

MINUTES
Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, August 18, 2022
Location: Teleconference

Meeting began at 6:00 p.m.
Quorum established at 6:03 p.m.

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges; Detroit, Michigan
Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan
Sommer Woods; Detroit, Michigan
Bud Denker; Detroit, Michigan

EXECUSED

Lonnie Peek
Brad Dick

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Scott Pratt
Tom Bissett
Karis Floyd
Joel Thomas
Mike Terrell
Lt. Todd Szyska

OTHERS PRESENT

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society
Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of Minutes for July 21, 2022

Moved by: **Michael Curis**
Seconded by: **Bud Denker**

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates; Michele Hodges, Chair, BIC

Chair Hodges started the meeting acknowledging the loss of a life on the island since the last meeting. She is confident that law enforcement and DNR management are on top of it.

Chair Hodges then recognized Ron Olson, Chief of Parks and Recreation, who was honored over the weekend with the naming of the new Tahquamenon Falls pedestrian bridge after him. The bridge, now named the *Ronald A. Olson Island Bridge*, was installed this past spring and was

named after him for his many contributions to the parks and recreation system through his years of service.

The Keep Belle Isle Beautiful program has the pleasure of having two new interns, Horizon and Christian, two 8th and 9th graders within the DPSCD school system service who collected more than 216 lbs. of trash during their internship and also conducted a study and made some observations and contributions on how to improve litter management on Belle Isle.

The boathouse program Adult Learn to Sail session classes are underway and will go through September 28. Piet Oudolf is in town from Europe this week at the Oudolf Garden and will be available to the public on Sunday, August 21 from 10 – 11 a.m. at the garden. The garden is always free and open to the public during park hours. The Dossin Great Lakes Museum is closed on September 3, but open on September 5 from 1 – 5 p.m. Regular hours outside of the holiday season are Friday through Sunday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. There is free admission through the month of August to celebrate Teachers' Appreciation Month. The Bee Fest is scheduled for August 20 at the Nature Center from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Renovations continue to move nicely along and should be completed soon. Encourages everyone to visit the website belleislefoodtrucks.com for more information on the trucks and their menus. Hype Athletics is accepting applications for use of the fields for the season or single day rental. You can visit hypeathletics.com.

Event reminders: August 25 from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., the DNR is leading a Learn About Hunting meeting, September 16 – 18, they are welcoming the Michigan Tree Climbing Championship. The Conservancy is celebrating the aquarium and conservatory's birthday this weekend. Highlights include yoga, a screening of the movie Luca, in partnership with the aquarium will be a biomimicry effort, oasis programming – outdoor aquatic science sessions on the Education Dock, and community fun day programming. Tickets are now available for the Garden Party, a fundraiser for the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, chaired this year by Shery Cotton, alongside her co-chair Pavo the cat. The event will be September 13 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. The Polish the Jewel Luncheon is Thursday, October 13 from 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at the Rooster Tail and will be chaired by Jenice Mitchell Ford, General Counsel for the Detroit Public Schools and keynote speaker Alycia Meriweather, Deputy Superintendent. They are excited for the opportunity to focus on the STEM education program at the aquarium and to raise dollars to ensure that it remains viable and continues on. They encourage feedback on the survey available on the website. If you are interested in helping out with events, they are looking for partners.

VENDOR UPDATES

Showdown in Motown, Danielle Woods and Sean Wilson

Ms. Woods began by giving thanks to Belle Isle, DNR, Scott Pratt, Lt. Syska, Sgt. Owens, Joel Thomas and Karis Floyd. This was their 5th Annual Showdown in Motown event. Thanks to Belle Isle they “packed out the paddock” with about 800 cars. All of their efforts continue to build trust and relationships with law enforcement and the wonderful citizens of Detroit who like to participate in the events. Police officers are visible in their precinct but this event makes them visible to the whole city. They had food trucks, exotic cars, and areas for the kids. The DNR

staff and everyone was instrumental in assisting them and they are hoping to do it again next year because it was very successful. Mr. Wilson thanked Scott Pratt and the whole DNR staff. They did their best to manage traffic, and they would like to tweak a few things, but it was a very successful event and they thanked everyone for allowing them to do it on Belle Isle.

