

## MINUTES

### Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday March 15, 2018

Belle Isle Nature Center

Meeting called to order at 9:06 a.m.  
Quorum was established at 9:21 a.m.  
Roll Call and Excused Absences

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Bryan Barnhill  
Sommer Woods

#### **PRESENT FOR BIPAC**

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

#### **DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Scott Pratt  
Jacob Brown  
Amanda Treadwell  
Darlisa Rickman

#### **APPROVAL FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Motion to approve excused absences, moved by **Bud Denker** and seconded by **Michael Curis**

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

*Chair Hodges* requested approval of the February 15, 2018 meeting minutes. *Bud Denker* moved to approve with *Mike Curis* seconding the motion. Minutes for February 15, 2018 were approved with no corrections.

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

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

**Sgt. Damon Owens**, DNR Law Enforcement, reported that officers will be moving to a 3-rotation shift; no incidents to report. Things have been quiet on Belle Isle.

### ***Park Operations Update***

**Karis Floyd**, Belle Isle Park Manager, shared the following operational items with the committee:

- Mold remediation at the White House is complete; staff will be moving back onsite shortly.
- Boiler will be replaced with a new furnace in the White House.
- Vendor Contract meetings and walk-throughs completed; awaiting contracts to be awarded.
- Currently accepting applications for Summer Temporary workers (STW)
- Two Belle Isle Rangers will be attending the Ranger Academy beginning April 2, 2018
- RKC was awarded the contract for the Giant Slide and will maintain her contract for biking and kayaking on Belle Isle Park.

### ***Infrastructure Updates***

**Amanda Treadwell**, Urban Field Planner, provided a written update regarding the infrastructure projects; a full update was provided to committee members' in their packets. Some of the highlights are listed below:

#### **Internal Affairs Building, Public Service Center and Staff Offices**

- The renovation project scope was reduced to accommodate FY 2018 budget. Deductive alternates for office include; removing garage improvements and site work. Site work, excluding ADA accessibility items, and garage improvements will be completed in fall of 2018 with FY 2019 capital outlay funds.

Contract was awarded to Qualified Disable Veteran for Antler Construction Company, Canton, Michigan for \$1,198,256.00. The Kick-off meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, April 2, 2018.

#### **Iron Belle Trailhead Development**

- Edgewater Design has completed 90% of the plans.
- Construction bidding is anticipated for March 2018.

## **Iron Belle Trail - Belle Isle Multi-Use Trail Design**

- DNR has secured Recreation Trail Program (RTP) grant funding for engineering of the Belle Isle multi-use trail. The grant period for these funds expires in September 2018. Engineering will be complete within this grant period.
- Design scope includes; engineering for multi-use loop trail, archeological survey, and trail signage.
- Edgewater Resources' contract had been modified to continue this scope of work in their contract.
- Future stakeholder and public meetings will be scheduled for input and coordination.

## **Wet-Mesic Flatwoods Habitat Restoration Plan**

- EA Engineering, Science and Technology Inc. will begin scheduling stakeholder input sessions in late March and then again in early May.
- The restoration plan is scheduled to be 60% complete in May for the second stakeholder review meeting.
- Public input sessions are tentatively scheduled for an evening towards the end of April.

## **New Capital Projects**

### **Scott Fountain ADA Accessibility Improvements**

- Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund awarded the grant to construct ADA accessible path to the top of the fountain. Construction Plans were previously funded with Capital Outlay and 95% complete. Funds will be available April 2018.

## **Partner Coordinated Projects**

### **McArthur Bridge Maintenance-MDOT**

- Bridge deck repair is underway. Work includes concrete repair to the bridge approaches, joint replacement, pavement repairs to the bridge and sidewalk, and an epoxy overlay to protect this investment.
- **TRAFFIC DETAILS:**
  - For safety, 1lane will be open in each direction of the bridge between Jefferson Avenue and the island during some of the repair work, as well as seven days a week until Memorial Day weekend and again after Labor Day. Pedestrians and bicyclists may have limited access at times. During the summer, lane closures will occur during weekdays, Monday through Thursday.
- All lanes will be open during weekends and the following special events:
  - Detroit Grand Prix: 5 p.m. Thursday, May 31, to 6 a.m., Monday, June 4
  - Freedom Fireworks: 3 p.m. Monday, June 25 to 6 a.m., Thursday July 5
  - Detroit Free Press Marathon: 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 20 to 6 a.m. Monday Oct. 22

## **Belle Isle Park Electric System Upgrade- DTE**

- DTE will begin the conversion of Belle Isle’s electric system to their system from PLD’s system in September 2018.
- Island-wide design for the new system is ongoing. Once the new electric cables are in place the upgrade to the island system may begin.
- Conversion is scheduled to be complete in 2020.

## **Belle Isle Boating Access Site (BAS) Study:**

OHM Advisors was contracted to complete a boating access study for Milliken State Park and Belle Isle Park. Existing boating access sites in a five-mile radius of these two sites have been reviewed for a comprehensive look at boating access to the Detroit River in the area surrounding Belle Isle Park and Milliken State Park. Both parks were also reviewed to determine the feasibility of a BAS within each of the parks. OHM’s preliminary review of Milliken State Park determined that the site would not be suitable for development of a BAS. The study will continue the assessment for a suitability study on Belle Isle Park.

