



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 27, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Virtual

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

No quorum established

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges; Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan

Bud Denker; Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Sommer Woods; Detroit, Michigan

Excused

Rev. Lonnie Peak

Unexcused

Brad Dick

DNR Staff Present

Ron Olson, Chief

Tom Bissett

Karis Floyd

Jason Fleming

Amanda Treadwell

Bob Clancy

Marie Kaphengst

Barbrea Young

Erika Compton

Barbara Graves

Others Present

Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Chair Hodges started with a mission moment, honoring member Brad Dick, who was recently promoted Chief Operating Officer for the City of Detroit. She thanked Brad for his service and congratulated him on his new role.

Chair Hodges said it is productive to meet in person and would like to revisit meeting format later in the meeting.

General Updates

Parks and Recreation Update – Ron Olson, Chief, PRD

Chief Olson gave an overview of the FY24 governor's budget that included \$43M for Belle Isle. The Senate version reduced that amount to \$35M and added items including funding for the Flint State Park to match the \$18M endowment put forth by the Mott Foundation. The House version was \$25M. It will now go to the legislative conference committees. There was a supplemental request put in for \$450K to fill the hole from the loss of the Grand Prix revenue.

Chair Hodges said they held a legislative day and will hold a tour with legislators on Belle Isle.

LUO Update – Alcohol Enforcement

Chief Olson said the Land Use Order regarding alcohol enforcement has been updated to give law enforcement more clarity by including the language "possession" of alcohol in addition to the already stated "consumption." Alcohol is allowed with a permit.

Sommer Woods asked what brought about the change. Chief Olson said it is for clarity for law enforcement. Jason Fleming, Resource Protection and Promotion Chief, added that generally alcohol is permissive in the parks. Most alcohol restrictions are put in at parks during certain times of the season or certain areas of parks where there have been historical issues. Most alcohol restrictions contain the "possess" or "consume" language. This change is to make it consistent with other parks.

Park Update, Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor and Karis Floyd, Park Manager

Tom Bissett gave kudos to the Belle Isle Conservancy (BIC) team for the April 22 cleanup day on the island and that it was nice to see the community come together.

Karis Floyd said they are in the process of opening the restrooms for the season. The tree survey is now complete and the red dots on some of the trees are identifier markings for trimming or removal. The posting for the new supervisor will end Friday and applications will be reviewed. Three ranger positions were posted, and two new office assistants were hired. There are two seasonal general office assistants working the booths, which will now be open seven days a week, to help open earlier, sell Passports and answer questions from the public. They have hired 24 seasonal positions and holding interviews next week to hire three additional positions. The \$15 an hour offer has helped bring in more applicants. He thanked the BIC for the help and organization of the cleanup.

Concessions Update

Jason Fleming, Resource Protection and Promotion Chief, covered department policies regarding concessions and permits, including the Use of Department Managed Lands policy, the process for awarding bids, addressed how it is determined to award short-term vs. long-term contracts, and adjustable percentages. Jason will connect with committee member Woods for further discussion.

Infrastructure Updates

Amanda Treadwell, Urban Field Planner, provided a summary of infrastructure projects. The park currently has over \$34 million in projects under contract. Highlights of the report included progress updates on the Conservatory, casino roof, park hazardous material testing and abatement, the boathouse site, and the Driker Trail. (Summary attached).

A kick-off meeting was held for the Multimodal Mobility Study. A project team is reviewing strategies recommendations for round #2 of public/stakeholder engagement. Meetings will be held in mid-June. A public open house will take place July 8 at the Nature Center. Information can be found at www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/prd/bip-study.

Flatwoods Restoration Update

Bob Clancy, Ecological Restoration Specialist, provided a summary of the Flatwoods restoration project, a project due to be completed in 2024. One of the project goals is to restore surface water flow patterns throughout the project area.

Traffic Closure Plan

Tom Bissett presented a recap of the traffic plan, which included an update on speed enforcement, traffic counter, speed indicator signs, and increased parking options. Future enhancements will take place with the Mobility Study.

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates, Ayo Thomas

As of June 1, the Dossin Great Lakes Museum hours of operation will change to summer hours, open Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Please check out the Detroit Historical Society's Microplastics: Here, There, Everywhere exhibit that opened last weekend. Encouraged youth to check out CampOut Camp Detroit. This Saturday at the Nature Center is statewide Astronomy Night. There were 875 volunteers for clean-up day, and they collected a total of 3,400 lbs. of trash on the island. May 6 and 7 at the aquarium is Koi Festival. Polish the Jewel will be held on May 18.

Public Comment

Deb Sumner – Asked about opening the park rec center. She would like to see more engagement with the city and getting the park back its most nature settings and stop overbuilding.

Angela Lugo Thomas – Asked about the beach area and paddock. Chair Hodges asked the DNR staff to put them in their staff reports.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Next regular meeting:
May 18, 2023
9:00 a.m.



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

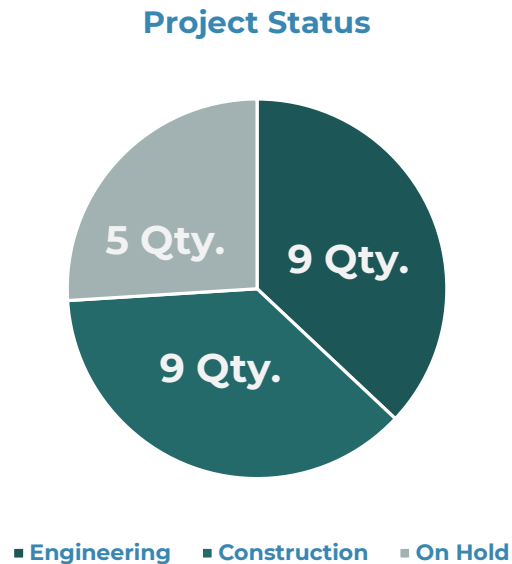
April 27, 2023

Capital Improvements Budget Summary

**Total funding for projects underway
\$34,472,658**

**Total ARPA funded projects
\$15,192,000**

- \$12,692,000 ARPA Funds
- \$ 2,500,000 Private Donation (BIC)



Project Status by Qty.