Chair Hodges wanted to highlight how important it is to have good partnerships , as this is a good example. Scott Pratt, Southern Field Operations Chief, PRD, said it was a benefit to them as well as they were able to meet the staff and have a successful collaboration, and it was great to have them on the island.

Detroit Jet Ski, Cacin and Khalilah Turner

Ms. Turner said they are ecstatic for their second year of operation on the island and they do not take the opportunity lightly. They are committed to upholding all the river laws and protecting the ecosystem on Belle Isle. The Turners gave an overview of the system they have installed on their jet skis, a GPS and speed governor with preprogrammed zones, so if a jet ski enters a no-wake zone, the jet ski will automatically slow down to approximately 5 to 7 mph. A second system, if the first system fails (which has never happened) is human interaction to make sure everyone is abiding by the no wake laws. They then presented two videos that demonstrated examples of how the automatic slowdown app works, including how they can be shut down automatically remotely. Mr. Turner would like everyone to know that there are a lot of jet skis out there, but their skis are not violating any laws. More information can be found on their website at www.detroitjetskirental.com.

Chair Hodges said they are very excited to have local businesses on the island and she hopes they continue to be successful, and she appreciates them clarifying the narrative and making sure a truthful one is out there.

Bud Denker said it is great testimonial and well done for justifying their technology and means and their business.

Michael Curis said it was a great presentation.

Sommer Woods appreciates what they have done and inquired about why it was brought before this committee. She hopes the DNR is standing behind their vendors when they are attacked so they do not always have to defend themselves.

Scott Pratt replied that after receiving complaints from the public about jet skis, they wanted to inform the public that the Belle Isle vendors are following the rules. More importantly, PRD plans to invite vendors to each BIPAC meeting in order for the vendors to have a chance to engage with the public and show everyone their services, and/or ask questions if they have any.

General Updates (information only)

Parks and Recreation Update - Scott Pratt, Karis Floyd, Joel Thomas; PRD

Karis Floyd, Park Manager, began by stating they are completely in support of their vendors. They have a great group, the best they have had, and that there are no issues from the DNR side. They will be inviting more vendors to participate in the meetings.

The giant slide will open Friday and they are expecting a great turnout. The Healthy Kidz group will be helping run the slide from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Friday through Sunday. Training took place and they are excited to get started.

Joel Thomas, Unit Supervisor, reported they have hired three rangers that will start next week, bringing the total number of rangers to 11. They are in the process of hiring 3 general office assistants. They are accepting applications for summer help. The slide is all cleaned up and ready to go. They are trying to keep up with the demands of the public – trash removal and keeping the buildings open. Scott Pratt added that the number of park closures has decreased. Booths are staffed and have kept the line moving. The shuttle service has helped with traffic flow and is picking up with usage.

Sommer Woods gave recognition to the reopening of the slide and the low cost to partake in the activity.

Law Update - Lt. Todd Szyska, DNR

Lt. Szyska began by relaying his thoughts and prayers to the family of the person who passed away. He said it is an ongoing investigation with the Michigan State Police. A suspect has been identified and the prosecutor's office is filing charges. They do not want this to be a backdrop to the island and are trying to put a closure to it with the families. The Showdown in Motown was a successful event and is a great fundraising opportunity for the DPD. They have been working hand in hand with the DPD officers.

The jet ski vendor gave a great presentation and they have not had any internal complaints about them. There are enforced water controls and it is not uncommon for people to violate them, including other vessels. He appreciates the vendor's willingness to put their safety controls in place and inform the public.

