



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: December 14, 2023

Location: Virtual

**Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.
No quorum established**

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC

Attending remotely:

Michele Hodges, Chair; Farmington Hills, Michigan

Michael Curis; Detroit, Michigan

Bud Denker; Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Angela Lugo-Thomas; Highland Park, Michigan

Excused

Lonnie Peek

Unexcused

Sommer Woods

DNR Staff Present

Ron Olson

Tom Bissett

Karis Floyd

Gail Fitch

Amanda Treadwell

Barbrea Young

Erika Compton

Lt. Todd Szyska

Michelle O'Kelly

Others Present

Ayo Thomas, Belle Isle Conservancy

Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Genevieve Rattray, Belle Isle Conservancy

Maud Lyon, Belle Isle Conservancy

Nancy Vella, Belle Isle Conservancy

Chair Hodges started the meeting by welcoming newest committee member Angela Lugo-Thomas, who introduced herself and said she was honored to serve on the committee.

Members present welcomed Ms. Lugo-Thomas to the committee. Member Denker also stated that this is his last meeting and that he was honored to be part of the organization and part of the community. Chair Hodges acknowledged member Denker by thanking him for his outstanding leadership, professionalism, and commitment to the people of Detroit.

Approval Of Minutes

Chair Hodges called for a motion to approve all outstanding meeting minutes. Member Curis made the motion to approve all outstanding meeting minutes, member Denker supported, and it was approved unanimously. While these items were approved, the approval was not valid as the meeting was not in compliance with the OMA.

Action Item

Resolution 12-2023-03 to Approve the 2024 Proposed Meeting Dates

Chair Hodges called for a motion to approve Resolution 12-2023-03 to approve the 2024 proposed meeting dates. Member Denker made the motion to approve, member Curis supported with the request for discussion. Chair Hodges called for additional discussion. Members decided that they would prefer amending the resolution to state they will hold 12 scheduled monthly meetings as they have done in the past. Chair Hodges asked for a motion to approve amended Resolution 12-2023-03. Member Curis made a motion to approve the amended Resolution, it was supported by member Denker and approved unanimously. While this item was approved, the approval was not valid as the meeting was not in compliance with the OMA.

General Updates

Parks and Recreation Update – Ron Olson, Chief, PRD

Chief Olson began by thanking Bud Denker for his years of service and for everything he has done for the island, and he also welcomed Angela Lugo-Thomas. He said that the next newest committee member has been appointed by the mayor and she will join the committee when she returns

from maternity leave, and Bud's and Michele's replacements are currently being worked on through the process. He continued by giving updates on the boathouse public input process, the Recreation Passport price change, and explained how the Passport dollars are allocated.

Park Update – Thomas Bissett, Karis Floyd, and Gail Fitch gave the following updates:

- They received approximately 1,800 comments and suggestions for the boathouse through the on-line form. The process of compiling the information has begun.
- Thanked Bud for stepping in to help their team and said that they could not have done a lot of projects without Bud and his partnership.
- They are in the process of winter operations. Seasonal Rangers are on layoff and recalled between 2 weeks – 3 months.
- Looking to fill a few positions: lead ranger, event ranger and 2 more ranger positions. The full-time janitor position as been filled. They will be fully staffed at the start of the 2024 season.
- They are preparing for winter weather season operations.
- There is a closure for Central Avenue after Portage Way to prevent salt being spread in the flatwoods but will remain open for pedestrian traffic. Signage has been posted.

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

Amanda Treadwell provided infrastructure updates including updates on the handball court, capital projects, hazardous material study, former zoo survey updates, Multimodal Study, and public information process regarding the boathouse (presentation attached).

Law Update –Lt. Todd Szyska

Lt. Szyska said that they are currently on winter staffing shifts, and gave an update on the Stuff the Truck and Sergeant Santa programs.

Belle Isle Conservancy Updates - Ayo Thomas

Ayo Thomas presented facility hours and program updates:

- Belle Isle Nature Center
 - Nature at Night: Winter Solstice – December 21, 2023; 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- December Dossin Great Lakes Museum updates
 - Open with free admission on Sundays in December

- Open Holiday Week Hours December 27 – 30; 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 - Admission prices in effect – free under 6, \$5 for adults and children, \$20 for a single household (up to 6 parents & children)
 - Closed December 24 and 31
- Pavers are available at Sunset Point (See Belle Isle Conservancy online for information)
- Belle Isle Aquarium named most beautiful aquarium in the country
- Belle Isle Aquarium Holiday hours
- December 24 – 25 Closed, December 27 – 30 – Open, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., December 31 – January 1 – closed.
- December is Ayo Thomas’s last meeting as a member of the Belle Isle Conservancy team.

