

MINUTES

Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 15, 2017

Location: Belle Isle Nature Center

No Quorum

Meeting called to order at 9:08 a.m.

Roll Call and Excused Absences

ABSENCES

Rev. Lonnie Peek

Bryan Barnhill

Bud Denker – excused absence

Brad Dick – excused absence

PRESENT FOR BIPAC

Chair Michele Hodges

Michael Curis

Sommer Woods Arrived at 9:19 a.m.

DNR STAFF PRESENT

Ron Olson

Scott Pratt

Karis Floyd

Amanda Hertl

APPROVAL FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES

Due to lack of a quorum there was no motion to approve absences.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was no motion to approve the May 18, 2017 minutes, due to lack of a quorum present. Minutes will be brought before the next committee meeting for review and approval.

GENERAL UPDATES

DNR Law Enforcement Update

Lieutenant Mike Shaw, Michigan State Police (MSP), was present to give a brief update from the Law Endorsement Division; Shaw shared that their focus is now on the upcoming fireworks now that the Grand Prix is over. Shaw also noted that a disgruntled employee was issued a trespassing ticket. Shaw further shared that there are 3,000 parking places on the island, and car counters will be out for the fireworks event. Thus once parking capacity is reached; car traffic will be closed. The last 2 years this event has sold out, it is anticipated to sell out this year too. This year campers will have a designated parking area at the paddock by the Casino.

Park Operations Update

Karis Floyd, Belle Isle Park Manager, noted that summer staff has been hired and the park is now fully operational for the season. Belle Isle Ranger interviews will be conducted this week followed by Milliken State Park Ranger interviews. The Belle Isle janitor position interviews should be conducted in approximately 2 weeks.

Karis further noted that there has been 7 leaks throughout the park, 5 of those have been repaired. The park staff will be working with the City of Detroit, Department of Water and Sewer to assist with the remaining leaks.

Karis advised that due to the upcoming fireworks in the park, the park will open at 2 p.m. that day. Staff will be on the bridge, along with officers, to assure traffic is kept clear on Jefferson Avenue.

Infrastructure Updates

Amanda Hertl, Urban Field Planner, provided a written update on the infrastructure projects; the update was included in committee member packets. Hertl noted some of the highlights as well.

- **Internal Affairs/Radio Building**
The WTA was selected as the Professional Service Consultant for the restoration of the building. WTA will begin the design phase this summer. Repairs are anticipated to begin this winter 2017 and continue through next summer 2018.
- **The Casino**
FH Martin will continue repairs to the roof and masonry on Wednesday, July 19, 2017. Estimated completion date for roof and structural repairs on towers is July 31, 2017. The new fire suppression and alarm systems are operational and have been pre-tested. A final certification test will be conducted June 19, 2017. Final punch list items will be completed after this date as well.

- **The Flynn Pavilion and White House**
Genoa Contracting LLC has begun work to replace the cedar shingles on the White House. Sidewalk and drainage improvements to the Flynn Pavilion entrance are scheduled for the end of June 2017.
- **Athletic Complex Renovation**
Upon approval by the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget's Board, a notice to proceed on construction should be issued by mid-June 2017.
- **Shelter 9 Shoreline Fishing Improvement**
Genoa Contracting LLC has mobilized on site. Work has begun on the removal of the rail, fencing and the surface of the seawall.
- **Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory**
Currently a structural evaluation of the Belle Isle Aquarium and Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory is being finalized. The ventilation report for the Conservatory has been reviewed by DNR and the consultant is working to finalize recommendations for improving ventilation. Construction documents will follow with the anticipated date for complete construction anticipated at the end of September 2017.

Repairs to the Koi pond are scheduled to be completed this week. The Koi pond is schedule to be filled the week of June 12, 2017.

- **Picnic Shelter Restoration - 2, 5 and 6**
The replacement of floors will begin this month in shelters 5 and 6. Following this initial phase of work lead paint abatement will begin in those shelters. Fresh paint will also be applied to the shelters.

Upcoming Infrastructure Items

- **Lake Okonoka Picnic Shelter Improvements**
JJR Smithgroup is coordinating the amenity layout with the Friends of Detroit River Lake Okonoka Habitat Restoration.
- **Lake Okonoka Habitat Restoration - Friends of Detroit River**
DNR-PRD is coordinating the kayak launch, parking, roadway and DTE utility upgrades with consultant, JJR Smithgroup.
- **Wet-Mesic Flatwoods Habitat Restoration Plan**
Requests for proposals will be issued.
- **Island Wide Stormwater Utility Assessment and Maintenance**
The initial project program meeting is currently being rescheduled.

- **Iron Belle Trailhead Development**
The initial project program meeting is scheduled for June 15, 2017.
- **Casino Elevator Assessment**
G.H. Forbes is to begin work in mid-July 2017.
- **Boating Access Site (BAS) Feasibility Study**
A professional service consultant is to be selected.
- **DNR-PRD project coordination with the Preservation Trade Network (PTN)**
The PTN is holding a conference this September in Detroit. They will be holding a multi-day event on Belle Isle with workshops involving volunteers from different trades who will perform restoration on structures throughout the park.
- **Patronicity Fundraising Campaign for the Newsboy Shelter**
The Belle Isle Conservancy is leading this fundraising effort with assistance from the Michigan Press Association.