The lieutenant reiterated that the speed limit is 25 mph. Speeding is not tolerated, and it is enforced. They cannot have any accidents just because people want to race. Bud Denker and Michael Curis gave Lt. Szyska their appreciation for all of LED's efforts.

Infrastructure Updates; Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, PRD

Tom Bissett provided infrastructure updates, which included the Multimodal Transportation Study project status, a boathouse update, and the James Scott Fountain update. The report is attached.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Betzold – Made statements about how he believes the DNR, enabled by this committee, has not protected the natural resources of Belle Isle, nor heeded wishes of the regular park users, mainly with the paddock area that is full of cement. He wants it removed and restored to its natural state, paid for by Penske. He does not feel 3 minutes of public comment allows time for the public to participate; he wants public Q & A sessions for people who regularly use the park.

Caren Jones – Their event held on the 5th and 6th of August, their reservation since a year ago, for Shelter 12. They were given options when the shelter she reserved was going under construction. They were given the option to use a different shelter that was not big enough. Adam met with them and said they could provide tables. Adam moved them to another because of it being rented. The event coordinator called them a few days prior to say that they already had that rented out. She ended up talking to Karis and everything worked out. She thanked everyone on Belle Isle for making her family happy and supporting her.

Paul Jones III – He is an urban planner in Detroit and neighbor and daily visitor of the park. A few weeks ago he got to join the natural resources subcommittee to tour the Messick Flatwoods and tour some construction areas. He is excited about the work and the conservation work on behalf of the DNR. That said, he thinks things they have heard today including relationships with vendors, mismanagement of key projects, and safety issues that have been long standing are still not fully addressed speaks to a gap between what Belle Isle needs and what the DNR is actually providing. He thinks it is great the vendor is providing safety regulators on their jet skis, but nothing is being done about the kids being killed on the island by cars. Something simple, such as speed bumps, reconfiguration of the bike lanes, better connection to the Ralph C. Wilson trail. It is still dangerous to bike on Belle Isle. He is excited to see progress on the study, but we need to do more well ahead of next fall.

Debra Bondy – Suggested a distinctive paint scheme on the vendor's jet skis. Ms. Turner said if there is a time and date of a complaint, they can cross reference their records to find if it was their jet skis. Debra said Mr. Betzold seems to never have anything good to say about the island and questions why he even comes to the island. She posed the question of where people would even park without the paddock. She addressed Mr. Jones' comments about biking. She has biked the island quite often, has never felt unsafe, has followed all the rules, and gone with the flow of traffic just fine. She said nothing will ever be done "right", but there has been a lot of progress on the island and she appreciates it.

Scott Pratt said Detroit Jet Ski has been a wonderful vendor, and he is confident that they would answer any questions anyone has.

Submitted written statements that Scott Pratt read:

Dustin Neifer –Hi! We admittedly only visit Belle Isle State Park once or twice per year so we are not frequent visitors by any means. The activities we enjoy while there are biking around the entire periphery of the island (i.e. in a loop) and picnicking. Two suggestions we have for capital improvement projects are making an easier to understand bike/foot path connection near where the bridge for entering/exiting the island is and improving turf quality along the riverfront on the eastern shore of the island in select areas. Thanks, and take care!

Carolyn White - Good evening! My name is Carolyn White, a former Aquarium volunteer and current volunteer at the Belle Isle Nature Center. I regret not being here tonight but I'm currently at a reception at the Aquarium. As a volunteer at the Nature Center, many visitors would ask "what else is there to see on the Island" or "where can we find food". I would direct them to the Aquarium, the Conservatory, and the Dossin by having them take Riverbank and turn left at Inselruhe. This is also the route all visitors coming from the east would take to access the food trucks, Kids Row Playground, the giant slide, and the Oudolf Garden. At some point, a No Left Turn sign was put in place at that intersection. So now, in order to reach those attractions from the eastern end of the island, they must continue on Riverbank, make the turnaround by the floral clock, and pass through the booth for a second time which can get very backed up. I'm not sure what the reasoning was to put that No Left Turn sign up in the first place but, in my opinion, it needs to be removed.

