

# **MINUTES**

## **Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Location: Belle Isle Nature Center**

**Meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m.**

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

#### **Quorum established**

Bryan Barnhill  
Rev. Lonnie Peek  
Bud Denker

Motioned by: Brad Dick  
Seconded by: Michael Curis

### **PRESENT FOR BIPAC**

Chair Michele Hodges  
Michael Curis  
Sommer Woods  
Brad Dick

### **DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Ron Olson  
Scott Pratt  
Karis Floyd  
Jacob Brown  
Darlisa Rickman

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion to Approve Minutes for March 21<sup>st</sup> , 2018**

**Motioned by: Michael Curis**  
**Seconded by: Sommer Woods**

## **General Updates**

### **Ron Olson, Chief, PRD**

- Toured with visitors from other states that have urban park centers and exchanged ideas.
- Met with Summer Youth Employment groups and some non-profits.
- Looking forward to the State Park Centennial.
- Pure Michigan in May will be bringing musical artists to the OAC and play thematic music in support of the State Park Centennial Celebration.
- DTE Energy is currently on the island adding the new electric transmission system to the island. This is necessary to continue powering the island.
- The first phase of the conservatory construction will be done soon.
- There will be parking passes issued during the Grand Prix so park guests will still have access to the east end of the island even during the races. We are still working out the details of this process.

## **DNR Law Enforcement Update**

### **Lt. Jennifer Johnson, MSP**

#### **Sgt. Jason Becker, DNR**

- Higher attendance as the weather is warming up
- Operations as normal
- Regular full-time shifts on the island now

## **Park Operations Update**

### **Karis Floyd, PRD**

#### **Jacob Brown, PRD**

- Buildings are reopening for the busy season.
- Doing maintenance on equipment to prepare for park maintenance.
- In the process of hiring and hoping to get positions filled.
- Have hired an outdoor Explorer for Belle Isle Park.
- Are transitioning to a statewide contract with Waste Management and Farrow will no longer be providing trash pick-up services as of May 14th, 2019.
- Met with MDOT last Friday so you will see some signs being put up around the island and some potholes being filled.

## **Outreach and Upcoming Events**

### **Darlisa Rickman**

- Planning through 2020 at this point.
- All Saturdays have been booked currently.
- Making sure that all events are running smoothly.
- Had a meeting with the Food Concessionaire and he plans to start providing food opportunities May 1st.
- Food Court area will soon be open, and the plan is to have 4 to 5 trucks available at Shelter 7 for the park guests dining convenience. There will also still be other various food trucks located at convenient spots around the park.
- The Grand Prix Team will begin their load in April 22nd at midnight.
- Spring Clean-up is Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Spring Into Nature 5k held Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> 7 a.m. – 11 a.m.; the proceeds benefit the Aquarium.
- Koi Festival Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.
- Riverside Kayak Demo Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup> at the Beach.
- Metal Detecting Event Sunday May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Beach.
- The Grand Prix weekend kicks off May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Sign up for the Belle Isle Beat to get more park information on events around the island.

**Sommer Woods:** Is that food opportunity for existing vendors or new vendors?

**Darlisa Rickman:** This is for our current vendor that is currently stationed at the concession stand on kids' row. He is now expanding to the area at Shelter 7 so the folks visiting the Conservatory and the Aquarium can be accommodated.

**Michael Curis:** How many of your events are reoccurring every year?

**Darlisa Rickman:** I can't give you an exact number but between the walks, runs, drum circles and numerous other events many are repeat guests. But in addition to that we find that we have many family reunions that are coming back every year.

## **Belle Isle Conservancy Update**

### **Chair Michelle Hodges**

- Met the new DNR Director Dan Eichinger.
- Visited and walked through the new Belle Isle Administrative Office at the IA building.
- Attended the Daffodil Luncheon April 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Boat House planning status - about to hire a consultant, in collaboration with the DNR and Detroit Rowing Club, for master planning.
- Balboa Park team visited.
- Hiring a volunteer coordinator, Aquarist, Education Specialist and an Events Associate.
- Qualified as a Finalist for the Impact 100 Program.
- A finalist in the Play Everywhere Competition which involves doing some build out of the grassy area next to the Aquarium.

