



Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 21, 2024

Location: 99 Pleasure Dr., Detroit, MI 48207

Meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

Quorum established at 9:12 a.m.

Present for BIPAC

Dr. Meagan Elliott, Chair

Michael Curis

Angela Lugo-Thomas

Virtual:

Dr. Lonnie Peek; Detroit

Sommer Woods; Detroit

Absent

Dr. Brian Banks

Melia Howard

DNR Staff Present

Tom Bissett

Gail Fitch

Lt. Todd Szyska

Cynthia Boggerty-Craft

Erika Compton

Darlisa Terrell

Marie Kaphengst

Anthony Olshansky

Scott Pratt

Griselda Trevino

Laura Parnell

Robbert McKay

Barbara Graves

Others Present

Lt. Lance Couturier, MSP

Maud Lyon, BIC

Amy Emmert, BIC

Chair Elliott opened the meeting at 9:01 a.m. and began with information items.

Tom Bissett, Urban District Supervisor, began by congratulating Erika Compton who recently accepted a position as an Accounting Tech with the Resource, Protection and Promotion Section, and to Cynthia Boggerty-Craft who accepted a position to Lead Office Assistant at Belle Isle.

Tom continued with information about the food truck concession, which is now up for bid again. The contract is available at: [Michigan.gov/stateparkconcessions](https://michigan.gov/stateparkconcessions) and bids will be accepted through January 8. They are also accepting opportunities to be a vendor at the park. Anyone interested should reach out to the office, specifically to Cynthia Boggerty-Craft (boggertycraftc@michigan.gov). They will host an online session on November 27 for anyone who has questions about the process. There will be another opportunity for a session in December. The Sunset booth will be the only booth open right now. If the booth is not staffed, you can purchase a Recreation Passport at the kiosk, the drop pipe, or at the headquarters.

Gail Fitch, Park Supervisor, announced that the Scott Fountain is being shut down for the season. All restrooms are shut down for the winter, with the exception of the public side of the Flynn, Bus Stop Shelter 7 and the vault toilet by the parking lot near the Yacht club.

Chair Elliott officially called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. and began roll call.

Chair Elliott then asked for a motion to approve the October 17, 2024 meeting minutes. The motion was moved by Member Curis, seconded by Member Lugo-Thomas, and passed unanimously.

Chair Elliott mentioned the November 7, 2024 special meeting had over 170 people in attendance, one hundred in person and 70 online, and it was a great conversation. She combined all of the public comments and put them into a spreadsheet and asked the team doing the development and the MDNR to answer the questions so as to post them online. Those results are posted on the Boathouse information page at:

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/prd/boathouse>

Chair Elliott then called for a motion to approve the November 7, 2024 special meeting minutes. The motion was moved by Member Lugo-Thomas, supported by Member Curis, and passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Law Update. Lt. Todd Szyska, along with Sgt. Owens, DNR Law, announced the 6th annual Stuff a Truck program, a partnership with the Detroit Police Department, to help support the children of Detroit. The program will have bins placed at the Outdoor Adventure Center, Belle Isle Park headquarters and Maybury State Park headquarters. Donations of new, unwrapped gifts will be accepted Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. November 30 they will host in-person at the Outdoor Adventure Center with a conservation officer and Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus present for photos.

Tom Bissett continued with the infrastructure update, which included an update on where they are at right now with the boathouse discussions. He then displayed a presentation of the various projects around the island, such as the Conservatory, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail, the MDOT micro-surfacing, Shelter #9, athletic shelter, and other ARPA projects.

Chair Elliott shared that the multimodal study is in its final stages. There is not a date yet for posting the update on the website, but it will be coming soon and publicized. They are also in the early stages of the island-wide development plan, which will build off the multimodal study in terms of participation and filling those gaps. She asked for people to let her know of any groups that may want to be involved.