Scott Pratt said they are reevaluating it now that the majority of the roadways are open.

Submitted written statement:

Sally B. Shelly - Good evening. I am beyond thrilled that I am able to submit this and attend this evening's Belle Isle Park Advisory meeting. I sincerely hope the panel considers more evening meetings for the public to attend and participate. Although, I am happy the giant slide will reopen I am hoping the fountain will be on soon, as well. I must say I am not pleased with the restrooms and don't understand why so many are locked every morning making it hard to find one to use. I would like to acknowledge your office worker Kim Hicks for her help each time I'm in the office. Thank you kindly.

Member Comments:

Sommer Woods said in reference to Paul's comments that they have talked about this. She agrees on a sense of timing, that safety and the roads are a significant issue. She is a proponent of dialogue, with whatever format necessary.

Michael Curis said it has been a great meeting and we never going to be 100% right, but we are always going to try and do and make things better. As long as we are making progress, he thinks the DNR is doing a great job and they will continue to make Belle Isle a better place for everybody.

Bud Denker thanked law enforcement again for the report, one of the hardest jobs in the world and it is appreciated. A lot of people do not appreciate it, unfortunately. He also thanked the rangers and staff who work hard and do not get enough appreciation. He also reminded people of the millions of dollars that the DNR has brought to the island that would not have been brought otherwise because of their access to those dollars. It is not perfect; nothing is perfect, but he appreciates everything they have done, and he appreciates the public's comments also. He said they have one evening meeting a year to allow more access and would like to know the number of people who showed up tonight to see if future evening meetings make sense.

Scott Pratt said they do like, as well, the public comments and all are good points. They are hoping to report out projects at the next meeting. They do have a lot of partners, MDOT, CO's. Even though they manage the park, they still have to get approvals, but they do have great partners and hopefully soon they will have more report outs. They hear everyone and will move forward doing the best they can.

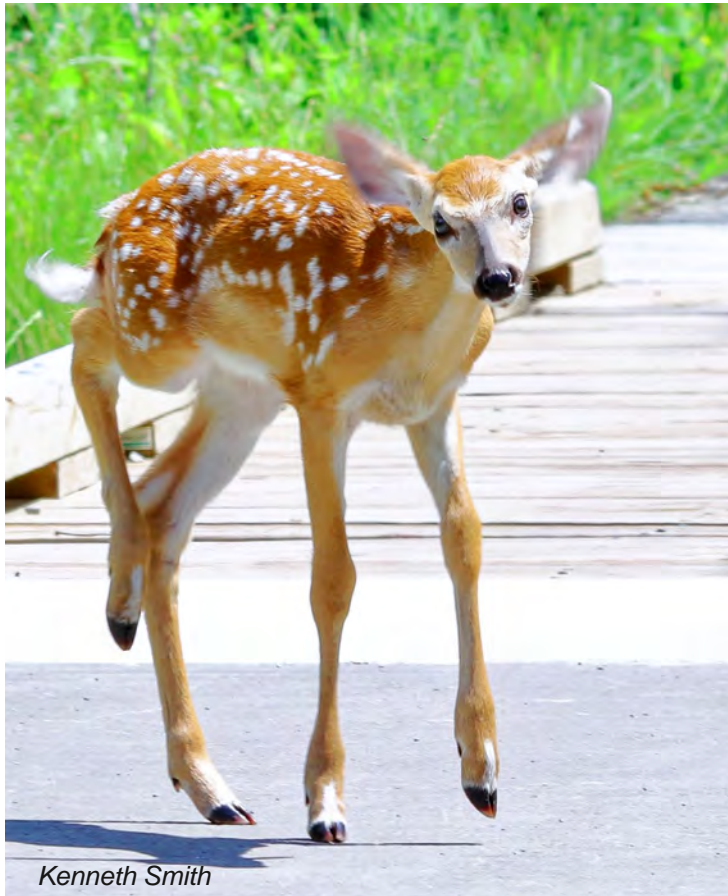
Bud Denker made a motion to adjourn, and it was supported by Michael Curis.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

