

MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee

SPECIAL MEETING – Thursday, August 2, 2018

Location: Belle Isle Nature Center

Meeting called to order at 6:08 p.m.
Quorum established at: 6:14 p.m.
Roll Call and Excused Absences

EXCUSED ABSENCES

None

PRESENT FOR BIPAC – SPECIAL MEETING

Chair Michele Hodges
Michael Curis
Bud Denker
Bradley Dick
Rev. Lonnie Peek

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ron Olson
Jacob Brown
Darlisa Rickman
Karis Floyd

PRESENTATION

Detroit Grand Prix Proposal – Response Overview

The Detroit Grand Prix event proposal submitted assessment and consideration information was shared with committee members prior to the meeting and a hard copy was presented at the meeting. This assessment outlined the background of the race, benefits to the City and Belle Isle as well as reviewed the impacts of the race on the island. The document addresses the public comments that have been received by the DNR dating back to September 2017 and further captures the major concerns from those comments. The final portion is the Assessment Key Summary Considerations and the corresponding Result Summary.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

Earl Lane: Loves Sunset Pointe, lives nearby and is frustrated when he has limited access to the park. Would like to see the same passion that is exhibited for Belle Isle Park expressed for every park.

John Carruthers: Feels that if everyone cannot be allowed on Belle Isle during the Grand Prix then feels that no one should be allowed on the island. Feels the senior citizens of Detroit are being denied access on the island during the Grand Prix.

Moira Fracassa: Feels that the public who uses the park should be the priority and focus of how the park operates a major issue is the lengthy period of restricted access during the peak park period. The stewardship that the park has been entrusted to is being driven by a private interest and she feels it is not right.

Margaret Currie: Asserted that she is a Detroit fan not a race fan but is admiring of how many people that the Grand Prix reaches and that it gives positive advertising for Detroit.

Thomas A. Wilson Jr: Pro Grand Prix and would like to keep the race on Belle Isle. Feels that Belle Isle is the “Island in the Stream” and the Grand Prix puts the City of Detroit front and center. Also feels that Mr. Penske and the Grand Prix has done a wonderful job improving the infrastructure of the park.

Jim Horton: Pro Grand Prix. On the board of a non-profit that puts money back into the community. Through the partnership that they have with the Detroit Grand Prix they can continue to benefit the community in numerous ways for numerous causes.

Mary Kay DeMayo: Pro Grand Prix. Belle Isle is a wonderful place that was designed for people to enjoy recreation, nature and cultural events and has served those missions for several generations. Feels we would benefit from balanced use of the island and that this could still be possible by continuing to have the Grand Prix on the island.

William Lynch: Pro Grand Prix member of the Yacht Club, grew up around Belle Isle and is probably on the island about 200 days out of the year. Remembers the disrepair of the island prior to the Grand Prix coming and supplying financial support. Feels that the little bit of inconvenience is worth the money that it brings and is thankful for the repairs and support from the Grand Prix.

Robert Harrington: Pro Grand Prix. Sent an email to the DNR outlining how the Grand Prix helped with the resurgence of Detroit and shows a positive image of

Detroit. The race is also a large economic benefit to the City businesses and therefore its residents. Feels the positives far outweigh the negatives.

Frank Putmas: Pro Detroit Grand Prix. Detroit Region Executive of the Sports Car Club of America and expressed that he feels that the Detroit Grand Prix has global benefits.

Bruce Nichols: Pro Grand Prix. Works on the operations crew for the Grand Prix and sees the look of awe and wonder on the face of the children that watch the Grand Prix and feels that it inspires many to perhaps become engineers or race car drivers or that they may start corporations in the city that employ thousands of people and are able to finance events such as the Grand Prix. Being able to work for the Grand Prix has made a big difference in his life personally. Understands the frustration of the restriction on the island during that period but assures that they are working on methods to shorten that period.

Donald Green: Against the Grand Prix. Feels that the DNR is colluding with the Grand Prix to destroy Belle Isle. Is seeking detailed documentation of the \$13.5 million dollars that the Grand Prix has spent to improve the park. Also feels that the Grand Prix takes credit for projects that they are not responsible for. Feels the Belle Isle Conservancy shamefully supports the Grand Prix in direct contradiction to its mission to preserve park resources and provide recreational opportunities.

