



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 17, 2022

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges; Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan

Sommer Woods; Detroit, Michigan

Bud Denker; Detroit, Michigan

Rev. Lonnie Peak; Detroit, Michigan

Excused

Unexcused

Brad Dick

DNR Staff Present

Ron Olson, Chief

Scott Pratt

Jason Fleming

Tom Bissett

Karis Floyd

Joel Thomas

Amanda Treadwell

Mike Terrell

Jason Becker

Barbrea Young

Ashley Jackson

Others Present

Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Nancy Vella, Belle Isle Conservancy

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Sam Ali, StrEats of Belle Isle

Review and Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes for August 18, 2022

Motioned by: Bud Denker

Seconded by: Michael Curis

All in favor, motion approved

Approval of Minutes for October 20, 2022

Motioned by: Bud Denker

Seconded by: Rev. Lonnie Peek

All in favor, motion approved

Chair Hodges started the meeting with a mission moment reminding everyone why we are here, why the work is important, why we are all working in collaboration with one another; not just BIPAC members, but DNR teammates, doing the work together for Belle Isle. She highlighted the conservatory and the renovation to come and thanked the staff at the conservatory.

Vendor Updates

StrEats of Belle Isle – Sam Ali

Sam Ali, owner of StrEats of Belle Isle, introduced himself and gave an overview of the services provided, with a variety of food truck options. He does an applications process of vetting the food truck vendors on the island; recruiting, background checks, and making sure they are safe -- have insurance and are licensed. In 2022 they added a couple of new trucks, BBQ and terry melt, and upgraded the bus stop pavilion. For 2023, it is planned to add a new variety of trucks and to provide more food and drink to the beach area. 2022 started off great, but due to high gas prices saw a slump in July. When the giant slide opened in August, it was a game changer, bringing a great increase in customers. The first few years were difficult as no one wanted to serve on the island.

To help facilitate the success of StrEats of Belle Isle Chair Hodges suggests he connect with Ayo Thomas at the Conservancy, as she is in charge of community engagement.

Sommer Woods questioned the recruitment process. Mr. Ali explained that he vets the trucks that come on the island. Per his contract, he has to have a certain number of trucks on the island.

Discussion took place on the 10% fee that is charged to vendors by the State of Michigan. Michael Curis suggested that we not charge vendors on Belle Isle who provide a service that we want our visitors to have. Jason Fleming, Resource Protection and Promotion Chief, PRD, said contracts are put through a bid process. 10% is a goal for around the state; sometimes varying. The idea of lowering it has some thought and merit but would need more conversations and include the staff who are managing the process. It was agreed to have further discussions regarding vendor fees.

EV Connect

Dr. Sean Friday, Project Developer for Diatomic Energy LLC, introduced himself and gave the history and mission of Diatomic, a company based in Detroit. Their purpose is to promote and facilitate EV adoption by making EV charging infrastructure accessible in Detroit. He stated that it is a pleasure to provide state-of-the-art EV charging at Belle Isle Park. He went on to describe the charging stations and the network provider EV Connect, a subsidiary of Schneider Electric, which serves customers across 41 states in the U.S. EV Connect simplifies the setup, management, and optimization of the charging stations. For more information, see DiatomicEnergy.com.

Michael Curis asked what they charge for customer use of the charging station. Dr. Friday said the fee structure is \$1 per kilowatt hour approach, similar to an electric bill, a variable cost based on how much needed. Ron Olson said they are exploring entities to put charging stations at harbors as well. Sommer Woods asked about the bidding process. Jason Fleming suggested coming back to the committee with an overview of the complete process.

General Updates

Parks and Recreation Update – Ron Olson, Chief, PRD

October 1 started the new fiscal year and enhancements were made to payrates for summer employees and adding positions statewide. Just recently hired a person to assist Darlisa in booking events. Contact continues with the governor's office to seek a replacement for Brian Barnhill who resigned his seat on the committee. Meetings are being held to align the continuing need for funding on Belle Isle, including with the ARPA funds. There are several infrastructure items that need attention, including the fountain, so they are exploring options to bolster needed funding, such as partnerships and grants.

Park Update – Tom Bissett, Karis Floyd; PRD

Karis Floyd reported that they hired a new accounting assistant, Erika Compton, who will be starting on November 28. They are excited to have her, and she will be introduced at the next meeting. Restrooms are being winterized. Bus stop 7 will remain open all winter and the casino outdoor restrooms as well. Holiday hours: office will be closed on Thanksgiving and the day after and closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas, and the day after. DTE and Gilbert Electric will be looking at the lighting on the island -- issue seems to be software related. They are looking at getting addition lighting. Some rangers are going on layoff starting next month until April. A lot of projects have been accomplished.

