

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

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

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

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC Michele Hodges, Chair Michael Curis Angela Lugo-Thomas Meagan Elliott Dr. Lonnie Peek

Absent

Sommer Woods

DNR Staff Present Tom Bissett Gail Fitch Todd Szyska Darlisa Terrell Marie Kaphengst Robb McKay Griselda Trevino Erika Compton Barbrea Young Barbara Graves

Others Present Harry Jones, President, Detroit Community Sailing Center Lance Couturier, Michigan State Police Maud Lyon, Belle Isle Conservancy Amy Greene, Nature Center Director, Detroit Zoological Society

Chair Hodges called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and roll was taken.

Chair Hodges then asked for a motion to approve the June 20, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Member Curis, supported by Member Lugo-Thomas, and passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Belle Isle Conservancy Update given by President Meagan Elliott. The presentation included the priorities of community engagement, communications, and coalition building.

Harry Jones, President of the Detroit Community Sailing Center, then gave a presentation on the Detroit Community Sailing Program that included the Center's history, the program's vision, examples of classroom and workshop activities and on-water activities, partnerships, business plan, and desired locations on the island for the program in the future. For more information go to SailingDetroit.org. (Presentation attached.)

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, then gave the department and park updates which included updates on the budget, the 40th Metro Youth Day, the giant slide and other offered amenities for those who cannot ride the slide.

Lt. Todd Szyska continued with the law updates and the success of the Metro Youth Day and Kite Festival events. He mentioned the traffic issues with the 4th of July firework event that were caused due to the Tiger's game that took place on the same day. He again reminded everyone to keep their speed on the island to under 25 mph.

Lt. Lance Couturier wanted to put out the message that non-permitted events need to be curtailed, as they caused some issues with traffic and reckless driving. July 27 from 9 a.m. to noon they will be hosting a car show for the Special Olympics at the Metro South Post.

Member Curis asked for a monthly report of the tickets issued on the island with a comparison to last year.

Amanda Treadwell then gave the infrastructure update, focusing on the two ARPA projects the conservatory and the casino. (Report attached.)

Public Comment

Martin Davis – Spoke about the tennis courts and parking lot.

Mary Durand – Asked about memorial lighthouse plans.

Member Comments

Member Elliott said she is excited to dig into the final recommendations of the Mobility Study and looks forward to updating the group on the work of the BIC.

Member Lugo-Thomas thanked everybody for being there and for sharing what they are doing for the island.

Chair Hodges acknowledge Maud Lyon who serves on the Conservancy Board of Directors and served as the interim between her and Meagan Elliott. She also acknowledged MoBIG representative Norma Keil Shaw and another great programming opportunity on Belle Isle.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Next regular meeting: Thursday, August 15, 2024 at 6 p.m.

Grand Canal, Belle Isle, Detroit, Mich.

BIPAC July 18, 2024 Belle Isle Conservancy Update



A new organizational chapter

- Building off of the strengths of the first era of BIC
- Expanding our focus to be representative of the entire island
- Strong alignment with public priorities for greater investment



Priority 1:

Community Engagement

- Participating in and supporting MDNR's island-wide Development Plan
- Understanding the relationship between who we engage and who we are missing
- Any opportunities to tap into existing community meetings (particularly for folks that aren't tapped into Belle Isle right now)?

Priority 2: Communications



- Stage 1, just capturing the joy of being on Belle Isle in all seasons
- Stage 2, facilitating broader messaging with public that supports all island stakeholders (ex: what's happening on the island, opportunities, etc.)

Priority 3: Coalition Building



- The ARPA era is winding down, and we will have greater bandwidth now to look ahead
- What are the next sources for a major tranche of public and private funding?

Detroit River Education and Sailing Center

Belle Isle Advisory Committee Meeting July 18, 2024

Detroit Community Sailing Center

www.SailingDetroit.org









Detroit Community Sailing Center

ww.SailingDetroit.org

About Us

- **1994 Founded** as Challenge the Wind Youth Sailing Program by the Grayhaven Sail Club, with a mission to teach sailing to youth who would not otherwise get exposure to the sport
- 2004 Non-Profit 501(c)(3) governed by an independent board
- 2011 10-year growth plan adopted with 2 sailboats and 8 participants
- 2018 Relocated to Belle Isle with 26 sailboats and capacity for 80 participants
- 2021 Detroit Community Sailing Center name change and as we launched Adult Learn to Sail, STEM and Water Safety programs
- 2023 Targeted Recruiting Served 100+ youth and 100+ adults. Currently we have 40 sail 3 safety/coach powerboats

