

## **MINUTES**

### **Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, August 25, 2016

**Location: Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion**

Roll Call and Excused Absences  
No Quorum  
Meeting called to order at 9:08 a.m.

#### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Bryan Barnhill

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Michele Hodges  
Bud Denker  
Ron Olson  
Scott Pratt

Due to lack of a quorum there was no motion to approve excused absences. Minutes were accepted with noted changes in unexcused absences and BIPAC members attending. Minutes revised on 09-15-2016.

#### **PRESENT FOR BIPAC**

Rev. Lonnie Peek      Chaired the meeting, due to the absence of Michele Hodges  
Mike Curis  
Sommer Woods

#### **DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Mike Terrell              Metro District Supervisor, represented for Ron Olson and Scott Pratt  
Karis Floyd  
Jacob Brown  
Darlisa Rickman

#### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Co-Chair Peek** requested approval of the minutes from the June 16, 2016 meeting. There was no motion to approve the June 16, 2016 minutes, due to lack of a quorum present. Minutes will be brought before the next committee meeting for review and approval.

## **PRESENTATION OF STEPPING STONE PROGRAM**

**Gary Williams** presented a PowerPoint presentation, giving an overview of the Stepping Stone program. Highlights of the program are below:

- The mission of the Stepping Stone Program is to expose children with little prior outdoor experience to the outdoors. As well as create a new generation of lifelong park users and to engage kids in experiential learning in a fun and safe park environment.
  
- Some areas of outdoor experiences include archery, fishing, camping, and water and nature exploration.

## **SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM PRESENTATION**

**Murdock Jemerson**, Rose Lake District Supervisor and Coordinator of the Summer Youth Employment Program, presented a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview and background information on the Summer Youth Employment Program and specifically on Belle Isle Park.

The Summer Youth Employment Program was started in March 2012 by Governor Rick Snyder. The program focus was summer employment for youth ages 16 to 19 in Flint, Detroit, Saginaw and Pontiac. The employment program provided jobs that were outdoor natural resourced based opportunities. The program also exposed youth to outdoor recreation activities such as swimming, kayaking, canoeing, archery, fishing and nature hikes.

Summer Youth Program on Belle Isle Park: Two agencies, The Youth Connection and Healthy Kids Are Us, have provided youth to work on Belle Isle State Park since the beginning of the Summer Youth Employment Program started in March 2012. Youth provided litter pickup, light lawn care maintenance, trimming of hedges, concrete sidewalk installation, bathroom repairs and concession building repairs. The Belle Isle Nature Zoo also provided similar projects on the island. The leaders of these agencies were present and gave brief comments on their activities and also have members of their program express their feelings on how valuable the program was to them. The agency leaders were:

Dr. Grenae Dudley, Executive Director, The Youth Connection  
Maria Adams-Lawton, Executive Director, Healthy Kids Are Us  
Amy Greene, Curator of Education, Belle Isle Nature Zoo

## **YOUTH CONNECTION PROGRAM PRESENTATION**

**Dr. Grenae Dudley**, President and CEO Youth Connection, shared a presentation overview of the Youth Connection Program.

- 90 youth participated this summer
- Belle Isle Park youth worked 20 hours per week

- Collaborated with 30 different partners
- National Park Service youth worked 40 hours per week

Those present discussed the possibility of reviewing the funding level for the summer youth employment program. **Co-Chair Peek** recommended that the group follow up further with Ron Olson and Michele Hodges.

**Mike Terrell**, Metro District Supervisor, introduced the DNR staff that worked with the youth this summer on the various programs: Karis Floyd, Jacob Brown, Darlisa Rickman, Terri Conner, Latricia Pelt, Theresa Bryan and Matt Krupansky.

## **PARK UPDATES**

### ***Park Operations***

**Karis Floyd**, Belle Isle Park Manager, gave a monthly update regarding several park operational items as follows:

- Strong youth participation this summer in the Healthy Kidz program
- Introduced park staff – Jake Brown, Park Operations, Theresa Bryan, Acting Lead Ranger, Kale Leftwich, Lead Ranger, Milliken, Matt Krupansky, New Ranger
- Stepping Stone Urban Program is underway and youth groups from the area will be attending to learn outdoor skills. The program will meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Trail Masterplan – the trail on Belle Isle will be approximately 6 miles around the island and will connect to the Iron Belle Trail. The Iron Belle Trail will go to the Upper Peninsula and be approximately 1,273 miles long.
- Sidewalk repairs will be made at the Scott Fountain, with an ADA walkway being installed. Currently in the bid process for this project, anticipate construction to begin in the spring of 2017. The DNR will be repairing extremely bad sections of the area this fall.
- Park attendance is increasing; there was an estimated 4 million visitors in 2016.
- The Lead Ranger position for Belle Isle will remain posted until August 28, 2016
- Jacob Brown has been promoted to the Belle Isle Park Supervisor position.
- Todd Keith has been hired as a new Ranger at Milliken State Park

### ***Infrastructure Updates***

- Repairs have been made to several 4 and 6 inch pipes; due to 7 underground leaks. Total cost of repairs was \$47,000 which included supplies and materials. This total did include work done at the aquarium.
- Construction work which consists of cement and roof work has started on the following 7 shelters: 1, 5, 6, 17, 18, 19 and 20.
- Bids will soon go out for the Athletic Complex. We anticipate work to begin in 2017.
- Bids for the roofing projects on the Internal Affairs building and casino will be going out soon.

- There will be a pre-bid walk-through next week for the garage doors in the shop area and the electrical for the entrance booth.
- Bids have been received for the new ADA ramp at the Scott Fountain. We anticipate work to begin in 2017.
- Design work is complete for the South Fishing Pier. We will be applying for additional grants to cover the construction phase.
- MDOT Engineers have completed the abatement work on the bridge that was washed out after the storms (past the lighthouse area).

