

MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 15, 2016

Location: Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion

Roll Call and Excused Absences
Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Bud Denker
Rev. Lonnie Peek

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Michele Hodges
Mike Curis
Sommer Woods
Bryan Barnhill

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ron Olson
Scott Pratt
Karis Floyd
Jacob Brown
Darlisa Rickman
Amanda Hertl

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: **Chair Hodges** motioned for approval of the minutes from the June 16, 2016 meeting and a motion to accept the minutes for the August meeting. There was no quorum for the August meeting. **Woods** motioned to approve the June minutes and accept the August minutes. **Curis** seconded the motions. Both motions were approved.

PRESENTATION OF BELLE ISLE PARK PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND FISCAL UPDATE

The Power point presentation presented at today's meeting will be available on the following websites.

www.belleislepark.org
www.michigan.gov/dnr

Karis **Floyd**, Jacob **Brown**, and Amanda **Hertl** presented the following overview:

- Visitor attendance summary overview from 2014 to present. Attendance is measured via a vehicle counter on the McArthur Bridge, which calculates an average 3.7 visitors per vehicle. Attendance in 2014 was 2,163,197, 2015 was 3,652,775 and in 2016, for the months of January through July attendance was 3,799,406. Attendance for the summer months for 2014 to 2015 showed a 32% increase.
- Belle Isle State Park funding for 2016 showed a total budget of \$5,500,00. From FY2014 to present the Belle Isle State Park DNR budget was \$16,400,000.
- Revenue Summary for 2016 showed total revenue of \$924,437. Revenue sources include use permits for shelter and facility rentals, event fees, food and service concession contracts and giant slide tickets. Total revenue since 2014 is \$1,964,402.
- Passport Fee Revenues are directed to 103 State Parks and Recreation Areas and State Forest Campgrounds. Passport revenues fund outdoor recreational facilities and other opportunities, such as state parks, recreation areas, state forest campgrounds, non-motorized trail heads and boat launches. The passport also supports historic sites within state parks and provides grants to communities to improve neighborhood parks.
- Overview of investments from 2014 to present included categories of completed projects; road resurface, drainage, traffic studies and bridge repairs, hazardous tree removal, Oxbow comfort station repairs, invasive species removal and outreach, ADA accessible kayak launch, Blue Heron Lagoon bridge repair, water mainline repairs and numerous other projects. Please view the powerpoint presentation for a more complete listing.
- Maintenance, Operations and Capital Outlay funding reflective as of September 13, 2016 are also available in the presentation and can be viewed online. Belle Isle total funding since 2014 for maintenance, operations and capital improvements was \$25,300,00. This consists of island revenue of \$1,964,402, private donations of \$872,372, volunteer hour contributions of \$724,735, public grants for infrastructure improvement of \$3,000,000, MDOT capital investment and maintenance of \$4,300,000, law enforcement \$5,600,000 and State of Michigan General fund of \$10,800,000.

PARK UPDATES

Infrastructure

Amanda Hertl

The Belle Isle Trail masterplan is planned to be completed by the end of October. Phase 100 of the Athletic Complex has been completed. The next phase is the development of construction drawings suitable for bidding. The Fire Suppression System for the casino has been completed. A consultant has been hired to develop improvements to shoreline fishing at Shelter #9.

Scott Pratt Pratt added that some projects are completed by DNR staff. Sharing that the Parks and Recreation Allegan construction unit completed the cement work for the playground project near the Nature Zoo, thus saving thousands of dollars. Also, that the Parks and Recreation Mt. Clemens construction crew completed the parking lot and drainage for the kayak launch access near the beach.

Ron Olson Spoke about invasive species control at Belle Isle Park and throughout the state. He reported that Oak wilt was recently identified on Belle Isle in an area about one acre in size. A plan is being developed to address the problem that will result in removing infected trees.

Hiring Updates

Karis **Floyd** provided an update on the ranger position for Belle Isle. Interviews have been completed and the position will be filled by next week. Also, an Accounting Assistant position for Belle Isle Administration will be posted.

Outreach and Events

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

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|---------|---------------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| • 10/01 | Salvation's Gate 5K | Paddock | 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. |
| • 10/08 | AARDA 5K | Paddock | 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. |
| • 10/09 | St. Vincent de Paul 5K | Shelter 8 | 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. |
| • 10/12 | Senior Power Day Exercise | Casino | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. |
| • 10/13 | BIC Polish the Jewel | Casino | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. |
| • 10/16 | Free Press Marathon | Island | 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. |
| • 10/22 | Junior League of Detroit | Paddock | TBD |
| • 10/22 | Stewardship Day | Nature Zoo | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. |
| • 10/29 | Color Run | Paddock | 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. |
| • 10/29 | Island Harvest Festival | White House | 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. |

DNR Law Enforcement Update

Sgt. Dan Bigger, Acting Lieutenant DNR Law Enforcement Division, Metro Detroit - District 9, reported that an incident of OWI involving a golf cart and a parked bus occurred; the incident was addressed by DNR Conservation Officers. Lieutenant Michael Shaw of the Michigan State Police, followed up to confirm that Conservation Officers did respond to the incident. Sgt. Bigger also indicated a recent event, with a valid permit, that took place ended up going longer than expected.

