

**PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

**Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 7 P.M.**

Novi Civic Center – Council Chambers

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. with Chairman Joseph presiding.

**ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners: Joseph (present), Riggins (present), Dooley (absent / excused), Joshi (present), Staab (present), Tolkacz (present), Torimoto (absent / excused)  
Student Representatives: DiDomenico (present), Sid (present)

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Chairman Joseph and Riggins requested to postpone the Villa Barr and Ella Mae Power Park updates to the June meeting.

Commissioner Staab motioned for approval of agenda and second by Commissioner Joshi.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

It was moved that the minutes for the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved by Commissioner Riggins and second by Commissioner Tolkacz.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- A. Novi Parks Foundation – Commissioners Joseph, Joshi, Staab & Torimoto  
Commissioner Staab stated all members were present for the last meeting, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Progress is being made for Pour on the Shore which is on July 26<sup>th</sup>. The Foundation is ahead of the game as far as administration. Executive Director Melissa Agosta is reaching out for donations and sponsorships. Melissa has gotten very busy with work. She will be with the Foundation through December but then the group will be seeking a new Executive Director. On June 17<sup>th</sup> the Foundation will present a check for \$300,000 for the splash pad to City Council. At that time, they will give a synopsis of the activities of the Foundation / history of the past year.  
Pour on the Shore tickets go on sale June 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- B. Parks and Facilities Updates
  - 1. Villa Barr Art Park – Commissioner Joseph - tabled until June
  - 2. Ella Mae Power Park – Commissioner Riggins - tabled until June

## **MATTERS FOR COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION:**

- A. Changes to City Committees (Walkable Novi, Cultural Arts & PRCS Grants)  
Director Muck provided more explanation to the items in the commissioner's packets regarding the changes Council made to the committee structure on May 6<sup>th</sup>. The changes to the committee structure from the Council Rules Committee. They kept the Council's goals in mind when they reviewed the committee selection, created additional boards and commissions to sustain resident engagement and provide additional input to city staff. Another revision is to establish an environmental sustainability committee, work with neighboring communities to complete connections through Novi to local trail systems and pursue partnerships with Northville for a trail connection near the railroad bridge at Eight Mile. Director Muck pointed out the commissions most pertinent to the Parks Commission. Including a new finance and administration, public utilities and technology, a mobility committee, cultural arts, strategic planning, and environmental sustainability. Some of the existing committees are being reworked into those newly recommended committees. Several have been sunsetted, including the Capital Improvement Program, Youth Council Liaison, Parks Grants, Citizen Advisory Board, Walkable Novi, Recreation Center, and Municipal Broadband. The Mobility Committee is going to look at the walkable aspects of the city and transportation. Director Muck asked to reappoint Commissioners Dooley and Tolkacz to this newly formed committee from Walkable Novi. The Cultural Arts Advisory Board was an advisory board strictly for Parks and Recreation. Now it will be a committee reporting to City Council. Five members will be appointed. Applications are currently being accepted for a variety of commissions. Additional conversation occurred about the direction of the Older Adult Needs Committee which is still up for discussion. Director Muck wanted to give the commissioners an opportunity to discuss and understand how their roles are changing as committee members.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

- A. Administration Division – Director Jeff Muck

1. Spring Park Projects

Director Muck started by saying the Lakeshore Park rear parking lot project is progressing very well. Paving started today. The job will definitely be done by Memorial Day weekend. Thankful to our friends at Motor City Mountain Bike Association for communicating to their members to keep people from going through the construction zone.

The concrete is down for the pickleball courts at Meadowbrook Commons. The rain last year slowed down some of the work. Currently the curbs are being removed, cutting the grades for walks, and installing the base stone for walk, and pouring the concrete. The existing parking lot top course is being taken out. Director Muck feels the staging for the Memorial Day Parade will not be impacted.

The sound dampening project in the Lakeshore Building was completed about an hour and half ago. It is a drastic change and exceeded expectations with the echo reduction. The sound panels blend seamlessly into the beams. The building is more conducive to holding meetings, trainings, camp and gatherings.