Jason Fleming added that they hired Marie Kaphengst to help with event coordination as well. She will be focusing on contracts, vendor permits, and helping improve exposure on social media. She comes with over 14 years of hotel experience dealing with events all over the U.S. She started Monday and they are happy to have her.

Tom Bissett mentioned that the Michigan conservation officers will be holding their annual Stuff a Truck and donations can be dropped off at the park headquarters.

Law Update – Lt. Jason Becker, DNR-LED

Lt. Jason Becker said they will also have a donation spot for Stuff the Truck at the DNR Outdoor Adventure Center. In the recent days they have had a few suicidal calls where the individuals were contacted by officers and convinced to seek medical help. This past weekend they received a call for an unresponsive person in a vehicle. Narcan was administered until EMS arrived and the subject was taken to the hospital. He acknowledged MSP for covering the island during opening day of deer season.

Infrastructure Updates; Amanda Treadwell, Urban Area Field Planner, DNR

Amanda Treadwell provided infrastructure updates including updates on the Conservatory construction, casino improvements, park hazardous testing, head quarter site work, EV fast chargers at the Nature Center, Mobility Study, Driker Trail and Ralph Wilson Trail, MDOT bridge structure maintenance and the James Scott Fountain. (Presentation attached).

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates, Michele Hodges and Ayo Thomas

- The Oudolf Garden continues to mature and is available for outdoor enjoyment all four seasons.
- The Nature Center reopened to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

- The Dossin Great Lakes Museum remains open Friday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Text GEM to 80888 for real-time updates about Belle Isle, island closures, and more.
- The aquarium seasonal hours as normal but will be open November 25, 26 and 27, December 23, 31, and 26.
- Tours and other sorts of engagement opportunities are offered as well as volunteer opportunities. Visit belleisleconservancy.org for more information about how to connect with us either at the aquarium or through volunteers or other opportunities.
- The feedback form helps develop programming and informs the way they are able to support the island so please take a moment to complete this survey. The information is very valuable.

Chair Hodges recommended holiday shopping at the aquarium. You can also support the Giving Society, also an important solution for ongoing sustainability, as well as sponsorships at the aquarium. For those that sign on with the Giving Society and with tank sponsorships, they will get a slide T-shirt. They appreciate the opportunity to be able to hear from the community and she provided her e-mail address, hodgesm@belleisleconservancy.org, and her mobile number, 313-815-9530.

Public Comment

Rich R. – Introduced himself as on the historical committee for the BIC and that his main passion is the police station. In five years, it will be the 100th anniversary of police radio that started on Belle Isle. He inquired on how they are doing with the renovation of that building. Amanda Treadwell replied that at this time there are no new plans to renovate that structure in the near future. It was stabilized in 2016 and the roof was replaced.

Mary Hennessey – Wanted to bring to attention that there are some broken items on the Kids Row playground and issues with litter. Scott Pratt apologized and said they will get on it.

Amy Greene, Nature Center – Amanda and Karis have been wonderful in helping coordinate with Diatomic Energy. They are happy to be the place on the island that is connected to the mission of sustainability. The Nature Center is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and they are happy to be reopened. She thanked Ayo for mentioning the programming. Opt Outside Day has a lot of support for outdoor activities, including from Wayne State's Astronomy Department. She looks forward to hosting the BIPAC meetings on site again.

Patrick Livingston – written comment:

Belle Isle hosted over 5 million visitors in 2021. It is time for the MDNR to step up and prioritize development of a Welcome Center to properly greet and orientate those visitors to what is by far Michigan's most popular state park. The most suitable location for the Welcome Center is the 10 acres of land located immediately off the bridge as visitors enter the island (the former Grand Prix paddock area).

The Welcome Center could include:

- A dedicated vehicle lane for those needing to purchase vehicle passes
- A staffed Information Center
- A Display of Park Rules and Policies
- An Interpretive Map featuring Belle Isle's History and Natural History
- Promotional displays for Conservatory, Aquarium, Dossin Museum, Nature Center etc.
- A Transit stop for the island shuttle bus and city buses
- Restroom facilities
- A refreshment court with picnic tables
- Appropriate landscaping and shade trees

Planning for and development of this Welcome Center should begin immediately. It should be given top priority in the Belle Isle Master Plan and included on the agenda of BIPAC meetings. Visitors to Belle Isle deserve to be properly welcomed to this park. I understand that BIPAC and MDNR staff are not required to respond to public comments at these meetings. Nevertheless, I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on this proposal. Thank You

Scott Pratt said Tom or Karis will reach out and that these are great ideas, and they appreciate the suggestions.

