

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
March 21, 2022

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, March 21, 2022, 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  
Ms. Consuella Hopkins, Vice President  
Mr. Dan Farrell  
Ms. Aimee Buccellato

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Jessica Williams, Executive Assistant; Annie Smith, Chief Development Officer; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreational Experiences; Matthew Frazier, Marketing Manager; Matthew Moyers, Community Standards Coordinator; Bridget Fields, Special Events Manager; Hannah Van Hoof, Special Events Coordinator

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on February 21, 2022.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 21, 2022, by Dan Farrell, seconded by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of March 21, 2022, by Aimee Buccellato, seconded by Dan Farrell motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0. Consuella Hopkins arrives at 5:06 pm.

IV. Outstanding Partner – First Tee of Michiana

First Tee of Michiana is one of the First Tee Indiana kids golf organizations that came under the Indiana Golf Fountain umbrella in 2012. In addition to the Indiana Golf Foundation's mission to teach life lessons through the game of golf, First Tee incorporates nine core values: honesty, respect, integrity, judgment, perseverance, courtesy, responsibility, sportsmanship, and confidence. First Tee of Michiana is housed at the Studebaker Golf Course. Aaron Perri introduced Aiden Coates to speak on behalf of First Tee of Michiana. Coates an 8-year-old participant in the First Tee program, spoke about his experience being with First Tee for 3 years. Coates indicated he participates in the summer and winter and is a member of the Kids Advisory board for the program. Commissioner Neal thanked Aiden Coates. Aaron Perri presented Coates and First Tee of Michiana with the Outstanding Partner certificate.

V. Use of Parks – New Events

- a. Studebaker National Museum - Studebaker Fountain Meetup/Band Performance

Maria Drevet explained the Studebaker Drivers Club International Meet returns home to South Bend every 5 years. The purpose of this event is to celebrate the legacy of Studebaker and celebrate the restoration of the Studebaker Fountain in Leeper Park. This event will showcase a band comprised of club members and members of the community.

Motion to approve Studebaker Fountain Meetup/Band Performance at Leeper Park on May 4, 2022, by Dan Farrell, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

b. Dope Femme Productions - The Garden Tea Party: A Juneteenth Celebration at Howard Park on June 19, 2022

Tierra Thomas explained that The Garden tea Party event will be a heavily themed day party. This event will include a live band, musicians, poets, and food and product vendors available to the public. This will be the first event hosted by the company. Commissioner Neal asked for time expectations. Bridget Fields stated that there is a 6-hour reservation, and the event will end by 8:00 pm.

Motion to approve The Garden Tea Party: A Juneteenth Celebration at Howard Park on June 19, 2022, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Dan Farrell motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

VI. Interviewing of Interested Residents

Troy Warner spoke about East Bank Trail closure and asked when to expect the reopening. Aaron Perri explained the complexities of the Leeper Street bridge and the work being managed around East Bank. Perri stated the bridge was deemed unsafe for travel by engineering following a utility truck accident. The Department of Public Works is managing the repair design and engineering. Dr. Kara Boyles anticipates this process will take the bulk of the summer at which point the trail can reopen. The remainder of the trail will open once Indiana Michigan Power completes their work, anticipated in early May.

No Further comments from the public

VII. New Business

a. LaSalle Park Remediation Plan

Dr. Kara Boyles presented on the LaSalle Remediation Plan. The public can view the information in the presentation by visiting <https://southbendin.gov/epa-approves-work-plan-for-becks-lake-remediation/>. Dr. Boyles discussed the site history, more recent site background, further site investigation, and the remedial action plan.

Dr. Boyles stated in the 1960s, the City acquired the property and developed LaSalle Park without awareness of past contamination. The federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA) was passed decades after the City acquired the park, and makes any person, including a municipality, who has ever owned or operated contaminated land potentially responsible to clean it up, regardless of if they caused the contamination. Dr. Boyles explained that in 2015 an administrative order (ASAOC) was signed by the City of South Bend and Honeywell to perform a focused remedial investigation, planning documents were approved, and an additional AOAOC was signed to complete the remediation action. Site investigation showed results from over 200 additional soil samples collected in November and December 2019 throughout the park. Together, the City and Honeywell have expended nearly \$5 million to investigate the area. The upcoming final phase of the project may cost an additional \$1.5 - 2.0 million.

Dr. Boyles stated that the next steps would be to proceed excavation in an extra cautious manner. The EPA has indicated that the park poses no immediate health threat and EPA continues to believe this to be

true. Dr. Boyles presented the remedial action areas. The timeline presented stated the City of South Bend Board of Public Works will publish Request to Advertise on March 22, bids will be due to Board of Public Works by April 26, contract will be awarded at the May 10 Board of Public Works meeting, and the city will host another public information session about specific work timelines in May or June before work begins.

Commissioner Buccellato expressed concerns about the timeline overlapping with heavy park usage. Dr. Boyles relayed that the timeframe of work is estimated to be 120 days and the completion date is expected to be September 15, 2022. Discussion ensued on the best time to begin the remediation plan. The Board of Park Commissioners requested clarification on the scope of work, timing of work, and authorization of work. Aaron Perri asked that Rick Brown be available to clarify and answer these questions. The board concluded by asking to be provided with additional information. Follow up and expertise of the LaSalle Park Remediation Plan will be provided at the next meeting.

