

# **BELLE ISLE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK SESSION MEETING SUMMARY**

May 6, 2014  
Belle Isle Conservancy  
8109 E. Jefferson Avenue  
Detroit, MI  
2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

## **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Michele Hodges, Chair  
Rev. Lonnie Peek Jr., Vice Chair  
Michael Curis  
Sommer Woods  
Alicia Minter

## **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Bud Denker  
Bryan Barnhill

## **STAFF PRESENT:**

Ronald Olson, Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation  
Scott Pratt, Southern Michigan Field Operations Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation  
Mike Terrell, Metro Detroit District Supervisor, DNR Parks and Recreation  
Sgt. Green, DNR Law Enforcement  
Inspector Darryl Hill, Michigan State Police  
Sgt. Shaw, Michigan State Police

The work session was called to order at 2:15 p.m. by Chair Michele Hodges.

Review of topics in the attached Memorandum  
Chief Ron Olson, DNR Parks and Recreation

## **Topic 1. Park Hours**

### **Overview of Topic:**

The current hours of park operation by the City of Detroit was 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily.

### **Recommendation:**

It was recommended, based on user activity, to amend the state park land use rules to open the park daily at 5:00 a.m.

### **Committee Action:**

There was a consensus to amend the rules to open the park at 5:00 a.m. daily. The change will occur within two weeks.

## **Topic 2. Park Road Speed Limit**

### Overview of Topic:

The current roads indicate speed limits of both 20 mph and 25 mph and those limits were maintained by the City of Detroit. Due to confusion, the speed limit was reviewed with the police and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

### Recommendation:

It was recommended to normalize the speed limit at 25 mph to be consistent with the speed limit at all other state parks. Discussion occurred with committee members and representatives from the Michigan State Police, including Inspector Hill, Sergeant Shaw, and DNR Conservation Officer Sergeant Green, as to the enforcement of the speed limit. The police provided an overview of sensitivity training that occurs, and a refresher course by conservation officers is planned for May 9, 2014. The police also indicated that each patrol unit will be equipped with video cameras to document each contact with park visitors. Trailer units with digital speed displays will also be placed on the island roads to help with safety education. Signs indicating the 25 mph speed limit will be added to ensure visitors are fully aware of the speed limit on the island.

### Committee Action:

There was a consensus to proceed to normalize the speed limit at 25 mph on park roads.

## **Topic 3. Alcohol Policy**

### Overview of Topic:

Park staff and law enforcement reviewed the City of Detroit's policy of no alcohol except by permit.

### Recommendation:

The recommendation was to leave the policy in place, as it is consistent with large, urban cities across the country and the state and to focus on managing behaviors to ensure there is a balance of quality experience for all park visitors. The committee was pleased with the option for picnic shelter groups to secure a permit for alcohol, which previously could be obtained for events only.

### Committee Action:

There was a consensus to retain the existing policy of no alcohol except by permit.

## **Topic 4. Beach Management Plan**

### Overview of Topic:

Beach guards will not be provided, which is consistent with all state park beaches and the Huron-Clinton Metro Parks.

Recommendation:

The management plan includes:

1. Offering free swim lessons.
2. Free use of life jackets.
3. Providing substantial beach area parameters and a small, contained area for younger children.
4. Adding safety amenities, including throw rings and signage.
5. Providing an emergency call box.
6. Ensuring periodic water testing, which was discontinued by the city in 2013.

Committee Action:

There was a consensus to proceed with the beach management plan.

The committee adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Attachment:

Memo dated May 6, 2014, to the Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee's Infrastructure, Rules and Regulations, and Event Subcommittees from Michele Hodges, Chair of Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee, and Ronald A. Olson, Chief of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division regarding current topics and recommendations

Submitted by:

Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
DNR Parks and Recreation  
May 16, 2014