

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: April 18, 2024 Location: 99 Pleasure Dr., Detroit, MI 48207

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m. Quorum established at 9:13 a.m.

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC
Sommer Woods
Angela Lugo-Thomas
Michael Curis
Meagan Elliott; Wayne County, Detroit (remote)

Absent

Michele Hodges Rev. Lonnie Peek

DNR Staff Present

Ron Olson
Tom Bissett
Gail Fitch
Lt. Todd Szyka
Robb McKay
Darlisa Terrell
Nicole Hill
Barbara Graves

Others Present
Eric Young, MSP
Maud Lyon, Belle Isle Conservancy
Genevieve Rattray, Belle Isle Conservancy
Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Member Woods called the meeting to order at 9:02 and roll was taken.

Member Elliott updated the group that beginning in July she will start her new role as the President and CEO of the Belle Isle Conservancy. Members congratulated her. Member Woods then asked for a motion to approve the March 21, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Curis, supported by Member Lugo-Thomas, and passed unanimously.

The meeting continued with Nicole Hill, Youth Engagement and Employment Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Division, giving a presentation and overview of the 2023 Summer Youth Employment Program. The program specializes in the employment of at-risk youth in Detroit, Flint, Saginaw, and Pontiac, and provides these youth an opportunity to engage in natural resource-based work experience, outdoor recreation activities, skill building through work projects, work readiness skills training, and credential training. Questions on the program can be answered by contacting Nicole Hill, Youth Engagement & Employment Coordinator, at HillN11@michigan.gov, or at 517-449-6704. (Presentation attached.)

Members expressed their appreciation of her work and the program.

General Updates

Ron Olson, Chief of Parks and Recreation, gave appreciation to Nicole Hill for her work with the Summer Youth Employment Program and for her engagement with the community. He said funding for the program comes from general fund dollars that have fluctuated over the years and he encouraged anyone who finds the program valuable to advocate with their legislators for it.

The governor's proposed 2025 budget includes an opt-out model for the Recreation Passport and is working its way through the legislative process. They would like to promote the value of getting the Recreation Passport because of the funding need to help with what we do, including for Belle Isle. There is \$2.5M general funds for Belle Isle that are augmented to almost \$4M for direct operations, not including MDOT and MSP. When totaled, operation costs are over \$7M for Belle Isle.

He then continued with saying there is great work being done by staff with everyday operations, and on a bigger scale, the ARPA funds that are being invested on Belle Isle that have enabled the big projects.

He expressed the appreciation for the partnership with the Conservancy and welcomed Meagan Elliott to her new role.

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, then gave updates on summer staffing, which begins this week, the opening of restrooms, and the closure of shelter 8. The target date to have the fountain open is Mother's Day. There

will be a lot of construction and improvements this season. The focus will be on public spaces and restrooms. Please be patient as they work through the projects.

Tom asked that everyone keep Karis Floyd in their thoughts as he is working through some health issues.

Tom continued with the boathouse letters of intent process, in which five preproposal letters were received and three were selected. The next step is to collaborate with the groups and stakeholders and tour the boathouse. Final plans will be due at the end of July.

The annual Belle Isle report will be presented to the Detroit City Council on May 14, 2024. The meeting is scheduled to start at 10:00 a.m., but they do not have an exact time on the agenda yet.

The next item on the agenda was the law updates. Lt. Todd Szyska said they have been busy with the warmer weather. Communication with the department has been good and there has been no closures so far. Some traffic issues are happening with the busy season. More officers have been added for the season. Eric Young of the Michigan State Police provided their hours of operation at the park. Memorial weekend, Friday through Monday, they will have two cars dedicated to the island and every weekend, Saturday and Sunday, they will have two troopers on site through Labor Day weekend. On Labor Day weekend they will have two troopers Friday through Monday. They will respond to any service calls on the island Monday through Friday.

Tom Bissett then gave a presentation with updates on the current infrastructure projects, including the updates to the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, the Belle Isle Casino, the Ralph Wilson Trail Phase 2 construction, and the ARPA funded investments. (Presentation attached.)