- 37% Engineering
- 37% Construction
- 26% On Hold

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory (ARPA) \$10,000,000

Progress Status:

- Blasting lead-based paint off steel members.
- Primer painted over cleaned steel
- Cleaning salvaged hardware for reinstallation.
- All aluminum cleaning has been completed.

Photos from 04/17/23:



Photo 1: Photo by Ideal, aluminum framing cleaned.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory (ARPA)



Glass removed, Steel ready for blasting

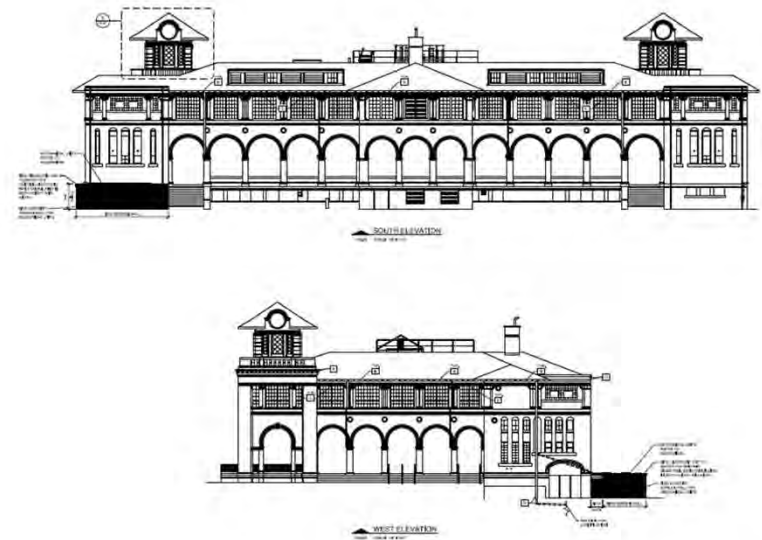


Aluminum glass framing being cleaned

Belle Isle Casino Roof Replacement (ARPA) \$5,192,000

Progress Status:

- Contractor to mobilize May 1st.
- Project team has reviewed the ceramic tile samples, selected color.
- Project estimated to be completed early 2024.



Roof replacement will be ongoing through spring 2024



Park Hazardous Material Testing & Abatement- \$500,000

Progress Status:

- Consultant team awarded contract
- Building assessments will begin in May.
- 22 structures will be assessed for critical structural concerns and hazardous materials
- Schedule completion date fall 2023



A comprehensive report to be submitted and abatement needs in park prioritized for health, safety and welfare of staff and public.

Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study

\$960,000

Progress Status:

- Kick-off meeting held with wayfinding & signage consultant
- Project team reviewing strategies recommendations for round #2 of public/stakeholder engagement
- Stakeholder meetings in mid-June
- Public Open House July 8th, 10am – 1pm

KEY THEMES COMING OUT OF STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

#1 Thing We Heard – People LOVE Belle Isle!

Other things we heard:

- **Tollbooths** are a key frustration – take too long, not sure when/if to stop, what do lights mean, what lane should I be in, etc.
- Clear **wayfinding** signage is desired
- **One-way roads** are frustrating, confusing, and inefficient
- **Closures** (or even potential of closures) are impacting vendors, weddings, ability to hold events, not being able to get back on island to pick children up from camps/events, etc.
- There is excitement and support for additional **modes of arrival** – ferry, off-island shuttle, etc.
- Not as much excitement about an **on-island shuttle** (too much stuff, etc)
- Difficult finding **parking at the Beach and near Aquarium/Conservatory**
- Frustrations about the **Passport** – how to get one, should Detroit residents need one, why don't people check for them, etc.
- Traffic safety for **pedestrians crossing** near Beach and Kids Row

Summary of stakeholder and public survey

Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study



Designs vary
Sign clutter
Information not always up to date
Incorrect placement



Belle Isle Boathouse Assessments

\$90,000

Progress Status:

- Structural assessment identified deteriorated and susceptible features of compromised structure – structure & perimeter around building deemed unsafe for occupancy
- Water infiltration over the years has compromised roof/concrete structure and exterior walls
- Hazardous material assessment completed, ACM and LCP identified throughout building



North side of the building compromised by water filtration over the years

Belle Isle Boathouse Site

Progress Status:

- Friends of Detroit Rowing Club looking into building a storage structure on site.
- FODR has reviewed design & permitting process with DNR staff.



FODR exploring alternative storage options for rowing equipment

Eugene and Elaine C. Driker Trail - \$289,000

Progress Status:

- Trail Resurfacing complete
- New fence and gate to be installed between golf driving range and end of trail
- Trail signage to be installed in May



Trail Improvements complete

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail-

Progress Status:

- Revised permit plans submitted to MDOT
- Construction to begin in summer 2023
- Once complete the 5.8 mile multi-use trail will circle park perimeter
- Trail design will coordinate with findings of multimodal mobility study to align findings related to pedestrian safety with cross walks, traffic calming recommendations, etc.



Walking/Biking one of the most popular park activities reported in multimodal mobility public survey