

MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 20, 2016

Location: Belle Isle Nature Zoo

No quorum at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting called to order at 9:20 a.m.
Roll Call and Excused Absences

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Bud Denker
Alicia Bradford

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Michele Hodges
Mike Curis
Sommer Woods arrived at 10:10 a.m.
Bryan Barnhill
Rev. Lonnie Peek arrived at 9:20 a.m.

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ron Olson
Scott Pratt
Karis Floyd
Darlisa Rickman
Amanda Hertl

APPROVAL OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

MOTION: **Chair Hodges** motioned for approval of excused absences. Barnhill moved to approve. **Curis** seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: **Chair Hodges** motioned for approval of the minutes from the September 15, 2016 meeting. **Barnhill** moved to approve the September minutes. **Curis** seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Chair Hodges noted that the Advisory Board has contacted the City of Detroit, Mayor's Office, regarding the board vacancy created by the resignation of Alicia Bradford.

Scott Pratt introduced the Sigma Gamma Foundation, and thanked them for the \$400,000 donation for the new playground.

PRESENTATION: UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND DEVELOPMENT

Sigma Gamma Foundation

Lance Shipman, Pentura, reviewed the process of building the new ADA playground now located on Oakway Drive and Lakeside Drive. The emphasis is on bringing children and families together to enjoy these outdoor play areas. This playground is specifically designed to accommodate children of all ages and children with disabilities. The structure is easily accessible for wheelchairs do to the heavy ramping.

GENERAL UPDATES

DNR Law Enforcement Update

Sgt. Damon Owens, DNR Law Enforcement Division (LED), reported on a recent incident on the island that involved a person jumping from the MacArthur Bridge. DNR Conservation Officer Cardenas arrived at the bridge approximately 1 minute after receiving the emergency dispatch. After witnessing the man in the water yelling for help. Cardenas retrieved a ResQ disc from his vehicle and threw it to the man, the man grabbed it, followed the instructions of the officer thus saving his life. The man was treated on the scene by EMS and transported to the hospital for evaluation.

Sgt. Damon reported that no incidents occurred at the Free Press Marathon.

Chair Hodges thanked the LED for their lifesaving efforts and mentioned that Officer Cardenas could not be there today, but will be in attendance at the November meeting.

Committee member Peek congratulated the DNR Law Officer's on a great save.

Ron Olson acknowledged Theresa Bryan, Belle Isle Park Ranger. On July 16, 2016 Theresa was called to a scene on the Belle Isle Park Bridge where a park visitor had been walking and reportedly had a heart attack. Upon Theresa's arrival the visitor was not responsive, Theresa performed CPR until the EMT's arrived, the visitor was still not responding when taken by ambulance to the local hospital. Staff later found out that the woman had survived and was in stable condition. Theresa's actions that day very likely saved the visitor's life. Theresa is a commissioned ranger and also an EMT.

Infrastructure

Amanda Hertl reported on various infrastructure and project updates:

- A recent pre-bid site visit was conducted on October 21, 2016 with contractors for sidewalk replacement at the Aquarium. Estimated cost of repairs (\$105,000)
- DNR met with contractors for a site visit to replace the roofs on the Harbormaster building (police station) and the IA (internal affairs) buildings
- Casino structural and roof repairs - Quinn Evans will be completing the assessment
- White house structure repairs - Quinn Evans will be completing the assessment
- Contract approved for replacement windows in the law enforcement garage – To be completed this winter.
- Contract approved for electrical to two entrance booths – To be completed this winter.
- Casino Fire Suppression system repairs will go out for bid early next year
- JJR Smith Group has completed the trail masterplan
- Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Project - shelter # 9 Fishing Pier railing
- Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Project - new picnic area near Lake Okonoka

Carrie Warren, Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), spoke about repairs to be made to the MacArthur Bridge. Noting that during the repairs the bridge will not be closed. MDOT is currently working with the boat club to possibly use their parking as a secure staging area during the construction process. Once complete the secure area would be paved.

Committee member Peek inquired about when the fishing pier dock, near the coast guard station, would be repaired?

Amanda Hertl explained that engineers have completed an assessment of the south fishing pier; and the cost for repairs is approximately one million dollars.

Hiring Updates

Karis Floyd, Belle Isle Park Manager, introduced two new employees. Todd Keith, is a new Park Ranger at Milliken State Park. Jacinda Bingoff is a new Lead Ranger at Belle Isle Park.

Outreach and Upcoming Events

Darlisa Rickman, Outreach and Events Coordinator, Belle Isle Park, reviewed the 2016 upcoming events. The following upcoming events were noted:

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| • 10/22 | Stewardship Day | Nature Zoo | 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| • 10/29 | Color Run | Paddock | 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. |
| • 10/29 | Island Harvest Festival | White House | 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. |
| • 11/18 | Senior Power Days | Belle Isle Casino | 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |
| • 11/19 | Stewardship Day | Nature Zoo | 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| • 12/02 | Light Up the Aquarium | BI Aquarium | 8:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. |

- 12/09 Holiday Stroll 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- 12/14 Senior Power Days Belle Isle Casino 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- 12/17 Stewardship Day Nature Zoo 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- 12/31 New Year's Eve Fun Run Belle Isle Casino 3:30 p.m.

Amy Greene, Belle Isle Nature Zoo, shared that the Nature Zoo will host a harvest event at the Nature Zoo on Saturday, October 29th from 10 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

On Sat Nov 5th, the annual Detroit Audubon Conference will be held, for more information contact the Nature Zoo.

BELLE ISLE TRAILHEAD DISCUSSION

The Belle Isle Park Trails Masterplan has been completed. The next phase to be addressed will be the development of the Southern Iron Belle Trailhead on Belle Isle. The final location selected for Southern terminus is on the east end of the island near the Livingstone Lighthouse.

