



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: October 17, 2024

Location: 99 Pleasure Dr., Detroit, MI 48207

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Present for BIPAC

Dr. Meagan Elliott, Chair
Michael Curis
Angela Lugo-Thomas
Dr. Brian Banks
Melia Howard

Absent

Dr. Lonnie Peak
Sommer Woods

DNR Staff Present

Ron Olson, Chief
Tom Bissett
Gail Fitch
Raelyn Maroney
Erika Compton
Lt. Todd Szyska
Darlisa Terrell
Marie Kaphengst
Tim Novak
Scott Pratt
Robbert McKay
Barbara Graves

Others Present

Lt. Lance Couturier, MSP
Dee Dee Martin, BIC
Maud Lyon, BIC
Nancy Vella, BIC
Aly Melnik, BIC

Chair Elliott opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and began with a resolution to recognize Michele Hodges for her service to the Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee, before opening the floor for colleagues to introduce themselves, including a special introduction to the newest BIPAC member, Melia Howard.

Chair Elliott then asked for a motion to approve the September 19, 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 Parks and Recreation update. Ron Olson, Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation Division, spoke on the progress of the projects on Belle Isle, including the ARPA funds for the Anna Scripps-Whitcomb Conservatory, Casino, and the yet-to-be worked on Aquarium and James Scott Memorial Fountain, as well as cleaning up the zoo area. He spoke on the deadlines for the ARPA funding, as well as some other possible updates to the Recreation Passports.

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, gave an update on summer staffing, and a 'shout out' to Darlisa Terrell, the Belle Isle Events Coordinator, for her hard work in putting together and planning the Harvest Festival that took place on October 12, 2024. He spoke about the success of the Harvest Festival, and how well received it was by the community. He spoke on the MDOT resurfacing project and mentioned to pay close attention to the lane shifts as you come onto Belle Isle, as well as the continuation of the Ralph J. Wilson Jr. Trail expansion.

Gail Fitch, Belle Isle Park Supervisor, gave an update on restroom closures and winterization on various non-heated restrooms around the park. He mentioned that the restrooms at the Bus Stop are heated and will be open year-round.

Chair Elliott seconded Tom Bissett's shoutout to Darlisa for the Harvest Festival, stating she came with her family and had a wonderful time.

Tom Bissett then spoke on the memorandum he sent to the Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee to propose a special meeting for the presentation of the Belle Isle boathouse proposal. He suggested two meeting times, October 29, 2024 or November 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Flynn Pavilion.

Chair Elliott agreed it was a good idea to have a secondary meeting and asked for a formal motion to approve the special meeting on November 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. located at the Flynn Pavilion. The motion was moved by member Lugo-Thomas, supported by member Curis, and passed unanimously.

Member Curis requested that the BIPAC members receive the written proposal ahead of time so they can review and formulate questions. Tom Bissett will send the proposal before the special session.

Mr. Bissett also advised that the meeting will be held in a hybrid format, so that members of the public that may not be able to attend in person can do so on-line.

Lt. Todd Szyska, DNR Law, gave an update on fall operations, speeding issues, and the Harvest Festival. Mr. Szyska also gave a 'shout out' to citizen Michele Hodges for all her hard work and dedication to the BIPAC team, as well as her support for the Law Division.

Member Curis inquired about electronic speed limit signs as a remedy to the speeding problem on Belle Isle, to which Lt. Szyska replied that it is a cost limitation that is preventing more speed monitors on Belle Isle, and that he and Tom Bissett have been working on coordinating funding for those monitors and working with MDOT on how to slow vehicles down, including possibly adding speed bumps around the island.

Chair Elliott inquired about the recent articles on the trespassing citations from the prom photographs in the abandoned Belle Isle zoo and if he could speak on that. Lt. Todd Szyska spoke on how the old zoo is a safety hazard, and strongly urges the public to stay out of the zoo area. Lt. Szyska mentioned that DNR Law as well as members of the DNR Parks and Recreation Division are working on ways to keep people out of that area, which includes issuing citations. Mr. Bissett also added that the structures are being scheduled for demolition and reiterated what Lt. Szyska stated that Belle Isle is a wonderful place for event photographs, however the zoo location is not one of them.

Lt. Lance Couturier, MSP, gave an update on troopers that attended the Harvest Festival and stated they had a wonderful time and that concluded all updates for MSP.

Amanda Treadwell, Urban Field Planner, then gave a presentation on the infrastructure updates for the Conservatory, casino, shelters, MDOT micro surfacing project, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail, Athletic Center, and the zoo. Ms. Treadwell also spoke on updates for the ARPA funds and ADA accessibility improvements. Chair Elliott inquired about the obligated versus unobligated ARPA dollars and Ms. Treadwell responded that everything apart from \$400,000 has been obligated. Member Curis inquired about the status of the \$2,000,000 that was originally dedicated to the demolition of the boathouse. Ms. Treadwell responded that it is all allocated from one budget, so there is flexibility to where things go. Member Curis wanted clarification that there

will be no ARPA funds being dedicated to the boathouse. Tom Bissett responded that is to be determined based on the boathouse proposal and how quickly questions can be answered. He stated that the money is obligated through the project manager, so that the funds can be utilized based on the proposal, so if the proposals do not go as planned, then the funds can be used for something else for the boathouse, and the \$2,000,000 is not wasted just because that proposal did not work out. (Presentation attached).

