

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, Sept. 17, 2015
Location: Casino
www.belleislepark.org
www.michigan.gov/dnr

**** Since there was not a quorum, this meeting served as a discussion based off the agenda ****

Roll Call and Excused Absences

Excused Absences:

Ron Olson
Scott Pratt
Rev. Lonnie Peek
Sommer Woods
Alicia Bradford
Bud Denker

Attendees:

Michelle Hodges
Bryan Barnhill
Michael Curis

Review and Approval of Minutes

Unable to approve minutes from previous meeting, July 16, 2015

Point of Action

Michelle Hodges provided a correction of the Agenda....introduction to new National Park Fellow

Welcome to the Casino

- Michelle Hodges provided a welcome and brief history re: casino

Public Survey Update

Michelle Hodges provided an overview of the public survey

- A. 375 phoned interviews from Detroit & 75 from each of the counties...near completion for focus group to occur on 9/17 ...questions asked what to expect, access issues, law enforcement, island issues, friendliness, preferred usage & overall satisfaction with updates by next meeting

Bryan Barnhill asked how we are using the data and its relevance from a historical perspective. Ron Olson can provide additional details as stated by M. Hodges. From a management, engagement standpoint, please include a PR component & what we do after we compile the data. Wants to communicate the successes of the new management & public perception to the island. This will potentially assist in future efforts of political support from government entities.

Michael commented that the public feedback is that everyone is happy, satisfied with improvements and overall a rush in making additional improvements. Mike further commented that the survey will bring to the island exactly with what the public desires. Public perception is what counts.

M. Hodges identified that the public survey will serve as quantifiable data to support future decisions. For example, how do you prefer to be communicated with? Community engagement, priority of projects.

Michael Curis referenced Detroit City Council President George Cushingberry video of Belle Isle and wants to thank him personally as per his invitation to the Belle Isle Conservancy staff to visit the Detroit City Council. The Committee agreed that Cushingberry assisted in addressing the community perception of Belle Isle.

Iron Belle Trail Update

Iron Belle Trail update by Paul Yauk, State Trail Coordinator of MI was the state park lands program manager previously. He outlined his previous experience, which included Chene Park and provided an overview to the group with a historic overview. The program was birthed based on the sitting Governor wanting to create a 1k mile trail from MI to Wisconsin. We are #1 in the nation. The vision for the Iron Belle Trail is to promote communities, health & wellness of MI natural resources. There are 2 routes with 1 great trail. We have a walking route and a bicycle route including a 12,500 mile trail. Partners include MDOT, National Park, Pure MI, MI Fitness Foundation, etc. MI Fitness Foundation is the fiduciary and just recently secured 25k. The program wants to focus on fundraising and has raised 31.5m for trails since 1970 with current funds being 3.1m. MDOT has funded 67.5m since 1992 and MDOT currently has provided 8.5m on significant bridge projects. Trust fund grants are allocated for Belle Isle. The project will be making a large pitch for private investors beginning with his mtg next week with Gov. Snyder. Total funding opportunities are 271M.

Goal: Create 3 regions for the hiking gaps: UP 123m, region 1 89.9miles and region 3 has 163.3 miles, totaling 91M, noting Biking gaps in region 1 43.3 miles, Region 2 226 miles and region 3 is 645.6miles totaling 334+ miles totaling 180M and the Statewide impact of biking is 668M.

National Fellow Update

David Goldstein is a part of the national parks team & was selected as a fellow in markets that don't have national parks within their confines and comes from the US Virgin Islands. David provided an overview as it pertains to the overall mission of Belle Isle. Barnhill asked about the impact that the data might have pertaining to the project. And he will provide regular updates at the meeting. He also addressed the commitment to historical building support.

Law Enforcement general update:

Slowed down. Complaints have been medical assists for heart attacks and few issues of vandalism. Tickets and arrests are well below were we were last year. The State reiterated to troopers to make contact with the constituent for education & safety not to write tickets. Public relations activities are key. Barnhill commented that the engagement he has experienced is key. As it pertains to issues, how have the police been engaged?

Staffing Update

For staffing, Karis Floyd noted that we have hired in 1 event ranger, 1 general office assistant & Michelle Hodges made comment of her new hires and volunteer coordinator & Brittany Sanders is the Detroit Fellow under Community Engagement Specialist, as well as the interns.

Infrastructure Update

Infrastructure was addressed by Michael Terrell. Casino has had an investment of over 750k to date and the focus is to get every structure up to par. Monies have been spent on the Flynn, White House, and Casino to date. The importance of partners like Conservancy and Penske Group make all the difference. He projects 10 year window to catch up on the infrastructure & asks for patience in the

process in working with the State of Michigan. Items that pertain to safety are first and the main grant to date is for the athletic complex to attract kids back to the island.

