

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**MARCH 20, 2017**

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, March 20, 2017 at the O'Brien Administration & Recreation Center, 321 E. Walter St., South Bend, Indiana for its regular meeting. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting were duly given as required by law.

Park Board members present were as follows:

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

Park Board members absent were as follows:

Mr. Aimee Buccellato

Staff members present: Aaron Perri, Director of Parks; Eva Ennis, Operations Coordinator; Jonathan Jones, Experience Division Project Manager; Cecil Eastman, Finance Director; Elizabeth Leachman, Event Coordinator; Michael Schmidt, Assistant City Attorney; Susan O'Connor, Recreation Director; Cynthia Taylor, Center Director; Jillian Rucker, Program Coordinator; John Martinez, Maintenance Superintendent

**I. The meeting was called to order by Board President Mark Neal at 5:00 p.m.**

**II. Approval of Minutes of the February 20, 2017 Regular Board Meeting**

Motion to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on February 20, 2017 & March 7, 2017 by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried.

**III. Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Motion to approve the consent agenda items besides item *2a*, by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried.

**Item 2a. Outreach at the Park**

Lee Ross explained that Outreach at the Park has happened the last 10 years at Coquillard Park, but the event has outgrown that location and is seeking to rent the Chris Wilson Pavilion at Potawatomi Park. Because the event offers free food and services to the public during the event, Lee Ross requested that the rental cost of \$500 be waived or lowered.

Aaron Perri explained that the Chris Wilson Pavilion hasn't been reserved by the public before, but the policy has recently changed to make it available to the public now. Dan Farrell asked if anyone else has requested to use the space on the same date. Jonathan Jones replied that no one has requested use of Chris Wilson Pavilion on the same date.

Michael Schmidt commented that any financial reductions would need to be reviewed to determine whether it would be violating separation of church and state. He requested that the

board allow the legal department and the Executive Director review more and determine what the legal allowances would be for this request. Mark Neal requested that the final decision be reported back to the board.

Motion to approve Outreach in the Park on July 17 as submitted on the application with a review by Legal Department and Executive Director of VPA to determine what flexibility exists to identify an opportunity for a cost reduction by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried.

#### **Item 2.f. March for Science - April 22**

Bridgette Dee Fries shared about the plans to host a satellite March for Science event in South Bend. She requested use of Howard Park on April 22 for the event. Based on social media activity, they anticipate over 450 attendees at the event.

Mark Neal noted that the event was approved for use of parks with the approval of the consent agenda but also emphasized importance of connecting with Public Works on logistical details.

#### **IV. Interviewing of Interested Citizens**

Request for citizen input on items not listed on the March 20, 2017 Park Board Meeting agenda.

Conrad Daniels asked if the policy for insurance requirements has been changed based on previous discussions to offer an alternative. Aaron Perri replied that some groups could qualify for a new policy to circumvent the existing insurance requirements called TULIP (Tenant User Liability Insurance Plan) which will empower more events to take place at parks without as much of a barrier.

#### **V. Reports by Organizations**

Joe Hart, President of South Bend Cubs, reported that the SB Cubs home opener is on April 8. Three new sections of seating will be ready by opening day. The official groundbreaking for the Berlin Flats development outside the field is March 22 at 11:30 am. Season ticket sales are up 20 percent from last year. The Cubs are partnering with the City on Best Week Ever for a concert on June 2 at the field. Mark Neal asked about HVAC lifespan at the park. Joe Hart responded that the city is always working closely with the Cubs to maintain it and communicate about its status.

#### **VI. New Business**

##### **1. Park Score Results**

Aaron Perri explained that VPA in partnership with Notre Dame contracted with Trust for Public Land to perform an analysis of South Bend parks and provide a park score. South Bend is the first second-class city to get a park score in the country. Aaron Perri also reviewed the preliminary ParkScore study results.

##### **2. Annual Reports**

Cecil Eastman provided a review of the financial report for 2016.

##### **3. Charles Black Center Renovations**

Cynthia Taylor, Charles Black Center Director, reviewed the renovation plans for the Charles Black Center. Dan Farrell asked what the cause was for the \$800,000 increase in the budget. Aaron Perri replied that the increase was due to the competitive construction market and some

unknowns. Aaron Perri noted that the EPA has promised a report on the environmental status of the area surrounding the center in March. The report will identify any remediation if necessary.

#### **4. MOU w/ ND & City**

Michael Schmidt explained that the Board of Public Works approved the MOU between Notre Dame and the City of South Bend to allow Notre Dame to use O'Brien as a test site for wireless research. Santiago Garces, Chief Innovation Officer, explained the research project in detail and the importance of South Bend's involvement in this type of research.

#### **VII. Business by Director Aaron Perri**

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- VPA is working on joint application for reserving parks with the Board of Public Works.
- The Orbis Environmental Consulting report on the Elbel natural resources is completed and will be delivered in a public meeting on April 23 at 2:00 pm at Elbel Clubhouse.
- VPA had an all staff meeting on March 10 with approximately 150 attendees.
- The Third Riverfront Parks and Trails Community Forum was on March 2. We will begin advertising for construction bidding soon and start work on Howard Park this summer. More information can be found on [riverfrontparksandtrails.com](http://riverfrontparksandtrails.com)

#### **VIII. Report from Susan O'Connor**

Susan O'Connor gave the following updates:

- Cynthia Taylor from Charles Black Center was a Black History Month Honoree.
- River City Basketball Championship games begin March 20.
- 743 golfers played at Erskine Golf Course the weekend of February 18 during the unusually warm weather.
- Softball League Play begins last week in April.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Center has been recognized for city's team recognition award for opening their facility during cold weather.

#### **IX. Report by John Martinez, Director of Facilities and Grounds**

John Martinez gave the following updates:

- VPA is transitioning from a Park Ranger to an Ambassador Program to fit the department's needs better. The Ambassador Program will allow us to focus on the beautification and customer service at parks.
- Facilities and Grounds will oversee 500 properties that are city owned as part of the centralized mowing program. The program will have its own budget and its own mowing crews. Staff is also exploring a youth mentorship program for this.
- Facilities and Grounds staff is reproaching its inventory control system.
- Leeper Park Tennis Court resurfacing was awarded at the last Public Works meeting totaling in \$56,000.
- Two new hires: Patrick Sherman, Project Manager; Andrew Forst, Horticulturalist

**X. Report by Jonathan Jones, Project Manager of Experience Division**

- VPA hosted a pop-up concert event at Seitz Park during unseasonably warm weather in February.
- Mom / Son Dance is March 28; there is already an increase in ticket sales from last year.
- VPA participated in the Parent Summit.
- The Marketing Team is developing pieces for our summer events, camps, classes, etc. and creating an overall brand identity.
- February earned media value of \$16,610
- Marketing Team made changes to the email newsletter to include more storytelling
- \$7,128 in sponsorship raised in February

No other questions or comments from the Board, meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m. by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held April 17, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. in the Boardroom of the O'Brien Administration Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eva Ennis  
Executive Secretary