

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
January 18, 2022

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, November 15, 2021, at Howard Park Event Center, 219 S. St. Louis Blvd and virtually on Microsoft Teams 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
Ms. Aimee Buccellato

Park Board members present and attending virtually as follows:

Ms. Consuella Hopkins, Vice President
Mr. Dan Farrell

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director of Venues Parks & Arts; Annie Smith, Chief Development Officer; Cynthia Taylor, Director of Recreation Community Programs; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreation Experiences; John Martinez, Director of Facility & Grounds; Matt Frazier, Marketing Manager; Amy Roush, Director of Development.

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Canneth Lee, City Council Member and PARC Chair.

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on December 13, 2021

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 13, 2021, by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda which consisted of the November financials, four Arborist renewals and two returning events for January 18, 2022, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

IV. Outstanding Partner – A Gammage Solutions

Aaron Perri started by introducing Austin and bragging about what he has accomplished with A Gammage Solutions. He stated that VPA has been partnering with him for the past few years to help us reach an audience of diverse young professionals through such activities as silent discos, the Vibes Music Festival and art gallery event. Austin is committed to holding events throughout the community that provide cultural experiences that make South Bend an inclusive, welcoming, diverse, livable, and loveable community.

Austin Gammage of A Gammage Solutions gave thanks for the recognition and wanted to acknowledge that his wife and children, as well as other who work behind the scenes. He also appreciates working with Jonathan and Bridget and the great team at VPA. Austin is passionate about the community and

feels it is great to work with a partner who recognizes and believes in small businesses and individuals in the community who have great ideas and support those initiatives.

Mark acknowledged and appreciated the energy that Austin and the team he works with brings to South Bend.

V. Use of Parks – New Events

a. Earth Day – Mind/Body/Spirit Festival

Jamila Blue the event organizer presented the information on what she is hoping the event will provide to the community at no cost for entry. The concept is for an all-day festival to celebrate health and wellness with free music, classes, and events geared to all ages. Since this will be in Potawatomi Park she has reached out to the greenhouse.

Mark asked Bridget if all paperwork was in order, and she said it was. He also asked if advertising materials could be shared when they are available.

Motion to approve the new event Earth Day – Mind/Body/Spirit Festival, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

b. I Walk with Fosters Event

Bridget presented for Josiah White's Foster Care. They are planning on beginning and ending their 1st annual walk in Howard Park. They are working with Public Works for the walk portion of the event and chose May because that is Foster Awareness month.

Motion to approve the new event I Walk with Fosters, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

c. Wedding Ceremony

Bridget also presented for the couple who want to get married near the Studebaker fountain in Leeper Park. They are only holding the ceremony in the park. Since this is classified as a private event there is a higher fee for park usage and there will be staff on site to assist.

Dan asked if Bridget had considered marketing to couples at bridal expos the opportunity to have their wedding ceremony in a park. Bridget will investigate attending local bridal expos.

Motion to approve the wedding ceremony in Leeper Park by the Studebaker Fountain, by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

VI. Interviewing of Interested Residents

Mark Neal opened the floor for interested residents to speak on a topic not on the agenda. There were no comments from residents.

VII. New Business

1. Youth Basketball MOU between YMCA of Greater Michiana and VPA

Jonathan Jones presented this as an opportunity to establish a partnership agreement between the YMCA and VPA relating to the youth basketball league that currently exists. Looking to create a single league called the "South Bend Basketball League" that has two program tracks that are jointly ran by the two organizations. The YMCA would manage the youth who are K – 2nd grade at the O'Brien Center and it

would be more instructional and developmental than competitive, and VPA would manage the 2nd – 6th at Charles Black Community Center. The 2nd grade youth would have the opportunity to either be in an instructional or in a more competitive league. This allows the staff to focus on the areas that is in their expertise and be more cost effective for staffing.

Mark asked for clarification on locations for the age groups and Jonathan explained that these are two different program tracks and that at the O'Brien Center there are accommodations to lower the rims and the court is slighter smaller. At the Charles Black Community Center is a collegiate sized court and would be geared to a competitive experience. Aimee suggested being mindful of families with children of different ages. Jonathan referred to the MSA soccer programs and how to manage time. Dan asked about who would own decisions that would impact the two parties in the partnership. Jonathan responded that those would be joint decisions and that was outlined in the MOU. The focus for this league to be very intentional and specific is presented as one holistic league. Mark mentioned that this MOU is only for 90 days which is the length of this season. Mark also asked if Jonathan could provide data relating to this MOU after the season concludes during his subsequent presentation to the board.

Motion to confirm the Youth Basketball MOU between YMCA of Greater Michiana and VPA, by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

2. VPA Supplemental Agreement Teamster Local Union #364

Clara McDaniels presented this as a supplemental agreement relating specifically to the Teamsters in VPA. The negotiations took place summer of 2021, and the full agreement was ratified in October. Any distinctions are covered in the supplemental agreements which there were multiple within the city.