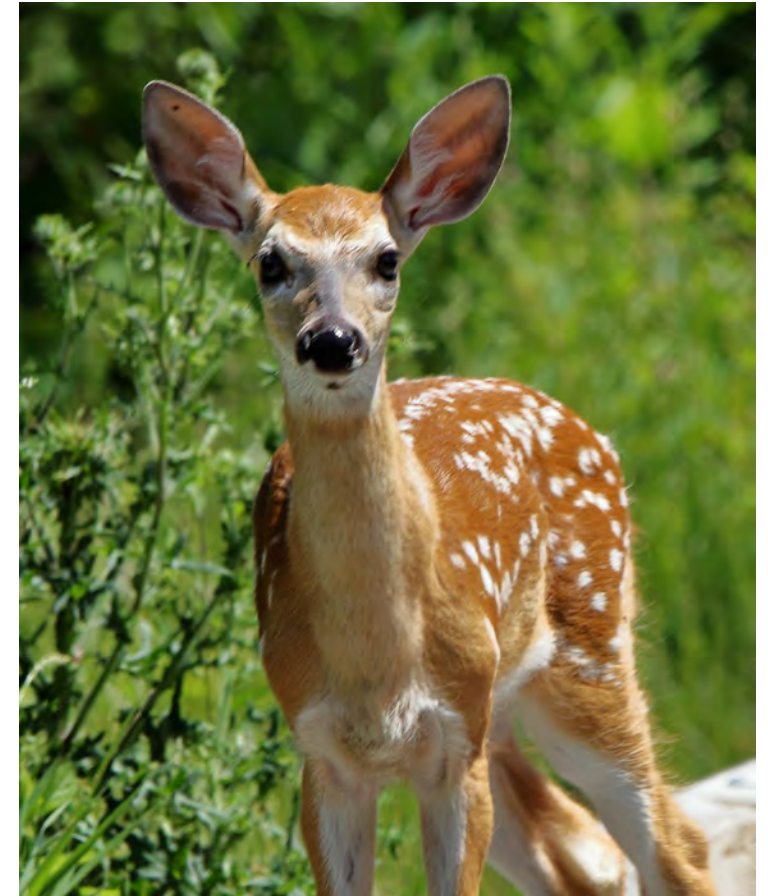
NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

September 22, 2022

9:00 a.m.



Kenneth Smith



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update

August 18, 2022 Detroit, MI





Belle Isle Multimodal Transportation and Traffic Study Project Status

- Team is on track in analyzing traffic and attendance data for preliminary summary report due in September.
- Data collected includes;
 - Traffic back-up locations & duration
 - Conflict data
 - Parking utilization
 - Park attendance sampling
- Draft wayfinding plan underway in separate contract to be coordinated with this study.



Example of ariel photograph stitched together from fly-overs in July

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



Belle Isle Multimodal Transportation and Traffic Study Community Engagement Plan



The Popular Beach area is the primary contributor to park congestion, bridge closures and back-ups

- **3 Rounds of Community Engagement**
 - Informal Summer/Fall on-site surveys
 - Presentation of draft recommendations in Spring 2023
 - Final Plan presented to public in Fall 2023
- **Community Engagement to include 3 groups in the above 3 rounds**
 - Park tenants and vendors
 - Key Agencies (City, State and non-profits/Neighborhood Organizations)
 - Community/General Stakeholders

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



ARPA – Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

- Contract approved and contract forms being finalized by DTMB.
- Contract Schedule pending project kick-off meeting.
- \$10 million Budget (ARPA & BIC donation)
- 18-month Construction Schedule.