Genevieve Rattray of the Belle Isle Conservancy gave an update on the Bebot that is coming to Belle Isle, a partnership between the City of Detroit, the Belle Isle Conservancy, the State of Michigan, DNR, and the Council for Great Lakes Region. She showed a picture of the robot that will be deployed on the beach to sift through sand and remove plastics. They will be hosting a press conference during Earth Day and will have some great speakers present. The very first deployment of the robot will be on World Ocean Dan, Saturday, June 8. She continued that Saturday April 27 is the annual spring clean-up beginning at 9 a.m.

Public Comment

Lisa DiChiera – Deputy Director, Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, spoke on the Belle Isle boathouse, the three-month timeline to submit a finance package, the use of the ARPA money for mothballing and initial stabilization, the Michigan Historic Tax Credit HB5430, Section 106, and asked if a city official will be invited on the walkthroughs.

Devon Anderson – President, Preservation Detroit, and board secretary of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network, spoke on the boathouse, that the community is behind its adaptive reuse and saving, thinks the process is being rushed. Written comment: Preservation Detroit and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network would both genuinely and sincerely appreciate the Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee adding their ardent and vocal support to that of numerous local organizations to preserve and adaptively re-use this storied and valuable resource (the Belle Isle Boat Club Building).

Robin Heller – Thanked the DNR for the successful Daffodil Luncheon. They raised enough for purchasing 100,000 bulbs to be planted.

Arthur Mullen – Local preservationist in Detroit – Echoes comments about the boathouse. Instead of rushing towards demo, use the opportunity to strengthen public/private partnerships as hazardous material removal will have to be done whether demolition or rehabilitation occur, and said it could be used for other needs such as a major transit center.

Amy Hubbarth – Detroit citizen and one of the five who submitted a letter of intent. She thanked the DNR for their efforts and believes the boathouse should be saved and not demolished, and that it could be used as a welcome center, ferry dock, or educational building.

Member Comments

Angela Lugo-Thomas – Thanked Amy for submitting her letter of intent. She knew the boathouse would be the topic of the year and she is a lover of historic buildings. She is looking forward to learning what the proposals look like and a possible walkthrough of the boathouse.

Michael Curis – Said the cost is typically less if you are rehabbing a building and doing environmental versus demolition and doing an environmental. He stated that it is tough to get firm commitment for financing in three months, but developers can get a soft letter of intent from a lender that is not a full commitment, and the DNR needs to make sure the developers and their proposals are financeable and they can get it done. It will be everybody's high priority to try and do it and do it sensibly and fiscally responsible.

Sommer Woods – Echoes the comments on the boathouse and hopefully there is a way to restore it. How do we save it and what are the best ways of multi-use of it as it is very important to people. Hopefully we can find the middle ground. She appreciates everyone's energy about it, as well as the DNR's.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, May 16, 2024.

MDNR 2023 Summer Youth Employment Program Report

April 2024

Nicole L. Hill, CDF



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MISSION

"The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations."

The MDNR strives to:

- Protect natural and cultural resources.
- Ensure sustainable recreation use and enjoyment.
- Enable strong natural resource-based economies.
- Improve and build strong relationships and partnerships.
- Foster effective business practices and good governance.

Summer Youth Employment Program

During his Special Message on Public Safety on **March 7, 2012**, Governor Snyder stressed the need for the program

- Four Michigan cities were ranked among the top 10 most violent cities in the nation
- Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) would help reduce crime and address juvenile unemployment in those cities

Initial Funding of \$2 Million (PA 236 of 2012)

- (1) From the funds appropriated in Part 1, the department shall award funds to non-government organizations that specialize in the employment of at-risk youth in Detroit, Flint, Saginaw, and Pontiac. The department may utilize the funding to have the at-risk youth participate in outdoor recreation activities consistent with the department's mission. The funds shall be awarded in a form and manner prescribed by the department.
- (2) As used in this section:
 - (a) "At-risk youth" mean individuals between the ages of 16 and 19 who are eligible for the free lunch program.
 - (b) "Department" means the Department of Natural Resources.

