi Special logo. We have a unique opportunity with a major donation of paint and supplies from PPG. They are looking at it as a showcase project for their company, worldwide basically. We have been able to work out with the cell phone carrier a window to be able to do this since they need to replace some of their equipment. The donation that was arranged through PPG by one of our local residents is going to save the City a significant amount of money from when we first started investigating this several years ago. August thirty-first is the intent to bring this forward. The water tower work will be done late September, early October. We are going to replicate the logo. It will be the same look and feel and the same color scheme. It will be a new look being glossier and newer looking.

We have been having progress meeting at Bosco Fields every couple of weeks. There is one area, the southwest corner, which is having problems with drainage and seed taking. The rest of the fields are looking pretty good and starting to fill in. We think when the fall weather hits, the cooler nights will help with the seed germination. For the southwest corner we have asked the contractor to relook at the grade and the drainage because we are having issues with that. We are fully intending to play on those fields next spring if at all possible.

Commission Torimoto asked if the picket donations for the Tim Pope play structure were the pickets with donor names on them.

Director Muck replied that is exactly what he was talking about. When we replaced the play structure and upgraded it we did not touch the surrounding fence so all of those are original pickets which Commissioner Staab and his wife, Becky, were very involved in getting. The intent is being able to offer more of them for sale to continue funding and go through the Foundation. There will be more to come on that.

Commissioner Staab stated it will be better than when they originally sold them since they are going through the Parks Foundation which is a 501-3c and will be tax deductible.

Director Muck stated there will more out on the pickets on social media and on the Parks Foundation's webpage.

2. Park Rentals

Director Muck stated, as Commissioner Torimoto mentioned earlier, the COVID pandemic has really shown the needs and wants of people to get out into our

parks and trails and use them. We wholeheartedly support that, but it has led to some challenges. We had several groups, several individuals who have started to use parks for their own personal profit. They were leading classes or programs and it got to a point we had residents complain because of parking issues. The groups actually started to "tattle" on each other about the use of the parks. We have had to implement a new rental policy and new permit policy. We have always had a policy, but we had to implement one. He turned the floor over to Deputy Director Ringle.

Deputy Director Ringle stated besides the other groups who were using the parks we were also offering some of our own fitness classes. Pavilion Shore Park was where most people wanted to be for fitness classes. We had to figure out a best use of the park and a schedule that allows people to take advantage of the beautiful park and we had to follow our ordinance. The ordinance is Permission to Assemble. What we have done with some of the bigger groups, who were having large groups and asking a fee or donations, is to give them a bank of time, where we feel it is good usage for the park. They are allowed to host free classes only during those specific times. That allows our programs, the classes we are running with people we have been contracting with, to hold their classes at specific times in the park and reduce traffic. We have implemented a four week or four session minimum for anyone who wants to do a park rental. Anyone who wants to charge for their classes needs to come through us and do a park rental. It is twenty-five dollars a session. We are very careful. We know Tuesday nights is the Tree Farm ride and the parking is busy then. Mid-day on Saturdays the park is also very busy.

Director Muck added that he knows of one other community that has banned that kind of activity happening in their parks. We don't want to get to that point but if we continue to have multiple groups not going through the proper process we may have to look at that, but he is not anticipating that. One of the other unique challenges is we have seen a group who has launched a virtual run, using it as a fundraiser, and encouraging people to use the ITC Trail. There is obviously no way we can do a permit for a virtual run. People and businesses are getting creative, but we have to protect our parks, taxpayers and residents, especially those who live in close proximity to our parks and trails. If you have heard anything out in the community or seen any of that, as Deputy Director Ringle mentioned, when we do require a permit they should have it on them when participating in case they are questioned by our police department or by another group. It is similar to what we do with our park shelter rentals.

Commissioner Torimoto stated tennis courts have been getting a lot of use. Some of the participants in the City's Adult Tennis League have been kicked off their courts by people telling them that they have the court reserved to give lessons, etc. He asked if that was valid. There are courts at ITC, Rotary Park and he knows a portion of the tennis courts behind the Middle School are the school district's and a portion is Parks and Recreation's. When asked to leave, one time they did refuse. He asked if there are permits given for things like private lessons and things like that.

