

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
January 19, 2021

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Tuesday, January 19, 2021, 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; Annie Smith, Chief Development Officer; Bridget Fields, Special Event Coordinator

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Lori Hamman, Councilmember; Rachel Tomas Morgan, Councilmember; Canneth Lee, Councilmember; Sharon McBride, Councilmember

I. Call to Order

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

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on December 14, 2020

Motion to approve the minutes of the last regular meeting of the board held on December 14, 2020 by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

III. Consent Agenda

1. Financial Statements – November 2020
2. Arborist Licenses – Renewals
 - a. Acorn Landscaping
 - b. Fuerbringer Landscaping
 - c. KC Tree
 - d. Serenescapes
 - e. Envirovision

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

IV. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Mental Health Awareness Event | May 14, 2021 | Howard Park

Marla Godette explained that the purpose of this event is to educate the community about relevant mental health concerns and promote local mental health resources. The event will include speakers from the community who will address mental health concerns, live music, vendors representing other community mental health organization, professional mental health volunteers and food trucks.

Motion to approve the Mental Health Awareness Event on May 14, 2021 at Howard Park by Dan

Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

2. Celebrate Recovery | September 30, 2021 | Howard Park

Jason Hertel explained that the Celebrate Recover event will feature entertainment by Memphis Underground, resources available in the community, and food trucks to celebrate national recovery month. The event coordinators are partnering with Oaklawn to host the event. Oaklawn will coordinate speakers to give testimonials of recovery stories.

Motion to approve the Celebrate Recovery event on September 30, 2021 at Howard Park by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

V. Interviewing of Interested Citizens

Mark Neal opened the floor for public comment. There were no citizen comments.

VI. New Business

1. Four Winds Field Amended and Restated Use Operations and Management Agreement

Dick Nussbaum explained that the last agreement was entered into 9 years ago right before Andrew Berlin purchased the team. The amended use operations and management agreement changes are due to changes in the baseball world including the reduced number of Major League Baseball teams and converting all Minor League Baseball teams to Major League Baseball. The new agreement consists of updated language to make sure it is consistent with the changes in MLB. The agreement also extends the partnership to 20 years to provide consistency for the City and the team.

Andrew Berlin commented on the economic development happening in downtown South Bend near the stadium. He also reviewed the improvements made in the last 10 years noting the significant economic impact they have brought to South Bend.

Mark Neal thanked Andrew Berlin and Dick Nussbaum for their commitment to the community and opened for questions and comments from the board.

Dan Farrell agreed that this is a great partnership for South Bend and thanked the legal team for their work in making adjustments in an easy to follow way.

Canneth Lee mentioned that he has had the opportunity to bring inner city kids to the games and thanked Andrew Berlin for bringing such a high-quality experience to South Bend.

Sharon McBride expressed support for the agreement and commented that South Bend is proud to be one of the cities selected to continue their programs.

Lori Hamman concurred with the comments regarding the positive impact the team has had on the community.

Rachel Tomas Morgan added her gratitude to Mr. Berlin and the team for their investments in the city, especially as it has impacted the neighborhood surrounding the park.

Motion to approve Four Winds Field Amended and Restated Use Operations and Management Agreement by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

VII. Report by Chief Development Officer Annie Smith

Chief Development Officer Annie Smith gave the following updates:

- 2020 was a difficult year to be raising money but the development team was still able to raise \$1 million over the course of the year including grants totaling in \$600,000 such as Indiana Greenways Grant for Nature Cat Trails, funds for COVID relief at Morris,

improvements to the Riverlights and more.

- VPA sent \$15,000 to United Way to support food insecurity in St. Joseph County through the Side-by-Side t-shirt campaign.
- VPA did have to cancel Best Week Ever and Holiday Market in 2020 but was able to host Director's Youth Scholarship Golf Outing and raised \$21,000 for the youth scholarship fund.
- Leighton Plaza brick campaign raised \$9,000 for youth programs.
- The development team is planning for the capital campaign to support the Morris Performing Arts Center.
- There were 1,500 volunteer hours in 2020.
- Steve Sass was named volunteer of the year.
- Over 3,500 individuals have been served so far with Skate-It-Forward program.
- The development team hopes to institute an annual giving program in 2021.
- Other goals for 2021 include planning the first Holiday Market and getting volunteer hours back to 8,000 hours.

VIII. Business by Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- VPA is piloting a new Friday Night life program at MLK Center to provide engaging experiences for youth during 8 pm – 1 am. Kintae Lark with our Youth Employment Program is leading this project.
- Green Fees are up 47% in 2020 at VPA golf courses.
- Howard Park ice skating is operating at 40% capacity, but gross numbers are almost the same as last year. 98% of sessions are at capacity.
- Project list for 2021: O'Brien Center, LaSalle Park including new pavilion and lighting, MLK Center upgrades including work at entry, Randolph Park road closure to combine two areas into the park, Seitz Park, 35th Street Wetlands, Pinhook Park kitchen, Kernan Trail signage and railing, and Muessel Grove restroom building.
- VPA received check from Potawatomi Tribe of Indians for improvements at Howard Park. VPA requested to use reserves to pay for Howard Park construction, and these funds will refill the cash reserves \$445,000.
- South Bend Boat House Lease Agreement will be brought to the board next month.
- Common Council will be asked to consider a resolution supporting the recognition of 100 years of history at Morris at their next meeting.

IX. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:13 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, February 15, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
Eva Ennis