The next task will be for OHM to collect public input on a Belle Isle BAS. Two written surveys will be developed for electronic posting online. One of the surveys will be specific to boat users, the other will be specific to recreational site users. A third survey will be developed for on-site questioning with recreational users (site users and boaters). The two written surveys for electronic distribution will be available April 1, 2018. Active user interviews will take place between May 1, 2018 and June 1, 2018. Data will be collected and reported to the MDNR by June 15, 2018.

## **The anticipated project schedule for the study is as follows:**

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| • Public Input                                | May1- June 1         |
| • Project team Review meeting of Public Input | by June 30           |
| • Concept Design                              | July 1 - August 1    |
| • Review Meeting & Selection Criteria         | August 1 - August 15 |
| • Assessment Review (in-person)               | by August 30         |
| • Finalize Report                             | by September 15      |

**Scott Pratt**, Chief, Southern Field Operations further commented that the study will encompass a 2-mile radius of the Detroit River to evaluate access. Further, that Milliken State Park has been ruled out as a possible boating access site. Surveys will be posted online so that the public can add their input. One survey will be specific to boating users and the other will be for the recreational users.

**Committee Member, Bud Denker** asked what is required in terms of size and area to designate a boat launch?

*Scott Pratt: There are quite a few factors including how many people the launch needs to accommodate, which will dictate how many ramps are needed and the biggest aspect of such a project would be the parking lot.*

### **Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory Structural Repairs:**

A structural engineering evaluation of the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory (ASWC) and Belle Isle Aquarium (BIA) was conducted by RSE Associates during the summer of 2017. While no emergency life-safety issues were found for either structure, RSE found significant corrosion and loss of structural steel within the ASWC's Palm House (dome). The Palm House structure has passed a turning point of structural strength but is not yet at a point where the building needs to be shut-down for safety. However, timely repair is required. RSE's recommendation was to address the structural integrity of the lower portions of the conservatory dome as soon as the work can be reasonably undertaken in 2018. The work will involve replacement of the vertical steel trusses of the Palm House (conservatory dome). The cost estimate for the recommended work is \$807,300 and will be funded by DNR-PRD capital outlay funds.

Contract forms are complete, and consultants are finalizing the work schedule this week. The fabrication specifications for the trusses have yet to be determined. The construction documents will determine how the trusses are fabricated off-site and installed in the dome. The final time schedule will be determined by the means and methods laid out in the engineering documents for replacing the steel trusses. We anticipate repairs will be completed by the end of the year.

### **Outreach and Upcoming Events**

**Darlisa Rickman**, Event Coordinator, spoke about the upcoming wedding and event season that has kicked off and is quite busy. Upcoming events include:

- March 25 - a vendor expo held at the Casino from 3:00 -5:00 p.m.
- April 7 - a commemorative event at the Old Police Station from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- April 15 - MSU having a science festival that is free to the public
- April 16 - Grand Prix load-in begins
- April 21 - Annual Spring Cleanup lead by Genevieve Nowak
- April 28 - Belle Isle Spring into Nature 5k to support the Belle Isle Aquarium

## Belle Isle Conservancy Updates

### **Chair Michelle Hodges**

- April 18 - Daffodil Day luncheon
- May 5 - Koi Festival
- June 1 - Grand Premiere
- July 11 - Metro Detroit Youth Day
- March 21 - preparations for the Piet Oulof Garden
- April 13 – 22 - Volunteer week
- Hiring at the Aquarium and Conservatory

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

**Tom Choske** Interested in improving transit accessibility and would like to make sure that new resources are not being wasted on work that has already been done.

**Jerry Comfort**  
Lake St. Clair  
Walleye Club  
Has collected over 4,000 signatures to support the Boat Launch. Strongly supports Boat Launch on Belle Isle.

**Richard Benson** Strongly supports the Boat Launch on Belle Isle Park.

**Stan Bylbos** Strongly supports the Boat Launch on Belle Isle Park.

**Carol Rhoades** Opposes Boat Launch on Belle Isle. Wanted clarification from Michelle Hodges on her stance with the negative effects of the Grand Prix.

*Michele Hodges: The Conservancy has always operated with complete transparency and consistently tries to minimize the negatives and maximize the positives. Any concerns are always forwarded to the Grand Prix committee.*

**Michael Betzold** Opposes the structure of authority on Belle Isle and the Grand Prix.

**Donald Green** Strongly opposes the boat launch on Belle Isle and questions the attendance figures for Belle Isle Park.

**Betty Roberts** Supports the Grand Prix on Belle Isle supports the Walleye Fishing Club's advocacy for a boat launch.

**Mr. Everette** Cited an article in the Metro Times analyzing the financial benefit of The Grand Prix on Belle Isle.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ITEMS**

**Rev. Lonnie Peek**

WDIV segment on Tuesdays during Live in the D usually spotlights a person or event and he will use his platform to push for volunteers for Belle Isle Park. Happy that things have been progressing well on Belle Isle.

Meeting Concluded: 10:11 a.m.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

**April 19, 2018**

Belle Isle Nature Zoo

Belle Isle Park

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald A. Olson, Chief

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