Last year, state received 2.5M for projects which has been allocated per the question from Brian Barnhill. Next focus is to create design projects to identify monies for the future based on the lack of federal funds. Mike Terrell said 1.25M is coming this year to support additional projects that can focus on completion. Bryan Barnhill also asked about the reorganization as it pertains to the water department, specifically the role of the regional vs the local authorities. Great lakes water authority is supposed to pay the city 50m /year. Where do the island pipes fall? City is maintaining all pipes 12 inches and above and the state handles what is below. Michael Curis commented on the importance of getting the federal designation and how to get the credits from the state. Michelle Hodges noted that the process is moving forward per her visit in Lansing last week.

Senior Power Days Update

Stephanie Donaldson stated that SPD has been a huge success in the first 6 events which attracted more than 1,700 seniors to date. The success has been attributed to the community outreach to all the counties. She acknowledged the ongoing support from the DNR, coupled with vendors, team members, etc. She announced that the DSO will be performing on the Isle on October 19th from 7-8:30pm with 100 tickets allocated. She invited the group to contact her if interested in attending. She announced the Veteran event and other events.

Summer Youth Employment Update

Karis Floyd provided an overview for the Summer Youth Employment program that occurs on Monday, Wed & Friday as spearheaded by Gary Williams providing programs in archery, fishing, etc. to over 400 children & 125 adults. He wants to include hiking as a new program since Belle Isle has some of the best trails to get kids out into the forest under the Stepping Stone Program. He commented on the Healthy Kids &? under MDOT overview as well as the Youth Academy.

Public Comments: 3 minutes each

Mary Ellen Howard, lives 4 blocks from Belle Isle. Has 3 questions:

1. What is the timeline for the strategic planning process?
2. At what point will the draft be presented?
3. Who are the decision makers regarding the plan?

Phil Mitchell

1. Detroit resident who wants to remove truck and auto racing from Belle Isle

Alyson Jones Turner, Searching for TELOS

1. Attended Detroit Public Schools and was a golfer who used the island as her home course. Can we restrict some activities from the island

Sandra Millicheck

1. Governance & organizational matters. Suggest using this mic for the future. Is concerned about accountability and transparency. Based on the DNR Advisory Committee Bylaws, are they finalized and if so, please update the website. There is a problem with the quorum and how can advice be given based on missing the citizens input. The website is not current on minutes. Open meeting acts governs the group and it appears that the group is not in compliance. Is there a memorandum of understanding btwn the conservancy and DNR?

Francis Candidge

1. Runs the golf range. Provided more than 400 golf lessons to kids 4-16 this summer with funding from LGPA and other funders. Going forward, they can accommodate more students but transportation is an issue.

Donald Green

1. Who is the wizard that orchestrated the Belle Isle Red Bull publicity stunt?

Skip Davis

1. Pertaining to the master plan, is a race track included?

Pete Forsythe

1. Detroit resident since 1978, safety is key to redevelopment, youth connections, he has heard that the # of AFAM visitors has been down, is that true? If there is a decline, why? Does the admission hinder the attendance? Detroit is an 82% AFAM city and should be taken into consideration when processing the redevelopment plan.

Update: Belle Isle Conservancy

A. Strategic Planning Process

- Focus on community engagement session and get feedback
- Organization of the island by zone & business operations strategies for each zone, coupled with a business model and MOA, etc.
- There is a MOU between conservancy & DNR
- Strategic plan will enhance the MOU
- Continue to meet with stakeholders and partners to provide areas of feedback

B. Cultural Campus

Cultural Campus is moving forward with \$ from DNR and there are some concerns with the consultants not taking volunteers seriously but have now gotten an understanding of the roles and should be complete by October. Examples of such areas of focus include the promenade behind the conservatory, lily pond enhancements, reuse boiler room space in conservatory, business models, operational issues, coordinating fees and other revenue streams. The report should be presented in October.

Committee member items

Honored in a moment of silence for Lt Arthur Green, DNR Law Enforcement, with DNR since 1996 and Chad Wolf, MI State Police Officer, also Joan Gerky, local contributor who passed from cancer.

Other Items

Mike Curis asked about getting wi fi into the casino & handicap assessable needs for the park overall and especially Scott Fountain.

Michelle Hodges commented that:

- a. Belle Isle Pizza will be opening soon.
- b. 2016 meeting dates need to be posted.
- c. Fountain will be open under Sept 20, slide is closed

Mike Terrell introduced Amanda Hertl as the new Urban Planner for Belle Isle, Milliken Park Belle Isle is the new #1 state park in attendance.....2.1M current and positioned to be #1 in revenue. The park will include a payment booth to the left in the future.

Meeting was closed at 11:11am by Michelle Hodges.