- April 27th is the Spring Clean Up.
- Keep Belle Isle Beautiful Initiative will take place on May 18th and June 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Koi Festival May 4<sup>th</sup>.
- The Grand Prixmiere May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Deeper Dive is June 27th featuring the Cuban Gar.
- Metro Detroit Youth Day July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Kite fest July 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Polish the Jewel October 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Sommer Woods:** In regard to Metro Detroit Youth Day if anyone knows someone that is a senior in high school, they issue scholarships. They have the application online for anyone that has an interest.

### Presentation

#### **Kamilah Scott, DTE – Update on New Electric Service for Belle Isle Park**

Explained the general reason for DTE’s continued presence on Belle Isle which is to update the dated electrical infrastructure on the island. The plan is for December of 2019 through October of 2020 to convert every location on the island to DTE power.

**Ron Olson:** Can the boxes placed around the island be painted or customized?

**Kamilah Scott:** Yes, they can. They often do that, especially the ones on college campuses.

**Michele Hodges:** With his update to the infrastructure does this mean that all locations will be metered?

**Kamilah Scott:** For the most part yes, aside from a few locations that will remain what we call subservice due to the distance and the impact the locations have on the island.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

**Michael Betzold**                      Ironic that Monday is Earth Day and that is the day that the Grand Prix begins its set-up. Park users don’t have even one seat on the committee to represent the park guests’ interests. The public has NO role in the “Public-Private Partnership” that runs Belle Isle.

**Zaher Abuelrooj**                      Had an issue gaining access to the parking lot down across from Milliken Park for the new early boat mooring for fishing. Would like to inquire about the 2020 April 1<sup>st</sup>-May 1<sup>st</sup> slip rental season for Walleye Fishermen. Would also like an update on the possibility of DNR putting a launch on the Detroit River.

**Ron Olson**                                The new Milliken State Park and Harbor plan to open the Harbor early was a pilot and some of the issues you pointed out will have to be

addressed to make things more accommodating. That's a big part of the study is to try to diversify access to the Detroit river because opening just one site is not going to solve the overall problem.

**Angela Lugo-Thomas** Please remember that you have a responsibility to not just the wealthy donors, who give money to Belle Isle but also to park users like me, that see Belle Isle as a place for rest and relaxation. A place to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city. It appears that if our concerns are against your personal beliefs or your pocketbook, they are never taken into consideration. Is there a different meeting that we should attend where the people in leadership will listen to our concerns?

**Michelle Hodges:** This is a very appropriate opportunity for the public to come and be heard and it has impacted the decisions made on the island and for the island, and hopefully how things have been adjusted and changed so that the park user is always at the top of the list of concerns.

**Lawrence Mohammed** Would like to know if there going to be more than one Kayak Launch.

**Response from Amanda Treadwell:** There will be 3 but currently we are only moving one.

**Royce from Canada:** Are there any approved events like Native ceremonies performed on the park such as sweat lodges?

**Response from Darlisa Rickman:** No there have never been any events similar to that here on the park that I'm aware of.

**Rick DeMayo:** Volunteer for the Grand Prix feels that the Grand Prix brings the community together and they definitely respect the environment. Wants to assure everyone that they will do everything to protect the landscape and the structures utilized by the Grand Prix.

**Unknown:** Will DTE provide steam on the island?

**Response from DTE:** No, we are no longer in the steam business a different entity took that over.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS**

**Michael Curis:** We want to assure the public that you are heard, whether it is pro or con for the Grand Prix. Unfortunately, we are in the unenviable position of having to make a decision knowing that we can't please everybody. The voices concerning this matter are very strong and sensible, but we must make a decision about what is best for the island over a long period. We hope that the adjustments that we are making, overseeing and continue to suggest appeasing a little bit of the opposition. At this point we want to still be respectful and respectfully disagree, but we do hear you and thank you for coming.

Motion to Adjourn: **No Quorum**

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Meeting Concluded: 10:23 a.m.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

**May 16, 2019**

Nature Center

Belle Isle Park

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

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

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

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