Chair Elliott clarified for the public that ARPA funds, under federal regulations, must be under contract for a project for it to be considered obligated. She further clarified that all the ARPA funding apart from \$400,000 is already under contract, so what happens to the money after that is determined by the contract manager, so that it is not to be wasted.

Public Comment

Amy Hubbard – Voiced her excitement for the November 7, 2024 proposal meeting and brought up possible ideas for speed limit signs around the island.

Henry Goitz, Friends of Detroit Rowing (along with Todd Platt) – Wanted clarification on the ARPA funds for the boathouse. He Voiced concerns for ARPA guidelines and the timeline we are on for the it.

Lisa DiChiera, Historic Designation Advisory Board – Thanked Tom Bissett for his assistance and voiced their advocacy for the revitalization of the boathouse, requested some portion of the ARPA funds go to the boathouse, and asked for the information regarding the November 7 meeting be sent as soon as possible so the word can get out.

Carolyn – Thanked Michele Hodges for all her help with the Conservancy. Voiced opinions to host the Holiday Stroll and concerns about the traffic direction through the forest.

Member Comment

Angela Lugo Thomas – Congratulated Michele Hodges and Dr. Meagan Elliott and welcomed Melia Howard. She asked that future openings for BIPAC be opened to the Indigenous community in Detroit and to invite them into conversations. She voiced support in saving the Belle Isle boathouse and is looking forward to the proposal and meeting on November 7. She mentioned her strong, personal connection to the zoo because her grandmother ran it for 12 years.

Michael Curis – Welcomed Melia Howard to the committee and Dr. Meagan Elliott as Chair of the committee. He voiced agreeance with Amy Hubbard about the speed limit signs coming onto the bridge.

Chair Elliott – Commented on member Lugo-Thomas' point on Indigenous representation on Belle Isle and said that when they continue with the island-wide planning process, they think about communities they have not yet engaged with on the island and how they can get them more involved.

Member Lugo-Thomas will be more involved with future conversations to make connections with those communities.

Chair Elliott reiterated the meeting time for the proposal, which is November 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Flynn Pavilion on Belle Isle.

Member Curis asked for proper sound and visual display at the November 7 meeting. He said we should reach out to Indigenous people to be involved in the plans with the zoo area and possibly allowing them to have a space where the zoo is located.

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

Next regular meeting: Thursday, November 21, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Infrastructure Updates

October 17, 2024



Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Project Status

- Tropical House – Glass installation underway.
- Cactus House – Abatement completed, and glass installation will begin this month.
- Limestone Panels – Installation of exterior dome base panels underway.
- Additional vertical glass replacement in the vestibule, dome and showroom.
- Showroom wall caps – Limestone cap mockup installed.



Limestone cap installation in showroom underway.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Tropical House



Tropical house roof glass has been removed, asbestos glazing compound abated and new glass and bar cap installation underway.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Vestibule Improvements

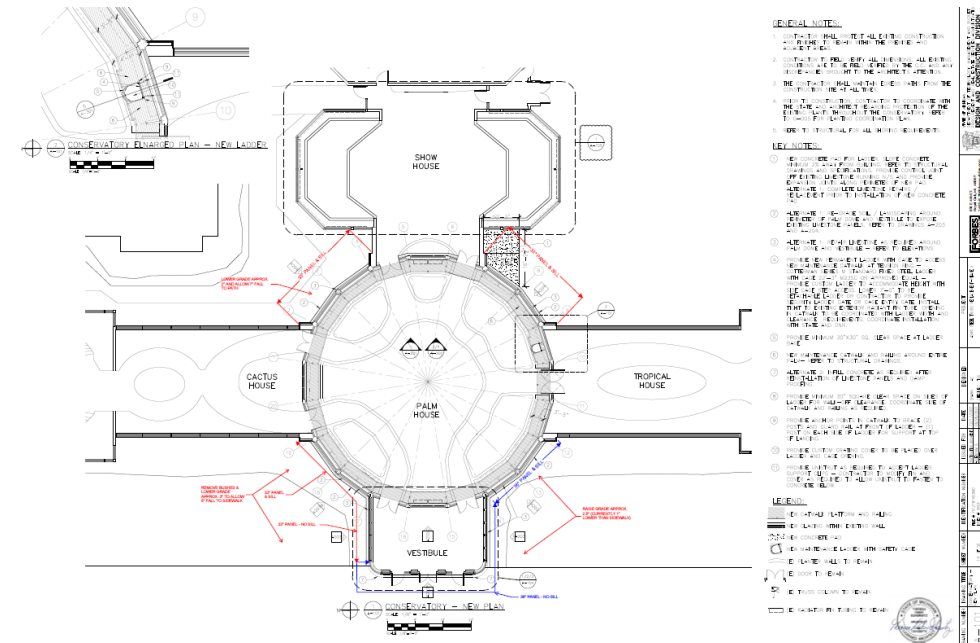


Waterproof membrane in place before new limestone panels to be installed.



Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Limestone Panel replacement



New Limestone Panels and Sill installed; Grading will drain away from wall.

Belle Isle Casino



Roof replacement complete. Crew cleaning up punch list items.

Belle Isle Casino



West side of casino.



East side of casino.

Belle Isle Casino



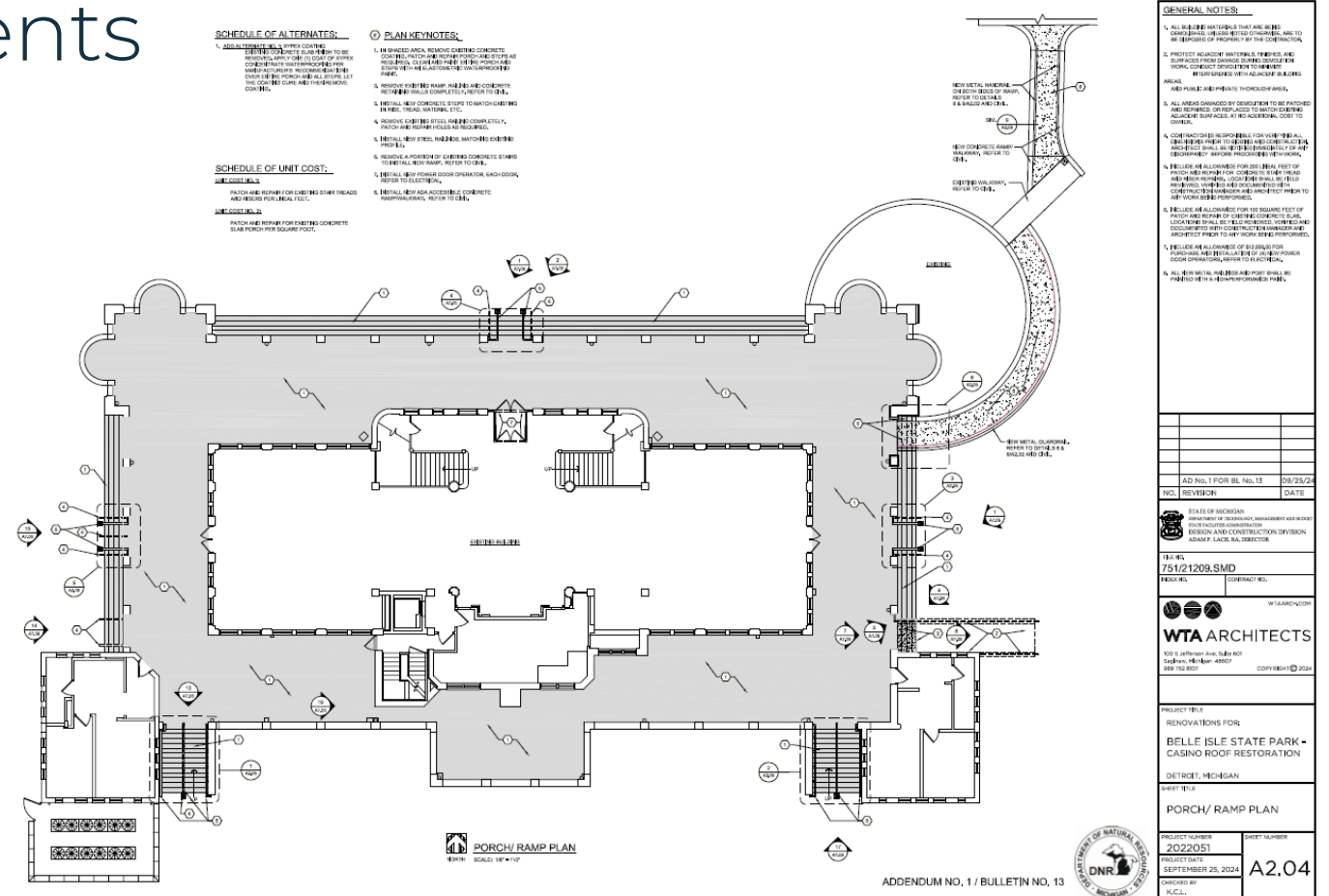
Tying in new storm lines in basement.

Belle Isle Casino

Porch Access Improvements

Scope of Work

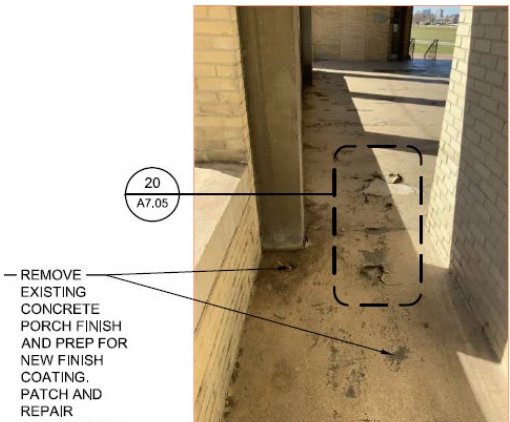
- Provide accessible path to plaza and porch levels from sidewalk.
- Improve front door to be accessible.
- Resurface porch and steps.
- Repair handrails.