Director Muck stated the only rentals we have are for our own programs like the Todd Beyer tennis program that we run for youth which he believes is exclusively at Rotary Park. At one point those hours were posted. He cannot

think of any instance where we have permitted an individual to be allowed to use our tennis court to hold their own lessons.

Commissioner Torimoto state the time they refused the person wanted multiple courts behind the Middle School. They refused to leave and just moved over one court.

Director Muck stated that if that happens again to contact him and he will follow up with the schools. The schools have six courts and we have six courts. You bring up a good point, the longer this goes, we may have to look at rules of play for our courts. We know we are going to have to do that on the pickle ball courts. We are going to have some discussion with staff of what that means in terms of how long you can play if other people are waiting. He can see those issues coming especially with pickle ball. We have had something like that happen on the basketball courts at ITC. This is a good challenge. COVID has shown there are people who want to use the courts but we may have to implement some policies and rules as we move forward. Commissioner Joseph stated he and a colleague attempted to play one evening in the last month. They drove to every court in the City. There were not only individuals playing but individuals waiting. It is a prime time where they are busier than others. He asked if there is any discussion associated with scheduling or time blocks.

Director Muck stated we see this on the High School courts every day. Those are not our courts and we do not manage those but every morning there are people with all of their equipment and they are out there all morning. He could see posting signage in the spring regarding play and time limits per court.

Commissioner Torimoto asked if you are a resident of Novi as opposed to a non-resident is there priority given as far as courts. He believes the answer

now

is no. This is a question he was requested to ask by a resident who was starting his match and residents from another city came in and tried to take over the courts. In some other cities' residents get priority.

Director Muck stated we do not do that and would not even know how to enforce it.

Commissioner Dooley suggested something like the Dog Park be considered where you pay a small fee.

B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

1. Program & Services

Deputy Director Ringle stated she would give a wrap up to our summer programs. Our Summer Camp which would have been Camp Lakeshore and Camp Power Play, are combined with a smaller capacity at the Civic Center and ends tomorrow. We had great kids, families and counselors. Cristin Spiller, our Recreation Supervisor over the camp, did a fantastic job. She was a trailblazer for us in the City and regionally. It was one of the first programs we had to put out there and have policies and procedures in place for safety and social distancing. She did a great job even last week when masks became mandatory for the camp, children as well. We taped an "Engage" video segment, which will be out shortly, interviewing camp counselors, Cristin and some families talking about their experience.

Our daytime Sizzling Summer Arts Series, which was held on Wednesday

mornings wrapped up last Wednesday. We did the performances on Facebook live and in person for the campers who walked over from the Civic Center so there were small audiences. Community Financial Credit Union was fantastic and was the financial sponsor that allowed us to do that. We are planning an outdoor movie on August 29th on the ballfield at Power Park behind the Civic Center. Right now, we are limited to one hundred people so we are taking reservations. The name of the movie is online. We are hoping for good weather. We had another one scheduled that was rained out.

Dance and fitness classes continue outdoors. People are loving it. Especially the dance classes for the kids, which are held at Fuerst Park in the amphitheater. It gives the kids space to spread out and parents are social distancing in the amphitheater watching the lessons so that is a great solution. Fitness is taking place a Pavilion Shore Park and Fuerst Park.

Shannon Timura was our most recent artist in residence at Villa Barr. She started in February and left in March due to COVID. She came back for a couple of weeks in August and finished her piece there. It is in the Civic Center and is called "Baby Your Dreams". It is a fabric and concrete mache woman with a mesh metal frame. It is in the Civic Center for now and all of the information on her and her piece can be found at cityofnovi.org/villabarr. We continue to pivot. For soccer we are waiting for MSYSA (Michigan State Youth Soccer Association) to give us direction. We know MHSAA today will allow practices in our region but don't know if it will allow games at this point. We are waiting to see what MSYSA's reaction is to MHSAA and how WSSL will react to Michigan State Youth Soccer and lead us in a direction for our league. We hope to be able to continue practice. We are down about thirty-three percent, which is what we expected and budgeted for. We are in a wait and see mode. We have fantastic volunteer coaches and we hope to continue to help to keep the kids engaged and active as safely as possible. More to come on soccer which is our largest youth program.