Phase 2 of the ASWC structural repairs will address steel repairs replacement as needed and replacing glazing in upper dome, asbestos in glazing compound and lead paint on upper steel trusses will be significant scope of work.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



ARPA - Casino

Project Status

- Tri-Star adjusting to ensure no leaks in temporary repairs as needed
- 50% Bid document review next week.
- Bid Documents to be advertised end of December.
- Construction in 2023 to align with elevator modernization.



Significant deterioration to roof and related structural and architectural elements will be address in roof replacement project

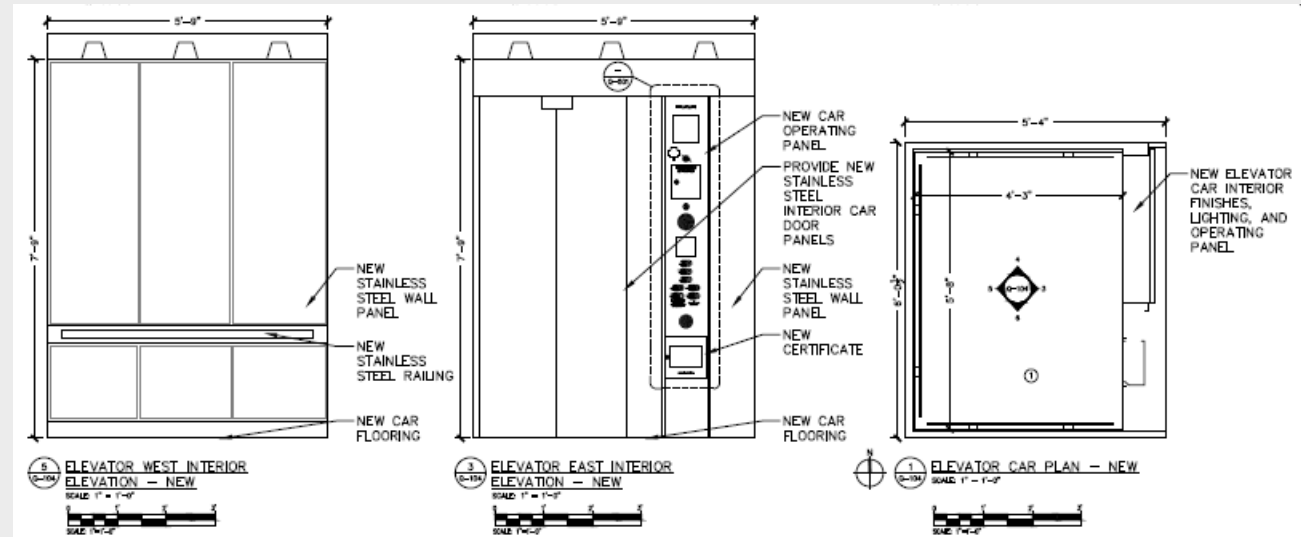
Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



Casino Elevator Modernization

Project Status

- Elevator and related components will be brought up to code.
- Construction to be bid December 2023.
- Construction anticipated April 2023 – January 2024.
- Construction Funding FY 2023 Belle Isle Capital Outlay



Elevator upgrades will include new sump pump for elevator pit, shunt trip/elevator recall to be tied into fire suppression system, non-proprietary equipment to be installed so state is not beholden to one service provider.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



Belle Isle Handball Courts

- Contractor to begin masonry work week of August 29th.
- Estimated 3-month schedule to complete scope of work.



Final scope of work includes masonry repairs, coping installation and painting of walls

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



Shelter #12 Improvements

- Improvements underway include;
- Carpentry repairs of rotted supports and decorative gables.
- Roof repairs including underlayment, wood decking and new clay tile shingles.
- Reinforcement of wood framing as needed.
- Entire shelter to be re-painted.