SYEP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Serves youth ages 16-19 who reside in service areas
- Funds programs in Detroit, Pontiac, Flint & Saginaw
- SYEP provides youth an opportunity to engage in:
 - A minimum eight (8) week, paid natural resourcebased work experience
 - At least five (5) outdoor recreation activities (e.g. camping, rock climbing, etc.)
 - Skill-building through work projects @various
 State Park/Recreation Areas
 - Employability & Work Readiness Skills Training
 - Credential Training (e.g. OSHA 10, Boater Safety, etc.)

2023 Partner Agencies

Partner Agency	City	Length of Engagement	
Centro Multicultural La Familia (CMLF)	Pontiac	3 Years	
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC)	Detroit	5+ Years	
Detroit Zoological Society (DZS) - Belle Isle Nature Center (BINC)	Detroit	10+ Years	
First Ward Community Center (FWCC)	Saginaw	10+ Years	
Genesee Area Focus Fund (GAFF)	Flint	10+ Years	
Green Door Initiative (GDI)	Detroit	5 Years	
Healthy Kidz, Inc. (HK)	Detroit	10+ Years	
Micah 6 Community (M6K)	Pontiac	1st Year	
Neighborhood Building Urban Gardens (NBUG)	Detroit	1 st Year	
Northend CCDC - Oakland Avenue Farm (`NCCDC)	Detroit	1 st Year	
Saginaw County Community Action Committee (SCCAC)	Saginaw	5+ Years	
Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision Project (SDEV)	Detroit	2 Years	
The Lawn Academy (TLA)	Detroit	1 st Year	
The Youth Connection, Inc. (TYC)	Detroit	10+ Years	
Urban Neighborhood Initiatives (UNI)	Detroit	10+ Years	

2023 Participant Breakdown

- Total # of Participants = 217*
- Demographics
 - African American (AA) or Black
 - Bi-Racial (Latinx/Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian, Native American, AA)
 - Caucasian or White
 - Latinx or Hispanic
 - Middle Eastern
- Total Number of Hours Worked = 30,358.39*

*3 agency reports pending

Work Projects

- Landscaping & Lawn Maintenance
- Skilled Trades
- Staining & Painting Fences
- Planting Flowers & Various Species
- Invasive Species Removal
- Painting Grills
- Trail Maintenance
- Grounds & Park Maintenance
- Tree trimming
- Harvesting Techniques
- Soil Aeration & Maintaining Garden Beds
- Managing Agricultural Waste
- Deconstruction
- Park Clean-Up
- Tiny House Construction
- Community-Supported Agriculture & Organic Farms
- 3-D Printing
- Painting Signage & Murals
- Food Insecurity & Nutrition
- Recycling & Repurposing Fabric, Materials, etc.
- Construct Garden Beds
- Environmental Pollution Advocacy
- Data Collection

- Great Lakes Watershed & Belle Isle Field Work
- Repair Break Wall & Dig Trenches
- Facilitated Table Activities
- Set-Up & Breakdown of Activity Tables,
- Paint Playground Equipment & Pick-Up Trash
- Blight Elimination & Community Clean-Ups
- Equipment Repair
- Composting & Urban Gardening Operations
- Beautification Projects
- Hoop-Houses
- Large Scale Murals
- Business Operations of Community Bike Store
- Bike Mechanics
- Coordinating Community Bike Rides
- Strategize How to Increase Bike Ridership
- Built Raised, Wood Beds
- Dirt Transfer, Transplants & Seed Planting
- Tend Plants, Harvest Fruits & Seeds for Residents
- Build Water Harvesting System
- Community Engagement through Events & Canvassing
- Drone Piloting & Operations
- Identify Native Plants & Flowers
- Drip Irrigation Systems & Install Rain Borders