It was recently announced by Southeast Michigan Council of Governments that the Regional Review Committee selected our project which is to build a shared path from the ITC Trail to Bosco Fields. It is being awarded through the Transportation Alternatives Program otherwise known as TAP Grant. It will not start until fiscal year 2025. The grant was applied for in November of 2023. Under the TAP program federal funding covers the majority of the cost of constructing the path and the city will cover the remaining portion. Director Muck was slightly surprised Novi received the funding because it is very competitive. \$578,897 was awarded in TAP Grant funds. Credit was given to the engineering department who submitted the grant. Planning will now begin in detail.

Deputy Director Ringle announced that Northwest Park is open. People have been using the playground and trails. 99.9% of the restoration is complete. June 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 we are going to host popsicles in the park as an opening event. It will be right before the commission meeting. The date was also chosen because the Napier and Grand River intersection will be open. Invitations are being created which will be shared with the commissioners and the community.

Director Muck explained this year July's Parks and Recreation Month will be celebrated early during the June meeting. It will be tied into the Grand Opening of the park. The staff will introduce themselves and pictures will be taken of the entire team. Communication will occur regarding schedules for the July meeting. Director Muck said, "I'm inclined to say July is National Parks and Rec Month maybe we should just recreate personally in July."

## 2. Jessica's Splashpad

Director Muck shared the good news that the splash pad is planning to open officially to the public on May 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. It will operate 10:00a.m. – 8:00p.m. seven days a week through Labor Day, obviously weather permitting. Oakland County did their initial inspection and there is a punch list of items that need to be completed which are already done. Oakland County will be back next week to check those five items then give the permit to open. Staff have been trained on the operations, the test results have been coming back clean and clear, also the system is operating very well. We are ready to go!

The Commissioners have all been invited to a VIP Preview on Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup>.

## 3. Strategic Community Recreation & Master Park Plan

Director Muck's last report was the Strategic Community Recreation Master Plan. The kickoff has been pushed back to June 6<sup>th</sup> at the Superhero Showcase taking place at the Civic Center. This will be the first launch of the surveys and public input sessions. Followed up with two more public input sessions on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Flash Vote Surveys will be happening too, which OAS Manager, Kit Keiser is leading. A lot of data will be generated for our consultant from these means.

Information will be posted on social media and the city website after Memorial Day.

## B. Recreation Division – Deputy Director Tracie Ringle

### 1. Programs & Services

Deputy Director Tracie Ringle provided some follow-up from previous agendas. The information on priority registration went to City Council and they are aware

that the commission supported this move. July 1<sup>st</sup> is the start date for switching over from zip codes to street addresses. People with 48167 that do not pay Novi taxes will now be non-residents in our system since technically that is accurate. The upcoming Engage will be on the web this week and in mailboxes the following week. Engage will include a note about Fall Basketball because it is the first program that will be affected.

Sideline Software was mentioned in a previous meeting. Deputy Director Ringle was happy to announce that it is being used and it was a great investment for our team.

A position for a temporary Cultural Arts Coordinator has been posted on the City of Novi website. This is due to a staff member being out on medical leave. The staff needs extra help during the busy summertime and planning for fall. The timeframe would be from summer into fall.

The Sizzling Summer Art Series has been changed from Wednesdays to Thursdays due to competition from neighboring communities. The first one will kick off on June 13<sup>th</sup> and happen every Thursday at 10:30 during June, July, and August. The July dates will be at Lakeshore Park.

260 people have registered for the Memorial Day Run; however, it is anticipated that last year's numbers of 300 will be reached.

Before the next PRCS Commission meeting camps will be underway. Deputy Director Ringle finished by saying all the planning that was done in the winter is happening now!

C. Older Adult Division – OAS Manager Kit Kieser

1. Programs and Services

OAS Manager Kit Kieser began by saying there is a lot going on in her department.

The Novi Birders group nearly doubled this past month. Forty-five people participated at the last meeting at Lakeshore. The Garlic Mustard Pull also at Lakeshore was a huge success. Sixty volunteers collected fifty bags of the invasive species from the park.

The Euchre Tournament was held April 27<sup>th</sup> with sixty participants which is a 15% increase from last year.