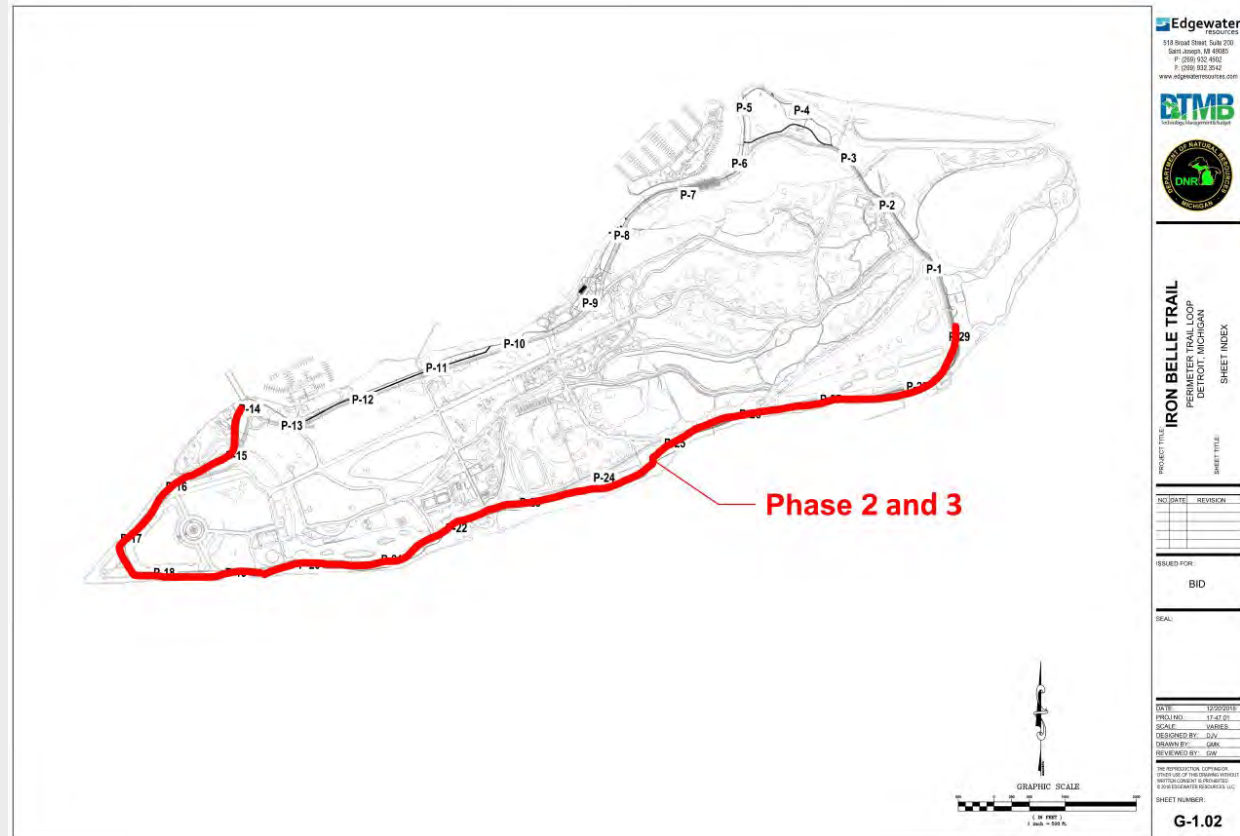
Shelter #12 to be completed mid-September

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



Driker Trail & Ralph Wilson Trail Phase 2

- New engineer, AEW, awarded contract to finalize phase 2 & phase 3 trail sections.
- Permit plans complete, but phases 2 & 3 will be slightly adjusted based on phase 1 to streamline construction.
- Driker Trail, to Livingstone lighthouse and around Blue Heron Lagoon, will resurface limestone trail. Construction to be contracted in 2022, prior to Wilson trail construction.



Athletic Shelter to be complete first week in August

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



MDOT Bridge Structure Maintenance

- Oakway Trl. and Central Ave. bridge work to be finished in mid-September.
- MDOT completing Oakway paving to new 10' paved trail in coordination with Flatwoods restoration.
- MDOT will mobilize mid-September for bridge replacement at Vista Ave.