Some members' asked questions about the recent flood at the aquarium. Karis Floyd explained that insurance did not cover the flood damage, and donations are being sought for further repairs.

**Mike Terrell**, Metro District Supervisor, commented on the phenomenal job DNR staff has been doing, although they short staffed.

**Sommer Woods** asked about the hours for the restrooms on the island, she also noted the great job being done by the DNR staff. **Karis Floyd** responded that all workable restrooms are currently open. Restroom hours range from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily.

### ***Outreach and Events***

**Darlisa Rickman**, Outreach and Events Coordinator, DNR-Belle Isle, reported on the 2016 upcoming events. The following upcoming September events were noted:

- |         |                                     |                   |                     |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| ○ 09/01 | Rec 10 Stand up Paddleboard         | Flynn             | 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.     |
| ○ 09/01 | Detroit Community Yoga              | Sunset            | 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.  |
| ○ 09/04 | 3 Discipline Triathlon              | Paddock and Beach | TBD                 |
| ○ 09/06 | Ncompass International Adult Swim   | Paddock           | 6 p.m. - 11 p.m.    |
| ○ 09/08 | Detroit Community Yoga              | Sunset            | 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.  |
| ○ 09/10 | Stewardship Saturday                | Zoo               | 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.    |
| ○ 09/10 | MCADD Rally/March                   | Fountain          | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.     |
| ○ 09/11 | Trivium Racing 10K                  | Island            | 4 p.m. - 10 p.m.    |
| ○ 09/13 | BIC Garden Party                    | Conservatory      | 5 p.m. - 10 p.m.    |
| ○ 09/14 | Senior Power Days Town Hall Meeting | Casino            | 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.    |
| ○ 09/15 | Detroit Community Yoga              | Sunset            | 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.  |
| ○ 09/14 | Tour de Troit Bike Ride             | Paddock           | 8 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. |
| ○ 09/18 | Detroit Goddess Festival Marathon   | Paddock           | 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.    |

### ***DNR Law Enforcement Update***

MSP Law Enforcement Officer Lieutenant Michael Shaw reported that there were no arrests or major incidents since last report.

The Lieutenant position for District 9 has not been filled; officers are alternating until the position is filled. Currently DNR Law Enforcement Officer Sgt. Daniel Bigger is acting Lieutenant. DNR Law Enforcement Officer Sgt. Todd Szyska spoke about the increase in attendance this year in comparison to last year.

## **BELLE ISLE CONSERVATORY UPDATES**

**Katy Wyerman**, Belle Isle Conservancy, spoke briefly about the aquarium, stating that it was closed in 2005 and was re-opened in 2012. **Wyerman** introduced Mr. Fred Huebener as the new aquarium Director.

- They are currently seeking donations for water damage repairs due to the recent heavy rain and flooding.
- Hamilton & Anderson Architects study on the restoration needs of the 1925 Scott Fountain is nearly complete.
- Charlie Mertiz (Architect), hired by the City of Detroit through a State Historic Preservation grant is working to develop drawings on how to reconnect the aquarium and the conservatory.
- Belle Isle SOUP            August 31, 2016
- Garden Party                September 13, 2016 (restoring lily pond)
- On October 1, 2016, 100,000 daffodils will be planted by volunteers at Belle Isle. For this year's annual event the DNR contributed a generous portion of the cost of the daffodil bulbs.
- On October 13, 2016 the "Polish the Jewel" annual luncheon will be held. This event is hosted at the Conservatory from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Proceeds from the event are being raised to erect a splash pad near the Belle Isle beach.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (3 minutes each)

- Michael Betzold                      **Mr. Betzold** questioned the meeting process. Indicating he feels there is no chance to get questions answered, using infrastructure and water main issues as an example. City and State dispute on who handles the water issue.
- Cleo Biles                                **Ms. Biles** would like to know the progress of repairing the streets on Belle Isle and when the lighting concerns for the handball and racquetball courts will be addressed? Suggested LED lighting.
- Mary Ellen Howard                    **Ms. Howard** questioned the criteria used by the DNR to measure the appropriate events for the state park system. For example, if the Grand Prix wanted to schedule a motorized car race at Ludington State Park. How does the DNR evaluate whether to approve or deny requests for Grand Prix?
- Sandra Nowack                         **Ms. Nowack** spoke about the importance of attendance of the BIPAC members. **Nowack** stated that the minutes for the BIPAC meeting are very important as they are the permanent legal record of the meetings and people who are unable to attend rely on the minutes for information.

**Nowack** requested that all involved with the recording and preparing of the approved minutes, take special care.

Donald Green

**Mr. Green** feels the Belle Isle Masterplan is null and void and that the Grand Prix has destroyed the west end of the island including 10 acres of concrete surrounding the fountain.

Larry Roberts

**Mr. Roberts** requested that the BIPAC committee ask the Penske team to give some attention to the trails and small bridges on the north end of Belle Isle. Asking if it is possible to fix the wood rail fences on the north end to prevent cars from going onto the point near the lighthouse? He also thanked the crew at the Belle Isle Nature Center, indicating the grandkids loved it.

**OTHER ITEMS**

Rev. Lonnie Peek

Rev. Peek spoke about the positive progress that has been made since the DNR took over management of the park.

**Next BIPAC Meeting:** September 15, 2016

Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion

Motion to Adjourn    Curis  
Seconded by         Peek

Meeting Adjourned: 11:05 a.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michele Hodges

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald A. Olson, Chief  
Parks and Recreation (DNR)  
Mike Terrell

Rev. Lonnie Peek, Jr

Date: \_\_\_\_\_