Amy Emmert, Director of Education and Engagement, Belle Isle Conservancy, then gave an update on the bird banding program that has begun again on the island, led by Mr. Allen Chartier. The birds are collected and clasped around the leg with a metal band, which allows research to be done on species and migration patterns. If anyone wants to participate, you can contact Amy at emmerta@belleisleconservancy.org. The bird banding reports can be found at <https://mihummingbirdguy.blogspot.com/p/bird-banding-reports.html>.

Chair Elliott said with the December 4 reopening of the Conservatory, they are always looking for volunteers to be there during public hours of operation. If anyone is interested in this opportunity, they can find information on their website at www.belleisleconservancy.org at the volunteer link.

Public Comment

Rosebud Bear Schneider – Spoke of the large community of indigenous people in Detroit, many of whom use the island and care deeply for it, and about the Detroit Indigenous Peoples Alliance, a collective of many who work together and were instrumental in Detroit history.

David Carleton, Stuart-Pittman - He is from the development firm who submitted the boathouse proposal. Spoke of his excitement to attend the public meetings, finding out more about the island, and to hopefully be successful in the development of the boathouse.

Amy Hubbard – Asked about the boathouse timeline and if there will be another public meeting.

Lisa DiChiera, Deputy Director of Historic Designation Advisory Board under City Council – Spoke about the boathouse and asked about winterizing the roof.

Member Comment

Angela Lugo Thomas – Said it was important to have someone from the indigenous community attend the meeting as they have a large presence in Detroit, and that hopefully they can adjust the time of the meetings so more people can attend.

Michael Curis – He thinks there should be an exception for indigenous people so that they do not have to pay to enter the island. He also spoke on the boathouse and expressed that there will be some difficult decisions to be made with financing it, among others, and that there will need to be a process in place to decide these issues before we get too far into the process.

Sommer Woods – Echoed the comments about morning meetings being difficult to attend and having more than one evening meeting, the importance of including the indigenous community, and asked about the vendor sessions and if a separate communication could be sent to her to distribute to her networks.

Chair Elliott – Will send a survey to see what times make sense for the BIPAC meetings to occur in 2025.

Chair Elliott asked Tom about the next boathouse public meeting. Tom Bissett replied that the developer and DNR are first looking into a few things, among them funding and how the model will work as far as vendors and opportunities. Next steps are unclear at this time as they still need to coordinate with the city. They will look at more public meeting opportunities after the holidays. Questions and answers on the boathouse were supplied at <https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/prd/boathouse>.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.



Belle Isle Park Infrastructure Updates

November 21, 2024



Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

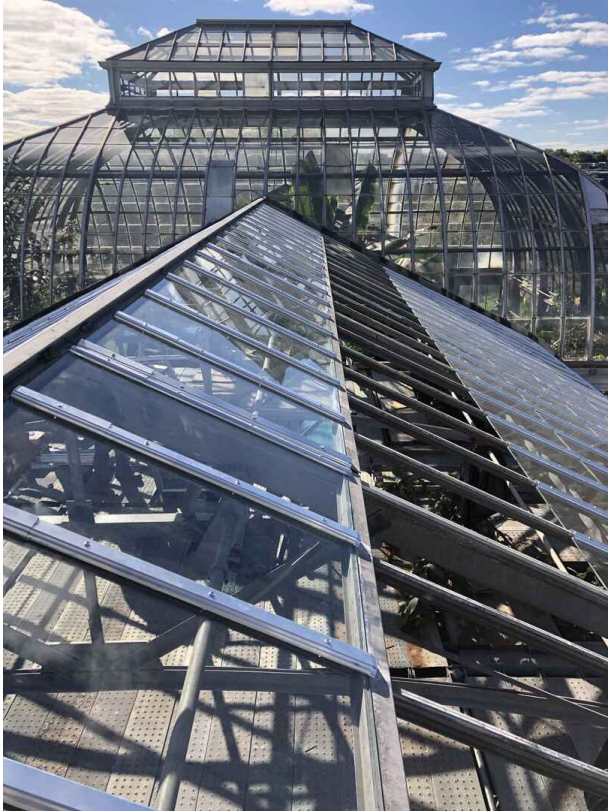
Project Status

- Tropical House – Glass installation complete.
- Cactus House –Glass installation complete.
- Limestone Panels – Installation of exterior dome base panels complete.
- 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 Low Houses



Glass replacement in Tropical House and Cactus House complete.

Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory

Vestibule Improvements



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

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Lake Muskoday Lot

Project Look Ahead

- Lake Muskoday Section - complete
- USCG Section – Asphalt paving to be complete today, 44/15/2024.
- Native plant material being collected on Belle Isle now to grow for shoreline restoration next year. Planting will commence near DYC this year yet.



Excavation for one of two hydrants along Riverbank.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Lake Muskoday Lot



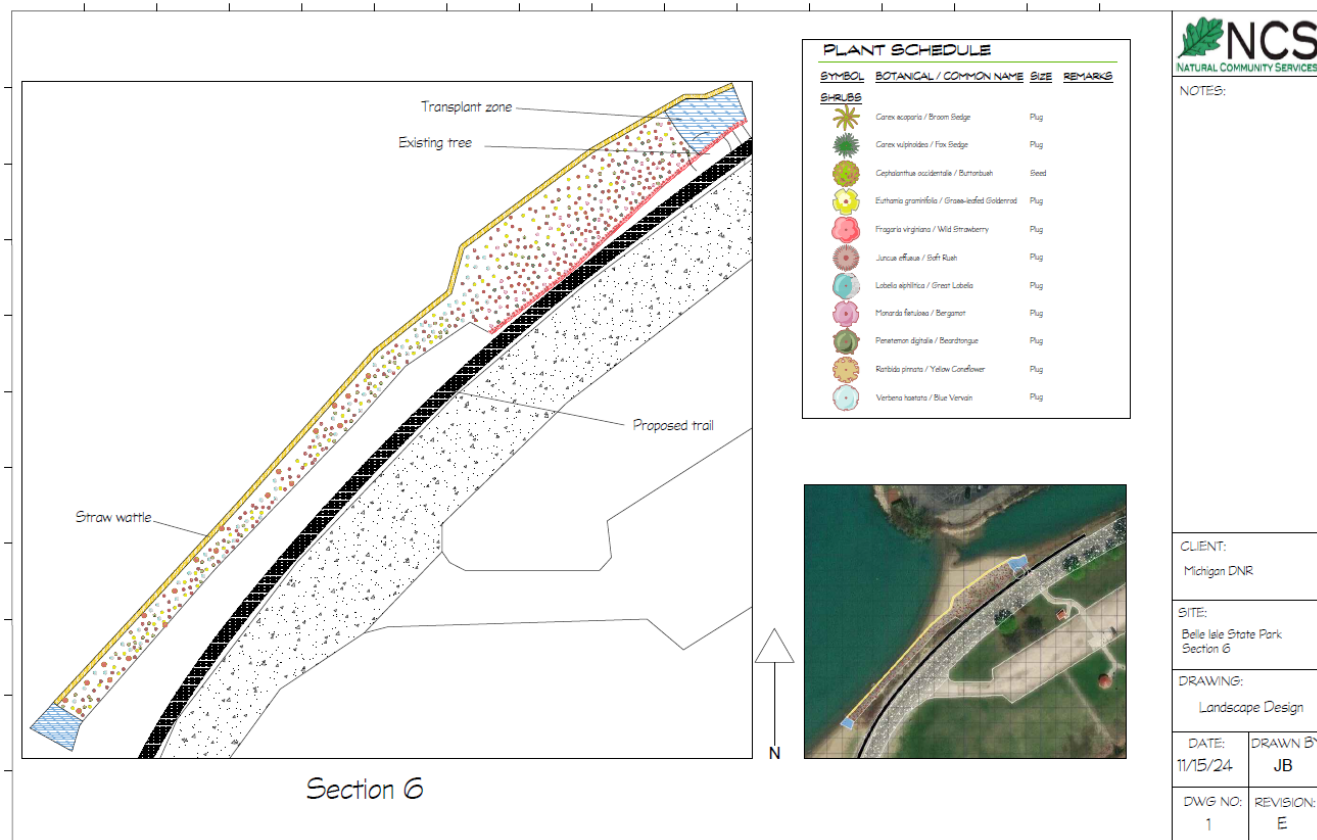
Excavation for Wilson Trail.



