

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
June 15, 2020

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, June 15, 2020, via Microsoft Teams virtual meeting for its regular meeting. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting were duly given as required by law. The public was provided with a link to join the virtual meeting.

Park Board members present were as follows:

Mr. Mark Neal, President  
Mr. Dan Farrell  
Ms. Consuella Hopkins

Park Board members absent were as follows:

Ms. Aimee Buccellato

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Eva Ennis, Operations Coordinator; Annie Gawkowski, Chief Development Officer; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreation; Tony Stearns, Director of Golf

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Karen White, Councilperson; Lori Hamman, Councilperson; Sharon McBride, Councilperson

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm. He reviewed the agenda and explained the forum for the virtual meeting.

II. Approval of the May 18, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2020 Park Board meeting by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent agenda

Motion to remove Use of Park items to be discussed separately and to approve the Financial Statements by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

2. Use of Park Applications

- a. Public Forum on the Citizen Police Review Board | June 16 | LaSalle Park
- b. Public Forum on the Citizen Police Review Board | June 18 | Boehm Park

Jonathan Jones explained that the Public Forum on the Citizen Police Review Board are public forums that would regularly happen inside Common Council chambers but are being held outside to keep appropriate physical distance. There are two events being held at two different locations.

Motion to approve the use of parks applications for Public Forum of Citizen Review Board at LaSalle and Boehm Park by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Interviewing of Interested Citizens

Mark Neal opened the floor for citizen comments. There were none.

## V. New Business

### 1. Elbel Technology / Connectivity Contract

Tony Stearns explained that connectivity at Elbel needs to be improved. The City's IT team helped Golf source a vendor that the City has used at other locations to add at Elbel to improve connectivity there. The total cost involved is \$4,000 over three years.

Motion to improve the Elbel Connectivity Contract by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

### 2. License Agreement with Class of 1970 Alumni Notre Dame

Amy Roush explained that a project with the Notre Dame Class of 1970 was brought to the board in November as an initial concept. The Class of 1970 is celebrating their 50-year anniversary this year and would like to commemorate their anniversary with a landscaping project at the corner of Riverside and Angela Blvd. Staff and the alumni group worked with legal to develop a license agreement. She mentioned that she would specifically like the board's review and approval of the language on the plaque which is listed on the license agreement.

Motion to approve the license agreement with the Class of 1970 Alumni of Notre Dame by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

### 3. EnFocus Transportation Agreement

Jonathan Jones explained that this agreement is a transportation opportunity for participants of the Youth Jobs Program. Previously the city partnered with EnFocus to provide shift workers in the city with consistent transportation access through a grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. These funds have been available still for VPA to use with EnFocus. Carpoolers can be reimbursed for providing rides to employees and a partnership with Transpo to provide free rides. This is a 6 1/2-month agreement to provide transportation because it is targeted for seasonal staff.

Motion to approve the EnFocus Transportation Agreement by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

### 4. Eagle Scout Project in Fredrickson Park

Amy Roush explained that Gabriel Dawson is trying to receive his Eagle Scout award and wanted to do a project for VPA. He would like to build wooden benches to be placed at Fredrickson Park. He will build 6 benches with 4 on the trails and 2 on the deck. The student will work with the LaSalle Council to be responsible for the items long-term.

Clara McDaniels noted that from a legal standpoint it was important that the benches will only set on the ground and not be installed in a way that would damage the clay cap.

Motion to approve the Eagle Scout Project in Fredrickson Park by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

### 5. Riverlights Agreement with St. Joseph County

Aaron Perri explained that this is an agreement between St. Joseph County regarding the River Lights on the Jefferson Street Bridge. The River Lights are installed on the bridge which is owned by the County. There was never a formal agreement put into place when the lights were installed so this agreement covers the placement of the lights on county property.

Clara McDaniels noted that she is satisfied that the agreement accurately captures the considerations of the City, but still needs to be approved by the County. She recommended a provisional approval.

