

**SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
August 15, 2022

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

Mark Neal – President

Consuella Hopkins – Vice President

Sam Centellas

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; John Martinez, Director of Facilities & Grounds; Jessica Williams, Executive Assistant; Matthew Frazier, Marketing Manager; Hannah Van Hoof, Special Events Coordinator; Amy Roush, Director of Development; Matthew Moyers, Community Standards Coordinator

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Sandra Kennedy, Corporation Council

I. Call to Order

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

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

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 21, 2022, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Sam Centellas, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of August 15, 2022, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Sam Centellas motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Outstanding Partner – Downtown South Bend Inc

DTSB is non-profit governed by a 30-member board including downtown business owners, downtown residents, local business leaders, the University of Notre Dame and City officials. DTSB offers insight on how to get involved in the downtown area. DTSB also hosts events, offers volunteer opportunities, and runs the ambassador program. Willow Wetherall expressed gratitude and appreciation for the VPA partnership and plans to maintain a safe, livable, vibrant downtown. Art Beat will be held on August 20 at Howard Park and Jefferson Bridge. Wetherall shared 17,000 people attended Art Beat in 2021 and they look to have a similar quantity of attendees this year. Art Beat is maxed out at 300 different art vendors with an added stage and 20 new culinary artists. Commissioner Neal thanked Wetherall and presents DTSB with the Outstanding Partner award.

V. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Contagious FAITH Ministries - Rebirthing of the Sons Event at Howard Park on September 10, 2022

Octavia Ray and Brandy Franklin presented the Rebirthing of the Sons event to the Board of Park Commissioners. Ray and Franklin would like to host an event Saturday, September 10 at 1:30pm – 3:00pm. for youth ministers, pastors, and male leaders in the community. This event is intended to uplift men from all walks of life. All ages are welcome. Commissioner Hopkins asked how many people are

expected to attend. Ray stated 100 people are expected to be present. The event will pass out bibles and snacks. This is a free event.

Motion to approve the ContagiousFAITH Ministries - Rebirthing of the Sons Event at Howard Park on September 10, 2022, by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

#### VI. Interviewing of Interested Residents

Commissioner Neal opened the floor for interested residents to speak on a topic not on the agenda. Conrad Damian asked if the returning event Neighborhood Family Picnic will be approved at the next meeting. There was expressed concern for timeline of approval of events. Aaron Perri relayed this event will be reviewed by the board at least a month before the event and the timeline issues are temporary due to staffing. Perri expressed appreciation to Damian for bringing this concern to the board.

#### VII. New Business

##### 1. Resolution 0002-2022 for Transfer of Property: City Park Lot 63 Shetterly Place

Joe Molnar presented on the City Park Lot 63 Shetterly Place. The Department of Community Investment and Department of Public Works received news that the property at the intersection of Riverside Dr and Leland Ave just south of the river near the Near Northwest Neighborhood is owned by the Venues Parks and Arts. Molnar stated there will be projects to reform this intersection for the community and the Department of Public Works would like to transfer ownership of this small property in order move forward. Molnar explained there is no intention of using the land but transferring ownership to a more suitable owner may be beneficial for future projects. Matthew Moyers confirmed the park board has the deed from 1930s and stated that the park has never been counted as park inventory.

Motion to approve Resolution 0002-2022 for Transfer of Property: City Park Lot 63 Shetterly Place, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Sam Centellas motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

##### 2. Northern South Bend Transmission Line Project

- a. Easement 2 – Booth Tarkington Park
- b. Easement 3 – Boehm Park
- c. Easement 63 – Ponader Park

Mona Livingston presented on the North South Bend Transmission Line Project. This project involves building 2.5 miles of 69-kilowatt transmission line near Booth Tarkington Park, Boehm Park, and Ponader Park in South Bend. Livingston explained this project is necessary because the current polls are from the from the 1970s. These lines require a lot of maintenance work and there are frequent power outages because they have reached the end of their lifespan. Livingston explained which lines are currently looking to be rebuilt and the 3 locations where easements are needed from the Park Board. This project was announced in the spring of 2022 with a planned start date of early fall 2022 and end date of spring 2023. Commissioner Neal asked Livingston and team to define the technicalities of the easements more. Justin Books and Tim Atkinson relayed this is a permanent easement. The new poles will be steel and will be 80-85 feet in height. Perri asked what kind of disturbances AEP expects will happen to park property. Books and Atkinson stated the poles will be placed in concrete foundation and all other poles will be directly imbedded. Perri asked how the park properties will be restored after the work and how many trees will be removed for the project. Livingston explained this is a rebuild of current lines so there should be no large disturbances. Clara McDaniels explained there will be a more detailed agreement that will lay out a depiction of everything planned to take place during the project. Livingston agreed the next update will be clarify the questions regarding trees and the transmission line project.