On June 5<sup>th</sup> Sip Sip Hooray will be returning with a different spin on the event. Trivia games will be featured by a company called Sporcle, charcuterie style snacks will be provided, and participants can bring their own beer and wine. The fourteen-passenger van will be used to take two groups to a Tiger's game. These spots are filling up quickly with only a few left. June 20<sup>th</sup> the Polynesian Dancers of Michigan will be at Meadowbrook for an afternoon Tiki Luau. The dancers will perform a variety of styles and teach participants some hula dancing. Virgin pina colodas and snacks will be served. MSU Tollgate will be leading Summer on the Farm tours geared towards people 55 and older. A guided hayride will take participants around the farm to see the animals and hear the history of the farm.

Two new programs in social service programs will be taking place in June. Retirement and Investment Planning Basics are provided by OAS but is for people of all ages that are interested in learning about what retirement looks like

financially. OAS in conjunction with Easterseals has a program to learn more about what they have to offer and how to take advantage of it.

OAS is planning two very large Memorial Day events. The Memorial Day Parade has twenty-seven groups registered, which is more than last year. May 22<sup>nd</sup> will be Fuerst Field of Honor which has a large response. The event includes a dinner for veterans and their guest, with music starting at 5:30. The ceremony will begin at 7:00 which will include the presentation of the colors, Choralaires singing the Armed Forces Melody, a wreath laying, playing of Taps, and a 21-gun salute.

## 2. Transportation Transition

OAS Manager Kit Keiser said the target date for the transition from Novi Senior Transportation to People's Express is about a month and half away. Everything is on track and going quite well. The issue of subsidies was revisited by City Council on May 6<sup>th</sup>. It was determined that Novi residents 55 and older and anyone with disabilities will ride for free within People's Express boundaries.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> letters were mailed to the active riders (ridden within past year). The letter included our sincere thanks for trusting us over the years, information about what and why it is changing, and what to expect as the transition continues.

Additional communication will go to all residents on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The brochure will include information about the change and service, fare information, FAQs, and contacts for who to call with questions or concerns.

## **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

### Student Representative Sid

It was really nice to see the TAP Grant which is a lot of money for that trail. It was really good to get that grant and I am excited about it.

### Student Representative DiDomenico

It is great to know the splash pad is practically here which is very exciting. I have been to Bosco Fields a few times in the past weeks and what I have seen is pretty exciting. It is great to see an update on the transportation and resident priority registration.

### Commissioner Talkacz

As always, I am constantly amazed with the number of activities that are going on between the three areas. Even when it is a lull before the kickoff of summer camps. It is a tremendous amount going on. I continue to be impressed by the staff and other teams. Nice job.

### Commissioner Joshi

I feel the same. I think it is a busy time and a lot of things are going live between June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 1<sup>st</sup>. It seems like your hands are full, but the staff is doing a great job. I am actually surprised that Northwest Park is already here. Congratulations.

### Commissioner Staab

I'd be remiss if I don't reinforce that tickets go on sale for June 3<sup>rd</sup> for Pour on the Shore July 26<sup>th</sup>. There is a lot on your plate this month with Memorial Day.

Congratulations on the TAP Grant. I am looking forward to the Northwest Park opening. Kindly send a refresher on the park site visits.

Vice Chair Riggins

Novi is just an amazing city with all the different activities that Tracie and Kit told us about. It is so wonderful, just a lot to do. I am excited about Northwest Park's opening. It is going to be awesome and amazing. I can't wait to take my grandson there so he can play. I am excited for the splash pad as well. The grant that was awarded is great. Have a great Memorial Day weekend and have fun. Go out to our parks!

Chairman Joseph

The Chorales concert this past Saturday was great. It featured Disney themed music through the years. A shout out to Aiden and all the Chorales. It was a nice evening for everyone.

It continues to be extremely impressive, all the activities that are going on. I am very curious to see how priority registration shakes out.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Riggins and seconded by Commissioner Tolkacz.

**Voice Vote**

**Unanimous**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Joseph at 7:46p.m.

DATE APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

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Joseph, Chairperson

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Riggins, Vice Chairperson