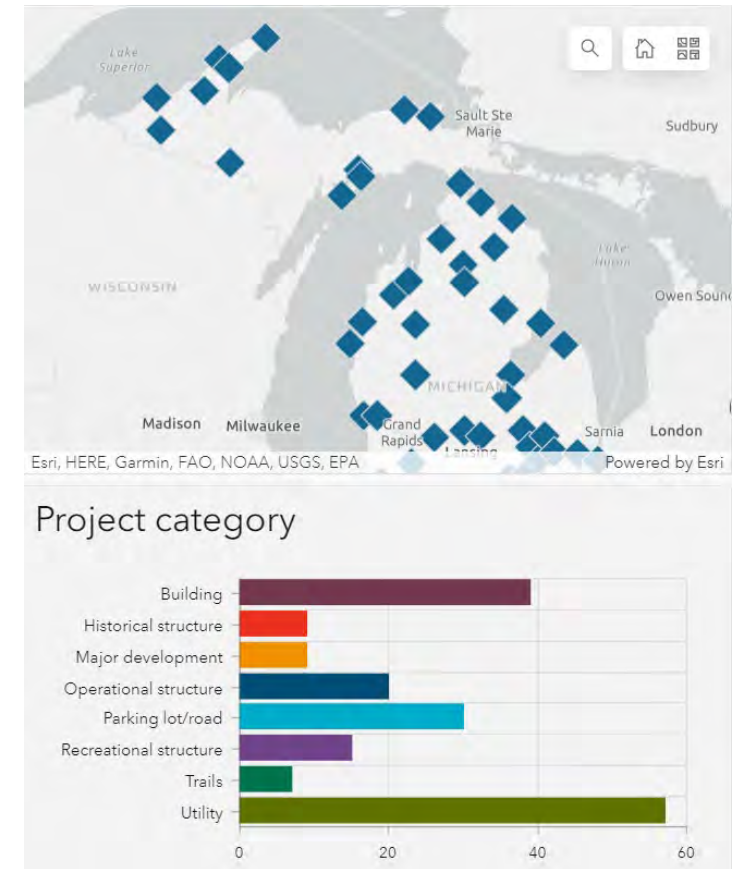
Suzanne Nash – She is part of the music vinyl group and is wondering on updates on the bandshell. Amanda shared that park staff has been reviewing the bandshell with PRD historic architect and they are working with the stewardship unit to secure funding to make repairs to the roof. May have updates next month.

Bud Denker thanked the DNR team, Michael Curis concurred. Rev. Peek asked what roll the committee plays in the EV program. Dr. Friday said there is no concerns for the BIPAC or the stakeholders; that it is worked out between Diatomic and the DNR and everything is on track. Scott Pratt said the contract process will be brought before the committee in the future.

Sommer Woods looks forward to the conversations about vendors, but she also looks forward to the conversations about procurement because there is some discrepancy, and she has some questions.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.

Next regular meeting:
December 15, 2022
9:00 a.m.



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update

November 17, 2022 Detroit, MI





ARPA – Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

- Conservatory and gardens closed now for construction.
- Anticipate gardens will reopen spring 2023.
- Conservatory will reopen when project complete in spring 2024.

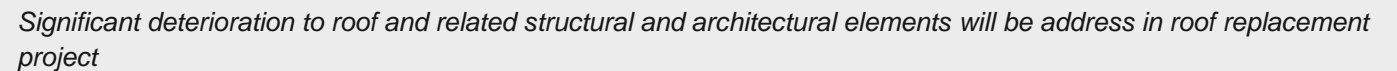


Phase 2 of the ASWC structural repairs will address steel repairs replacement as needed and replacing glazing in upper dome, asbestos in glazing compound and lead paint on upper steel trusses will be significant scope of work.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



- **Bid Documents to be advertised end of December.**
- **Construction to begin spring 2023.**
- **Construction in 2023 to align with elevator modernization.**