Public Comments

Stephen Malbouef - Concerned about the condition of the boathouse and funding to renovate and maintain the building. Also has concerns with the timing of the online DNR informational webpage.

BIPAC comments

Angela Lugo-Thomas said she is thankful for being a member of the BIPAC committee.

Michael Curis wished Bud Decker well and gave warm welcome to Angela Lugo-Thomas. He also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Chair Hodges wished everyone happy holidays and said she is looking forward to 2024.

With no further business the meeting ended at 10:10 a.m.

Next regular meeting: January 18, 2024



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

December 14, 2023



Handball Court Repairs – Completed 2023



Handball courts required masonry and structural stabilization and investment.



Handball courts stabilized

Belle Isle Capital Projects

Total projects currently Funded: \$53,687,000

Projects Underway Now

\$29,254,000

- Engineering Phase
 - # 5 Projects
 - \$2,855,000
- Construction Projects
 - #8 Projects
 - \$ 26,399,000

New Projects Funded - To begin 2024

\$ 24,433,000

- Engineering and Construction
 - #10 new projects
 - \$23,000,000 ARPA
 - \$ 1,433,000 – DNR PRD CO



Scaffolding around Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Belle Isle Capital Projects - Underway

Engineering Projects

- Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study
- Park wide Hazardous Material Assessment
- Park Maintenance Garage
- Shelter 19 & 20, and Oxbow Restroom
- Scott Fountain Engineering



BELLE ISLE MULTIMODAL STUDY

PROPOSED MULTIMODAL NETWORK | DETROIT, MI | NOVEMBER 2023 livingLAB WADE TRIM

Proposed multimodal routes in review

Belle Isle Capital Projects - Underway

Construction Projects

- Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Dome stabilization – Phase 2
- Casino Roof and Drainage Replacement
- Casino Elevator Modernization
- Belle Isle Aquarium, Boiler Room structural Repairs
- Flynn Window Restoration
- Wilson Trail Phase 2
- Wet Mesic Flatwoods
- Belle Isle Sawmill



Door submittals approved

Belle Isle Capital Projects

Park Capital Outlay – New projects for 2024

- Athletic Shelter heating equipment replacement
- Shelter #9 Structural Repairs
- Casino Loggia resurfacing and ADA access improvements



Shelter #9 – closed to the public for repairs

Belle Isle Aquarium Update

Boiler room roof structural repairs

- Additional structural support required beyond reinforcement initially observed once roof was opened up.
- New tongue and groove has been installed.
- New shingles installed.



Roof is under- supported and needs replacement and reinforcement to stabilize roof.

Wet Mesic Flatwoods Restoration

Contractor wrapping up:

- Construction work to be complete December 2023.
- Pavement markings on Central Ave. complete.
- Vehicular gates to be installed on Central Ave. and Oakway this winter.
- Interpretive signage being finalized.



Gate will be installed on Central Ave. in the Flatwoods.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Project Status

- Dome glass installation is complete
- Cleaning the glass of the film residue
- Scaffolding will start removing the shrink wrapping and wood framing around the exterior, then begin removing exterior scaffolding.



Scaffolding will be removed once glass replacement complete.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



New glass installation in upper dome



Belle Isle Capital Projects

ARPA – New projects for 2024

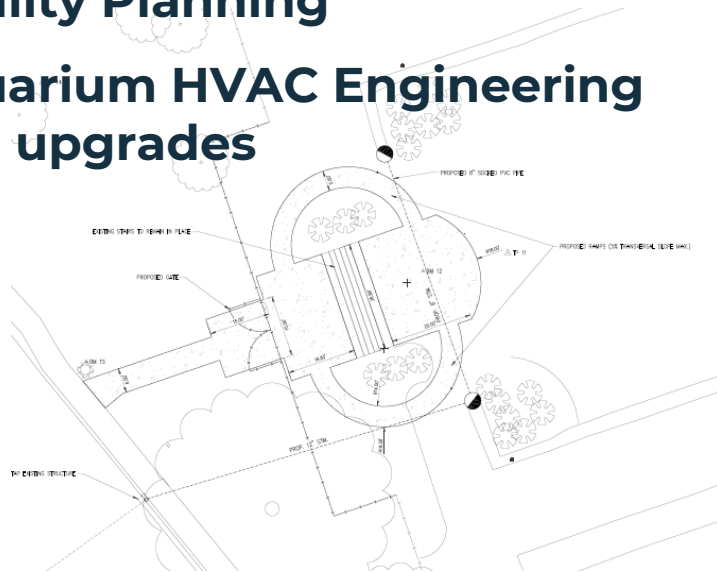
- Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory
 - Facility planning
 - Aquarium HVAC Engineering and Upgrade
- Former zoo building removals
- Hazardous material abatement and structural repairs
- Boathouse Health, safety and welfare
- Scott Fountain Structural Repairs
- Wayfinding signage
- Parkwide development plan