We have added some creative fall programs. For fall adult sports we have added Adult Coed 4 Grass Volleyball. We have done sand volleyball but are now going to have grass volleyball. We are also going to have Adult Pairs Badminton and Adult Coed Kickball. We know people want to be outside and active. We do not know what our indoor fall and winter look like at this point. We are going to push the season as far as we can and hope the weather helps us out, possibly through October.

Deputy Director Ringle presented the Parks and REcess flier. She stated this is new and the whole team brainstormed and worked on this. We know there are children in Novi and the surrounding school districts who won't have a chance to have a gym class if they are going to participate virtually. We wanted to insure the children would have an opportunity to move around and interact safely and still get the mental and health benefit of a gym class or recess. We are offering a number of programs. There are eight weeks of programs where we will have different themes from 4:30pm to 5:30pm. We understand the children will be on somewhat of a regular schedule with their teacher, virtually. We will offer it right after school and it will rotate through a number of parks. We are excited to offer this program as something new and innovative.

We know that Light Up the Night is not going to be traditional this year. We are

in our planning stages for a drive through Santa visit. There will be more to come on that but we are still planning on the typical date for that of Friday, December 4th. Everything will be done from a vehicle including Santa, treats and crafts on the Civic Center Campus.

Our team continues to be creative and find new programs. Not one of our programs have been the same. The team has had to work harder and smarter to be able to offer everything we are doing. She thinks they are doing a fantastic job.

Commissioner Dooley stated it is remarkable what the team has been able to do under these circumstances and the commitment to all ages in the community. He especially likes the Parks and REcess program.

Student Representative Kamalesh stated that she likes the idea of the Parks and REcess program but due to the pandemic a lot people are unemployed and she is not sure how able some people would be to afford something like that. She asked if that is usually what a Park and Rec program or sports would cost.

Deputy Director Ringle replied that it is less expensive. It is less than ten dollars an hour for a child to participate in the program, which is a pretty reasonable cost. With everything we will offer, we have to staff the program and get the supplies for it. It is not a revenue builder for us. It is a break even and community benefit. We are being very conscious of that without hurting our finances as well.

Director Muck stated the Novi Parks Foundation also has a scholarship fund so those who may not have those resources right now can apply for a scholarship through our office.

Commissioner Staab asked as far as the rentals, are we seeing exercise groups using the parks since they can't be inside.

Deputy Director Ringle replied that we primarily see exercise groups. The concerns are typically exercise groups that are gathering on their own and assembling. We are keeping an eye on that.

Commissioner Staab asked if they are franchise groups.

Deputy Director Ringle replied a lot of times they are displaced instructors who had worked at a studio or gym that is closed and they are looking for something to supplement their income and/or keep themselves in shape while engaging people.

Commissioner Staab asked if she had mentioned the fee was twenty-five dollars per session.

Deputy Director Ringle replied we charge them twenty-five dollars per event.

If they are collecting a fee we charge them a twenty-five dollar rental fee.

Commissioner Staab stated he thinks the twenty-five dollar fee is very fair.

Commissioner Joseph asked if there is a difference between the for fee and donation classes or are both required to get a permit.

Deputy Director Ringle stated that there is not a distinction between fee or donation. If there is money exchanged, then they need to have the permit.

C. Older Adults Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Program & Services

Director Muck stated we still have our Loan Closet in operation. We have some upcoming Ask the Expert programs that will be in the next Engage. Our food commodities and Meals on Wheels programs continue to operate.

Medicare counseling still has people calling in for those. Our Veteran's Day this year will be a virtual event and Cristin Spiller is working on that. Deputy Director Ringle forgot to mention our tree socks at Meadowbrook Commons. If you drive by Meadowbrook Commons you may see some color on some of the trees. Those have recently been added and are similar to the ones at the Civic Center last year. We hope to brighten the day of those living at Meadowbrook Commons. The support from the public was overwhelming. Deputy Director Ringle and our Recreation Supervisor, Alyssa Golles, hung those yesterday. Our Transportation Program is in full swing. We are averaging about twenty-five rides a day. We are seeing that some of our riders are still a little hesitant to use the transportation service. They are being very cautious about where they go and who they interact with. We did hold our first Older Adult Advisory Board meeting virtually on Tuesday. They had not met since before the shutdown. There was some good conversation and feedback from them. We had a good discussion about technology and the obstacles and opportunities for seniors. That led in to potentially what we are going to be applying for in the Oakland County Grant he had mentioned earlier. They made some recommendations to take forward on the City website and on the Meadowbrook Commons website and their communication with residents as well as family members of residents. They also had some comments and recommendations on our Engage magazine, especially how that is visually presented to seniors. We are looking for more members for that Board. There are currently only three members. We are going to reach out to the Novi University graduates since that is a group who has wanted to get involved. He asked Commissioner Dooley to feel free to reach out to his fellow alumni. We can use two or three more members on the Older Adults Advisory Board. We are also going to be looking for new members of the Cultural Arts Advisory Board. Jessica Mistak, our Recreation Supervisor, who is in charge of our facilities and transportation, is going to be shifting some duties into Older Adult Services. Currently, as you are aware, we are not renting facilities. We have allocated her to do some programming and other work in the OAS realm. There will be more to come on that.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Smith stated he is impressed with Director Muck, Deputy Director Ringle and the whole staff keeping things together with what is going on. The Tim Pope Play Structure dedication was excellent. He cannot believe it has been twenty-two years since he helped build it.