Access to Casino to be improved before it is reopened for events.

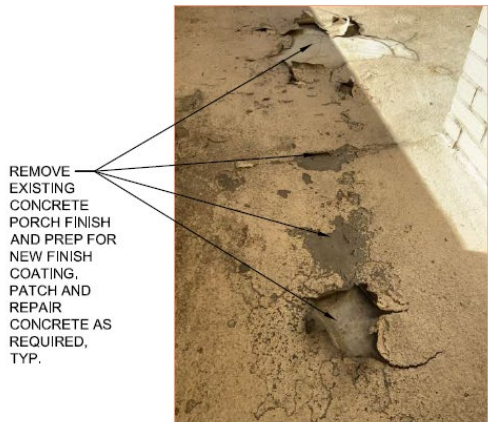
Belle Isle Casino

Porch Access Improvements -



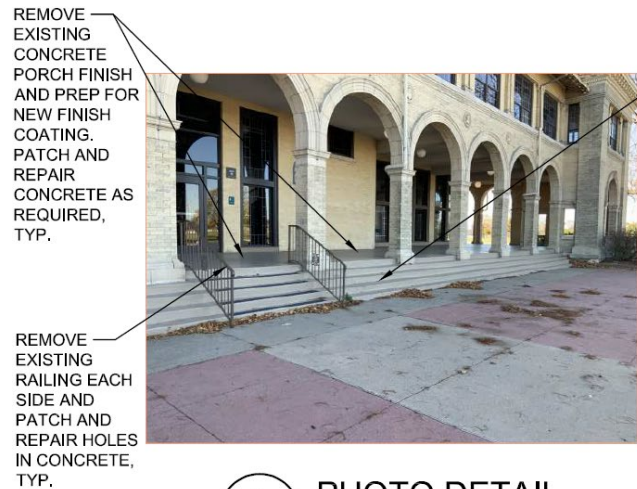
19
A7.05

PHOTO DETAIL
NO SCALE



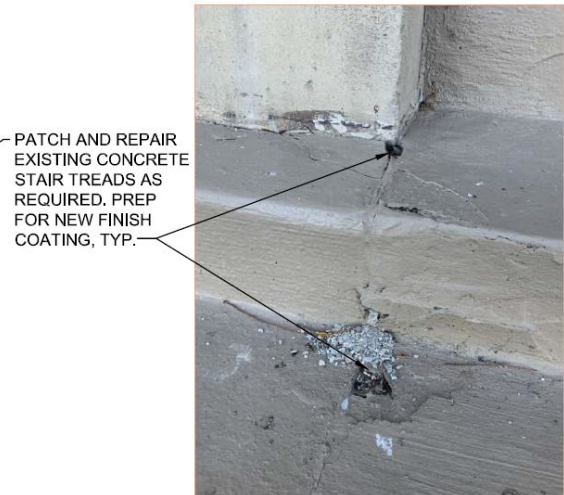
20
A7.05

PHOTO DETAIL
NO SCALE



2
A7.05

PHOTO DETAIL
NO SCALE



3
A7.05

PHOTO DETAIL
NO SCALE

Photo details of access surface issues that will be improved.

Belle Isle Casino

Porch Access Improvements – New Railing



PATCH AND REPAIR
EXISTING CONCRETE
STAIR TREADS AS
REQUIRED, PREP
FOR NEW FINISH
COATING, TYP.

REMOVE EXISTING
CONCRETE
PORCH FINISH
AND PREP FOR
NEW FINISH
COATING. PATCH
AND REPAIR
CONCRETE AS
REQUIRED, TYP.

12 PHOTO DETAIL
A7.06 NO SCALE



REMOVE
EXISTING
RAILING AND
PATCH AND
REPAIR HOLES
IN CONCRETE,
TYP.

REMOVE EXISTING
CONCRETE
PORCH FINISH
AND PREP FOR
NEW FINISH
COATING. PATCH
AND REPAIR
CONCRETE AS
REQUIRED, TYP.

13 PHOTO DETAIL
A7.06 NO SCALE



REMOVE EXISTING
CONCRETE PORCH FINISH
AND PREP FOR NEW FINISH
COATING. PATCH AND
REPAIR CONCRETE AS
REQUIRED, TYP.

REMOVE
EXISTING
RAILING EACH
SIDE AND
PATCH AND
REPAIR HOLES
IN CONCRETE,
TYP.