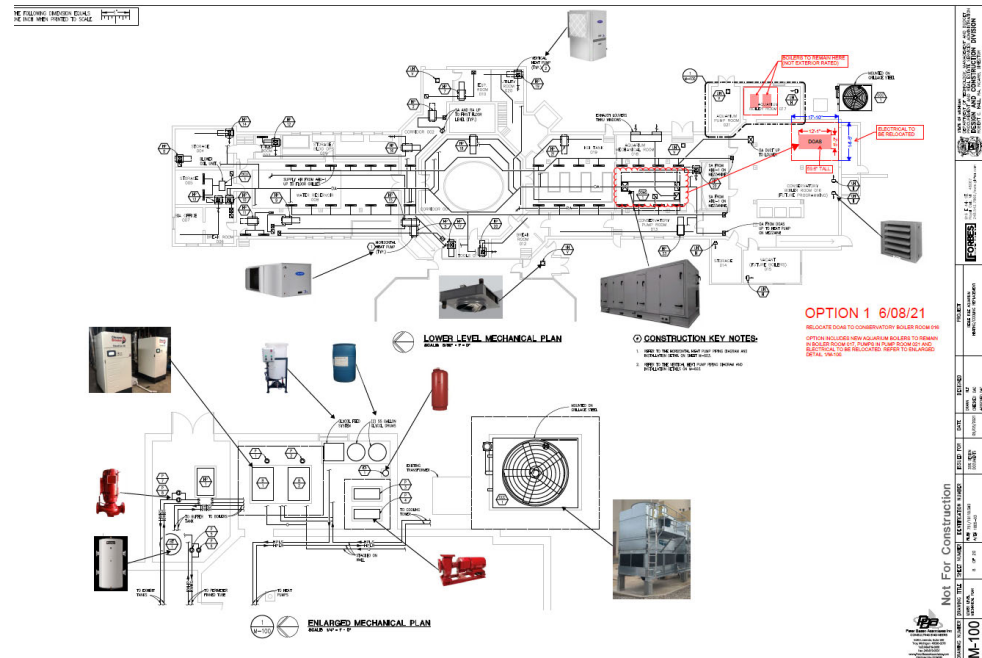
Zoo removals expected to be underway in 2024

Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

- Facility Planning
- Aquarium HVAC Engineering and upgrades



ADA access improvements between aquarium, conservatory and gardens will be assessed



Facility programming plan to be finalized prior to completing HVAC engineering plans

Belle Isle Hazardous Material and Structural Study Master Document

Draft reviewed:

- Final report to be submitted by end of 2023.
- Report will guide prioritization for addressing hazardous removal throughout park.
- Abatement and structural repairs will be executed with PFC ARPA funds.



PRELIMINARY STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY SURVEY REPORT

WOODSIDE RESTROOMS/COMFORT STATION

Belle Isle Park
Detroit, MI 48207

Prepared for:
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
525 W. Allegan Street
PO Box 30028
Lansing Michigan 48909
Client Reference: Hazardous Material and Structural Study

Prepared by:
Beam, Longest, and Neff
51151 West Pontiac Trail
Wixom, MI 48393
BLN Project ID: 230022
May 24, 2023



HAZARDOUS AND REGULATED MATERIALS INSPECTION REPORT

WOODSIDE COMFORT STATION

Belle Isle Park
Detroit, MI 48207

Prepared for:

Department of Natural Resources
525 W. Allegan Street
PO Box 30028
Lansing Michigan 48909
DTMB File No.: 751_22133.MNB

Prepared by:

Beam, Longest, and Neff
51151 West Pontiac Trail
Wixom, MI 48393
BLN Project ID: 230022
July 26, 2023

Draft Report submitted for Structural Integrity Assessment and Haz. Mtls. Testing records.

Belle Isle Former Zoo

- 20+ structures to be removed.
- For removals - consultant will prepare permit plans and bid documents.
- Future use - cost estimates will be prepared for options to incorporate passive recreation and visitor amenities in alignment with public input and mobility study recommendations.