Wilson Trail is now connected on North shore of park.

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Shoreline restoration



Native Planting scheme for the north shoreline along Riverbank

Plant Schedule

1. Broom sedge
2. Fox sedge
3. Buttonbush
4. Grass –leafed goldenrod
5. Wild Strawberry
6. Soft Rush
7. Great Lobelia
8. Bergamot
9. Beardtongue
10. Yellow Coneflower
11. Blue Vervain

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail

Shoreline restoration



Native Planting scheme for the north shoreline along Riverbank. A combination of rip rap, coir logs and native plants will stabilize shoreline

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail



Wilson Trail under construction on south shoreline, Lakeside Dr.



Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Trail



Wilson Trail under construction on south shoreline, The Strand.



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.

Shelter #9

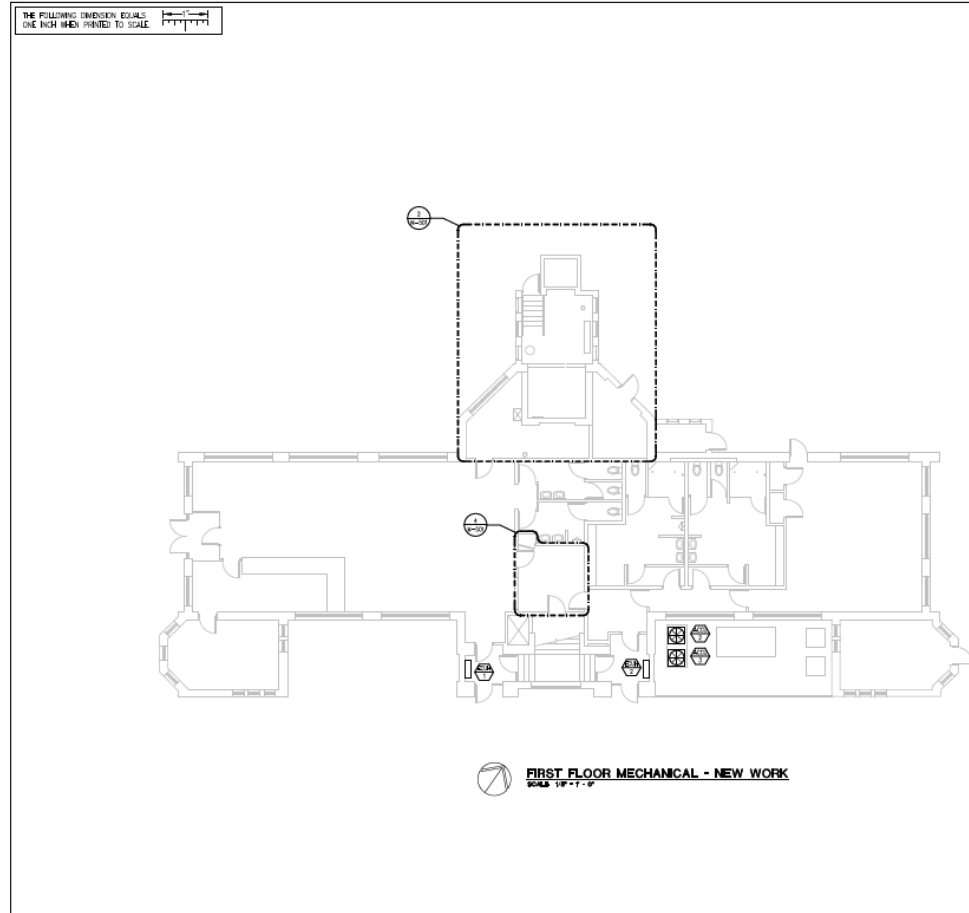


Shelter #9 structural repairs complete.