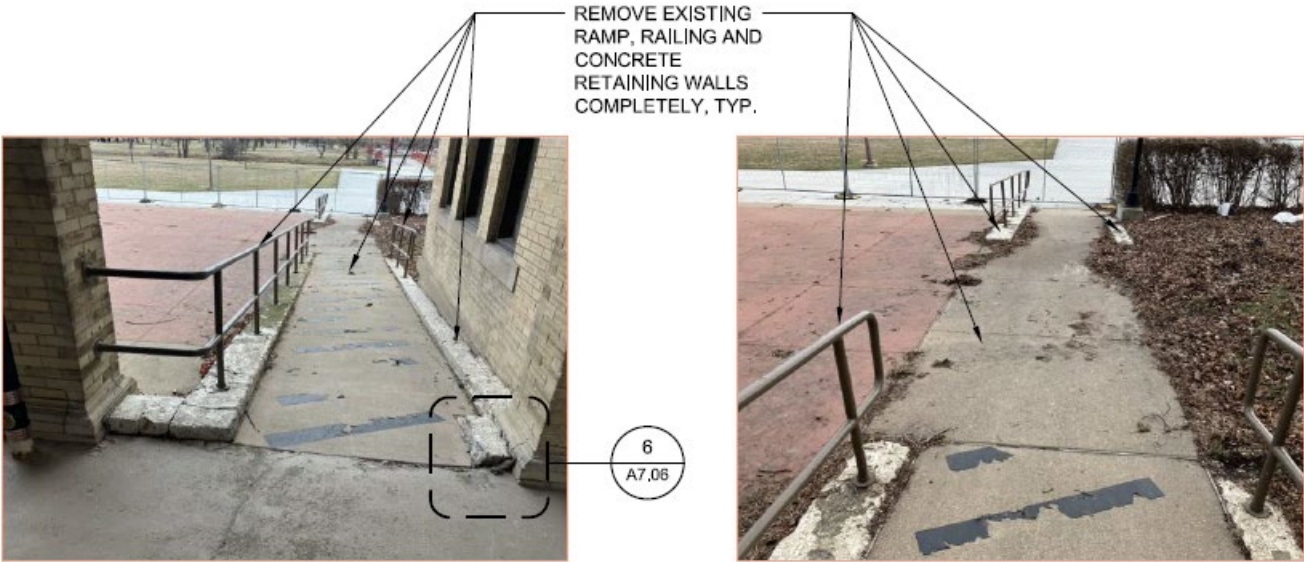
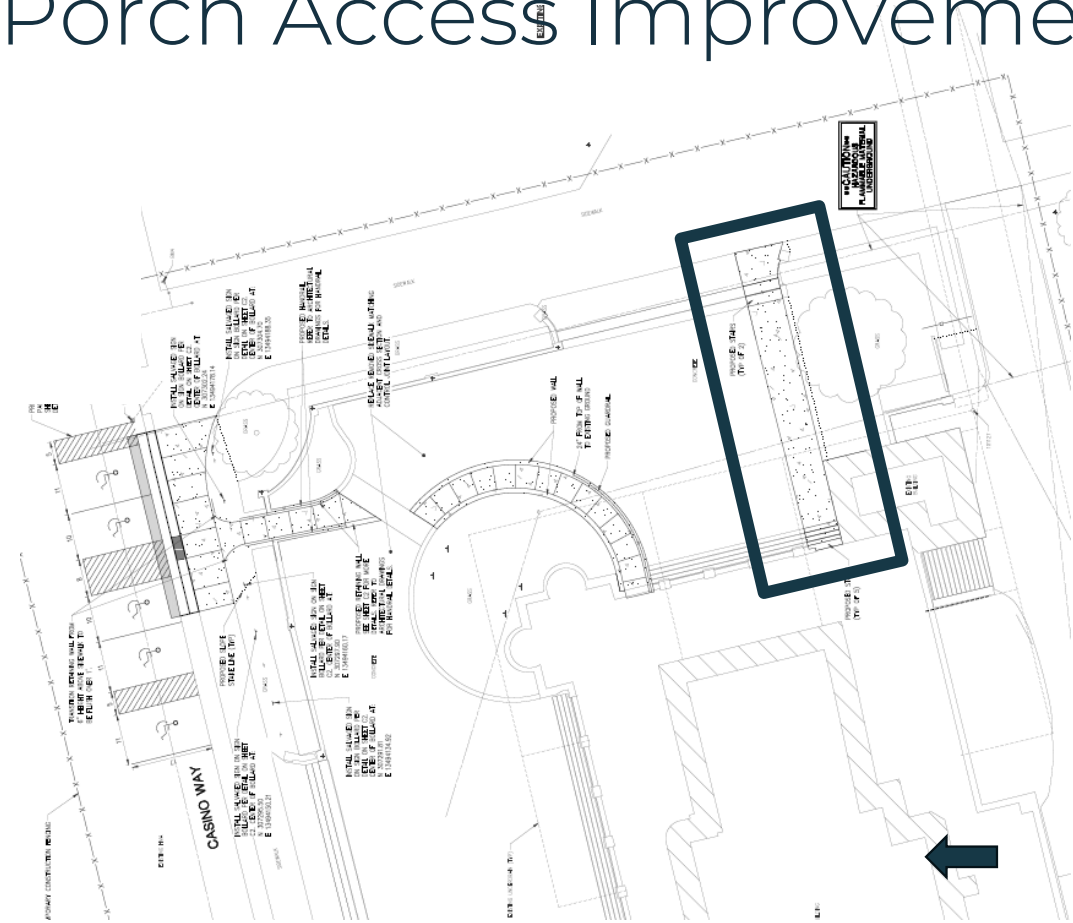
PATCH AND
REPAIR EXISTING
CONCRETE STAIR
TREADS AND
RISERS AS
REQUIRED, PREP
FOR NEW FINISH
COATING, TYP.

