

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
August 23, 2021

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, August 23, 2021, 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:

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 of Venues Parks & Arts; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreational Experiences; Cynthia Taylor, Director of Recreational Programs; John Martinez, Director of Facility & Grounds; Amy Roush, Director of Development,

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on July 19, 2021

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 19, 2021, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of August 23, 2021, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Use of Parks – New Event

Motion to approve Children’s Lives Matter event in Howard Park September 17, 2021, by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato motion carries. Roll call vote 3-0.

V. Outstanding Partner – United Way of St. Joseph County

Aaron Perri explained that the reason the United Way of St. Joseph County was chosen for recognition this month due to their “Hello Summer” campaign which allowed VPA to be able to provide over 150 events outdoors over the summer months around the community. He recognized Velshonna Luckey and Laura Jensen from United Way for their leadership and support. Velshonna shared that through the coordination with Jonathan Jones, Cynthia Taylor, and Aaron Perri United Way was able to “touch” many more lives in the community through this effort. She also shared that this effort represented the community coming together and is looking forward to VPA and the United Way partnering in future endeavours.

Aaron Perri presented the outstanding partner certificate to the United Way of St. Joseph County.

VI. 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.

VII. New Business

1. Announcement of open application for Ecological Advocacy Committee membership

Amy Roush shared that the application process was open to the community seeking new members for the EAC and where the information could be found on social and web platforms.

2. Resolution No. 0001-2021 Establishing Policy establishing policy for Board of Park Commissioners to participate electronically in meetings.

Clara McDaniels shared that this resolution is for electronic participation by board members under non-emergency situations. Currently there is an executive order by the Governor of Indiana due to COVID-19 and this resolution is when that order expires. It allows electronic participation, but she stated there are restrictions surrounding that. The clerk of the board has the requirements and will manage compliance with this policy.

Mark Neal clarified his understanding that at least half of the board had to be physically present under this resolution. He also queried the question that if there were only two members physically present and the other two were virtual and there was a vote for an increase in fees that if the two present approved that would be a correct action. Clara concurred that his understanding was correct.

Dan Farrell asked a question about virtual attendance and physical attendance and when the “clock” is reset after virtual attendance and Clara stated that the rules is new to all, but that she felt it would not be rest until a physical attendance after two virtual meetings.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 0001-2021 Establishing Policy establishing policy for Board of Park Commissioners to participate electronically in meetings by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

3. Resolution No. 0002-2021 Extending term for Ecological Advocacy Committee

Amy Roush presented due to Garry Harrington and Matthew Moyers not being able to attend. She referred to Steve Sass being present virtually and offered him as a resource due to the others not being able to attend. The two changes from the original resolution include and would take effect on January 1, 2022:

- a. The term is two years for members, with no limit on number of terms.
- b. The chairperson has a two term (of two years each) consecutive term limit.

Aimee Buccellato asked if there is a number of members that would be better for the board and Amy Roush deferred to Steve Sass for his input and comment. He did mention an acclimation process for onboarding and that the higher the number of members the more needed for a quorum. He also asked about the function of the EAC as the Citizen Tree Board for VPA.

Motion to table Resolution No. 0002-2021 until the next meeting to allow for additional terminology to be added to the resolution for clarification by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0

VIII. Report by Director of Recreational Community Engagement Cynthia Taylor

Cynthia Taylor, Director of Recreational Community Engagement, started her report by sharing that two of the managers had hired part time personnel and that another manager is actively looking for a part time person at this time. She then went on to share that her division developed a strategy for the summer which included innovation, cultivate connections, safety/wellness, partnerships, and impact.

Cynthia shared some numbers relating to engagement from April to August ending with information relating to the Back 2 School Parade event that had over 40 organizations, 25 vendors and over 1,000 spectators and participants. This was the first year this parade was started at Washington High School and ended at the Charles Black Community Center and had overwhelming support from the community.

Impact drivers for this area include social equity, ecological stewardship, health & wellness, and neighborhood/economic development. She also mentioned some of the partners that have been instrumental in connecting VPA and the community which included Ivy Tech, Bendable, SBCSC, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Real Services, Mix 106, and the South Bend Empowerment Zone.

She ended by mentioning some upcoming events for her team which includes: Gone Fishing, SJCP Library Partnership “Explorer Story”, Christmas on the West Side at both MLK and CBCC, and a “Team Happy Hour”.

Mark Neal asked if the partnership with Ivy Tech was continuing, and Cynthia stated yes and that they were hoping to expand it.

IX. Business by Chief Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- There was a community event the previous week to seek feedback on the My SB Parks and Trails projects and what the community would like to see going forward. This event also tied into DNR grant monies for the department.
- BWE was moved to late summer and was very well received by the community. The Friday evening fireworks were rained out, but a date in September has already been set to shoot them off at another downtown event.
- Art Beat happened over the weekend and showed how Howard Park can be utilized for a large event.
- Update on the loss that Consuella Hopkins experienced and the addition that Eva Ennis experienced.
- Budget season and fees will be presented to the board for approval in coming months.
- There are no major reorganizations or major capitol projects in the coming year, but there is a request for two 15-passenger vans to help transport for field trips and events to replace the over 30-year-old bus that VPA currently has.
- He shared that there were some changes in the teamster contract for 2022.
- Aaron also shared a couple of comments from Mayor Mueller during his State of the City address:
 - Replacement for the MLK Center which will be named the Dream Center at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.
 - Priority of repairing neighborhood courts – 17 locations.

- He then mentioned the READI (Regional Economic Acceleration Development Initiative) grant that is a state initiative. The City submitted ten different projects some capitol and some programmatic which included the Dream Center project.
- Aaron shared some updates relating to the Morris 100 Campaign.
- Ribbon Cutting at the O'Brien Center soon. The partnership with the YMCA is going well.
- Forever Learning is going to be having programs at various facilities.

Mark Neal stated that the READI grant is a more competitive process than the last time the region applied, but that there are worthy projects that were put forth. Aaron stated that the City should know by the end of the year.

- Aaron mentioned that he will not be at the September meeting due to attendance at the NRPA (National Recreation Parks & Association) conference. VPA is one of only four finalists in their category.
- He ended with mentioning the Directors' Youth Scholarship Golf Outing on Monday September 13th at Erskine Park Golf Course.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, September 20, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amy Roush