

## MINUTES

### Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 19, 2017

**Location: Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion**

Meeting called to order at 9:02 a.m.  
Roll Call and Excused Absences

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Rev. Lonnie Peek

#### **PRESENT FOR BIPAC**

Chair Michele Hodges  
Michael Curis  
Bud Denker  
Brad Dick  
Bryan Barnhill  
Sommer Woods

#### **DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Ron Olson  
Scott Pratt  
Karis Floyd  
Jacob Brown  
Amanda Hertl

**Chair Hodges** welcomed everyone to the meeting at the historic Flynn Pavilion. She also noted that the Shiver on the River (Flying Pancakes) will be held at the Flynn Pavilion on Saturday, February 4, 2017.

#### **APPROVAL OF EXCUSED ABSENCES**

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

## **ROLL CALL AND INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE:**

**Chair Hodges** introduced the newest member of the BIPAC Committee, Mr. Bradley Dick. Mr. Dick is the City of Detroit, Director of General Services. Mr. Dick is replacing Alicia Bradford.

**Chair Hodges** shared Bradley Dick's resume with those present. Brad has been with the General Services Department since 2006; in 2011 he was promoted to his current position with responsibility for 600 employees. His department services include over 150 facilities, 5,000 acres and 308 parks in the City of Detroit. Brad was instrumental in the initiative to save the City nearly \$30 billion dollars as well as leading the team to update the City of Detroit Parks and Recreation masterplan. Brad's prior experience includes private sector positions with MSX International and Ford Motor Company; which he served in England and Mexico City. Brad also served in the Peace Corp as a volunteer.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion:** **Chair Hodges** noted that the October minutes under Belle Isle Conservancy notes indicated "conservatory" rather than conservancy. This had been previously noted and had been corrected prior to the meeting. Hodges motioned for approval of the October minutes. **Denker** moved to approve the October minutes. **Curis** seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

**Motion:** **Chair Hodges** motioned for approval of the minutes from the November 17, 2016 meeting. **Curis** moved to approve the November minutes. Denker seconded the motion. Motion was approved. **Chair Hodges** abstained from the vote on the approval of the November minutes as she was not present.

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

### ***DNR Law Enforcement Update***

**Ron Olson** introduced Lieutenant Joe Molnar. Lieutenant Molnar is replacing Captain Malloch in the Metro District.

Lieutenant Molnar shared that he has been with the Law Enforcement Division for 14 years and is originally from Alpena County. He has been in the Metro District for approximately 2 months now. He also noted that there were no major incidents to report.

### ***Infrastructure***

**Amanda Hertl** reported on the various infrastructure items and projects for 2017.

- Bathroom repairs and restoration plan for the Stone Comfort Station, Shady Nook, Woodside, Oxbow Comfort Station and the Bathhouse comfort station. Cost approximately \$25,000
- Casino elevator assessment and bid documents, cost estimate \$15,000
- Flynn and White House building stabilization, interior renovation assessment estimated cost of \$550,000
- Casino fire suppression system upgrade cost estimate approximately \$600,000
- HVAC upgrade, ventilation and control system upgrade and temporary heat and glass replacement for the Belle Isle Aquarium and the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory approximately \$200,000
- Barrier free walkways: Assessment of the barrier free access to all walks, facility entrances, restrooms, parking lots and play areas, cost approximately \$65,000
- Assessment of Milliken State Park and Belle Isle Park for future possibility of a public boating access site cost approximately \$75,000
- Design of a Kayak launch in the Nashua canal to be constructed as a part of the Lake Okonoka design, cost estimate of \$25,000
- Structural repairs to the Scott Fountain to provide adequate winter conditions for fish habitat. Cost approximately \$75,000
- Asphalt shingle roof replacement, painting, concrete replacement at 7 picnic shelters, cost estimate \$300,000
- Design engineering for hydrologic restoration of Wet Mesic Flatwoods, cost approximately \$525,000
- Oak wilt management and tree removal, cost \$200,000
- Storm water assessment and maintenance, cost estimate \$185,000
- Replacement of street lights with solar lights and new poles, cost estimate \$1,200,000 from the Detroit Lighting Authority.

**Bud Denker** thanked the DNR and the Public Lighting Authority (PLA) for their collaborative effort on the new decorative solar lighting for the island. This was a million dollar investment to the park. **Ron Olson** noted that staff collaboration played a key part in this project; also stating the project was completed one year ahead of schedule. Ron Olson thanked the Grand Prix for the new previously installed LED lighting at the Casino and assisting with the Tom Gores and Platinum Equity donation for the MacArthur Bridge.

Questions presented by Committee member **Bryan Barnhill** were addressed;

- What are the overall funding sources for the infrastructure projects for 2017 and what is the overall cost?  
*Amanda Hertl responded that overall there are approximately 150 projects (that are ranked) estimated at \$300 million dollars. State funding totals \$1.25 million per year for capital outlay. In 2017 \$4.5 million will be spent on infrastructure projects including \$1.5 million from budgeted funds, and \$2.5 million from grants and partners.*

- Have you secured funding for each one of those projects and if so what are the funding sources?

