

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
July 20, 2020

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, July 20, 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  
Ms. Aimee Buccellato

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Eva Ennis, Operations Coordinator; Annie Gawkowski, Chief Development Officer; Matthew Moyers, Partnerships & Standards Coordinator; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreation

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Kara Boyles, City Engineer; Sharon McBride, Councilperson;

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:00 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 June 15, 2020 Park Board meeting by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

IV. Interviewing of Interested Citizens

Mark Neal opened the floor for citizen comments.

Edward Thomas member of the public explained that he was in attendance to discuss an event for use of parks approval. The event was not on the agenda, so Mark Neal asked that staff review the request and have the event ready for approval at the next meeting.

V. Reports by Organizations – Ecological Advocacy Committee

Steve Sass reviewed the tri-annual report that the Ecological Advocacy Committee developed for the Park Board. He also noted that the committee met for a special meeting in July regarding the Ponader Park Douglas Road Expansion, and the committee provided a report and suggestions to the board as well. Mark Neal requested hearing an update about the 35<sup>th</sup> Street Wetlands in the future.

VI. New Business

1. Presentation from St. Joseph County regarding Douglas Road Expansion Ponader Park

Jamie Wood, Attorney for St. Joseph County, explained the Douglas Road Expansion project that will impact the Ponader Park property. To accomplish this Douglas Road project, the County is requesting the board transfer .399 acres of property to the county via warranty deed, grant a .944 temporary easement, and release .1 acres of wetland easement currently on the property. The County would like to address the concerns of the Ecological Advocacy Committee while moving forward with the project timeline.

Clara McDaniels noted that an MOU was created prior to the EAC meeting where the EAC discussed the project, but a new MOU will need to be developed to address their comments. In addition to the MOU there are several related documents that will need to be created to fully take action on the property transfers and easements.

Jamie Wood noted that the timeline for the project requires that the action on an MOU be taken in August. Once the documents are drafted and sent to the Park Board for review, the Park Board could call a special meeting to approve the documents to allow for the project timelines to be met.

Aimee Buccellato noted concern that the board was brought into the conversation at a late time frame and without much information. She requested that the County submit a point-by-point response to the EAC's memorandum. She mentioned that the board, as owners of the property, has the ability to give context for the actual value of the property in terms of the appraisal. She added that she would request further investigation regarding why the project itself cannot take on the reconstruction of a wetland in the area that it is being disturbed.

Dan Farrell stated that he'd like to take the time to visit Ponader Park and view the property.

Consuella Hopkins concurred with both of Aimee Buccellato's and Dan Farrell's comments and thanked Clara McDaniels for her efforts on working through this so quickly.

## 2. Request to Advertise for Security Systems

Aaron Perri explained that VPA would like to find a security systems provider for all of its facilities under a combined contract. VPA would like to advertise to receive proposals.

Motion to approve the request to advertise for security systems by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

Clara McDaniels reviewed the process of the opening of the proposals at the next meeting.

## 3. MOU with YMCA of Greater Michiana

Aaron Perri reviewed the MOU noting that the package should address the needs of the community well and take advantage of the benefits of each entity.

Motion to approve the MOU with the YMCA of Greater Michiana by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0. Mark Neal recused himself from voting because of a conflict of interest due to being a board member for the YMCA.

## 4. Book Box Girl Scout Project at Kennedy Park

Amy Roush explained that Emmie Pica would like to build and install a book box at Kennedy Park for a Girl Scout project. She is requesting the board's approval for the project installation at Kennedy Park.

Motion to approve the Book Box Girl Scout project at Kennedy Park by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

VII. Business by Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- Jonathan Jones developed a comprehensive Recreation report for the board members to review that has a lot of information about the work the recreation team has been doing over the last several months.
- Pulaski Park is complete. There was a ribbon cutting in July to celebrate its opening.
- Leeper Park Phase II is almost complete including the overlook on Riverside Drive.
- O'Brien Center and the Gov. Kernan Trail are the next two projects that will start construction.
- The budget process has started. This year the city expects a significant reduction in revenue and VPA is being asked to cut their budget by approximately 10%. He discussed how the department is considering ways to restructure and use partnerships as a way to reduce expenses through something called All-In Recreation, which will be presented at a future meeting.

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, August 17, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. with location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eva Ennis