The goal of this project is to produce the best possible guidance document for future trail development on Belle Isle, encapsulating the creative vision of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) into a realistic, practical, buildable and sustainable set of implementation strategies.

Primary development features addressed in this document include:

- A 6-mile, paved, multi-use Perimeter Loop Trail around Belle Isle Park
- A Trailhead for the southern terminus of Michigan's Iron Belle Trail
- A trail system through the 200-acre Wet-mesic Flatwoods forest

The project approach was based on integrating the goals of the DNR along with public input to create an extraordinary guidance plan for future decisions with respect to the island's trail network. This was accomplished through a series of meetings and workshops led by the design team through the design process. Each meeting was strategic in accomplishing goals related to each of the three project elements.

BELLE ISLE CONSERVANCY UPDATES

Please visit our website for additional information: www.belleisleconservancy.org

Chair Hodges shared that the Belle Isle Conservancy online store will be coming soon. Chair Hodges also introduced; Brittany Sanders, Director of Community Engagement, Belle Isle Conservancy and Genevieve Nowak, Director of Volunteer Services.

Chair Hodges spoke about several of the volunteer groups, mentioning General Motors, Deloitte and the University of Detroit specifically. Hodges noted that the Detroit Symphony Orchestra volunteers planted 19,000 daffodil bulbs in 2 hours.

Chair Hodges updated everyone that the “Polish the Jewel” luncheon that was held on October 13, 2016, had approximately 400 people participate. Money raised from this event will provide funding for the new splash pad at the beach area that is to be located where the old waterslide is.

The Garden Party was a success with over 600 participants.

Thanks were given to the DNR for their continued support.

Upcoming Events:

- November 5th at 10:00 a.m. will be the Coy transfer, this will be one of the last coy transfers.
- The Light Up the Aquarium event will be held on December 2, 2016. Event to be renamed the “Deep or Dive”
- Holiday Stroll to be held on December 9, 2016 – Conservatory and Aquarium

Chair Hodges reviewed the 2017 proposed meeting dates noting that some evening dates and times are being considered and may be added.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

Stephanie Donaldson Founder of Senior Power Days. Reported that attendance has increased since 2014; now have 300 – 400 participants for each event.

Michael Betzold Mr. Betzold expressed concerns about the Detroit Grand Prix contract. An email addressing these concerns was sent to Ron Olson on October 6th.

Mary Ellen Howard Will we learn the current status of the grand prix contract and questioned what happened to the Biederman report. Howard stated that the Detroit Police Department (DPD) is using the paddock for drivers training. This is another example of inappropriate use of the state park.

***Ron Olson** responded that the City of Detroit requested that the Paddock location be used for public service training. That is the reason DPD is at the paddock.*

***Ron Olson** also mentioned that conversations have been in process regarding the Grand Prix. The goal is to work toward an agreement beyond 2018.*

***Michael Montri**, General Manager, Grand Prix, stated that they are working to make the event good for everyone.*

Committee member Peek suggested that the Grand Prix could make a presentation regarding some of the positives the event brings to the park.

Ron Olson agreed that would be a great idea and also spoke about their support of the recreation passport by purchasing in bulk and also their support of senior power days.

Committee member Curis noted that there are 2 races left, contractually.

Jennifer Teed Feels that the playground is great and she is excited to see it here. This is the first meeting that she has attended. Sad that entrance to the park is not free anymore. She also spoke about her concern with the use of public space by corporations and its effects on the environment.

Betty Roberts's Big fan of the Grand Prix. Question about money raised by Polish the Jewel.

Chair Hodges stated that she will get those numbers to the public.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS

Curis Would like to purchase plaques for special events, donations, etc. Curis will donate the first \$1,000 toward that effort.

Olson agreed, the DNR will support that as well.

Woods Had questions about contracts meeting and was thankful for the information given.

Hodges Working to develop a list of topics for the BIPAC meetings. Examples such as the water taxi proposal and partnerships with yacht clubs and the coast guard. Branded Belle Isle products. Welcomed Joe Tate to the Belle Isle Conservancy

Chair Hodges will not be able to attend the November meeting.

Olson Will have additional information on the oak wilt project at the next meeting. Olson urged everyone that if you have oak wilt, do not trim until it's dormant.

At the last meeting a memorandum was submitted on the strategic planning process with DNR. Will be building out on the planning that will include the 2005 master plan, landscape and zones on Belle Isle Park

Would like public meeting sessions to hear what people want to see at Belle Isle and to give their perspective on planning for the park.

Hodges Phase one of Biederman Project has been completed. Currently working on Phase 2 in various workshop groups. The result will be an executive summary.

Curis Proposed that the sales of recreation passports should be split if sales have increased because of Belle Isle's increasing attendance.

Olson stated that the funds from sales of permits are state mandated.:

Questions/Comments:

Betty Would like to limit speakers to 3 minutes

Stephanie Thanked the DNR for their continued support of Senior Power Days. Detroit Symphony Orchestra is requesting a May 23, 2017. Senior Power Days will be partnering with the Detroit Yacht Club for this event.

She also thanked the Detroit Grand Prix for the recreation passports they provided for the seniors. Senior Power Days is free to all seniors.

Peek Asked Stephanie to give a brief history of Senior Power Days.

Stephanie Explained that Senior Power Days was founded in 2014 in partnership with the DNR, the area Agency on Aging and various other vendors. The event has touched over 7,000 seniors.

Next BIPAC Meeting: November 17, 2016, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., at the Flynn Pavilion

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Barnhill

Seconded by: Curis

Meeting Adjourned: 10:43 a.m.

Approved: _____
Michele Hodges

Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: _____