Motion to approve the Northern South Bend Transmission Line Project easements by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

### 3. I&M License Agreement Settlement and Limited Release

Clara McDaniels presented the I&M License Agreement Settlement and Limited Release to the board. I&M were given access to certain portions of the East Bank trail in 2021. The Board of Public Works and Board of Park Commissioners entered this access agreement with I&M. McDaniels stated this agreement is regarding the missed deadline for project completion on East Bank Trail along with payment for the trees that were cut down in conjunction with the project. An agreement was reached that is in the best interest of Park Board and the City of South Bend. Work is set to be completed by the 20<sup>th</sup> of this month.

Motion to approve I&M License Agreement Settlement and Limited Release by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

## VIII. Old Business

### 1. Potawatomi Zoo Usage Approval

Josh Sisk presented to the Park Board on the Potawatomi Zoo Usage. Sisk explained there are 2 acres of land near Southwood Ave that has been underused due to the parking lot. A community meeting was held to determine what can be done with this area. The biggest request was for a walkway that goes across the land. In 2019, the tiger and lion exhibits were not meeting modern zoological standards. To continue usage, the zoo would like to utilize this land to enhance the Amber Tiger exhibit. Sisk explained the top priority for this project is oak tree preservation. The zoo has committed to new 8-foot black chain-link fencing. Commissioner Neal asked how this will be funded. Sisk stated the hotel – motel tax grant money will be used and the READI grant has been applied for. Perri shared that oral endorsement is requested based on major projects with over \$25,000 in monetary changes.

Motion to approve Potawatomi Zoo Usage by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

## IX. Reports by Organization – Ecological Advocacy Committee

Steve Sass presented the EAC Report to the Board of Park Commissioners. Sass began by welcoming Sam Centellas the newest member of the board and recognizing VPA for becoming a Gold Medal Finalist with the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA). Sass gave updates on the 10 following topics: Citizen's Tree Board, River Windows, Invasive Plant Ordinance, Wildlife Coexistence Plan, Back the Bend, Urban Tree Canopy Intern Program, Seitz Park Landscape Plan, Howard Park Bioswales, Feral Cats Colonies, and Biological Surveys and Inventories. For a full look at the report please visit the August 15, 2022, EAC Report folder at, <http://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/Browse.aspx?startid=2196&row=1&dbid=0>. Commissioner Neal expressed appreciation for the work that Sass does in the community.

## X. Report by Executive Director Aaron Perri

- The Roast and Toast of Annie Smith took place to say farewell but also celebrate and highlight all the work that Annie has done with VPA.
- Emily Sims will begin after Labor Day as the new Chief Development Officer.
- 3 grants have been completed: 2 through READI Grant (one \$2,000,000 grant for the Dream Center and one \$5,000,000 grant for the Morris Performing Arts Center) and one \$500,000 grant for the Dream Center through the Land Water Conservation Fund.
- Remediation work for LaSalle Park/ Beck's Lake superfund site. Cleanup is expected to be completed in late October 2022.

- Budget season has begun, and the official Mayoral Council kickoff meeting is Wednesday, August 17. The VPA budget meeting will take place on August 31. Park usage fee changes will be brought to the next BPC meeting.
- The National Recreation and Parks Association Annual Conference is September 19-22 in Phoenix, AZ. Perri will attend this conference and join the September Park Board meeting remotely. Jonathan Jones has been chosen to be a national presenter at the NRPA Conference this year.
- Frost Engineering is completing their study with Potawatomi Pool. This assessment will help dissect the issue and allow the team to understand what resources it may take to restore the pool. Until this is completed, the pool is effectively closed the entire season.
- Seitz is under construction. The work done by the University of Notre Dame has been completed. There will be a ribbon cutting on the Century Center Island on September 12 at 3:00pm to celebrate the commissioning of the hydro turbines. August 2023 is anticipated completion of the Seitz Park project.
- Half of the athletic court upgrades have been awarded for pickleball, tennis, and basketball.
- Looking for Meisel Grove restroom bids. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last bathroom project to complete the entire restroom system upgrades.
- Perri Updated the board on safety issues in the parks. There has been a lot of success with the Parks Outreach & Engagement Team (POET).
- The Director's Youth Scholarship Golf Outing (DYSGO) will take place on September 12 at Erskine Park Golf Course.
- Best Week Ever will take place later this month on September 24 – October 1 with Morris 100 Fest closing the week out.

#### XI. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:48 by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held October 17, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Williams  
*Clerk, Board of Park Commissioners*