Detroit Community Sailing Center

ww.SailingDetroit.org

Detroit Free Press - 08/06/2023

WHERE WE LIVE: DETROIT

SAILING TO NEW HORIZONS



Clark Goeman, 35, of Hamtramck, left, a 420 CM sailboat sailing coach, helps Lilly Bhogle, 14, of Canton onto his boat as Lyla Garcia, 12, waits for another sailor to trade places as they train in their Challenge the Wind was started by the Detroit Community Sailing Center who teaches youth ages 10-17 how to sail. The emphasis is on water safety and STEM to help increase access to Detroit's waterways for youth who would otherwise not get the opportunity. PHOTOS BY MAND WINGHT/DETROIT FREE PRESS





Kyla Foreman, 10, of Detroit, left, holds a rope as Harry Jones, Detroit Community Sailing Center president, makes some adjustments for her and her crewmate Eleazar Smith, 10, of Detroit, on the Optimist (opti) boat they will set sail in on the Detroit River as part of their participation in the Challenge the Wind program on July 24 from the banks of the Belle Isle Boathouse. PHOTOS BY MANDI WRIGHT/DETROIT FREE PRESS

There's a transformation happening in youth at the Belle Isle Boat House

Mandi Wright Detroit Free Press otherwise would not have the opportunity to participate.



Detroit River Education and Sailing Center

Program Vision

- Place-based learning programs and opportunities.
- Programing will include river-centered STEM, local history, environmental, career/education pathways exploration, and water safety.
- Open to public and focus on reaching underserved youth.
- Year-round with accessible fees.
- Delivered in classrooms, workshops and on the water.



Classrooms and Workshops Example

Winter After School Activity

Partnership with U of M Detroit Story Lab and sponsored by the Skillman Foundation

Building a sailboat Includes:

- Learning to use hand tools, engineering drawings, epoxies, etc.
- STEM
- River environment understanding and appreciation
- Detroit and river culture and history.

Detroit River Education and Sailing Center

Classroom and Workshop Activities

- Marine/Biology studies
- River history, culture & research
- Boats, kayaks and SUP building platform
- Marine Park Maintenance skills
- Aquatic studies, Exhibit space & research
- Marine industry skills
- Marine Equipment maintenance
- Boat maintenance and repairs



On Water Activities (Training & Recreation)

- Water safety
- Scientific exploration of the river and park interior lakes
- Testing student- built boats
- Sailing, Kayaking SUP, canoeing, rowing & more
- HS sailing team training center
- Adaptive sailing



On Water Activity Example

High school students exploring Detroit River shoreline with college level (marine) biology students as guides.

Picture is a similar program in a City Park in Bladensburg MD (Washington DC suburb)



Detroit River Education and Sailing Center

Partners

- U of M Detroit River Story Lab
- Detroit Swims (YMCA)
- Youth Nautical Education Foundation
- Skillman
 Foundation
- Detroit River Education Coalition
- USCG?
- DPS/Charter Schools?

Business Plan

Ongoing operations funding from participant/ user fees, donations and future endowments.

Governance

Expand existing DCSC board with stake holders from government, users, schools and funders.

Cost/Funding

Capital and Operating costs are site dependent.

Funding is based on firm and mutually achievable objectives.

Timetable

Site dependent

Programming proceeding with location uncertainty

Cost Estimating

Design

Lease Agreement

Design/engineering approvals/permits

Construction bidding

Construction

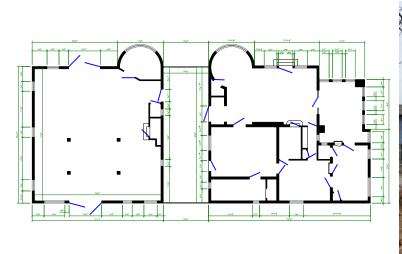
Occupancy

Infrastructure Option 1 Gateway at the Boathouse

- Gateway's proposal is our preferred option
- Our river education center and sailing/water access plans can be accomplished at the Boathouse.
- River between bridge and beach is idea area for non motorized watercraft.
- Concern with ROI with the high renovation and ongoing building maintenance cost.



Infrastructure Option 2 Police Station and North Fishing Pier





Good, but **expensive option**.

Recent walk through with DLZ architect firm revealed regulatory and environmental requirements will add significant cost.