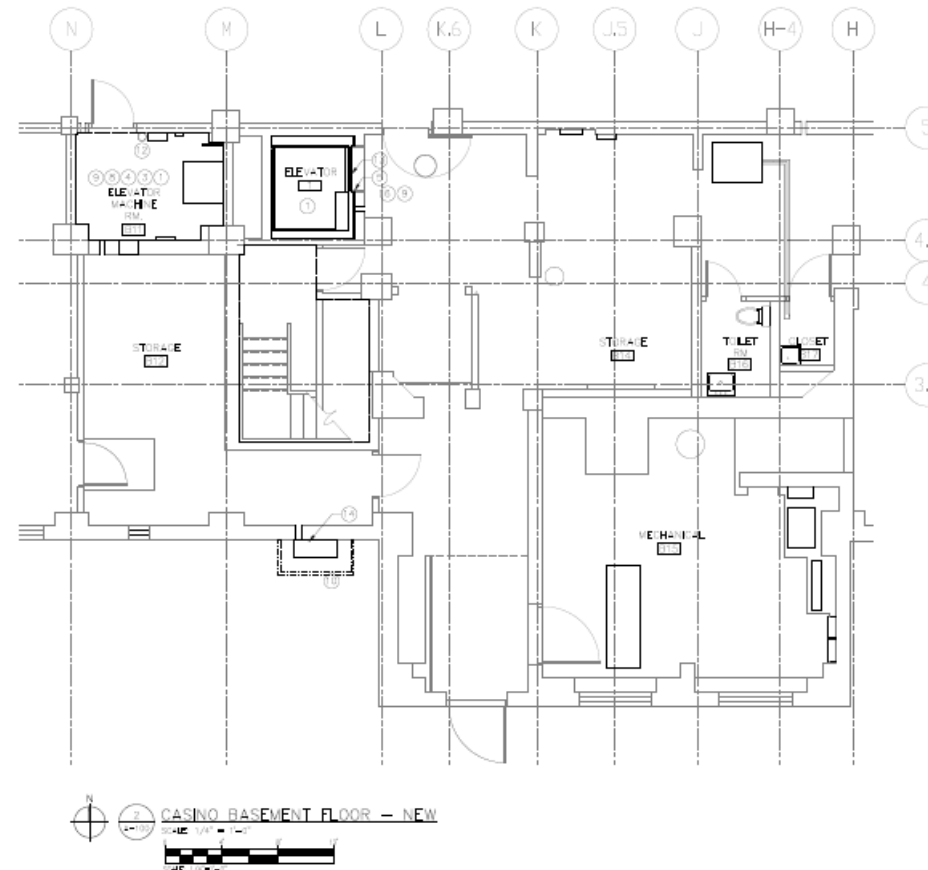


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Casino Elevator Modernization

- **Bid schedule:**
 - Bidding – walk through 1/23/2022
 - Bids due 2/8/22
 - Contract Approval 3/14/22
- **Construction Schedule:**
April 2023-April 2024 Construction
- **Construction in 2023 to align with roof repairs.**
- **Estimated Administration and Construction Cost:**
\$ 1,125,000



Elevator improvements will provide for modernized equipment and bring unit up to current code

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



Casino Site Improvements by Grand Prix

- Grand Prix will replace concrete adjacent to lagoon.
- Construction cost: \$225,000.
- Replacement will be completed this week.



Concrete removals underway now



Park Hazardous Material Testing & Abatement

- Parkwide RFP for hazardous material testing and structural condition assessment out.
- 42 structures to have hazardous material testing, 22 structures need structural engineering assessment.
- RFPs for parkwide scope due in December.
- Casino abatement project will begin end of November.



Consultants were required to tour all limited access structures to submit a proposal

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



Belle Isle Park Headquarter Site Work

- Parking lot asphalt and restoration complete
- Final items to be installed next week.
 - Parking lot striping
 - Wheel stops
 - Grading adjustments



Park Headquarters will welcome the public to front door again this month

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



EV Fast Chargers at Belle Isle Nature Center

- DTE will provide Transformer installation date by end of November.