Kristina Eagle: Pro Grand Prix. There is a long history with the Grand Prix including one with my Dad and it allows me to be able to share my history with my kids and that feels amazing. It also supports Detroit and I really like that the family bond that is there.

Gary Callendar: Pro Grand Prix. Been with the Grand Prix since 1985. Keep the race... make Detroit shine!

Beverly Maddox: Pro Grand Prix. The single best promotional event for Detroit as well as this historic island. Would like to stress the importance of the Detroit Grand Prix, its economic impact, and what it means for the community to have them in Detroit and on the island.

Bill Bruce: Pro Grand Prix. Long time resident of the City of Detroit. Loves the positivity that the Grand Prix gives Detroit.

Susan Williams: Pro Belle Isle... does the ADA transportation for the Grand Prix and is pro the Grand Prix staying on Belle Isle. The money that was spent outfitting Belle Isle was well spent.

Whenever she travels people are talking about the Grand Prix, the island and Detroit in a positive way. Moving the Grand Prix elsewhere wouldn't make good business sense.

Michael Betzold: Adamantly opposed to the Grand Prix. The DNR's decision on the Grand Prix is a violation of the public trust and the DNR's own mission. Is the DNR working for the public or Roger Penske?

Trifun Dimitrijevski: Pro Grand Prix. Medical Director of the Detroit Grand Prix. Feels the Detroit Grand Prix has become the identity of the City of Detroit. The Grand Prix allows the city to showcase this beautiful island. In full support of the Grand Prix for many more years!

Joe Hollowell: Pro Grand Prix. Feels it provides employment for the community.

Rick DeMayo: Pro Grand Prix. Member of the Detroit Grand Prix Association since 1994. Supports keeping the Grand Prix on Belle Isle

Deborah Alrutz: Pro Grand Prix.

Carol Rhoades: The counter proposal has many incorrect statements some examples are the bird migration and the set-up of the race. Environmental study must be done before signing any contracts with the Grand Prix.

Skip Davis: Opposed to the race on Belle Isle not the actual Grand Prix. Feels the race is a fantastic event but sorely out of place on the island. Had the idea that wouldn't it be more ideal if all the big investors and movers and shakers combined their resources and created an endowment for Belle Isle where they could put in a couple million a year and then we could improve the infrastructure problems without depending on the Grand Prix race. Belle Isle is an attraction on its own.

Lance Smith: Pro the Grand Prix. Feels that if there is a race it should be on Belle Isle.

Debbie Stefanides: The Detroit Grand Prix is beneficial to both Belle Isle and the City of Detroit. Feels we need to keep the race on the island. There is no place else within the City that would showcase to the world what a great city we have!

James N. Bull: President of the Detroit Audubon - need an Environmental Impact Study. Opposed to the Grand Prix racing on Belle Isle not the actual Grand Prix. Feels the Grand Prix would be better served downtown, and Belle Isle should be allowed to serve its original purpose as a respite for urban dwellers to commune with nature.

Sandra Novacek: Opposed to the Grand Prix on Belle Isle. Coordinator for Belle Isle Concern, a group of citizens concerned with the Grand Prix being held on Belle Isle. Feels that the DNR has rubberstamped the approval of the Grand Prix being held on Belle Isle and that the behavior of the DNR regarding this issue raises serious questions of who the DNR is working for.

Phil Talbert: Pro the Grand Prix. Detroit based partner with Andiamo catering and events. The Grand Prix stimulates employment and helps support mentorships, philanthropic giving and the local economy in general. Keep the Grand Prix.

Emma Lockridge: Opposes the Grand Prix. Feels that the decision had already been made that the race would go on prior to this meeting. This park was not intended for racing.

Melissa Arrowsmith: The Grand Prix is an incompatible use of this historic, natural and public park.

Sheila M. Brown: Has worked and attended the Detroit Grand Prix for many years and feels it is in the best interest of the park and the City of Detroit for the event to continue Belle Isle. It spotlights the park and the City in the international view and generates millions of dollars of revenue which benefits the park and the city.