Motion to approve of the Riverlights Agreement subject to the negotiation of the final terms with St. Joseph County by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

#### 6. O'Brien / YMCA Partnership

Aaron Perri shared that because YMCA in South Bend has closed their building, VPA has been working with them to help fill gaps that might exist. VPA and YMCA of Greater Michiana are in discussions to open the O'Brien Center to the YMCA members. This partnership happens at the same time that VPA is expanding the O'Brien Fitness Center so there is an increased capacity in the building to house more members in addition to more services and offerings. The partnership would include membership reciprocity. Members of Y or O'Brien would receive unlimited fitness classes, childwatch access, access to YMCAs across the country, discounts on lessons and camps, and other discounts on VPA programs. Additionally, the partnership would possibly bring equipment from the Y to the O'Brien Center as well as share staff.

Mark Neal asked about pricing in comparison to the current fees at O'Brien and YMCA. Aaron Perri replied that to keep rates in line with the offerings of the new partnership the new rates will likely be more than current O'Brien rates but less than YMCA rates. There will also be a scholarship opportunity to ensure that cost is not a barrier for anyone to have a membership.

Dan Farrell recommended reaching out to loyal O'Brien members and YMCA members to make sure the new rate packages include benefits that both membership bases are looking for.

Aaron Perri noted that there are 900 member units at O'Brien with 14,000 members at YMCA.

Mark Neal shared that he is also a member of the YMCA Board.

Aaron Perri added that the board will review an MOU and user fees at the next meeting.

Sharon McBride, 3rd District Councilwoman, commented that she was pleased to hear that there was discussion in the YMCA Board, and she would be interested to hear more about the context of the meeting. She asked if there have been discussions about what the goal is for the YMCA building on North Shore Drive.

Mark Neal noted that Aaron Perri's conversations have been with the Y Management specifically to sort through an opportunity to use the O'Brien Center for members. The Y as a mission driven organization that is looking for the best way to meet the needs of the community most effectively. The Y already has several partners in the community and is looking for more ways to offer their programs in more spaces.

Councilmember Sharon McBride encouraged VPA to continue to make sure the city is servicing all communities and neighborhoods experiencing disparities in education and housing. There is concern from the community that the Y is a facility that is servicing the east side of town where there aren't other facilities like it.

Lori Hamman, At-Large Councilmember, commented that the Y has amazing fitness programming, and with this partnership, she sees the Y being able to use the parks themselves for fitness programming. She also recommended supporting corporate memberships and corporate wellness planning, and that the more resources you have available, it will open up a greater response for those corporate wellness programs.

Consuella Hopkins also noted that partnering together and doing programming at the parks would help with cost savings.

VI. Business by Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- VPA is tracking national, state and local guidelines in regards to COVID-19 to determine how to move forward with programming in the upcoming weeks.
- Playgrounds, restrooms, skate park, splashpads, community centers, and golf have all opened. Athletic tournament play and large-scale events are not yet starting.
- VPA will not be opening Potawatomi Pool this summer but Kennedy Water Park will open.
- Charles Black Center will have a delayed opening because an employee tested positive for COVID-19.
- Check [sbvpa.org/updates](http://sbvpa.org/updates) and the safety measures pages for information regarding what is open at VPA and what precautions VPA is taking
- Youth Jobs program is running.
- We are rescheduling Best Week Ever to the beginning of August. VPA has developed a precautions manual that is being reviewed by the mayor's office and health department.
- VPA is working aggressively on the 2021 budget. The City and VPA is going to see some significant changes to the budget because of anticipated reduction in tax revenue.
- Pulaski Park Ribbon-cutting will be scheduled soon.
- Gov. Kernan Trail is under construction now.
- Pinhook Park is under construction.
- Leeper Park phase 2 will be complete in the next 2-3 weeks.
- Seitz Park hydro project work is still happening. The City will be able to start work to complete the park at the end of the year.
- Potawatomi Zoo cut the ribbon for opening the new entrance.

Mark Neal thanked Aaron Perri and the VPA team for all the work that has been done to put protocols and communication in place that honors the community needs and keeps people safe.

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, July 20, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. with location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eva Ennis