DLZ's pending estimate will be based on relocating the sailing program to the North Fishing Pier and establish the first floor of the Police Station as a new education center. This will involve:

- Repair and update the pier, installing docks and adjacent equipment storage
- Restore shoreline and creating a boat launching beach
- Renovate the police station's first floor for occupancy
- Remediate the entire building
- "Whitebox" the 2nd floor and attic for future expansion



Infrastructure Option 3 New Construction in Bridge to Beach area





Cost-efficient option.

- Designed to effectively deliver place-based education and river access
- Design appearance appropriate for Bell Isle environment
- Will appeal to sense of public accessibility.
- Future opportunities include activating potential of Belle Isle facilities as an education campus.

Ex. Pictured : Presented by DLZ architect firm. Richard L. Bready Mt Hope Bay "Sailing and Education Center", an existing structure at a university in RI.



Questions? Feedback?



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Infrastructure Updates



July 18, 2024



Project Status

- Low Houses Scaffolding being erected over the cactus house to prepare for glass installation
- Showroom –New concrete surfacing installation underway.
- Exterior sidewalks Perimeter sidewalk replacement complete, Lake Tacoma overlook in process and Conservatory Garden sidewalks along front of Conservatory and at to also be replaced.



Floor replacement in Showroom underway.



New sidewalk installed between Conservatory entrance and Picnic Way.







New ADA access at Aquarium entrance.



Lake Tacoma overlook to have new concrete paving.



New roof on vestibule underway.



Limestone panels from vestibule will be replaced. Material to be stockpiled for future use within facility.



Contractor removing brick around steel supports in preparation of repair/replacement.



Construction crew finishing roof replacement.



Casino roof, dormer siding, gutters, downspout replacement progressing.

Eave repairs complete and new LED soffit Lights installed.



Porch ceiling repairs underway. Damage due to leaks from mechanical room



Various interior repairs due to roof leaks entering second floor.



New skylight, security railing and flat roof replacement.



Stained glass medallion, new skylight, lighting and paint in space above increase illumination of medallion.

Multimodal Mobility Study

Comprehensive Recommendations

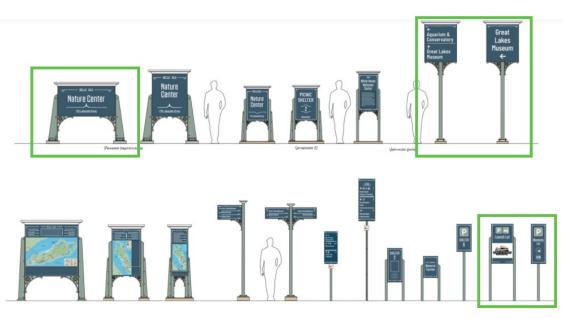
- Wayfinding signage plan
- Jefferson Ave. and Grand Blvd. Intersection Improvements
- Toll Booth and Recreation Passport Communication Improvements
- Right sizing parking at most popular sites and reconnecting Vista Ave.
- Add separated/buffered bike lane on MacArthur Bridge.
- Central Ave. Promenade and 2-way conversion
- Small Interventions at large intersections for improved safety.

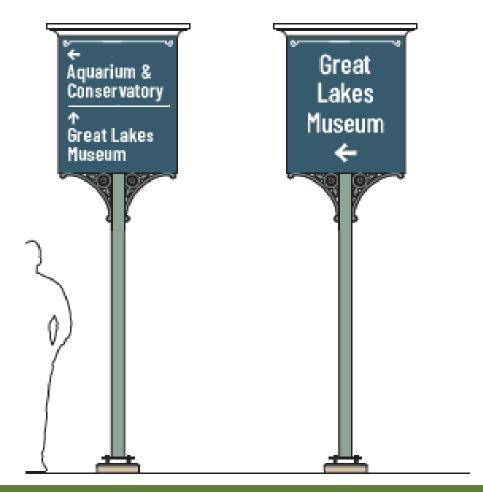
- Complete walking and biking Networks.
- Complete Configuration around Scott Fountain and Casino parking improvements.
- Pilot project for safer crosswalks at beach and Dossin.
- Expanding multimodal transportation.

Multimodal Mobility Study

Initial phase – Vehicular Signage

- Entry Signage Recreation Passport Direction
- Wayfinding at Entrance
- Information Map





Multimodal Mobility Study

Interim circulation recommendations

- Increase pedestrian circulation
- Increase bicycle circulation
- Improve vehicular circulation

Phase 2 Wilson Trail, 2024 2-Way Cycle Track, 2024 Central Ave. Conversion, 2025

> Vista Ave. Reconnection, 2026