Lori Schutz: As a member of the Porsche Club of America and Zone representative for 12 regions, would like to express our appreciation of being able to participate in the Detroit Grand Prix weekend. Has sponsored a “Car Corral” the past few years that members enjoy. This event brings so much excitement and money to the area while respecting the Belle Isle beauty. Would like to see this legacy continue.

Margaret Weber: The DNR counter proposal still impedes use of the West end for a 1/6 of the year, and the 62 days is 1/3 of prime use time of Belle Isle. Is a 40 plus year resident of the city and I bike Belle Isle and do bird watching and photography. The report from the DNR about the number of comments was not fully transparent- there was no data or analysis of comments to inform the public adequately.

Nick Cucinella: Did not fill out the comment card

Peter Potoski: Feels to make the set-up and take down shorter and have the race people pay to clean up the old zoo area, screen it off and let them store the cement curbs in there. More parking is needed at the beach area. Lots more.

Sarah Earley: Pro Grand Prix. Thanks GM and the Grand Prix team feels that they are extraordinary because they work very hard to make the Grand Prixmiere a great

success. Explained the Grand Prixmiere' s fund raising aspect and how it directly benefits the park and the park guests. Has been fundraising for the park for 15 years.

Elizabeth Reid: Pro the Grand Prix being moved off Belle Isle. Grand Prix doesn't fit with the intended purpose of the island. Restricted access unacceptable and would not be tolerated in other parks.

Christine Sauvé': As an avid park user and Detroit Audubon member, deeply concerned about the continued use of our precious park space for the Grand Prix. I am disappointed the DNR has not conducted a comprehensive environmental impact study before even considering a proposal to renew the contract. As stewards of our public park, expects the DNR to more seriously consider the multitude of public opposition expressed through the strategic management plan. Finds it unacceptable that so much at our park has been paved for the "paddock" and blocks user access to that area for so long. This would not be acceptable for a state park anywhere else so why is it here?

Aaron Goodman: Opposed to the renewal of the contract to hold the Detroit Grand Prix on Belle Isle for the following reasons: The race is counter to the mission and standards of the DNR, it restricts access to the park, damages the environment, wildlife and degrades the actual landscape. The contract and "counter proposal" doesn't effectively mitigate or make-up for the damage caused by the race. Received public comments over multiple planning processes have identified ending the Grand Prix on Belle Isle as a top priority of the public.

Armando Huffman: Pro Grand Prix.

Brian Flaggs: The recreational programs involving the Grand Prix are invaluable for the kids in Detroit. Transports thousands of students to the "free Prix day" annually. The up close, hands on experience is what's needed. The vocational students really benefit.

Laura Lewis: A Detroit resident and member of the Belle Isle Conservancy. Opposes the renewal of the Grand Prix contract. As proposed, the rental fees and donations are ludicrously low and will lock us in for too long. It is an election year and DNR administration will/may soon be changing. Do not renew and tie the state and residents into a below-market contract that takes away public resources from the public.

Ed Weglarz: Pro Grand Prix. Volunteer for the Grand Prix races and an almost 5-decade resident of Wayne county. Feels we should look at the big picture, the improvements and expansions.

Miller Fawaz: Pro Grand Prix. Grand Prix should continue Belle Isle.

Jerry Farrell: Pro Grand Prix in favor to renew the contract.

Georgina Guirguis: Pro Grand Prix the Grand Prix should continue Belle Isle.

Chris Urban: The Grand Prix since 1992 has brought numerous upgrades to the island from Scott Fountain to updated picnic shelters. He is an engineer due to the race and a lifelong resident and visits the island every week.

Jamie Farmer: Lives in the neighborhood and opposes the approval of the Grand Prix on Belle Isle. This is a public park paid with tax dollars. It is absurd that the Grand Prix is doing the public a favor by taking off 3 days for set-up and take down. Again, this is a public park not for a corporate playground. Follow your mission statement DNR. Do your job.

Howard Lieblich: Pro Grand Prix. In support of the Grand Prix on Belle Isle.

Jarion Gipson: Concern regarding the care given to the park in preparation, during and dismantling of set-up for the Grand Prix.

Brian Olatunji: Pro Grand Prix. In favor of maintaining the presence of the Grand Prix on Belle Isle.