Commissioner Torimoto stated there were good discussions tonight. He wanted to reemphasize how important it is, especially during COVID, to be able to provide the services and assets that our Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services can. It is an opportunity to keep healthy both physically and mentally and at a safe distance to have some human connection. It has been amazing to see how the professional staff has evolved. Looking at all of the programming, he sees some things that look pretty interesting. He thanked the staff for all of the opportunities for everyone in the community.

Commissioner Riggins stated it was a great conversation tonight. She is thankful for all of the thinking outside the box initiatives to keep the community involved and engaged. She appreciates it and is excited about it. She encouraged everyone to stay safe.

Commissioner Joseph stated he echoes what Commissioner Smith said about the Tim Pope play structure rededication. It was a great turnout and a great day. He thanked the team for their flexibility with the comments on the tennis and use of Pavilion Shore Park. Obviously, there is an overabundance of want to be out there enjoying the spaces we have and trying to be aware of the use. As he was doing park visits on a bike ride, on the ITC Trail he noticed some of the boards are pulling up on the edges of the pathway.

Commissioner Dooley stated a few people have brought it to our attention and the contractors were out this weekend and they have fixed the boards. When you are out there again you will see that they have been fixed.

Director Muck added that the repair was all under warranty and the contractor tightened everything back down. He appreciates everyone who reported the issue. We preach the police motto, "If you see something, say something". We appreciate that people were saying something.

Commissioner Joseph stated he is usually on the ITC Trail on Sunday mornings and at that time there is generally a lot of usage. There is quite a bit of spreading across the entire trail of groups of sometimes four to six people. This is great when you are walking with your group but during busier times it is an issue. He doesn't want to suggest anything that would take away from the beauty of the trail, but maybe markings or lines like a roadway and signage would be appropriate to bring it to people's attention.

Commissioner Joshi commended Deputy Director Ringle and the staff about the Parks and REcess. She has already signed her son up for the program. It is a really unique idea. Hopefully the weather will cooperate, and we can have a longer fall. The program is a highlight and a great idea.

Student Representative Kamallesh stated especially since the pandemic that Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle are doing a really great job of getting people involved, especially outside. She wants to reiterate Commissioner Joshi's comment about the Parks and REcess program. She really likes the idea especially since schools are going virtual.

Commissioner Staab thanked the staff and Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle specifically for the rededication on Saturday. Director Muck mentioned we had several children playing in the background during the dedication ceremony. There was great participation from the Pope family. We will be working on getting the word and information out on the picket sales. He and Director Muck will be getting together to get a form for the picket sales finalized and to the Parks Foundation. He would like to commend the department for their foresight and initiative in thinking out of the box during these trying times. He asked people to wear their masks and stay safe.

Commissioner Dooley stated it is amazing how much this City offers to everyone during these times. We think about where we were in March and April and where we are today. The City continues to think about its citizens first and foremost. He is pleased that everyone could be present, and it shows dedication to what we believe in. He stated to Director Muck and Deputy Director Ringle that he would be very happy to offer his services on the Older Adults Advisory Board and will talk to the Novi Ambassadors and see what kind of interest we can get from them. I was a great meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Voice Vote

Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Dooley at 8:00 p.m.

DATE APPROVED: _____

Jay Dooley, Chairperson

Charles Staab, Vice Chairperson