Michele Hodges, Chair, Belle Isle Conservancy, noted that a press release for the Patronicity campaign was released that includes a link to the website for donating to the campaign. More information can be obtained from Katy Wyerman at wyermank@belleisleconservancy.org.

For more information, please visit our websites:
www.belleislepark.org
www.belleisleconservancy.org

Outreach and Upcoming Events

Karis Floyd, Belle Isle Park Manger, noted that there is now access to the Casino building; weddings will begin for the season next week.

Michele Hodges shared that the Lily pond is filled and the restoration is complete; the Koi will now be able to stay out year around.

Ron Olson, Chief, DNR – Parks and Recreation Division, shared that due to the funding provided by the Grand Prix, Dr. Carpenter, DTE, was able to repair some defects in the electrical system of the fountain and replace some lights as well.

Belle Isle Conservancy Update

Chair Hodges noted some of the recent events they are working on.

- “Sunset at the Scott” to be held on August 10, 2017; this event helps raise funds to replace the Pewabic tile at the fountain.
- The “Garden Party” will take place on September 12, 2017 at the Conservatory.
- The “Polish the Jewel” is scheduled for October 12, 2017. This is the third year of fundraising for the splash park. The splash park will replace the water slide over near the beach. Adequate funds are now available to initiate the planning process; a consultant has been hired.
- Expressed admiration for the event recently held on Manistique Street. Feels this event was an enriching and uplifting experience and should be supported just as the community supports Belle Isle.
- The Grand Prixmiere, which takes place the Friday evening prior to the Grand Prix, was a huge success with our corporate partners garnering \$700,000. This enables us to keep the fountain and the aquarium functioning. The aquarium costs about \$500,000 a year to keep open and free to the public. Thanks to the Penske team, Chevrolet and PWC.

Michael Montri, Grand Prix Representative, was present at the meeting and shared that the Grand Prix had a very successful weekend. Attendance was not record breaking however approximately 100,000 people attended the weekend event. From a media standpoint there were approximately 1.8 million viewers who were able to watch and see a very favorable City of Detroit. The Grand Prix generated the second highest rating outside of the Indy 500. The race also generated over 50,000 articles and stories worldwide which exceeds even the Indy 500. There were over 77 corporate partners; which were the highest ever. The race generated 238 million social media hits, up 34% last year. Michael noted that support from the DNR is appreciated.

Ron Olson did voice some concerns that were brought up over the Grand Prix weekend in regards to the traffic and the takedown of the event. **Scott Pratt** further clarified that the booth at the time of the Grand Prix was converted into an informational booth. It is intended to open extra lanes in the future and to review additional signage; in hopes to support better traffic flow and make things more amenable.

Chair Hodges, requested an update on the negotiation of the contract for the Grand Prix event.

Ron Olson stated that the goal of the negotiation process is to talk about the changes, adjustments and plans for the future. Research and tactical assessments will be undertaken to shorten the set up and take down times.

Chair Hodges further questioned if there was chronicling of each question and response?

Ron Olson stated yes we are.

Sommer Woods, committee member, asked if the movement of the booth was because of closures due to the Grand Prix. Also, was there any concessions made during the congestion as far as park passes and tickets?

Scott Pratt explained that we do not ticket; a slip is given out as a reminder that there is payment due to enter the park.

Karis Floyd further explained that typically the booth is in front of the police station and traffic flows better; however due to the construction at the police station it was not possible this year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes each)

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|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Belinda Aberle | Detroit resident that is not in favor of the Grand Prix and would like to see it moved to a venue that can support it. |
| Dick Morris | Interested in the Grand Prix Revenue |
| Rick DeMayo | Heavily in favor of the Grand Prix |
| Stephanie Donaldson | Gave an overview of Senior Power Days Events |
| Michael Betzold | Asserted that he is vehemently opposed to the Grand Prix |
| Donald Green | Disappointed in the poor upkeep of the island and very against the Grand Prix |
| Carol Rhoades | Expressed concern about signage on the island to enforce one way streets and asked about a missing chair on the children's playscapes. Also, supports the Grand Prix moving off the island. |
| Barb Martin | Has the Grand Prix impacted any family reunions? Would like for the Grand Prix to find a better level of compatibility with Detroit residents. |

Scott Pratt, DNR, explained that some of the shelters that were offline were due to repairs that needed to be made.

Sommer Woods, questioned what the grass cutting schedule was because she felt the island looked unkempt

Karis Floyd responded that the grass is on a cutting schedule and certain areas are only maintained at certain times.

COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS

Michael Curis

We all have to work together during the negotiation period at the end of negotiations nobody should say “I won” it should be “We all won” which means we all have to give a little bit and we all have to leave something on the table. And we all have to make it work for everybody.

Sommer Woods

Would like to commend Stephanie Donaldson on a job well done and would like to encourage everyone to see the movie about 12th and Claremont regarding the race riots; finds that concept to still be applicable in 2017.

Michele Hodges

Next meeting to be held July 20, 2017 at the Flynn Pavilion

Meeting Concluded:

10:13 a.m.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

July 20, 2017

Flynn Pavilion
Belle Isle Park
Detroit, MI 48207
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

Approved: _____
Michele Hodges, Chair

Ronald A. Olson, Chief

Date: _____