Steve Panton: Belle Isle is 1,000 acres of public park in the Detroit River. It is a place for experiencing the natural world. It is not a racetrack for the Grand Prix.

Frank Rashid: Opposes the Grand Prix. Asking that the DNR review its assessment and reject the proposal for the Grand Prix on Belle Isle.

Kathleen Rashid: Has not heard any evidence that shows the Grand Prix on Belle Isle does not blatantly violate the mission of the DNR. Why doesn't the DNR require an independent Environmental Impact Study?

Cedric Johnson: Pro Grand Prix. Supports the race on Belle Isle.

Cheyenne Jones: Pro the Grand Prix. Please keep the race on Belle Isle totally supports the race.

Don Fitzsimmons: The Detroit Grand Prix is a world class international event that can only continue to be successfully held on Belle Isle. Over 100k visitors attend the Grand Prix, many returning and many new visitors. Owner of Royal Transportation Company and it is a direct economic benefit to over 100

employees. Responsible to contract (10) additional passenger transportation companies to service the Grand Prix.

(140) busses from Detroit and Michigan based companies spending \$240,000. Unique opportunity.

Ade Oba Abdalla: Believes the Grand Prix volunteer recruitment card illustrates the Penske Corporation and Detroit Grand Prix's intention and motivation based on love which is a verb that we express through our actions to help Belle Isle. Help Detroit plus help ourselves. Believes we are blessed to have a corporate citizen like Roger Penske in the upper corner. Believes it's his reason for bringing this world class event to our island, city and community "We love Detroit". Ingenious enough to utilize Grand Prix racing as a vehicle to generate funding for the preservation and improvements on the island we all love! While bringing prestige and recognition to our city with this world class event!

Jennifer Teed: Opposes Grand Prix. Feels this is just wrong: Earth first- So we have a place for recreation and wildlife to live. People second-Belle Isle is Detroiters' sanctuary we should have access. Profit third- Profit is great when the first 2 are not sacrificed.

Lenita Singleton: Pro Grand Prix. To the panel of the DNR: Although a few of us will not be physically present this evening as planned our spirit is and will be present with a renewed and much anticipated hope of a continued marriage of Detroit Grand Prix Association with Belle Isle State Park in Detroit, Michigan. Since 1983 DGPA has weathered the storm- "For richer or poorer". Now let us DGPA and Belle Isle stay joined in a richer union in this dedicated proposal we bring. It is the DGPA hope, including ourselves, devotees' efforts and support to continue our annual automotive celebration. Including our infectious motor city spirit as this great city of Detroit was born to be. We thank you for listening from a few caring volunteers including myself.

Curtis P. Daniels: Pro the Grand Prix. Would like to keep the Grand Prix at Belle Isle.

Angela Lugo-Thomas: Opposes the Grand Prix. Feels this is a very stressful situation. An educator and a lifelong Detroiter feels that there are so many unfair elements to hosting the Grand Prix on the island and that it takes away from the community in general and the children. Feels that the photos that were shown in the presentation were misleading because the Grand Prix destroys nature and the island. Came to enjoy the island on her parent's anniversary and was immediately met with barriers and felt denied of being able to come to her sanctuary. The island was not meant for corporate events but for recreation.

Ike Okonkwo: Pro the Grand Prix. Proponent of keeping the Race on Belle Isle.

Betty Roberts: Loves the Grand Prix, loves Belle Isle and loves the City of Detroit. The Grand Prix has a positive impact on Belle Isle and the city! The positive publicity for the city is invaluable. The revenue raised for the city and the park is great. The inclusion of DPS students is a super experience for our students.

Larry Murphy: Pro the Grand Prix. Supports the Grand Prix and feels it is a great experience.

Stephanie Chang: Wrote to share her thoughts on the Belle Isle Grand Prix proposal. Cited that the Grand Prix was an issue that she often hears about from her residents on a regular basis and wants to protect Belle Isle's natural beauty and wildlife. Appreciates the information provided and the MDNR's efforts to address environmental concerns and acknowledges the information provided in comparison to other parks but still does not feel those events are on the scale of the Grand Prix nor are the parks situated in an area with as dense of a population. Is disappointed that after concerns were expressed the set up and takedown time has not been greatly reduced. She is pleased to see an increase in compensation but feels there should be further compensation so that the tax payers can have the best public park that they deserve.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Rev. Lonnie Peek: Respects the passion that each side displays and wants to express that once the decision is made we should all seek to move forward and ask yourself what you can do to help. Appreciates everyone coming out.