Mark asked if the list of staff positions has changed in the last few years due to how VPA has changed how business is being done? Aaron responded that he didn't think that positions had been added to the salary ordinance. People have been increased to the existing positions due to a higher need and referred to Howard Park and the addition of trails and that we have the Trails 365 program. Head count has increased. Mark mentioned the 2 ½ % percent increase except in 2024 and that there is an increase in the tool allowance to \$500 and double time for snow control on Sunday which was a parity issue and also solid waste drivers had a parity in salary to other city departments. Dan asked if the tool allowance was annual and if the percent increase was the same for the VPA teamsters as the rest of the teamster employees in other areas of the city.

Motion to confirm the VPA Supplemental Agreement Teamster Local Union #364, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

VIII. Reports by Organization – YMCA of Greater Michiana

Charles King and Macie Wise represented the YMCA of Greater Michiana. Charles started be stating he was grateful for the partnership with VPA, which has allowed them to reach new places in the community and increased their community partners. It has been a good year and the past summer was busy and are looking forward to growing the upcoming summer. They have been working with VPA on the youth basketball program and the City of South Bend Office of Community Initiatives for Friday Night Hoops to name a couple of partnerships. Some numbers that Charles shared included:

- a. 113 campers joined in 11 weeks of summer camp
- b. 9 survivors participated in the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program
- c. 151 youth received care at 4 Y-Club after school sites
- d. 1,079 children checked into childwatch at O'Brien

- e. 350 youth participated in swim lessons through the collaboration with 3 community partners
 - I. PAL's (Police Athletic League)
 - II. South Bend Community School Corporation
 - III. Michiana Swims
- f. Added flag football fall of 2021 and had 40 children participate

Mark shared that he is no longer a member of the YMCA board, he was on the board for twelve years and thanked Charles and Macie for making the partnership stronger. Aaron asked if the ribbon cutting had been set and Charles stated that when the furniture arrives that will be set. Aaron also mentioned that Charles was a past employee at the Century Center and is happy that he didn't move far and is still in the area.

IX. Report by Director of Recreation Community Programs – Cynthia Taylor

Cynthia shared a PowerPoint with highlights relating to the Community Programming area of Recreation which included:

- a. 235,000 facility visits which includes:
 - I. Programs
 - II. Special Events
 - III. Rentals
 - IV. Community meetings
 - V. Classes
- b. 70 Youth Internships – 160 hours of time in this department for each person
- c. 5,600 Fitness/Wellness participants
- d. 50 + partnerships

Mark asked if the interns included ones that John Martinez had mentioned in the Facility & Grounds department and Aaron clarified that these youth were specific to Cynthia's area.

- e. 2022 Goals
 - I. Increase family and community engagement
 - II. Expand health and wellness opportunities
 - III. Create effective and efficient operations
- f. Martin Luther King, Jr Center – “Dream Center Campus”
 - I. Advisory/Public Meetings
 - II. Phases for vision, goals, and concept design
 - III. Groundbreaking fall of 2022
- g. Youth Employment Program
 - I. Increase from 70 to 150 youth in 2022
 - I. Job readiness skills
 - II. Financial literacy
 - III. Network with industry leaders
 - IV. Partnerships with private/public sector
- h. Pinhook Community Center
 - I. The Public is enjoying the upgrades
 - II. Already have 25 rentals for 2022
 - III. April 30 – Arbor Day/Nature Cat Trail Opening
 - IV. October 15 – Treats on the Trail

- i. MLK and CBC new partners
 - I. Beacon Health & Fitness
 - II. Century Center – E Sports at Bendix
 - III. Youth & Agriculture
 - I. Students who participate in this type of program increase their intake by 25%
 - IV. Youth Build Program
 - I. Increase youth in the construction fields
 - II. Staff is going through training to potentially participate

Mark asked if Cynthia is partnering with local unions, Teamsters, or construction companies for the youth build program? Cynthia responded that, yes, they are hoping to partner with all of those.

- j. Rum Village
 - I. Nature Camps
 - II. Sunday Family Hikes
 - III. School Programs – Naturalist went to schools
- k. Staff Professional Development
 - I. SB Academy is offering classes to City of South Bend employees
 - II. Staff Happy Hours – last Friday of the month over lunch hour

Mark mentioned that the SB Academy is a great opportunity for city employees. He also asked if a spot has been located at the Charles Black Community Center for the garden? Cynthia said she thought there has been an area identified. Aimee also congratulated Cynthia on the great job that her and her team have done in the last year.

X. Business by Chief Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- He shared that in the last few weeks approximately 10% of the staff has been out with COVID.
- Amanda Parker, Special Events Coordinator, in Development has chosen to leave and pursue another opportunity and Meghan Huff, Aquatics/Ice Manager, in Recreation Experiences is also leaving.
- Recruiting for Eva's position and will hopefully have a new face at the February board meeting.
- Aaron wanted to share information on a couple of professional services contracts that will be signed before the next board meeting:
 - Parking garages contract with ASM Global
 - Annual contract with DTSSB
- Addition to the contract with DTSSB of a Downtown Safety Patrol working with Mayor's office, South Bend Police Department, Department of Community Investment for an increased police presence downtown. This program was piloted the last couple of months and was well received.

Mark asked if Willow Wetherell could be added to a meeting so that the board members could meet her and hear her thoughts on DTSSB

XI. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, February 21, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Roush