14 PHOTO DETAIL
A7.06 NO SCALE

Photo details of missing, broken and inconsistent railing will be replaced.

Belle Isle Casino

Porch Access Improvements



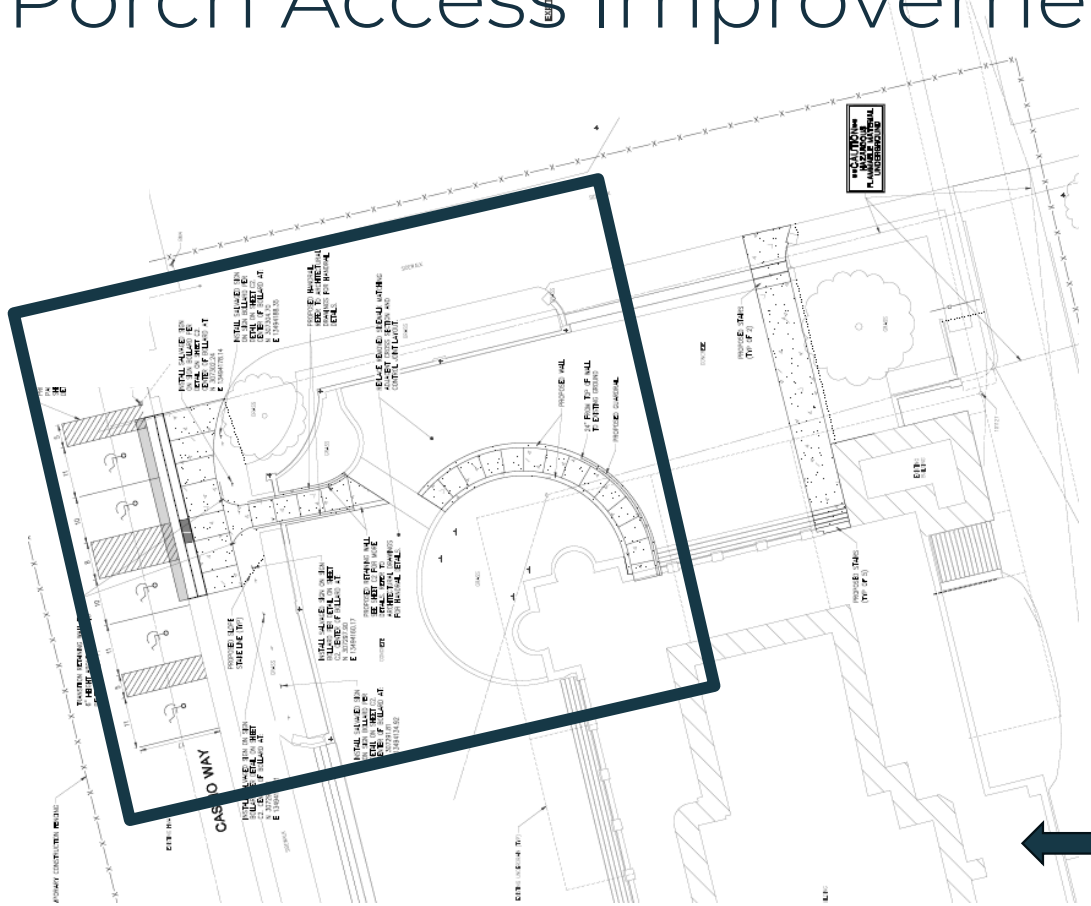
7 PHOTO DETAIL
A7.06 NO SCALE

8 PHOTO DETAIL
A7.06 NO SCALE

Existing ramp does not meet code and only accessible from the back of the building it, will be replaced.