EV Fast Charger installation underway

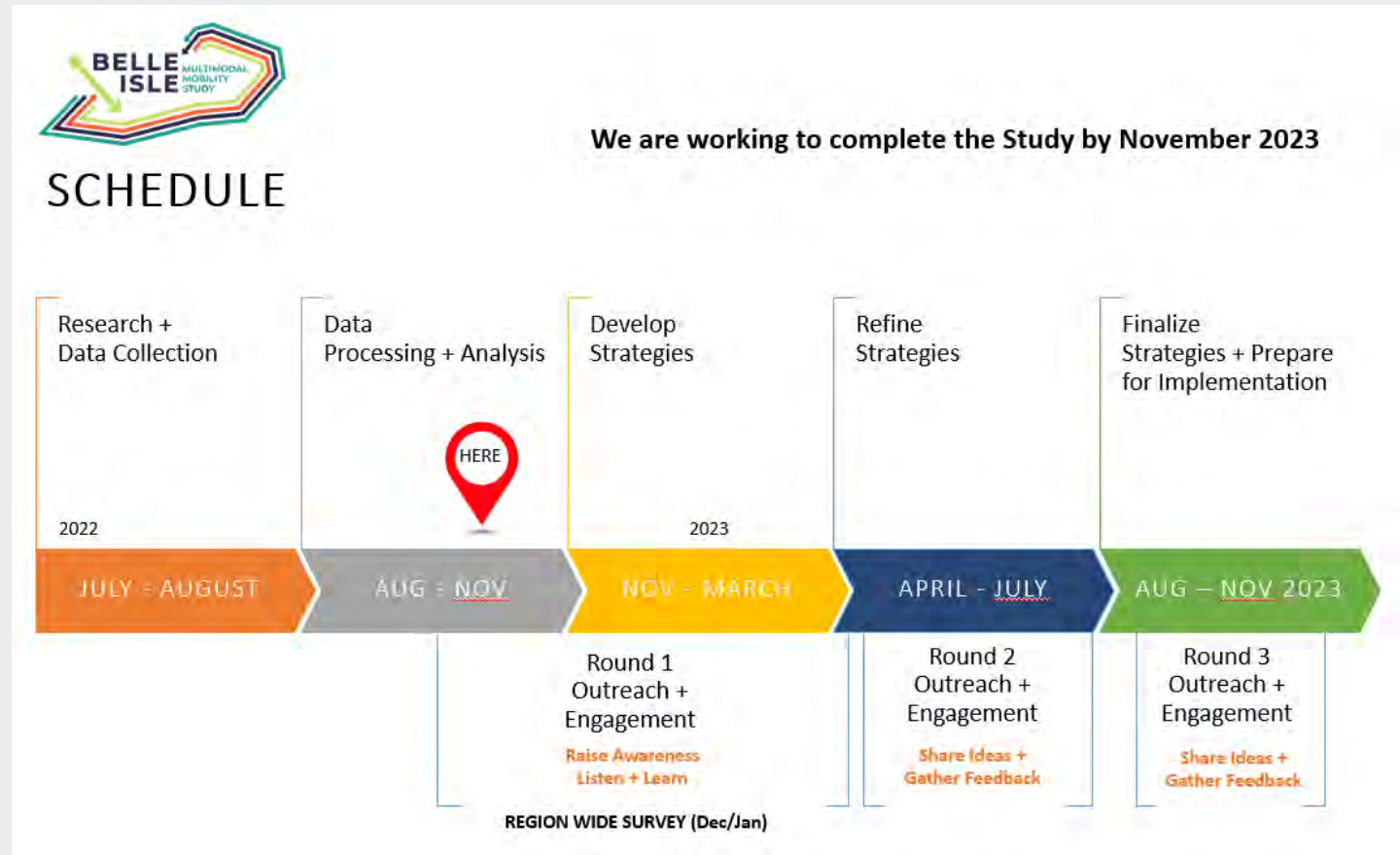


Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study (BIMMS)

- Data Processing & Analysis Phase Underway
- Stakeholder meetings (18) now through end of December
- Project Team preparing public survey for region wide distribution
- Project webpage will be put up on DNR Belle Isle Webpage for FAQ's and project schedule



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



Driker Trail & Ralph Wilson Trail Phase 2

- **Driker Trail bid documents are complete.**
- **Pre-Bid walkthrough scheduled for 12/13/2022.**
- **Construction expected for January 2023.**
- **Wilson Trail Phase 2 geotechnical surveys completed this week.**



Driker Trail scope of work

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



MDOT Bridge Structure Replacement

- Vista Ave. Bridge reopen when road is striped.



Restoration work complete at Vista Bridge



MDOT Bridge Structure Maintenance

- Oakway Trail Bridge work and trail improvements complete.
- The Central Ave. Bridge work complete.



Striping on Central Ave. Bridge to Portage Way complete



Bridge Maintenance and shoreline stabilization complete.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022



James Scott Fountain

- Installation of a new DTE transformer complete.
- New mechanical lights and conduit installation underway.
- Bulkheads to secure open spaces under the basin are in fabrication.



Utility improvements that have been underway this year to prepare the fountain for a new transformer will be complete next week with the installation of a new DTE transformer.

Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Update, November 2022