*Amanda Hertl responded that State of Michigan capital outlay, grants and partners. The list was not available at today's meeting but could be provided.*

- General time line for completion of projects?

*Amanda responded that over the next 10 years expect to complete 150 projects.*

- What percentage are emergency, maintenance and cosmetic projects?

*Scott Pratt responded that 90% of the projects are necessary maintenance. Some of the cosmetic projects has been and are done by volunteers.*

Committee member **Michael Curis** requested that infrastructure material be included in the member packets for each meeting.

Committee member **Bryan Barnhill** requested an update on the diseased trees on the island.

*Chief Ron Olson addressed this item noting that there is about 40 acres, in four (4) different zones, that are impacted by oak wilt. The plan to address this problem will be in 3 parts. First is to remove the trees that were identified as beyond salvage; this is approximately 120 trees. The second step is to root prune the affected trees. Oak trees that have yet to show signs of being infected will be injected to slow the spread of the disease. Much of this activity will take place between now and spring. A \$200,000 grant from the Statewide Invasive Species Management Program was approved for Belle Isle to treat invasive species; this grant will fund this treatment.*

**Chair Hodges** mentioned the groups are working together on the Newsboy Shelter and asked if additional information could be provided by Amanda Hertl?

*Amanda stated that the DNR and BIC are coordinating with the Michigan Press Association (MPA) to raise funds to restore the Newsboy Shelter this year. The funding need for restoration is \$650,000. The DNR is in the process of coordinating temporary cover for the structure with membrane over the roof as well as structurally shoring up the building. DNR – PRD Cultural Funds will be used to complete this work.*

**Chair Hodges** also noted that a completed physical assessment of the Scott Fountain has been received. The assessment was completed by Hamilton Anderson Associates. The Belle Isle Conservancy will be seeking funding the restoration; the cost is expected to exceed \$5 million depending on the fund plan.

**Chair Hodges** asked Ron Olson to speak about the Strategic Planning Process.

*Ron Olson stated that over the past couple of months the teams have been working on a draft of the strategic planning process, Biederman Group Development Plan and other related resources. The goal is to have a working draft to establish public meetings. Part two of the planning process will include establishing more detailed management plans. The teams are working to have a draft completed by July, 2017 which will include public involvement and reviews by the BIPAC and Belle Isle Conservancy Board as well.*

***Park Operations Update:***

**Karis Floyd, Belle Isle Park Manager**

***Hiring Updates:***

Currently there are 2 positions that will be posted; a full-time Ranger position within Milliken State Park and Harbor as well as a Secretary position at Belle Isle Park.

Committee member **Bryan Barnhill** asked about the general responsibilities of the secretary?

*Karis stated that the secretarial position would assist with various contracts, general office assistance, help facilitate meetings, handle the CAMIS system, weekend support with summer rangers.*

Committee member **Barnhill** further questioned the salary for this position?

*Karis stated that there is a starting wage of \$17.53 more information will be forwarded to the committee when the postings are available. Copies of the job postings will be sent to the BIPAC members.*

***Outreach and Upcoming Events***

**Jacob Brown** reported that we have one upcoming event, Shiver on the River, to be held Saturday, February 4, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Belle Isle Casino.

**Jacob Brown** also noted again that the Belle Isle Conservancy will be hosting “Flying Pancakes” at the Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion as a part of the Shiver on the River Event.

**Ron Olson** mentioned that the markings seen on the sidewalks indicate where repairs will be made that are currently in progress.

**RECOGNITION OF CO RICHARD CARDENAS**

**Chief Ron Olson** presented **Officer Richard Cardenas** a Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Support at Belle Isle Park. The certificate was awarded jointly by the BIC and the DNR.

**Lieutenant Joe Molnar** read the plaque to the group present:

*On the morning of October 15, 2016, DNR Conservation Officer Richard Cardenas responded to a suicide attempt from the MacArthur Bridge on Belle Isle Park. CO Cardenas observed a man in the river struggling to keep his head above water. Realizing the gravity of the situation, CO Cardenas encouraged the man to kick his legs to keep his head above water and quickly retrieved the “ResQ Disc” from his patrol vehicle. CO Cardenas immediately deployed the life saving device and helped secure a safety line around the man’s body. For the next 10 minutes, CO Cardenas held the victim in a position whereby he could safely breathe until a Detroit Harbor Master vessel could remove him from the water. The man was ultimately transported to a local hospital, treated for hypothermia and released with a second chance at life.*

**Ron Olson** reflected back to 2014 when the team efforts of the PRD Park Ranger, State Police and Conservation Officers worked together on another lifesaving incident.