Belle Isle Casino

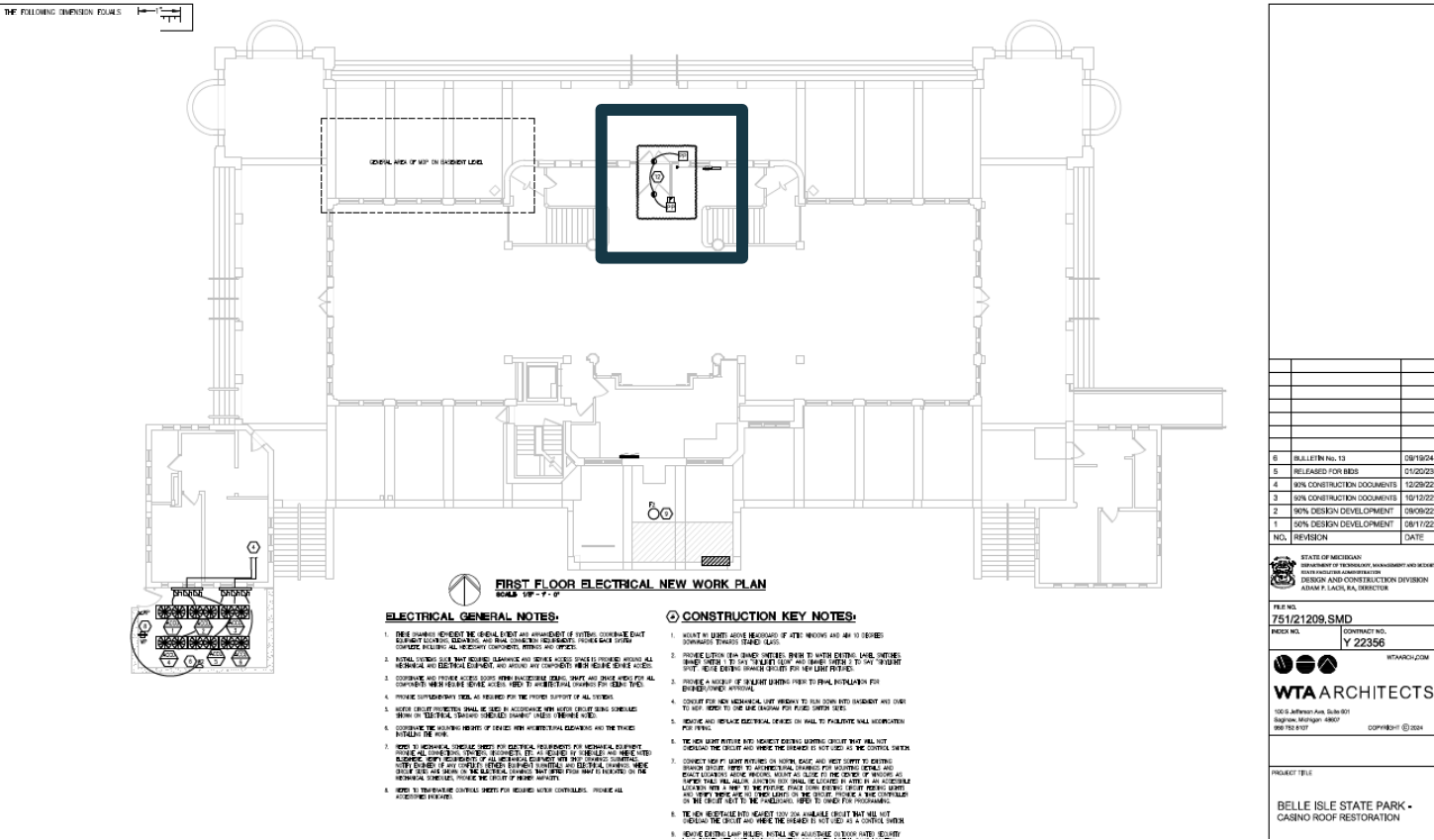
Porch Access Improvements – New Railing



New ramp will take visitors up to plaza and porch levels with a sloped walk.

Belle Isle Casino

Porch Access Improvements – Accessible main entry



8	ILLUSTRATION No. 13	08/18/24
9	RELEASED FOR BIDS	11/22/23
4	90% CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS	12/28/22
3	90% CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS	10/19/22
2	90% DESIGN DEVELOPMENT	08/09/22
1	90% DESIGN DEVELOPMENT	08/17/22
NO.	REVISION	DATE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND REVENUE
REVENUE ADMINISTRATION
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION DIVISION
ADAM P. LACOUR, DIRECTOR

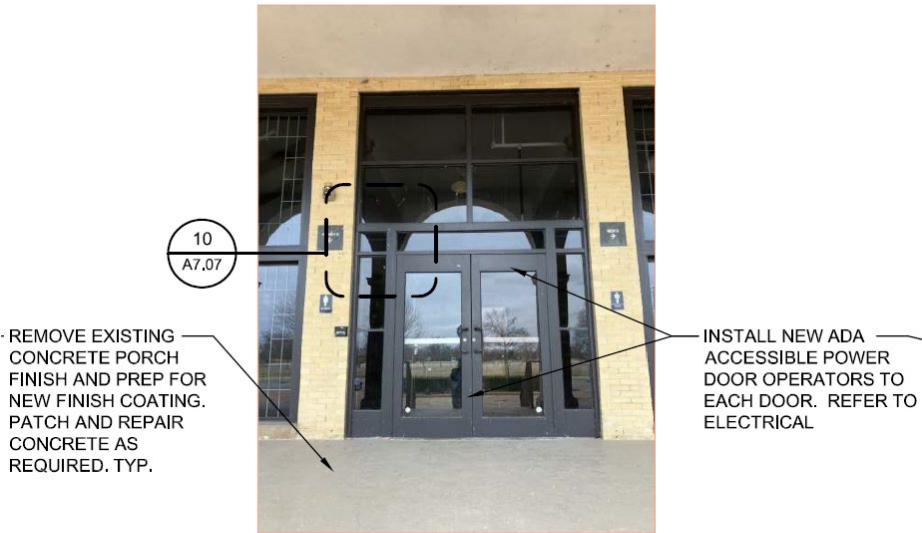
FILE NO.
751/21208.SMD

CONTRACT NO.
Y 22356

WTA ARCHITECTS
10000 Ardmore Ave., Suite 201
Bloomington, Michigan 48307
950.762.9107

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PROJECT TITLE
BELLE ISLE STATE PARK -
CASINO ROOF RESTORATION



· REMOVE EXISTING CONCRETE PORCH FINISH AND PREP FOR NEW FINISH COATING. PATCH AND REPAIR CONCRETE AS REQUIRED. TYP.

