

MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 18, 2017

Location: Belle Isle Nature Center

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.
Roll Call and Excused Absences

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Chair Michele Hodges
Michael Curis
Bud Denker
Bryan Barnhill
Bradley Dick
Sommer Woods Arrived at 9:19 a.m.
Rev. Lonnie Peek Arrived at 9:30 a.m.

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Scott Pratt
Mike Terrell
Jacob Brown
Amanda Hertl

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Ron Olson

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Hodges asked for a motion to approve the February 16, 2017 with the following corrections:

Corrections: Cheyenne Jackson's father clarified that she received a toy car from the Grand Prix not a real car.

The Conservancy's event was referred to as Deeper Dive rather than Deep or Dive.

The teammate that manages the event is Danielle not Daniel.

Chair Hodges then asked for a vote and a motion to approve. There was no opposition. A motion to accept was put forth by Committee Member Bud Denker and seconded by Committee Member Michael Curis. Motion to accept passed unanimously.

Chair Hodges noted that the March and April minutes were not considered formal due to lack of a quorum. Chair Hodges suggested that the March and April, 2017 minutes be acknowledged and accepted. Motion to accept by Bud Denker and seconded by Michael Curis.

Chair Hodges moved to the next item on the agenda awaiting Richard Morris' arrival to the meeting.

GENERAL UPDATES

DNR Law Enforcement Update

Lieutenant Joe Molnar, DNR Law Enforcement, was present sharing that with the better weather he acknowledged the increase in traffic on the island and additional accidents; including motorcycle accidents. One incident included a driver who fell asleep behind the wheel and drove into the river by the yacht club. Similar situations have happened in the past, but it has been well handled by park staff and the Michigan State Police working in tandem.

Sargent Mike Shaw, Michigan State Police (MSP), indicated some reports of minor traffic accidents and the recent articles outlining the enhancements to the island; as well as some of the things that have improved the island such as law enforcement. At this time MSP are gearing up for the Grand Prix and after that the fireworks weekend.

Chair Hodges congratulated the law enforcement agency on the headline "No Crime on Belle Isle" and thanked them for creating a safe environment for people to enjoy the island.

Park Operations Update

Jacob Brown, Belle Isle Park Supervisor, was present to cover reports; Karis Floyd and Darlisa Rickman were attending another meeting at the time. Jacob gave the following updates:

- Update on hiring of STW workers
- Trees and miscellaneous debris was cleaned up and removed from the canals unblocking several.
- Mia Moore, General Office Assistant, for Belle Isle Park, was introduced to all those present.
- Brief update given on a newly posted ranger and janitorial positions. There will be one Ranger position for Milliken, two Ranger positions for Belle Isle, as well as two janitors.

Committee members asked the following questions:

Are the posted jobs new positions or replacements for Belle Isle?

Jacob responded that they are all new positions.

PRD has worked with Hamilton Anderson and WCI to reduce the scope of this project to align with the budget. Improvements will address the play surface of the existing soccer field, baseball fields and stabilizing the handball courts structure.

- Shelter 9 Shoreline Fishing Improvements:
Contract Awarded to Genoa Contracting LLC
24019 Lakewood St.
St. Clair Shores, MI 48082

Contractor mobilized on site May 15, 2017. This is a 75 day contract with a scheduled completion date for the end of July, 2017. During construction of the shoreline improvements, the picnic shelter will be closed and PRD will relocate or provide a tent for permitted park users.

- Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory:
Currently the ventilation report for the Conservatory is being finalized by Montgomery Smith, Inc. The PRD staff and consultants are in the process of reviewing the ventilation report. A finalized report and construction documents for improvements will follow.

The initial structural report for both of these buildings by RSE Associated is scheduled to be submitted for review June 1, 2017. Construction documents will follow; the anticipated date for completed construction drawings is the end of September, 2017.

- Picnic Shelter Restoration of Shelter 2, 5 and 6:
Replacement of shelter #5 flooring is anticipated to be completed in late June. Repairs for shelter 2 and 6 will follow. PRD is in the process of securing bids for this work.
- 2017 Upcoming Projects:
New picnic shelters and play equipment will be installed on the north side of Lake Okonoka. The construction schedule will coordinate with the Friends of Detroit River Lake Okonoka Habitat Restoration Project (scheduled to start this fall and continue through 2018)

Iron Belle Trailhead Development:
Initial Project Meeting scheduled for June 15, 2017.

Casino Elevator Assessment - Project to begin in mid-July
Contract Awarded to Smith Group JJR
201 Depot St. 2nd Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Casino Elevator Assessment

Contract Awarded to Professional Service Consultant
G.H. Forbes Associates Architects
28000 Woodward Ave. Suite 202
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Boat Access Site (BAS) Feasibility Study, the initial project program meeting was held on May 18, 2017.

Wet-Mesic Flatwood Habitat Restoration Plan, the initial project program meeting was held on May 16, 2017.

Island Wide Stormwater Utility Assessment and Maintenance, the initial project program meeting is scheduled for May 30, 2017.

Outreach and Upcoming Events

Jacob Brown announced the upcoming events at Belle Isle Park

- Roads will go to 2-way traffic on Riverbank Road beginning May 22, 2017, a map was provided to illustrate the route.
- A successful demo day was held for two of the vendors on the island. There were approximately 70 people for the golfing and over 300 for kayaking.

Committee members inquired as to when Metro Youth Day is scheduled to be held?

Jacob responded that this event is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, July 12, 2017.