MDOT scope includes concrete repair of historic Bridge, embankment stabilization and decking maintenance.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



Belle Isle Boathouse



Photo No. 8 – Failed terrace slab viewed from topside.



Photo No. 13 – North terrace, east end, exterior wall



Photo No. 21 – Deteriorated brick masonry near south main entrance.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022



James Scott Fountain



PHOTO NO. 3: Outer pool underside exhibited cracks with efflorescence staining, stalactites and active water ingress.

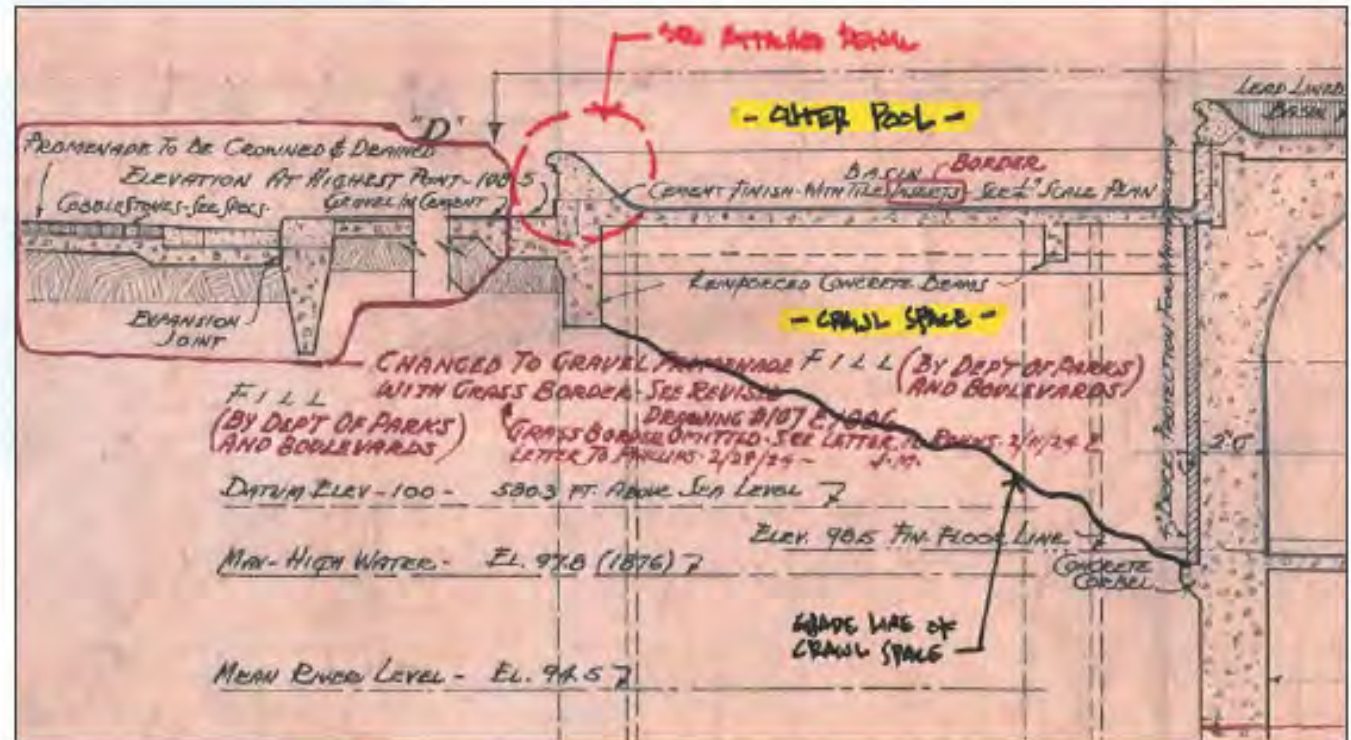


FIGURE NO.1: Fountain cross-section showing outer pool as-built construction.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, August 2022