Michael Curis: Was on the island on Sunday and a couple people brought up the water runoff; in the lease with the DNR it is up to the City of Detroit to handle the water run off not the DNR. So, there is no cost for the Belle Isle for the issue. Also, the airport, you can't shut that airport down there are people there that have contracts to fly in and out. If you do shut down one runway you are forcing everybody to land and take off on a cross wind runway and that's the most dangerous thing you can do for an airplane. Speaking of the increase in visitors on Belle Isle it went from 2.2 million users 4 years ago to 4.6 million last year that is more than all 4 stadiums downtown brought in for home games combined. A couple people talk about the Grand Prix in Montreal. Every city pays \$51 million dollars to the Grand Prix organizers to have the Grand Prix in their city. I believe that the cup is half full not half empty, I think the race is wonderful and it can be made better. I think we need to shorten the time that they are on the island and making it inconvenient for the park goers. And that should be our goal. Thank you.

Bud Denker: So, counting I see there was around 65 people that showed up tonight to speak, which I really value and appreciate. Once again, I really love Belle Isle, even though I don't live in the city I come here a lot because I come here to run and recreate, and I want to make Belle Isle a better place and it still needs a lot more help.

As long as we are here we are going to commit, and we are going to give. We are not going to be here forever, it is not sustainable for us to be here forever. There are a few things that we want to fix on this island that are still there to be fixed and we plan to do that. So, I appreciate the passion, I appreciate the feedback and I learned a lot today. Took some notes today to make some changes and that's helpful but this committee is here because we love it. Our mission is to be here every other month and I think we've been here every single month for the last couple of years to listen to you and to listen to what goes on here on Belle Isle. I will thank as I always do Ron; you and your team, for the work you do, the attention you don't get, the applause you don't get because what you do goes unwarranted in terms of turning this island around. You are the workers here and you make it happen for us and I never want to forget the sacrifice that you make in terms of your lives to make Belle Isle a better place. So, thank you very much.

Bradley Dick: I don't think there is much else I can say tonight that hasn't already been said. Thank you everybody for coming out tonight. Lots of amazing and great comments. I took some notes too. Thank you everybody thank you Ron for all your hard work.

Chair Hodges made the following statement: I would also like to thank all of you for being here tonight, the chair of our Board of Directors Sarah Early for taking her time the last 15 years, and to my colleagues on this board. It's now incumbent upon us to figure out what our next steps are going to be and certainly to the DNR that will now have to make a final decision.

Some of you will interpret any support for the race as a compromise to our mission, and I certainly understand how you arrived at that conclusion when looking through this issue with one lens. Because there are clearly issues and impacts on the island that none of us can ignore, including the load in and load out times, access issues, visual impediments etc. And I believe many of you also understand the complexities of moving Belle Isle forward and managing the \$300 million dollars in deferred maintenance and capital needs. One very important component needed to tackle this large challenge is well managed public/private partnerships. A great example of a good public/private partnership happened just this week with Mike Farrow and his Farrow Group donating \$50,000 dollars of their services to take down the no longer sustainable water slide, paving the way for a new splash park for the island.

Another very important one is the Grand Prix and the Penske Corporation. As Sarah started to outline the Grand Prixmiere raised more than \$1 million dollars and that doesn't include the amount that is invested on an ongoing basis at the fountain, it wouldn't run without the Grand Prix and DTE, the bridge lights and other things. And do you know what that \$1 million dollars means? It means one of Belle Isles most loved attractions the Belle Isle Aquarium will remain free and open to the public for another year, it means we will continue to be able to offer curriculum aligned field trips for Detroit Public Schools third and fourth graders, stem education and science Saturdays. It means we will keep working with Wayne State University to advance various research initiatives there. It means we will offer tours for a multitude of community groups and see it used as a venue to celebrate some of life's most joyful moments. It means we will all watch the Belle Isle Aquarium transform and get closer to accreditation. This is significant.

