

DRAFT MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 20, 2018

Location: Belle Isle Nature Center

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.

Quorum established

Roll Call and Excused Absences

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Rev. Lonnie Peek
Bryan Barnhill

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Chair Michele Hodges
Sommer Woods
Brad Dick
Bud Denker
Michael Curis

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ron Olson
Scott Pratt
Jacob Brown

APPROVAL FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES

Motion to approve excused absences:

Moved by: Michael Curis
Seconded by: Bud Denker

APPROVAL FOR 2019 BIPAC MEETING DATES

Motion to approve Calendar Dates:

Moved by: Bud Denker
Approved by: Michael Curis

A Special Award was given in Honor of Special Recognition for Conservation Officers Steven Converse and Ben Lasher who saved the life of a woman at Belle Isle Park

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion to approve Sept. 20th, 2018 Minutes:

Moved by: Bud Denker
Seconded by: Michael Curis
Corrections: None

GENERAL UPDATES

Chief Updates

Ron Olson

- The transition of state government continues
- The Budget for 2020 has been submitted
- We are funded through the fiscal New Year
- Senate bill 1258 puts into place the Recreation Passport Opt-out may be put in place by the lame duck session. It may help to augment our funding throughout the state
- The 1259 companion bill would give to local grants for improvements. Currently it is at 10% and this proposal will add another 5% bringing the total to 15%.

Michele Hodges: Would like to invite Keith Creagh to fete him and show appreciation for his efforts.

DNR Law Enforcement Update

Lt. Joe Molnar

With colder weather there are less visitors and less events there is nothing major to report. A few minor violations.

MSP

Sgt. McQueen

All has been quiet we have been consistently patrolling the island with no major issues to report.

Park Operations Update

Jacob Brown

- A few positions will be posted after the 1st of the year. 1 General Office Assistant position for the events office. Also, there will be 3 ranger positions, 2 will be seasonal for 7 months and the other will be an 11-month position.
- Working on Brush removal around the island as well as removing hazard trees.
- There will be an update to fixtures and the painting of restrooms.
- We will begin work filling in some of the low-lying areas around the park to make it feasible for park goers to utilize the area, so they don't continue to collect water.

- Making amendments to agreements and contracts to get ahead of what has been some problem areas in regard to events.

Michele Hodges asked about the Food Truck Rally and how they can avoid certain circumstances, such as traffic, in the future. **Jacob Brown** responded that it is a portion of their event planning that will take place after the first of the year to address these issues. The event was very good for the public, but it made it difficult to get around the park. They are trying to have some consideration and balance in the future. No one anticipated such a high turnout and they are working in conjunction with law enforcement to come up with innovative ways to handle these situations. **Joe Molnar** reported that he, Lt. Grady, and Inspector Smiley are going to look at the scale of these events. As the park increases in popularity this is something they have to look at as far as what the park can sustain for the number of events and the amount of traffic coming on to the island. **Ron Olson** said it was the most people he has seen there. Belle Isle is not the only park to experience these overcrowding issues for popular venues and events at our parks. We are successful, but with that brings more challenges and we need to be more prepared. **Michele Hodges** asked to be kept in the loop because they have other potential partners that have an interest.

Infrastructure Update

Amanda Treadwell gave an update on infrastructure (see attached). **Michele Hodges**: Thanked Todd Platt for keeping the Boat House on Belle Isle viable and for all of his services.

Ron Olson: Some of you might have known Ernest Burkeen he was a good friend of mine and the former Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Detroit. He used to be here on Belle Isle for 7 or 8 yrs. during the Archer administration. He passed a week after Thanksgiving and he had a fondness for Belle Isle even though he moved on to the Parks and Rec in Florida. He was very appreciative of Belle Isle and the many improvements that he always wished that we could do when he was in place. I just wanted to mention that for those who may have known him or crossed paths with him in the past.

Michele Hodges asked if there were vendor and concessionaire opportunities that opened on Belle Isle for the year. **Ron Olson** didn't think any had expired on Belle Isle but will check into it.

Ron Olson reported that the Lake Okonoka project that Amanda referenced regarding the bridge and the culvert is planned to be done by April 1st and the bike path will be restored.

Outreach and Upcoming Events

Jacob Brown

- After the 1st of the year there will be a scaling back of events due to the construction in the Conservatory and at the Scott Fountain.
- They will be changing some language in the contracts.

Belle Isle Conservancy Update

Chair Michele Hodges -

- Found the characters made by Jacinda Bingoff to be very festive and creative and thanks her for the contribution.
- Holiday Stroll was a great success.
- The DNR is Looking for volunteer campground hosts.
- Piet Oudolf will begin the stages of development and are looking for volunteers.
- The Polish the Jewel was successful as well and continues to support the Splash Campus.
- On Ralph Wilson's 100th Birthday which was Oct. 17th 100 million dollars was donated to Buffalo Parks and 100 million dollars stayed here in Detroit and was dedicated to parks and trails in Southeast Michigan. Thank you to Ralph Wilson for being an active part of the island and the region.
- Would like to recognize the Penske team who are contributing to part of the \$35 million effort donated to Detroit neighborhoods.
- 100th Anniversary of Belle Isle Park to be celebrated in May 2019.

Ron Olson: There will be a special ceremony for the 100th Anniversary of Belle Isle and currently videos, pictures and testimonies are being compiled if anyone would like to contribute to the story. There is also a passport booklet where you can keep track of all the parks you have visited. For anyone interested they can follow the link on the website.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

Angela Lugo-Thomas - Would like to know if anyone has looked at how other large urban parks protect their parks from commercialism and corporate takeovers? Why doesn't the DNR and the BIC find grants and donors that don't require a car race or the other inappropriate park events in exchange for funding maintenance and upcoming projects on Belle Isle? Now, there have been articles suggesting that Belle Isle will be used by the Auto Show starting in 2020 for a few weeks after the Grand Prix. What is your position regarding this issue?

Michael Betzold - If there are any plans for the Auto Show to come to Belle Isle Park the plans must be made public and kept transparent. I want to know from Michelle or anyone on this panel has anyone had any contact from the Auto Show organizers about the plans that they are publicly floating for operating on Belle Isle? **Michele Hodges:** We have not been contacted by organizers, with that being said we would be open to find out what they do have in mind so that we can properly manage and make sure that they are inserted in the process for proper consideration. **Ron Olson:** We have not talked to anybody from there and if they are speculating on things its just speculation. If and when they come forward with ideas, we will see what they are interested in doing and go forward. **Michael Betzold:** Will you make that public? **Ron Olson:** Yes.

Anita Twardesky - Outlined the beautiful new self-guided tour book that may be available for sale and or rental at the vendor RKC by the Belle Isle guests and enthusiasts. It is currently available on the Michigan Sea Grant website for \$12.

Donald Green - No longer trusts the judgement of the DNR nor the BIC regarding decisions made on Belle Isle Park and how it functions

Peter Potowski - Park usage is an important aspect. We are lucky to have both sides of the issue up for discussion.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS

Michael Curis - Merry Christmas to all and thank you all for your input.

Sommer Woods - Congratulated Michele Hodges for being acknowledged as a Notable woman in Nonprofits in Crain's 2018 issue.

Michele Hodges - Wishes everyone Happy Holidays!

Meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

January 17, 2019

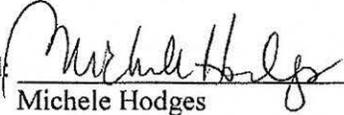
Belle Isle Nature Center

176 Lakeside Drive

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

Approved: _____


Michele Hodges


Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: _____

3.21.19