The incident involved crossing the bridge, where participants went outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT) permitted lane use. Conservation officers were on site and continued to manage and guide participants back into the approved one lane usage.

Sgt. Bigger spoke about the increased number of medical service calls that Conservation Officers are responding to. **Sgt. Bigger** stated that they continue to work with DNR Law Enforcement and DNR Parks staff on day to day matters as they arise. Sgt. Bigger and Lt. Shaw indicated that violations and arrests remain down on the island.

Lieutenant Michael Shaw, Michigan State Police (MSP) reported that criminal calls for service, continue to decline. However medical calls for service are up at this time. Lt. Shaw stated that suicides continue to be a problem on the MacArthur Bridge. MSP is working closely with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for a solution. MSP is continuing working with both the DNR Parks and LED staff to streamline details on the island.

BELLE ISLE CONSERVATORY UPDATES

Please visit our website for additional information: www.belleisleconservancy.org

Public workshops will be held this fall as part of the ongoing planning process.

Upcoming events:

- Polish the Jewel luncheon to be held October 13, 2016
- Light Up the Aquarium to be held December 2, 2016
- Holiday Stroll to be held December 9, 2016

Several recent event successes include the Sunset at the Scott event, the Belle Isle Garden Party, and the Belle Isle soup where approximately 650 guests were in attendance. The volunteer program continues to grow, and all are encouraged to give of their time.

The Belle Isle Beat and Conservatory brochure are new publications. The Belle Isle Beat is not being distributed in hard copy form to the suburbs, but we would be willing to do so. It is sent electronically to suburbanites.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

Michael Betzold **Mr. Betzold** appreciated the staff report on operational details to improve transparency. Spoke about the advisory meeting. Grand Prix being on the park concerns.

Betty Roberts Had questions and comments regarding Oak wilt. Inquiring what type of Oak trees is affected on the island? And questioned if the Sunset restrooms would be open all year?

Karis Floyd stated that the sunset restroom will be closed and winterized. Several acronyms were mentioned and explained to clarify for those present.

Francine Pegues The U.S. State Department visited the Belle Isle Golf Center with a group of Cuban youth and had a good experience.

Karen Rosenberg Questioned who is responsible for security of the island? Stated kids are climbing into the Scott Fountain structure.

Scott Pratt stated that park Rangers, MSP and DNR Conservation Officers are responsible for security on the island. The public may also report issues to the White House - Administration Office.

Rosenberg inquired if Belle Isle Park works with Michigan Universities to collaborate efforts regarding preservation of island resources.

Chair Hodges responded: Yes

Is the Belle Isle Beat newsletter distributed to the suburbs?

Chair Hodges responded. Yes, it is distributed electronically to suburbanites.

OTHER ITEMS

Curis Keith Creagh is back as Director of DNR after completing his assignment as DEQ Director.

Floyd Shared that Belle Isle Park was awarded the “Most Outstanding on the Eastside, “ also known at the MOE Better. Each year, the MOE Better Award is given by the Eastside Community Network (ECN) to groups, businesses and places that contribute to the strength and vitality of the Eastside of Detroit. This award focuses on 5 different categories. Over 500 community members nominated and voted on the award winners this year. This award and event has been a staple of the community for over 25 years; and we are pleased to celebrate you this year.

The complete list of winners for the 2016 Awards and the associated categories is outlined below:

Best employer of Eastside Residents

Better Made Potato Chips

Best Eastside Fun Spot

Belle Isle State Park

Best Eastside Restaurant

Sinbad's

Best Eastside Small Business

Rose's Fine Foods

Best Eastside Neighborhood Group

Friends of the Alger Theater

Hodges

Stated that there will be a Belle Isle Advisory Board vacancy when Alicia Bradford has officially resigned. Alicia Bradford has been appointed Director of Wayne County Parks. Congratulations Alicia! The vacancy is a City of Detroit, Mayor Appointment.

Hodges also stated that the Advisory Board adheres to all policies as it relates to the Committee and its responsibilities as board members.

Committee members asked the following questions of DNR staff:

Barnhill

Question about the comparison in investments from 2014 - 2016

*Ron **Olson**, Chief, DNR Parks and Recreation, clarified that the investments are accumulative and the goal was to achieve \$20 million in three years and that was achieved in two years.*

Woods

Is there an itemized breakdown of 2016 revenues?

*Karis **Floyd** responded: Yes and referred Woods to the power point*

Is the bid process for State contracts bid on lowest bidder or best value?

*Karis **Floyd** responded: Best value, more details will be sent back to clarify the purchasing policy.*

Curis

Acknowledged the great job law enforcement is doing at Belle Isle Park.

Next BIPAC Meeting: October 21, 2016 Belle Isle Nature Zoo 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

The October 21, 2016 meeting location will be held at the Belle Isle Nature Zoo rather than the Belle Isle Casino as indicated on the schedule.

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Barnhill
Seconded by: Curis

Meeting Adjourned:. 10:27 a.m.

Approved: _____
 Michele Hodges

Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: _____