4. When you think about interacting in the repurposed old zoo site, would you prefer

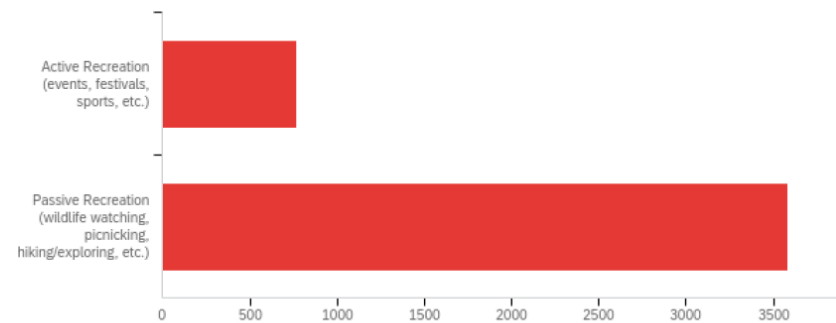


Figure 39. Respondent preferences of active versus passive recreation.

	# of Respondents (4350)	%
Active Recreation (events, festivals, sports, etc.)	767	27%
Passive Recreation (wildlife watching, picnicking, hiking/exploring, etc.)	3583	72%

Table 22. Respondent preferences of active versus passive recreation.

Public feedback from MSU survey completed in 2022 (February – July)

Belle Isle Multimodal Mobility Study

- Project team revising recommendations based upon public input.
- Revised strategy to be presented to stakeholders in January 24, 2024.
- Project team continuing working with signage consultant to develop signage and wayfinding design package. Initial wayfinding to be implemented in 2024.
- Final report will be submitted April 2024.

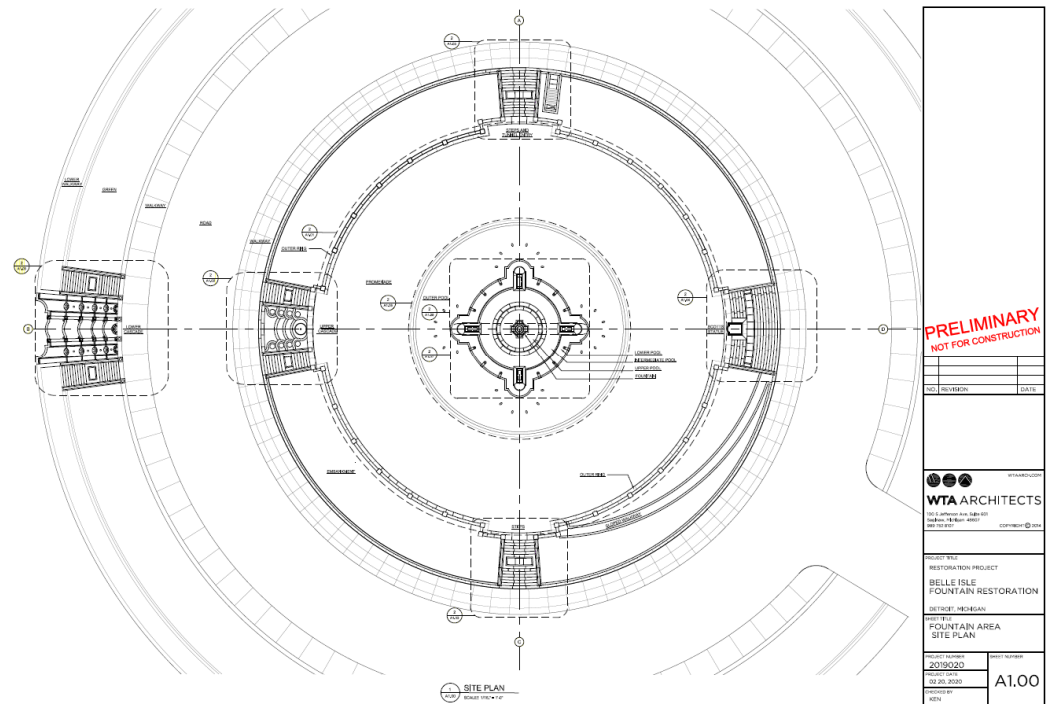


Public Open House at Dossin, July 8, 2023

James Scott Memorial Fountain

Engineering Work Order approved for:

- Structural concrete decking
- Sealing the fountain basins
- Masonry repair
- Structural deterioration at cascades



Coring samples taken in 2021 identified structural deterioration in concrete decking under the fountain bowls