INSTALL NEW ADA ACCESSIBLE POWER DOOR OPERATORS TO EACH DOOR. REFER TO ELECTRICAL

9 A7.07 PHOTO DETAIL
NO SCALE

Front door is difficult to open and is not accessible..

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Lake Muskoday Lot

Project Look Ahead

- Lake Muskoday Section - complete by 10/18/2024.
- USCG Section – Mobilize by 10/18. Anticipate complete work by 10/30/2024.
- DYC Concrete Drive – Both entry and exit cured by 10/25/2024
- Native plant material being collected on Belle Isle now to grow for shoreline restoration next year.



Excavation for one of two hydrants along Riverbank.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Lake Muskoday Lot



Excavation for Wilson Trail.



Wilson Trail is now connected on North shore of park.

MDOT Microsurfacing

Picnic Way to MacArthur Bridge

Scope of Work

- Microsurfacing for roadway from Picnic Way to Bridge entry and exit.
- New pavement markings for vehicles and 2-way cycle track and on street parking.
- Special markings for cycle track at intersections
- Installation of new ADA ramps along the Strand.



Wilson Trail is now connected on North shore of park.

Shelter #9

Scope of Work

- Replacement of all posts and footings.
- Replacement of concrete under shelter and new concrete pad for grill and ash can.
- Shelter newly painted.
- Fishing railing repaired.



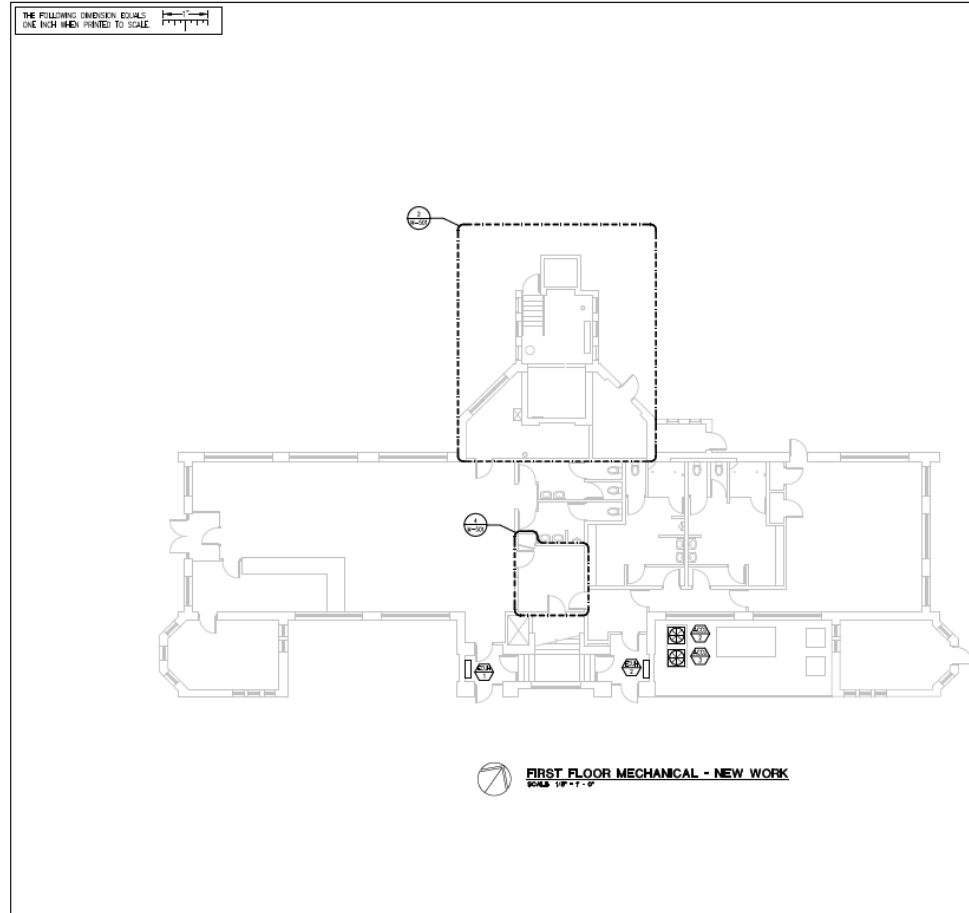
Shelter #9 Final inspection scheduled for October 21st, 2024.

Athletic Shelter Heating

Scope of Work

- New Heating unit for building to provide comfort level air conditioning.
- New wall units will be installed at south entry doorways.

Schedule – 35% Review was completed in August. Project to be bid in 2025.



New Heating system for Athletic Shelter will be installed in 2025

American Rescue Plan Act Projects

Engineering underway

	Project
➤	Scott Fountain structural stabilization
➤	Belle Isle Aquarium and Conservatory Facility Development plan and ADA access improvements
➤	Belle Isle Aquarium HVAC Construction
	Parkwide hazardous material abatement, structural repairs at multiple sites and removals
➤	Park Strategic Development Plan
➤	Park wayfinding signage
	TOTAL \$23,000,000.00



Zoo site visits have taken place to prepare for surveying and testing in coordination with removal plans.