Sailing & Education



Detroit River Story Lab – Detroit River

Green Door Initiative



Bay Sail Program – Saginaw Bay
Saginaw County Community Action Center





Huron-Clinton Metro Parks Collaboration

- Certified Swim Instructors
 - Water Safety & Introduction to Swimming
 - (6) Six Beginner-Level Swim Lessons
- Local beaches and pools in SE Michigan
- Swimsuit/Trunks, Goggles, Swim Cap & Swim Bag Provided
- Transportation Stipends
- Potential Lifeguard Training Options
- 25 Participants & Staff

Comprehension of Understanding green spaces Leave No Trace Principles as recreational environments Understanding the Organizing and Maintenance of green relationship between understanding types of Interpreting environmental environmental quality and materials and their impact health on the environment Natural Resource-Michigan's geography, flora Awareness of community (plants) and fauna (animals) The role of hoop houses Harvesting cycles gardens and their impact on and respecting them for the community pollinators **Based Skills** Species observation, invasive Art as a form of educating in Beginner level construction plant monitoring and control, Re-use of materials the environment and of outdoor furniture & sustainable landscaping techniques, water quality sustainability various trades sampling and testing Landscape design & how to How to prevent the spread of **Urban Farming & Agriculture** use a variety of landscape invasive species tools safely

Life Skills

Empathy

Conflict Resolution

Financial Literacy (i.e., banking, budgeting, saving; using debit cards, investing & credit)

Interpersonal Skills

Journaling

Stress Management

Goal Setting

Healthy Meal Prep, Cooking, Grocery Shopping & Foraging

Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Community Engagement

Character Development

Positive Mental Attitude & Healing Circles

Workplace & Employability Skills

Workplace Ethics	Workplace Behavior & Expectations	Customer Service	Motivation & Taking Initiative	Time Management	Social Media in the Workplace	Workplace Appearance
Timesheets & Payroll	Teamwork & Cooperation	Resumes, Cover & Thank You Letters	Critical Thinking	Communication Styles & Skills	Workplace Safety & Diversity	Dressing for Success
Creativity	Entrepreneurship	Prioritizing Work Task	Job Searching	Interviewing	Problem-Solving	Negotiating Skills
Debating in an informal setting	Robert's Rules of Order	Professional Networking	Allocating Resources	Public Speaking & Engagement	Data Collection	Business Etiquette
Research	Planning & Organizing	Completing a Job Application	Customer Service	Professionalism	Community Engagement	Information Processing

Visited 16 State Parks

State Parks & Recreation Areas Aloha State Park **Bald Mountain Recreation Area** Bay City State Park Belle Isle State Park Flint State Park Hayes State Park Mackinac Island State Park Maybury State Park Pontiac Lake Recreation Area Port Crescent State Park **Proud Lake Recreation** Seven Lakes State Park South Higgins State Park Waterloo Recreation Area Wilderness State Park William G. Milliken State Park & Harbor