#### b. Harriet Tubman Statue Presentation

Alfred Guillaume stated the statue is a gift to the city of South bend. The statue is currently located and housed in an exhibit in Utah and expected to be moved the South Bend area by mid-April. Guillaume explained that fundraising for the statue has raised \$30,000 over the amount needed. Guillaume read comments from donors exclaiming their excitement about the statue. Guillaume explained that the history that links South Bend to the underground railroad is the reason for seeking to place the statue in South Bend. Guillaume asked that the Board of Park Commissioners accept the Harriet Tubman Statue as a gift. The Board of Park Commissioners thank Alfred Guillaume. Aaron Perri stated there will be a resolution presented in front of the board at an upcoming meeting to accept the gift and finalize the installation location. Alfred Guillaume and his committee requested a high-profile downtown location.

#### c. Potawatomi Zoo Bear and Concessions Project

Josh Sisk spoke about the positive influx and trajectory of traffic at Potawatomi Zoo. Sisk explained the logistics of how the Zoo has outgrown the current concessions area. Sisk presented the concept to include a Black Bear exhibit in the concessions area located by the Potawatomi Zoo train tunnel. The design aspect of this project will be pursued in the case of Park Board approval. The project will include converting the train, a new improved menu, and a Black Bear exhibit with a waterfall. Pictures of the potential layout and schematic designs were shown. The theme for this exhibit will be North America. There is a strong desire to conserve the major trees for the area and there is a plan to plant 45-50 new trees. Sisk explained the plan to begin construction from July to August and open the exhibit in 2023. Commissioner Hopkins questioned the upkeep of the water in the exhibit. Sisk explained that there will be a constructed pond with a filtration system and every 2 months this will be cleaned. Commissioner Buccellato asked how long the train track will be shut down. Sisk answered stating the trains will only have to shut down for a week. Commissioner Neal and Sisk discussed estimated pricing of this project price. Sisk shared that Majority Builders is the selected contractor for the project.

Motion to approve Potawatomi Zoo Bear and Concessions Project by Dan Farrell, seconded by Aimee Buccellato motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

### VIII. Reports by Organization

#### a. Ecological Advocacy Committee

Steve Sass explained the member layout of the 2022 Ecological Advocacy Committee and that this is the most experienced committee they have had. Sass shared that there are currently 3 subcommittees: 35<sup>th</sup> Street Wetlands, Tree Board Research, and Invasive Plant Brochure. The position of secretary of the EAC

was implemented last year. Last year this position was held by Professor Andrew Schnabel and this year the position is held by Charlene Rountree. The secretary is responsible for the EAC minutes which have now been uploaded and updated onto the city website. Sass met with Patrick Sherman and Aaron Perri previously to discuss design work for the 35<sup>th</sup> Street Wetland project. Sass explained that the grass located in the Wetland is Reed Canary grass and is a major invasive species which needs removal and remediation. The imported new grass mixed with old grass has created this invasive species. Sass talked about the Tree Board and the logistics of it. The EAC along with Chari Burke from Indiana Department of Natural Resources comprised Tree Board handbooks to distribute. Sass spoke of the Invasive Plant Ban that was passed last April. The Invasive Plant Brochure subcommittee is working of the enforcement of the ban. Sass spoke about the Wintercreeper invasive plant species and the complications with eliminating this species in the state of Indiana at retailers. The county passed the Weeds and Rank Vegetation ordinance in April 2021 which makes many plants on local properties illegal. Sass brought up the submission of the Wildlife Coexistence Plan to address the goose remediation. Sass also spoke about the biological inventories, bird survey, and plant survey results.

IX. Report by Executive Director Aaron Perri

- Perri spoke about continuing education of Venues Parks & Arts staff, recognizing James Hopkins, Sarena Gates, Rolando De Leon, and Patrick Sherman.
- Perri expressed now being transition season and to expect numerous landscaping project including Seitz Park and athletic works. Some additional projects include repair and renovation of restroom facilities. Dan inquired about the tennis court completion. Perri confirmed the project is expected to finish in the fall.
- CAPRA approvals will be addressed at the next meeting and documents are available to view via hard copy or online. The public can view as well.
- April 8<sup>th</sup> is opening day at Four Winds Field.
- April 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm MLK Center will be the final presentation for the redevelopment of the center.
- Perri discussed that Clara McDaniels would like to remind the board of the virtual order implemented by the Governor. Hybrid option will continue, and board cannot miss more than two consecutive in-person meeting. Half of the meetings must be in person. McDaniels added that when taking a board action, a roll call vote is suggested when a participant is virtual.
- Perri asked McDaniels to research for clarification on which items are required for board approval. Commissioner Buccellato asked that if there is a presentation for board approval on a major item, can presenters be in-person. Discussion ensued on this matter.
- Perri spoke on the 3 Projects that will apply for the READI Grant. The application will open in May/June.

X. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 7:16 by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held April 18, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Williams  
*Clerk, Board of Park Commissioners*