**Chair Hodges** also mentioned Park Ranger Theresa Bryan and her life saving efforts by administering CPR to another individual; noting that Theresa was recognized in an article in Hour magazine as well.

**Ron Olson** noted that Theresa Bryan was presented an award at a National Resource meeting last fall.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Doodle poll results were shared with all committee members; the only date recommended for an evening meeting was August 17, 2017. The meeting would be held from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. This evening meeting will be added to the 2017 meeting schedule and posted to the site.

**Motion:** Motion to accept the above date adjustment to the 2017 meeting schedule was made. Denker moved to approve with Curis seconding the motion. Motion was approved; the meeting schedule will be updated, distributed to committee members and posted to the website for the public.

All other meeting dates will continue on the regular daytime cycle.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (3 minutes each)

Don Murray Presented 2,300 signatures supporting the addition of a boat ramp at Belle Isle Park. Mr. Murray distributed copies of the letters of support for the Belle Isle boat ramp.

*Ron Olson* stated that a study is being done to assess options for a boat launch location to determine what works best; including Milliken and Belle Isle Park.

Michael Betzold

Mr. Betzold read the mission statement from Belle Isle Conservancy website. Betzold also wanted noted that questions he asked Michele Hodges, and her response is that she thinks the grand prix is a great partner and there is no discussion or effort to restore the large concrete area constructed by Grand Prix. Mr. Betzold referred to Public Meeting Act 267, 1976, regarding the decision to renew the contract with the Grand Prix without public meeting.

Stephanie Donaldson

Ms. Donaldson sent a special thank you to Mike Curis for Big Boys providing the lunch at the December Power Days event. There were over 300 in attendance and they are looking forward to 2017

Mary Ellen Howard

Presented 4 questions to the group:  
What are the funding sources on projects?  
How much was donated in 2016 and where did it go?  
What date in 2017 will Penske take over the west end of the island?  
When do we anticipate learning more about the draft plan?  
(Referring to the Strategic Planning Process)

*Bud Denker* responded that the Grand Prix will comply with the 7 week set up time, prior to event day.

Donald Green

Presented handouts with photos of dumpsters at the conservatory and casino. Complaint associated with the large red dumpsters throughout the park. Green stated that the DNR and Grand Prix has signed a long term contract. Green questioned why the public was not able to weigh in on the Grand Prix contract and stated that the race takes over the park for 4 months. Request to respectively request committee to abstain from comment or engage in conversation unless they want to debate.

Mr. Roberts

Mr. Roberts a City of Detroit resident for 40 years, wanted to comment about the poor condition of the North end Bridge, nature trail that leads east from the baseball fields. Mr. Roberts questioned why there were no public meetings about the renewal of the Grand Prix Contract?

*Chair Hodges stated she wanted to be clear, there has been no Grand Prix renewal contract approved.*

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS**

Michael Curis Welcomed Brad Dick to the committee

Bud Denker Welcomed Brad Dick to the committee and spoke about his vast experience and resources. Denker noted that Brad's team is responsible for the great flower display at the foot of the island (Jefferson)

Sommer Woods Welcomed Brad Dick to the committee

Michele Hodges Suggested visiting the piranha display at the Aquarium, which has seen increased attendance (expect to hit .5 million visitors this summer). **Chair Hodges** also spoke about the many different species of fish at the Aquarium.

**Chair Hodges** introduced and thanked the Aquarium team and Educational Coordinator Amy Emmert as well as General Manager Fred Huebener.

She also reported that the Belle Isle volunteers were honored at the Players Club on E. Jefferson. A new award in honor of Judge Mary Waterstone has been established. In the future the Mary Waterstone Award will be given to the top volunteer. Two inaugural award honorees were Adrienne Gregory and Jan Ellison.

Anyone interested in joining the Community Engagement Committee, should contact Director of Community Engagement – Brittany Sander at (sandersb@belleisleconservancy.org)

The Belle Isle Conservancy online store is now available  
Please visit our website at: [www.belleisleconservancy.org](http://www.belleisleconservancy.org)

**Chair Hodges** shared that there has been new additions to the BIC team. Administrative Support was hired to assist with answering calls and providing customer service. An intern is also helping to support the events team.

**Chair Hodges** shared the recent passing of dedicated volunteer, Mr. John Posner, the husband of Roberta Henrion.

**Chair Hodges** also spoke about BIC securing a national science grant/Wayne State University in the amount of \$1.2 million for the aquarium. Some of this grant will be utilized for youth programming at the Belle Isle Aquarium.

Bradley Dick

**Mr. Dick** stated he is looking forward to all of the great changes on the island and being back involved on the island after having been involved previously in the management of Belle Isle Park.

**Next BIPAC Meeting: February 16, 2016 Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion**

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Denker

Seconded by: Curis

Meeting Adjourned: 10:12 a.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michele Hodges

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: \_\_\_\_\_