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.
- Reviewing requirements with engineering team to comply with code and address a cracked back-flow preventer in the mechanical room.



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



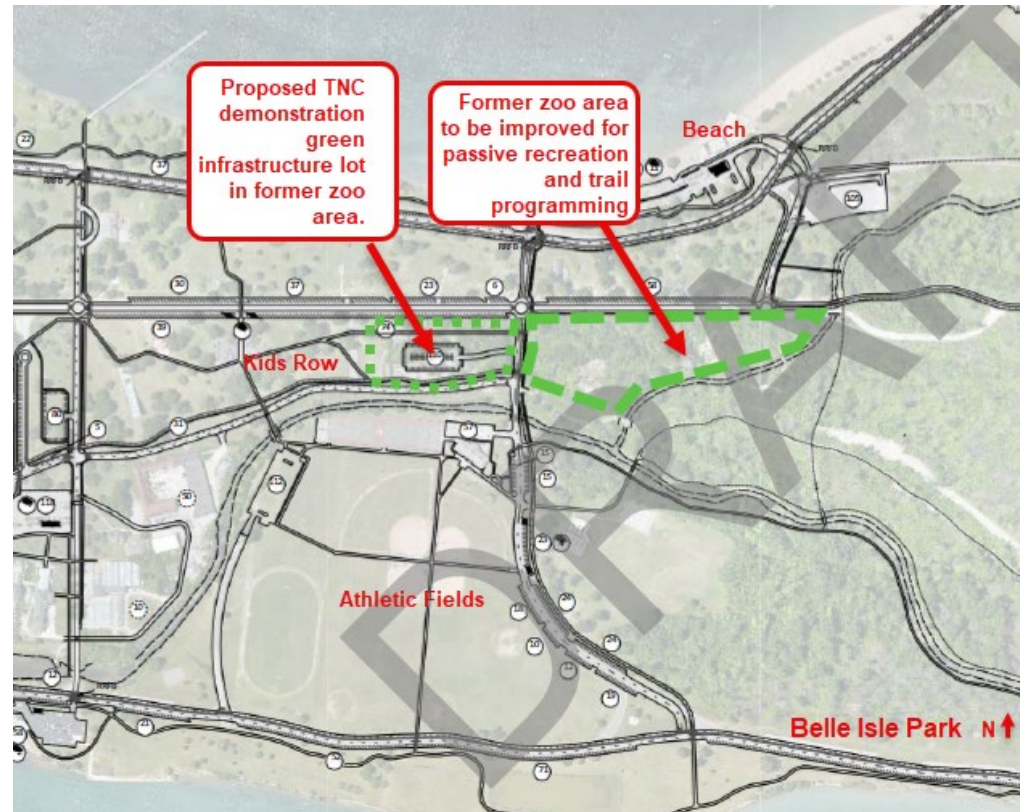
Zoo site visits have taken place to prepare for surveying and testing in coordination with removal plans.

Demonstration Green Infrastructure Parking Lot

The Nature Conservancy Grant

Project

- To coordinate with the zoo structure removal.
- New lot will also align with recommendations from mobility study.
 - Migrate parking to where it is needed to reduce traffic congestion and improve park visitor experience.
 - Install sustainable new infrastructure.
 - Replace parking that does meet need for popular places and contributes to stormwater in park combined sewer overflow.



Recommendation from mobility study for migrating parking throughout park will be implemented on coordination with zoo removals.