

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
June, 26, 2023

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, June 26, 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:

Mark Neal – President  
Consuella Hopkins – Vice President  
Georgianne Walker

Park Board members absent were as follows:

Sam Centellas

VPA staff members present: Jordan Gathers, Interim Executive Director; Jessica Williams, Executive Assistant; John Martinez, Chief of Park Operations; Emily Sims, Chief Development Officer; Macey Hanna, Director of Recreational Experiences; Amy Roush, Development Director; Hannah Francis, Special Events Manager; Maggie Sullivan, Marketing Manager; Rachael Zeiger, Special Events Manager

Other city representatives present: Michael Schmidt, Assistant City Attorney; Troy Warner, Councilmember

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on May 22, 2023.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 22, 2023, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Georgianne Walker, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of June 26, 2023, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Georgianne Walker motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Arborist Licenses – New

a. Chava Tree Service

Motion to approve Arborist Licenses – New, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Georgianne Walker motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

V. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Fun in the Park on July 1 at Freemont Park, July 22 at Coquillard Park, August 12 at Eastside Neighborhood, and August 19 at Potawatomi Park 2023

Michael Williams explained this four-park tour is for the youth. These events are meant to bring together the community with fun, snacks, and entertainment. Prizes will be given and sports activities such as basketball, football, kickball, and relay races will take place. This event is open to the public and open to children of all ages.

2. Inspiring Young Minds Summer Event on July 8 at 2:00pm – 8:00pm at Voorde Park

Bobbie Woods and Joseph Karanja presented this event. This event is meant for young people with a focus on young men from ages 8 – 18. The event will consist of games, educational seminars, and team building workshops.

3. Family Fun Day on July 22 at 12:00pm – 6:00pm at Southeast Park

Sonya Perez explained this event will be a community event that will be distributing free school supplies and free haircuts for back to school. Sports competitions for soccer, basketball, and kickball will be held and a trophy will be given to the winners. There will be a food truck at this event as well. This event is open to the public.

4. Community Fellowship on August 29 at 11:00am – 3:00pm at LaSalle Park

Rachael Zeiger presented this event. This event will be a free community event to teach and preach the good news of Christ and have fellowship with one another.

Motion to approve Use of Parks – New Events, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Georgianne Walker motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

VI.Outstanding Partner – Greater Impact Lawn Care

Karen Grant accepted the award on behalf of Transformation Ministries and Great Impact Lawn Care. Greater Impact is an organization that has two job opportunities for students. The two job opportunities are lawn care and screen printing. Transformation Ministries seek to transform the hearts and minds of youth and their families while connecting others to the city in a positive way. The Board of Park Commissioners thanked Great Impact for their service. Jordan Gathers presented the group with the Outstanding Partner award.

VII.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.

VIII.New Business

1. Eastside Baseball Softball Lease Agreement – Tarkington Park

Michael Harding spoke on behalf of the Eastside Baseball Softball Association. Harding explained the Eastside Baseball Softball Lease Agreement is seeking approval from the Board of Park Commissioners to expand their existing footprint into Tarkington Park. The agreement is a 50-year ground lease to allow the expansion. Eastside Baseball Softball Association also has a 10-year agreement with I&M. The association will also be returning to present another agreement to expand usage to Boehm Park as well.

Motion to approve Eastside Baseball Softball Lease Agreement – Tarkington Park, by Georgianne Walker, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IX.Report by Chief of Park Operations – John Martinez

John Martinez presented the update for the Facilities & Grounds division. There will be 3 day and 3 night sessions for the public to discuss the River Park Master Plan and Potawatomi Park Master Plan. The Howard Park Outreach & Safety Program has been refined. There is a focus on vandalism and damage reporting has been improved. The camera program will potentially be expanded to 15 parks as well. Operations updates include a new restroom maintenance program, new playground surfacing at South East Park, new splash pad upgrades at South East Park and Coquillard Park, and athletic court improvements. There are two new open positions: Public Construction Manager and Group Leader: Centralized Mowing. The team had a staff cookout and celebrated Rolando De Leon for his 13 years of service with the City. De Leon received a Key to the City.

X. Report by Interim Executive Director – Jordan Gathers

- On June 27 there will be drop-in sessions at IUSB from 10:00am – 6:00pm for feedback on Potawatomi Park.
- Seitz Park will have a more concrete timeline which will be shared at the July 17 meeting.
- Four Winds Field expansion plans are advancing.
- 35th Street Wetlands project is close to being finalized.
- The Kennedy Park project is currently on hold until we receive grant news in January 2024.
- LaSalle Park project has been awarded and the expected completion is later this year.
- The MLK Dream Center is going to bid in July with an expected completion date of late 2024.
- Movies in the Park will be July 7.
- The Fusion Fest vendor application deadline has been extended to this Friday June 30. Vendors can apply at [SBFusionFest.com](http://SBFusionFest.com).
- Potawatomi Zoo Lion Exhibit Ribbon Cutting is Thursday, June 29 at 9:00am.

XI. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held July 17, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jessica Williams  
*Clerk, Board of Park Commissioners*