And it pains me to see Roger Penske, Michael Montri, Bud Denker, their teammates and the legions of volunteers attacked and demonized. They are human beings just like the rest of us and I get from my vantage point around the decision-making table, I get to see firsthand, how they lead with sincerity, and a real concern for Belle Isle. They are not the problem. They are only doing what they are being allowed to do. At the same time, they've also chosen to make significant contributions to this community well beyond Belle Isle. Bud I sincerely thank you and your team for being outstanding allies, my hats off to you and all of our private sector partners. You give us the momentum that allows us to leap ahead and you always, always, always are there with grace, dignity, generosity and professionalism no matter what, even when under the pressure you are tonight.

Does this mean I'm oblivious? Does this mean I am stary-eyed or conflicted in some way? No, quite the opposite actually I am a pragmatist and hopefully a wise one. We have a heavy, heavy lift as a community to make sure we can sustain Belle Isle and keep it incredible. We are not here because we are personally benefiting. We are not here to pad budgets. It would be a serious setback to lose the significant funding force and the impact would be immediately felt. We need time to replace it. Three years is reasonable to replace these dollars. As Bud said they are not planning on being here forever. So, community, and I'm defining community as the BIPAC, the DNR, the Conservancy, it is up to us to manage this relationship and ensure the positives outweigh the negatives. Public/private partnerships are crucial to our success, but only if they are tightly and truly managed and if we are thinking of Belle Isle as a vulnerable child that needs responsible adults protecting it.

So, to that end I call upon the Conservancy, and my colleagues here to move forward in approving this contractual agreement with these considerations:

- Everything that's been conveyed in the Conservancy's written communication, which you're more than welcome to all see, the highlights of which are that we provide for everything in writing and ensure that the final value of this year's contract and going forward is greater than previous years. Including written support for the Grand Prixmiere and a continuation of it and minimum fundraising expectation.
- Two that we establish good governance and not because I think the Grand Prix is going to misbehave but because its good business that we monitor, we evaluate, we enforce, we have accountability and we have penalties if expectations aren't met.
- Third, that we value engineer and reduce the impacts of this race on the park user and on the island with sensible solutions, relative to sequencing, timing, signage, barriers and all the visual impediments.
- Four, that we pursue smart win/win high impact outcomes and I ask that we set the bar high, because if we are smart we can knit together a holistic, comprehensive approach to managing this contract in alignment with park needs. Like the things we talked about earlier with the Newsboy shelter, wireless communication, Oudolf Garden, daffodils, Mogo, the Iron Belle Trail, and Capital Campaign; this can be an important piece to the effectuation of all those things.
- Fifth, that we do it all with a park user focus. We communicate with park users, we engage with them, we give them access and make other accommodations as

necessary. And in the meantime, during all this we aggressively create and identify alternative funding sources.

So, I ask that my colleagues consider a resolution that captures these thoughts tonight. And Ron, I look at you directly and say we need you to lead for us as a community, we truly need you to lead for us. So, as I wind down I just want to say a couple of final thoughts and that is this has been hard for all of us. Painful, divisive, its 9:20 p.m. and none of us has been home yet. I understand that, and I know how much you all care. And you all have in some way strengthened the outcome. I know you all have made me a better leader at understanding issues and make sure that we hold everybody accountable and to a higher standard, that is impact. You might not have gotten the precise end result that you wanted but you have improved this contract if it gets approved. It is now time to move forward whatever the decision ends up being. And the only ones that know for sure is the DNR.

Great things await if we are to fully realize the potential we must move ahead together. We the Conservancy, and the BIPAC will continue to provide opportunities for all voices to be heard and perhaps more importantly to have that impact. It is my hope that we unite, that we lead and that we seize this exceptional future because this is our moment and I thank you all for the opportunity to serve with you.

Would anybody like to present a resolution?

Committee member Rev. Lonnie Peek moved to support a resolution as outlined above by *Chair Hodges*. *Committee member Michael Curis* seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously. Resolution will be prepared by *Chair Hodges* office and submitted to the DNR.

Meeting concluded: 9:24 p.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

August 16, 2018

Belle Isle Park

Flynn Pavilion

Detroit, MI 48207

6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.