

MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Location: Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion

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

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Brad Dick

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Chair Michele Hodges
Michael Curis
Bud Denker
Bryan Barnhill
Sommer Woods
Rev. Lonnie Peek

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ron Olson
Scott Pratt
Mike Terrell
Karis Floyd
Jacob Brown
Amanda Hertl

Chair Hodges welcomed everyone to the meeting at the Flynn Pavilion.

APPROVAL OF EXCUSED ABSENCES

Motion: **Chair Hodges** motioned for approval of excused absences. **Curis** moved to approve. **Woods** seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion: **Chair Hodges** motioned for approval of the minutes from the January 19, 2017 meeting. **Denker** moved to approve the January minutes.
Woods seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

GENERAL UPDATES

DNR Law Enforcement Update

Lieutenant Joe Molnar (DNR-LED) reported there were no major incidents on the island this month and routine traffic stops were performed.

Infrastructure

Amanda Hertl reviewed some of the various infrastructure projects for 2017. There are currently 18 ongoing projects managed by PRD with a total budget of \$5.7 million dollars. A more detailed infrastructure list was included in each committee member's packet for further review. Some of the highlights of those projects are:

- Internal Affairs Building (IA) Roofing and masonry repairs
- Police headquarters Roof repairs
- Casino Fire suppression system and roof repairs
- Athletic Complex Field improvements are to begin in mid-June
- Flynn Pavilion ADA improvements and storm water drain repairs

Some upcoming projects also include:

- Office space relocation for Belle Isle staff
- Iron Belle Trailhead development
- Lake Okonoka picnic area improvement
- Casino elevator assessment

Ron Olson mentioned that on February 15, 2017 the DNR met with members of the Detroit Water and Sewage Department (DWSD) and the group is currently working through the details regarding the much needed repairs to the park; including the recent water main break at the front of the McArthur Bridge.

Park Operations Update:

Karis Floyd, Belle Isle Park Manager

Floyd gave a monthly update on park operations. The following items were noted:

- Redecorating of the Flynn Pavilion
- Installation of waterless urinals in restrooms
- Removal of downed trees throughout the park

- Beach erosion issue - currently working to correct
- Recycling bins will be placed in approximately 2 weeks
- Single stream recycling
- Michigan Tourism will be on Belle Isle in March
- National Convention in May
- Cleaning contract awarded to American Cleaning Company for the Belle Isle Casino
- Belle Isle Casino fence project expected to be completed this summer.

Outreach and Upcoming Events

Darlisa Rickman, Outreach and Events Coordinator, Belle Isle Park, reviewed the upcoming presentation on chocolate; presented by the Nature Zoo in conjunction with the DIA.

Committee member **Sommer Woods** asked when do the busy season kick off at Belle Isle and how many events did the park host last year. What is the projected number of events for 2017?

Darlisa responded that 253 weddings were hosted and another 193 other events. We project about the same number of events and weddings for this year. Facility improvements may mean a few less.

Woods further asked when you have that many events, how many people are in the events department to handle the events.

Darlisa responded that there are two full time employees and short term workers are utilized during the summer months to assist.

Woods further questioned how staffing levels at Belle Isle compare to other state parks.

Scott Pratt responded that staffing levels are similar; with Belle Isle being somewhat different.

Ron Olson also responded that there are three event planners with the state and an event planner for the BIC to assist.

Woods further stated that she feels Darlisa does a great job with the events for Belle Isle.

Strategic Plan Update:

Ron Olson spoke about the strategic plan, currently in the planning process. Both the DNR and BIC are working together to finalize the draft. The next step will be a series of public meetings to update the public and receive input.

The current DNR PRD strategic plan is in the final draft stage and public comment is being reviewed; the plan will soon be finalized. Information is available on the website at www.michigan.gov/dnr

Oak Wilt Update:

A map and plan will be posted on the website at www.belleislepark.org.

Ron Olson further explained that there are 112 dead infected trees that need to be removed. There is a plan to have them removed and in March a helicopter will be removing the trees to assist with the prevention of this infection spreading. The DNR also partnered with BIC to obtain a grant of \$200,000 from the statewide Invasive Species Program to assist with funding the effort. Also in March trees will be injected to further slow the infection and spread of the disease.

Committee member **Bud Denker** inquired how will anyone know that the process is working?

Olson replied that periodic checks will be done to track the progress. Olson also stated that this is the 11th state park that this disease (oak wilt) has impacted and is a problem.

Chair Hodges asked about the prescribed burn that is to be done?

Olson responded that in the spring the burn will be done to eradicate various invasive species and allow native plants to germinate. Signs will be posted during the burn; and this process will be very carefully managed.

Belle Isle Conservancy Update:

Chair Hodges spoke about the chocolate event at the conservancy this past weekend. Hodges expressed her appreciation to the DIA for support of this event; and thanked Brittany Sanders for leading the event. Hodges also stated that the Shiver on the River event was very successful.

Hodges also shared that on Friday, February 17, 2017 BIC is supporting the Deeper Dive to benefit the aquarium. This event will feature newly discovered blue prints of the aquarium. For additional information on this event please contact Katy Wyerman, Daniel Jackson or Brittany Sanders.

There will also be a Black History Month display at the Belle Isle Aquarium featuring African American Scientists.

Epic Races is conducting a statewide fundraiser with a virtual run. To sign up for this event please visit www.michigan.gov/dnr. This is part of the Big Green Gym Program

PRESENTATION:

2017 CHEVROLET GRAND PRIX BELLE ISLE EVENT

Bud Denker, Executive Vice President, Penske Corporation, shared a presentation with the committee outlining some of the improvements to the park and the City of Detroit since the Grand Prix has been being held in Detroit. The presentation will be available for viewing on the website at www.belleislepark.org.

Committee member **Reverend Lonnie Peek** commented that the presentation gave a very good perspective on what Penske and other corporations give back to the City. Committee member **Michael Curis** also commented that he appreciates Penske and all they have done for the City.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

- Don Graham Thanked the committee and thanked the Detroit Grand Prix for the fantastic presentation. Mr. Graham represents “Keep Michigan Clean.” Mr. Graham spoke about how great it is to have the paddock parking area for events such as the slow roll, etc. celebrating all the improvements done to the park.
- Ade Oba Abdulla Is a Detroit Grand Prix Association member and is impressed by the Grand Prix and how it is set up and broken down each year.
- Cheyenne Johnson Cedric Johnson on behalf of Cheyenne Johnson spoke about a toy car that she received from the Gran Prix two years ago.
- Cedric Johnson Spoke about volunteering at the Grand Prix and his experiences during the Grand Prix event, setup and breakdown.
- Donald Green Mr. Green distributed a handout to the committee members and spoke about not needing a boat ramp on Belle Isle Park. There are 10 launches on the Detroit River currently. More green space will be destroyed for an access ramp. Mr. Green feels that funds for current maintenance needs are limited so money should not be spent for such a project.

Next BIPAC Meeting: March 16, 2016 Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion

Chair Hodges Motioned to Adjourn

Moved by: Denker

Seconded by: Curis

Meeting Adjourned: 10:18 a.m.

Approved: _____
 Michele Hodges

Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: _____