Newsboy Shelter Details

Katie Wyerman, Belle Isle Conservancy, spoke about Newsboy Shelter #1 being built in 1902. The shelter has been offline for structural work. Both the BIC and the DNR are working together to come up with fundraising opportunities. The estimated price to restore the shelter is approximately \$650,000.

Katie Wyerman also mentioned the launching of a Patronicity campaign (email Katy for more information). For more information, please visit our websites:

www.belleislepark.org

www.belleisleconservancy.org

Belle Isle Conservancy Update

Chair Hodges noted some of the recent events they are working on:

- The field trip season has ended, General Motors provided the seed money for this program. Over 35 volunteers and 890 hours of volunteer work.
- Michigan Cares for Tourism Team also visited the island and volunteered.

- Volunteer Orientations concluded
- Successful clean up on April 22, 2017 with over 800 people participating
- Launched the BCBS anti-littering campaign
- Lily pond restoration is underway
- Online store on the island. The “Pure Detroit Outpost” is located at the Aquarium
- There is an opening for a Marketing Communications/Project Manager at the conservancy

BAS Update (Boating Access Site)

A written update was provided by the DNR regarding the status of a BAS at Belle Isle Park. The DNR is currently in the process of hiring a design consultant to perform a study that assesses boating access site opportunities at both Milliken State Park Harbor and Belle Isle.

Detroit Boat Club – History with Belle Isle

Mr. Richard Morris, Commodore, Detroit Boat Club, shared a Powerpoint presentation about the Belle Isle Boat Club. Those present asked several questions:

Does the boat club have any concerns about the Grand Prix being on the island?

Mr. Morris responded no they do not.

How many members at the Boat Club?

Mr. Morris responded that the boat club consists of 100 members

What is the membership cost?

Mr. Morris responded that membership is \$145 to join the Boat Club

What is the ethnic percentage of the members?

Mr. Morris responded that they have a 10% African American membership

If you join are you subject to special assessments?

Mr. Morris responded no.

Are there future plans to rent the boat slips once you make the repairs?

Mr. Morris responded that there may be a possibility once security and repairs are implemented.

Can the boat club pier be utilized by the average fisherman?

Mr. Morris responded that he is not sure, that is still being worked out.

Is the boat club available for parties and functions?

Mr. Morris responded that the boat club is not available for parties until next year.

Are the kitchen facilities available or do you have to use a caterer.

Mr. Morris responded no, the kitchens are outdated and in need of repair you'd have to cater.

Who was the designer of the building?

Mr. Morris responded that it was Chittendon

Do you still offer lessons?

Mr. Morris responded that yes, lessons are still offered.

Do you have the history of the Boat Club written down?

Mr. Morris responded no, the history is not written down.

For additional information regarding the Detroit Boat Club visit their website at www.detroitboatclub.com

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

Michael Betzold

Asserted that he is very disheartened by the destructive changes that the Grand Prix enables on the island.

Rene R. Rentie

Answer:

Are there any plans to repair the fishing pier?
Yes that is what the Boat Assessment program is addressing.

Ed Weglarz

DGPA Volunteer and supporter of the Detroit Grand Prix feels that it is advantageous to have the Grand Prix on the island as it garners national attention.

Lisa Rails

Representing RENEW Detroit and feels that the Grand Prix is detrimental to Belle Isle and to the natural habitat.

Skip Davis

Only had 6 words: Grand Prix? Yes Belle Isle: NO

Mary Ellen Howard

Stated she has read the BIC Mission and feels that the Grand Prix is in direct conflict with the mission statement and feels that it is hypocritical. Stating she finds the Grand Prix to be more intrusive, obnoxious and commercial than ever before.

Donald Green

Gave handouts to the committee. Complaints about the upkeep of Belle Isle namely the athletic restrooms and a conflict of interest within the panel of the committee. Not in support of the boat launches on Belle Isle. Would like to know who paid for the concrete on the island.

Rick DeMayo

Feels that Belle Isle needs more promotion. Was very impressed with the content on Belle Isle and discovered a renewed respect and awe for the attractions. Did not find that the Grand Prix was a deterrent to anything on the island.

Mr. Blanchett

Finds the Grand Prix very invasive and frustrating would like the time that the Grand Prix occupies the island to be reduced.

- Regina Kuiper** Thought it was prudent to point out that most of the movers and the shakers in the past were more invested in the island because they lived within the city.
- Unknown** Acknowledged that for the months of April through June there has been no crime on Belle Isle.
- Rebecca Minardi** Representing the Detroit Audubon is against the Grand Prix because she feels it is not good for birds or people.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS

- Rev. Lonnie Peek** Thank you to Sommer Woods for her assistance and hard work.
- Sommer Woods** Spoke about the M 1 Rail/Q line and its ongoing progress. Would like to have the community advocate for transit.
- Michelle Hodges/Michael Curis** Annual update to the Detroit City Council is an obligation of the committee where they spoke about issues of access, forestry and working together to make Belle Isle a better place.
- Bud Denker** Robert Carpenter (DTE Employee) – Repairs and maintenance to the Scott Fountain to get it up and running
- Bradley Dick** Appreciated everyone coming out and speaking about their concerns. Spoke about the City of Detroit’s 40 Park Initiative and ground breakings that are happening every weekend. Come visit City Parks.
- Rev Lonnie Peek** Very proud of Detroit and its comeback
- Chair Michele Hodges** Roger Penske and his team share a passion for Belle Isle. We value the citizens comments and concerns regarding the Grand Prix. Very interested in finding some solutions for current issues.

Meeting Concluded 10: 53 a.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

June 15, 2017

Belle Isle Nature Zoo

Belle Isle Park

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

Approved: _____
Michele Hodges

Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: _____