

## MINUTES

### Belle Isle Park Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 15, 2018

### Belle Isle Flynn Pavilion

Quorum: Meeting started at 9:05 a.m.  
Roll Call and Excused Absences

#### **PRESENT FOR BIPAC**

Chair Michele Hodges  
Michael Curis  
Bud Denker  
Bryan Barnhill  
Brad Dick

#### **DNR STAFF PRESENT**

Scott Pratt  
Michael Terrell  
Karis Floyd  
Jacob Brown  
Amanda Hertl  
Mia Moore  
Egypt Burnley  
Gary Williams, MSU Extension

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Rev. Lonnie Peek  
Sommer Woods

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

**Chair Hodges** requested approval of the minutes from the January 18, 2018 meeting.  
**Curis** moved to approve minutes, with **Dick** supporting the motion. Minutes for January 18, 2018 were approved.

## **PRESENTATION**

### ***Stepping Stones Program***

**Gary Williams**, MSU Extension, shared a Powerpoint presentation, giving an overview of the above program. This program is designed to bring urban youth a fun, educational outdoor experience in a Michigan State Park. Stepping Stones is now offered at 8 State parks. The goal is to keep youth close to home while introducing them to the outdoor experience. Youth participate in at least one of the following activities: fishing, archery, Camping 101, nature exploration, and water studies. The program has had over 1,200 participants with 90% of the youth indicating they would like to come back and visit a state park. Both staff and chaperones expressed that they would recommend this program to others.

## **GENERAL UPDATES**

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

**Lieutenant Joe Molnar** reported that it is a slow time of the year and the island has been relatively quiet. Molnar also noted the following:

*When you dial 911, the call automatically routes to either the Detroit Police Department or the Michigan State Police. There are still a few issues with the routing system due to the fact we are so close to Canada. However, we will be working out those issues. Still use 911 as your primary emergency helpline, otherwise, you can find at State Trooper, Conservation Officer, or Park Ranger to assist in any major matters.*

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

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

- The White House drywall installation will be complete in approximately 3 days
- Heating system for the White House needs to be installed prior to staff moving in
- MDOT bridge work updates will be sent out more frequently
- Hiring will begin in March

### ***Infrastructure Updates***

**Amanda Hertl**, 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:

- MDOT will begin setting up cones and block off points the first week of March. March through June 2, 2018 there will be restricted lane access.
- There will be one lane in and one lane out available for use during the construction process. After June 2, 2018 there will be 2 lanes open each way Friday – Monday for more efficient traffic flow. Two lane traffic will be extended for special events and holidays. Listed below is a summary of those events and dates:
  - Freedom Festival Fireworks – Monday, June 25, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. through Thursday, July 5, 2018 at 6:00 a.m.
  - Detroit Free Press Marathon – Friday, October 20, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. through Monday, October 23, 2018 at 6:00 a.m.
  - Memorial Day
  - 4<sup>th</sup> of July
  - Labor Day
- There will be one pedestrian bike lane open during construction, which lane to be utilized is currently under review.
- The Internal Affairs building bids were received on February 7, 2018 and were higher than the initial budget. Documents will be reviewed to bring the requirements within the budget.
- The following projects are currently on hold until spring 2018:
  - Casino
  - Athletic Field
  - North shore fishing pier
  - Scott Fountain ADA access
- A study is being planned to review the restoration of the Conservatory. With this study we hope to determine if the Conservatory will be restored to its original 1904 Victorian state or will be renovated in the 1950’s “updated” image.
- Paint work is complete on shelter 5; once the weather improves concrete will be poured at both shelters 5 and 6. Expected completion is April 2018.
- Surveys for the boating access site will be conducted at both Belle Isle and Milliken State Park and Harbor.
- The Lake Okanoka project dredging stage is complete. It is expected that refilling of the lake will take approximately one week. The sanitary portion of the project will be conducted next week. Once the bridge permit is received from MDOT, it will take approximately 2 months to construct the bridge that will connect the two waterways for recreational use.
- Farrow Contracting has offered to remove the water slide. We will be working with him in the near future to complete this process.

### ***Upcoming Events***

***Jacob Brown***, spoke on behalf of Darlisa Rickman, indicating there are no current event updates.

## ***Strategic Management Plan***

**Scott Pratt**, Southern Field Operations Chief, spoke about the status of the Strategic Management Plan. Public input meetings were held on February 1, 2018 at the Outdoor Adventure Center. A total of 148 people attended; and were invited to review and provide comments on the draft plan. Primary topics of interest were a boat ramp on Belle Isle and the Grand Prix. The public comment period for the plan concluded on February 12, 2018. All comments are currently being compiled for review by the planning team and revised as appropriate. Once revised, the final draft plan will be presented to the Belle Isle Advisory Committee and the Belle Isle Conservancy Board for any further recommendations as part of the final approval process.

## ***Belle Isle Conservancy Update***

**Chair Hodges** spoke about the following upcoming items:

- During Black History Month the Aquarium will be profiling 8 scientists. The Conservatory will host 10-12 scientists and a walking tour will be available.
- On February 25, 2018 Olivia Hubert, Brother Nature Produce, will be speaking at 2:00 p.m. at the Aquarium.
- A new pilot program is currently going on at the Aquarium, the program is named “who eats what”
- Spring clean-up is scheduled to begin April 21, 2018
- Volunteer groups are flourishing

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

**Don Graham** shared a litter campaign with the committee. In particular was cigarette butt litter, displaying a cup holder where you insert the cigarette butt as a means of disposal rather than throwing out a window.

**Jerry Comfort** requested an update on the Belle Isle boat launch project.

**Carol Rhodes** Mentioned the large mound of dirt located near the lighthouse, asking if it would be leveled and seeded.

*Karis Floyd responded that yes it would be leveled and seeded.*

The Detroit Free Press had an article that indicated an environmental study was launched on the island in December, is that true?

*Scott Pratt responded that we currently have DNR staff looking that over. The snake study is part of the Lake Okanoka project.*

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ITEMS**

**No Committee Member items.**

Meeting Concluded: 10:05 a.m.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

**March 15, 2018**

Belle Isle Nature Center

Belle Isle Park

Detroit, MI 48207

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 am.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michele Hodges, Chair

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

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