2023 Colleges Visited, Credential & Certification Trainings

Delta College

Michigan State University

MIAT College of Technology

Saginaw Valley State University

OSHA 10

Boater Safety

Machine Guarding

Fire Safety

Active Shooter

CPR, First Aid & AED

Narcan

ServSafe Food Handler Certification

Natural Resource-Based & Outdoor Recreational Activities





Centro Multicultural La Familia Pontiac, MI





Detroit Hispanic
Development Corporation
Detroit, MI





Genesee Area Focus Fund Flint, MI





Green Door Initiative Detroit, MI





Healthy
Kidz, Inc.
Detroit, MI







Neighborhood Building Urban Gardens Detroit, MI

Northend Christian Community Development Corporation Detroit, MI







Saginaw County Community Action Committee Saginaw, MI



Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision Project Detroit, MI

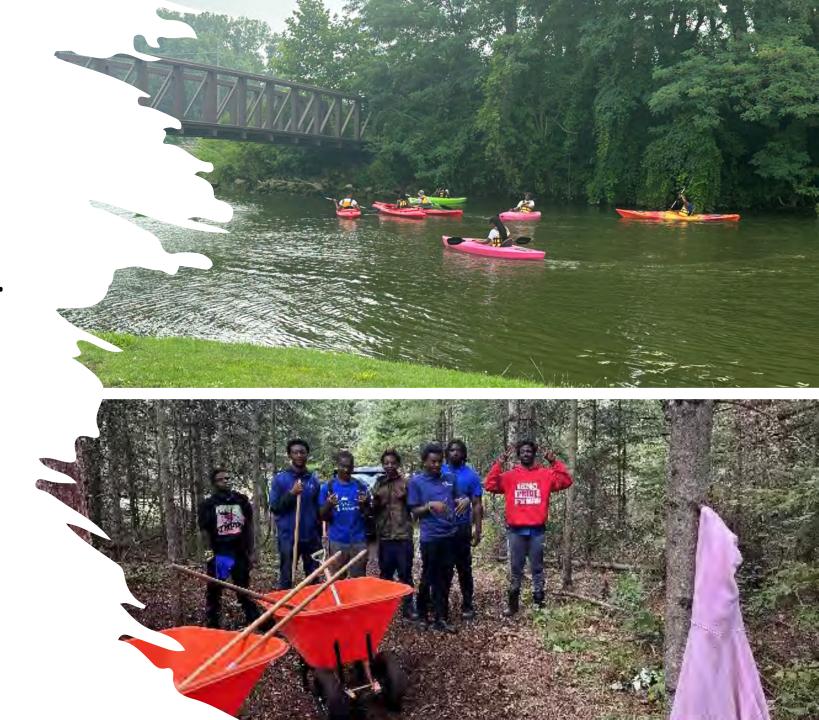




The Lawn Academy Detroit, MI



The Youth Connection, Inc.
Detroit, MI



Urban Neighborhood Initiatives





2023 Program Outcomes

47 youth matriculated to college

• Various Majors – veterinarian medicine, psychology, electrical engineering, social work, business administration, pre-med, nursing, agriculture, music education, criminal justice, physical therapy, computer technology, sports management, financial advisor, education, art, mechanical engineering, etc.

36 youth were hired after SYEP

 Various Positions – construction, groundskeeping, retail, service industry, landscaping, painting, non-profit, etc.

6 youth matriculated to skilled trades school or advanced training programs

• Various Areas - truck driving, construction, pre-apprenticeship, IT, tree trimming, etc.

115 youth returned to high school

Remaining youth are still undecided

Questions?



Contact Info

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Youth Engagement & Employment Coordinator

DNR, Parks & Recreation

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Thank you!

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Infrastructure Updates







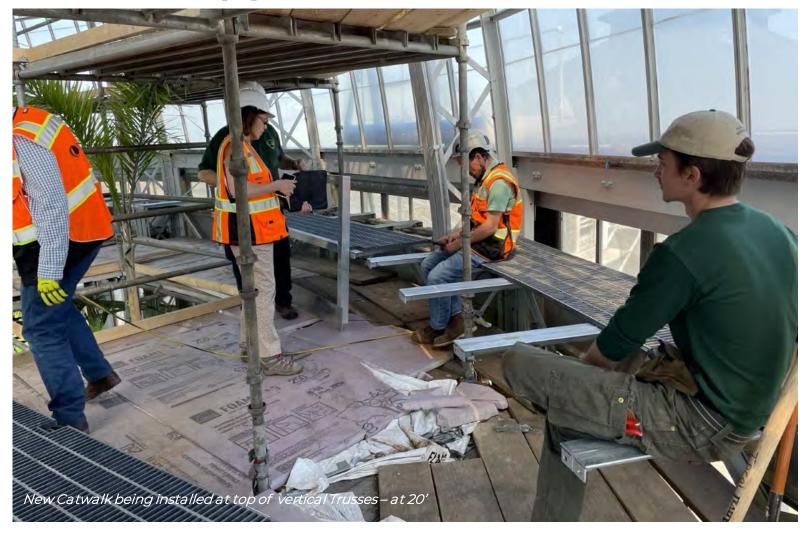
Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

- Exterior Scaffolding is removed.
- Ideal preparing to install new catwalks in dome.
- New Glass for lower houses will be ordered, currently scaffolding going up for the cactus house.
- Architect finalizing plans for show room floor improvements.
- Ideal is pricing the vestibule roof.



