

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
February 22, 2023

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 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
Mr. Sam Centellas

Park Board members joined virtually were as follows:

Ms. Consuella Hopkins

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director of Venues Parks & Arts; Cynthia Taylor, Director of Recreational Community Programs; Matthew Moyers, Partnerships, Community, and Standards Coordinator; Maurice Scott, Director of Community Initiatives; Emily Sims, Chief Development Officer; John Martinez, Chief of Park Operations; Macey Hannah, Recreation Experiences Director; Rachael Zeiger, Special Events Manager; Jessica Williams, Executive Assistant; Hannah Francis, Special Events Manager; Amy Roush, Director of Development,

Other city representatives present: Jenna Throw Assistant City Attorney.

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on January 23, 2023

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 23, 2023, by Sam Centellas, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of February 22, 2023, by Sam Centellas, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Yeah, Totally Skateboarding Festival – June 24th, 2023 – O’Brien Skatepark

Rachael Zeiger, Special Events Coordinator, presented on behalf of the event organizers.

Motion to approve the new events Yeah, Totally Skateboarding by Sam Centellas, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

V. 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.

VI. New Business

1. Approval of AEP Easements
 - a. Easement 2
 - b. Easement 3
 - c. Easement 63

Mona Livingston from Indiana Michigan Power a subsidiary of American Electric Power presented an addition to the easement request that had been originally approved by the Park Board. They have taken the Board's concerns on tree management into consideration and have been working with City legal to protect the plant and tree life that will be affected during the time of the request.

Motion for approval of AEP Easement 2, Easement 3, and Easement 63 by Sam Centellas, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

2. Acceptance of student member into the Ecological Advocacy Committee 2023 Cohort

Matthew Moyers offered the appointment of a student cohort to the Ecological Advocacy Committee (EAC). Catherine Reynoso is a student at St. Mary's College.

Motion to approve acceptance of student cohort into EAC by Sam Centellas, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

3. Eastside Youth Baseball Softball Association Presentation

Representatives from the Eastside Youth Softball Association board shared a presentation for the consideration of the Board of Park Commissioners on how they would like to utilize VPA park property and how they feel it could benefit the community by partnering with VPA in the future. The two parks discussed included Tarkington Park and Boehm Park. The staff and Board are supportive of the concepts. The details will be further explored and presented at a future meeting for potential formalization.

4. Review of Reaccreditation Documents
 - a. Approval of Recreation Programming Plan (2023 – 2025)
 - b. Approval of the 5-year Administration Procedures & Policies Manual

Matthew Moyers presented the documents for approval that will benefit VPA's reaccreditation process.

Motion to approve the Reaccreditation Documents which include the Recreation Programming Plan and the 5-year Administration Procedures & Policies Manual by Sam Centellas, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

VII. Report by Organization

1. The YMCA at O'Brien

Andre Gammage presented for the YMCA of Greater Michiana, representing the YMCA board. He shared numbers which showed the positive impact that the partnership with the City and VPA has on the community at large. Jill Haboush shared the numbers specific to the O'Brien Center location and how the partnership has increased the membership growth at that location. They also shared the concept renderings for an expanded fitness center and aquatics center addition to the existing building.

VIII. Reports by Director of Recreational Community Programs Cynthia Taylor and Director of Community Initiatives Maurice Scott

Cynthia Taylor, Director of Recreational Community Programs, reported on the facilities that are a part of community programs (Martin Luther King “Dream Center”, Pinhook Community Center, Charles Black Community Center, Rum Village Nature Center). She also shared the addition of a marketing manager and the transition of one of the MLK employees to Youth Employment Coordinator. She listed some of the organizations that they are partnering with to improve opportunities both in the centers and for the youth.

Moe Scott, Director of Community Initiatives gave a background on how his department came into being and the thought process behind the department transitioning into VPA. He shared how Community Initiatives is not only in the centers, but also is partnering with schools and Group Violence Intervention.

Consuella complimented Moe as being an individual who follows through when he is involved and that this initiative is to develop and improve the lives of those who are west of town and will bring about a change to not only that part of town but to the entire community.

Mark asked how many employees Moe was bringing with him into VPA and the answer is five full time employees and six part time employees.

IX. Business by Chief Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- Aaron started his report by sharing the dates and information on upcoming events that VPA is either partnering or hosting.
- He then reminded the board that the reports from the different departments were in their packets.
- He gave an update on where VPA is in the grant application process for Kennedy Park and that we should know in September whether we have won the grant.
- Aaron shared that the CAPRA self-evaluation was submitted as the first step in that process.
- He then highlighted the list of the projects that are in process and will be completed in the next several years that was included in the board packet.
- One of the projects that Aaron shared more insight on was relating to a potential Four Winds Field expansion.
- Another project that will need community input is Potawatomi Park area and to that effect a consulting firm is being brought in to start the Master Plan, planning process.

Mark asked about the Scoreboard at Four Winds Field and Aaron shared that it is on time for the start of the season.

Mark ended by reminding the other board members that there will be a meeting scheduled with the Board of Public Works to go over some of these larger projects to keep the board apprised of what is being decided.

X. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, March 20, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Roush

