

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
May 18, 2020

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, May 18, 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. Aimee Buccellato
Ms. Consuella Hopkins

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Eva Ennis, Operations Coordinator; Bridget Noonan, Special Event Coordinator; Annie Gawkowski, Chief Development Officer; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreation

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Councilperson Lori Hamann; Councilperson Rachel Tomas Morgan

I. Call to Order

President Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Mark Neal took roll call attendance. All board members were present.

II. Approval of the April 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of April 20, 2020 Park Board meeting by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda for May 18, 2020 Park Board Meeting by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

IV. Use of Park Applications – New Events

Bridget Noonan explained that Civic Theatre will not be able to use their theatre this summer due to physical distancing guidelines related to COVID-19. They would like to use VPA spaces to hold their events outdoors instead. There will be lawn seating for each event and still promote physical distancing, using hand sanitizer stations, etc. Aimee Buccellato commented that she fully supports bringing the theatre outdoors and getting programs up and running as possible. Bridget Noonan reviewed the new requirements for park use events.

Lori Hamman thanked the department for working to try and get things up and running again in a safe way.

Motion to approve the use of parks application for all three Civic Theatre productions by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

V. Interviewing of Interested Citizens

Mark Neal opened the meeting for citizen comments.

Lori Hamman thanked the department for keeping community members safe during this time.

Rachel Tomas Morgan thanked VPA for their creativity during these last few months especially with the movie last week.

VI. New Business

1. Resolution to establish relationship between VPA Foundation and City of South Bend
Aaron Perri explained that over the past decade there was the Parks Foundation and Morris Entertainment Inc. These two groups merged 2 years ago to form the VPA Foundation. There has never been a formal relationship established between the City and this entity.

Annie Gawkowski explained that the VPA Foundation is a separate 501c3 that supports VPA. This resolution would define the scope of services that the city and the foundation provide for one another. Clara McDaniels noted that she wanted to ensure that the MOU delineates how the Foundation and VPA and the Park Board will work together. VPA is the sole beneficiary of the proceeds raised by the foundation. There isn't much legal guidance between the relationship between foundations and City entities, but because it is a separate legal entity, it is important that it keeps its own records but provide reports to the city. There may be additional agreements that the board and the foundation need to enter into in the future, but this is a starting point.

Mark Neal noted that he would like to understand how the new combined foundation has went so far. Annie Gawkowski replied that there has been turnover of members in the last year. The foundation has added 5 new members to come to a total of 25 members. The foundation is looking for new leadership because current leadership is looking to step down. She noted that it was good to have a project to bring the groups together like Howard Park. The foundation will have more large fundraising projects starting soon.

VII. Report by Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- VPA continues to engage with public as much as possible virtually including virtual fountain start-up, live dance parties, and live fitness classes. VPA just released the Lean on Me video that engaged music artists from three counties.
- VPA projected opening dates are available at sbvpa.org/updates. The first thing to open up are playgrounds. VPA will be distributing signs at the parks with guidelines for how to use them.
- VPA did receive communication from the County regarding acquiring land for a Douglas Road expansion project at Ponander Park and that is adjacent to Juday Creek. This is a wetland area, so VPA will work with our Ecological Advocacy Committee to review this consideration and what ecological impacts it would have.
- Howard Park updates: The Rask Family Fountains cannot be started up until the company can come and work on them who installed them.. Howard Park Public House is currently on hold.
- Gov. Kernan Trail construction work is underway.
- Pulaski Park is almost complete and should be able to open when playgrounds open.
- Pinhook Community Building is upgraded, and work at the park has started.
- Emergency Food Supply Distribution – VPA employees are still in place to help distribute foods. T-shirt campaign raised over \$13,000 for food supply funding. 25,000 meals a day are currently distributed.

Mark Neal recommended virtual ribbon-cuttings for the opening of the playgrounds.

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, June 15, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. with location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eva Ennis