Ariel of scaffolding being removed.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



Project Status

 New fiberglass catwalk being installed at the base of the dome.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory



Replacement catwalk being installed at top of cupola – at 80'



New motors on upper cupola windows and handrails for new upper catwalk

Belle Isle Casino

- Safety Railing has been installed on the flat roof.
- New LED lights ordered.
- Roof tiles to be delivered to site next week for contractor to start installation.



Laser scanning to measure roof dimensions between valleys..

Ralph Wilson Trail Phase 2 Construction

Project Status

- Pre-bid meeting with general contractors was Friday, April 12th.
- Bids will be due in June.
- Contract to be awarded in July.

Phase 1: 2.5 Miles Phase 2: 3.3 Miles (Plus additional 0.2 mile gap at the DYC from phase 1) Gateway ___

Phase 2 will complete the 5.8 mile multi-use trail around the park..

ARPA funded investments

Engineering Proposals for Parkwide & Site Investments design services. Consultants to be announced next month.

- Hazardous material remediation.
- Former zoo structure removals.
- Boathouse specifications and removals



Entrance buildings to the former zoo damaged by hazardous trees.

ARPA funded investments

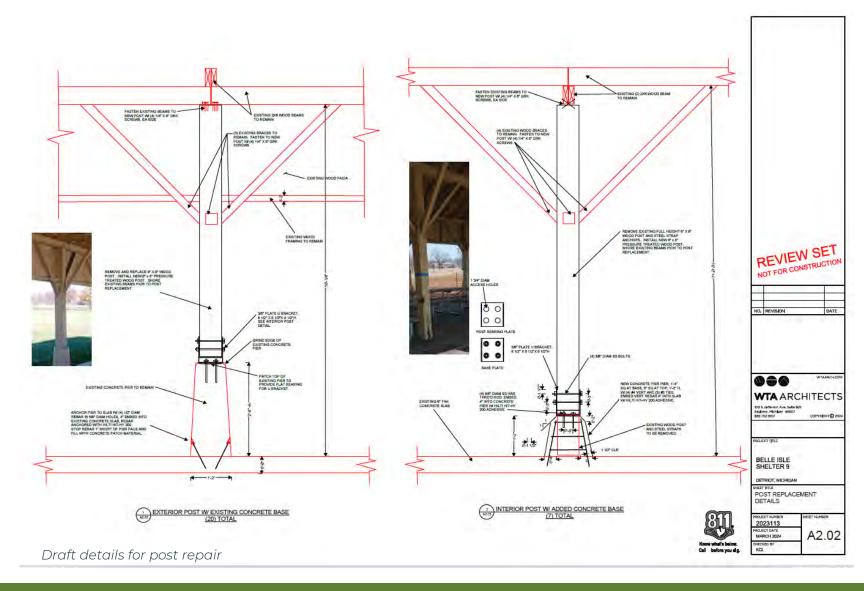
- Engineering Proposals have been reviewed and currently DTMB is working to award consultants' contracts. These will be announced next month.
- Belle Isle Aquarium and Conservatory Facility Development Plan
- Belle Isle Park Strategic Development Plan



The Belle Isle Park Strategic Plan will be based upon previous planning studies including the multimodal mobility plan.

Shelter #9 Structural Repairs

- Funding in Place for repairs
- Project team reviewing structural details to ensure historic structure compliance and minimize exposure of steel on interior post bases.



Flynn Pavilion



- Window repairs on front of Flynn complete and have been painted.
- Wood replacement on south windows continues and glass for observation space will be on site for installation this month.

Belle Isle Sawmill

- New barn doors on site and installation has been delayed as not all of the hardware was included in shipping.
- Contractor expected to wrap up next week.



Board and batten has been installed.

