

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
May 17, 2021

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, May 17, 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; Jonathan Jones, Director of Recreational Experiences; Bridget Fields, Special Events Manager; Annie Smith, Chief Development Officer

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

I. Call to Order

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

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

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 19, 2021 by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of May 17, 2021 by Dan Farrell, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

IV. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Juneteenth Event | June 19 | Howard Park

Bridget Fields shared that the Juneteenth Event at Howard Park is organized by Black Lives Matter. The event will be held both in the park and on Jefferson and St. Louis Blvd which has already been approved by the Public Works special events committee. The event is 2 pm – 9 pm and road closure starts at 10 am. There will be kids games and presentations on the event law, a 3-on-3 event on St. Louis Blvd, and a car show on Jefferson Blvd. Kat Redding, organizer of the event, confirmed all of these details. Bridget Fields explained that all items including health department approvals and insurance are being taken care of.

Motion approve the Juneteenth Event by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Aimee Buccellato, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

2. Community June 26 Leeper Park

Bridget Fields explained that the Community Picnic Meet & Greet event has decided to reevaluate their event date and will not request approval at this board meeting.

Motion to table Community Picnic Meet & Greet to a later meeting 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 citizen comments. There were none.

VI. New Business

1. MOU with WNIT for Nature Cat Trail at Pinhook Park

Annie Smith explained that WNIT approached VPA about an opportunity to put a Nature Cat themed trail at one of our parks, and VPA received a Greenways grant for \$5,000 to fund this trail. The MOU states that VPA is working with WNIT to create a Nature Cat trail at Pinhook Park. WNIT is working through copyright information with Spiffy Studios.

Motion to approve Nature Cat Trail MOU by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

2. Facilities Use Agreement with Michiana Soccer Association

Jonathan Jones reviewed that the agreement is a formalization of a long-term partnership with MSA Soccer. The agreement is a 5-year period usage agreement at Boehm Park, Marshall Park, and Tarkington Park. There are no field rental fees in exchange for a \$4,000 valuation from MSA. This exchange allows VPA to be recognized at a Club Sponsor Level and gives VPA free or discounted player registrations for youth that participate in other VPA programs. MSA is responsible for creating lines and putting up equipment, and they keep equipment up for public use when games are not in play.

Motion to approve Facilities Use Agreement with MSA by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

3. Facility Use Agreement with International Soccer Academy

Jonathan Jones explained that this agreement is similar to the agreement with MSA. It allows the International Soccer Academy to use Boehm Park for soccer practices. ISA will take care of field prep and maintenance. This is a long-term agreement of \$400 per month as opposed to most other field rentals that are done on a case-by-case basis.

Motion to approve Facility Use Agreement with International Soccer Academy by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

4. MOU Amendment #3 with Indiana University South Bend regarding Facility Use of Leeper Tennis

Jonathan Jones reviewed that this agreement allows VPA to establish a schedule with IUSB tennis programs and assess their rental payments based on usage. This is an extension of the previous agreement with IUSB.

Motion to approve Amendment #3 with Indiana University South Bend for Facility Use at Leeper Tennis by Aimee Buccellato, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

VII. Reports from Organizations – Edge Adventures

Sally Burch, Operations Director of Edge Adventures Aerial Park, shared that last year Edge Adventures was open 91 days and served over 730 people more than the previous year. Sally Burch highlighted the Zip and Sip event that was a large success last year and they hope to continue this year. Night climbs with LED lights above the course was also a new addition last year. Edge Adventures also has a new website and reservation software. 2021 goals include working together with Edge Adventures on marketing partnership, coordinating seasonal staff people, and working together on a public safety presence. Opening day was first week of May, and the last week will be first weekend of November.

VIII. Report from Chief Development Officer Annie Smith

Annie Smith gave the following updates:

- The Development Team is working heavily on Morris 100 Years Celebration and fundraising campaign.
- The grand opening of the Rask Family Fountains at Howard Park was celebrated on Friday, May 14.
- The Rask Family has agreed to support the lighting of the south side of Jefferson Bridge.
- