

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
March 15, 2021

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, March 15, 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

Park Board members absent were as follows:

Ms. Consuella Hopkins

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreational Experiences; Cynthia Taylor, Director of Community Partnerships; Bridget Fields, Special Event Coordinator

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Lori Hamman, Councilmember; 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 February 15, 2021

Motion to approve the minutes of the last regular meeting of the board held on February 15, 2021 by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Use of Parks - New Events

1. Back to the Basics Holistic Market

Alicia Mitschelen presented the Back to the Basics Holistic Market, an event that will feature holistic practitioners and vendors in the local area. She expects 100 attendees.

Motion to approve the Back to the Basics Holistic Market at Howard Park by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote

2. Leadership Mini 5k

Bridget Fields explained that Leadership Michiana is planning a mini 5k as a fundraiser. It is open to the public but most participants will be Leadership Michiana participants. Howard Park would be the check-in location for the race, but there are no other event plans at Howard Park.

Motion to approve the Leadership Michiana Mini 5k at Howard Park by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried.

#### IV. Interviewing of Interested Citizens

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

#### V. Reports by Organizations

##### a. Ecological Advocacy Committee

Steve Sass reported that the EAC has worked with IUSB Botany Club to purchase and plant native Indiana plant seed at the bioswales at Howard Park. A subcommittee has started work on the nuisance wildlife management plan and is partnering Elkhart Parks Department to create a beneficial regional management plan for Canada geese. The EAC continues to work with Sharon McBride on the South Bend Code Ordinance Chapter 19 amendments to Sections 13 and 14 and is hopeful that Common Council will move forward on the proposed changes later this year. The Mud Lake Focus Group has started meetings with the goal to study and resolve how the Mud Lake properties can be best stewarded. The resolution establishing the EAC states that the EAC will expire on December 31 of 2021 unless renewed and Steve Sass requested that the board consider extending the EAC.

#### VI. New Business

##### 3. Fredrickson Commons Drainage Easement – Discussion

Zach Hurst explained the developers of Fredrickson Commons housing development are requesting a drainage easement into Fredrickson Park as part of the development's stormwater management system. Specifically, the stormwater management system plan is to overflow water into the lagoon at Fredrickson Park if the storm water basin on the development reaches capacity. \*\* reviewed that all grading and improvements will happen within the property owned by the developers. The natural topography of Fredrickson Park would not need to be adjusted to allow for drainage to flow into the lagoon.

Aimee Buccellato asked where water overflow from the current housing around Fredrickson Park goes. Roger Nawrot explained that all the developments have their own water management plans and overflow into the Fredrickson basin. Aimee Buccellato asked if it is common practice to use park land as retention basins for private development. Aaron Perri replied that this would be a unique case, but this park developed differently than others because it was not originally intended to be a park space.

Aimee Buccellato asked where the requirements for how much water must be managed on-site comes from and whether that is updated regularly especially considering the number of high-impact storms and flooding that has happened in the area in recent years. She expressed concern over the park's liability for handling the storm water in major weather conditions, especially when considering the flow of water that's already going into the basin from existing housing. She noted that developing the property will change the amount of overflow that comes from that property currently due to the additional paving and rooftops, and she would like more information about how that impacts the proposed retention basin and the basin at Fredrickson Park.

Zach Hurst replied that the standards are approved by the Board of Public Works as recommended by City Engineers. Roger Nawrot added that the property where the development will go is already draining into the Fredrickson property, but by building a basin on the private development, there will be less drainage into the Fredrickson basin.

Mark Neal noted that this agenda item is just a discussion right now and requested follow-up information for the board to consider this request further. He requested information about city policy on drainage requirements on private property and how it is determined. He also asked for additional analysis of how

the additional roofs and driveways at the development will affect the runoff at that property. Aaron Perri also noted that Fredrickson Prairie is sited as a park of special ecological concern by the EAC, so the EAC may want to evaluate this proposal as well. Mark Neal requested that Steve Sass and the EAC evaluate the ecological concerns to the board and report back to the committee at least a week prior to the meeting.

Clara McDaniels also noted that the easement agreement is currently in draft form, but she offered to share the draft and answer any questions about it from the board.

#### VII. Report by Recreational Experiences Director Jonathan Jones

Jonathan Jones gave the following updates:

- The new Recreational Experiences Division oversees aquatics and ice, athletics, Howard Park, O'Brien Center, and special events.
- Howard Park ice skating saw 40,000 skaters in the 2020-2021 season, only a 2% decrease from the 2019-2020 season. VPA gave away 499 free skating sessions and 450 free skating lessons through the Skate It Forward Initiative. Ice skating made a net revenue of \$321,000, only a 4% decrease from the previous year even when operating at 35% capacity for the first 10 weeks of the season.
- The Recreational Experiences Division is tracking its revenue-to-operating expenditures closely for 2021. So far, VPA is a 100% cost recovery due to ice skating and room rentals at Howard Park, but we expect that number to go down during the spring and summer months when more free programming starts.
- Other updates from the division: Summer softball registration is open; Camp Awareness registration is open; VPA Youth Basketball is in its final weeks, Summer Activities Expo is scheduled for April 3, and VPA is planning a partnership with United Way for summer programming.
- Employee Highlight: Danica Kulemeka is our new Howard Park Manager who came to the position after serving as a graphic designer and marketing manager for VPA over the last 3 years.

#### VIII. Report by Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- VPA produced its 2020 Annual Report titled, "A Year Like No Other." Its available digitally and in print.
- VPA is tracking Federal and State funding opportunities that will help offset COVID revenue losses.
- Parks Jobs & Equity Act (House Resolution 1678) was introduced last week for projects up to \$1 million for underserved park projects.
- Senate Bill 384 regarding professional sports development areas has passed the Senate and is now in committee for the House.
- Senate Bill 164 regarding the Hotel-Motel Tax passed the Senate favorably. This bill would increase the tax from 6% to 8% which impacts the Morris Performing Arts Center, the Potawatomi Zoo, and the Mishawaka Sports Complex.
- Erskine Golf Course opened last week and Elbel and Studebaker will open soon.
- VPA is offering a new program to increase the City's tree canopy. Residents can apply to receive a free native tree to be planted in their tree lawn. There is a limit of 150 trees for 2021.

- Hit Refresh, a campaign to activate outdoor spaces in the spring to encourage restaurant takeout and getting outdoors, launches in April.

IX. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, April 19, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Eva Ennis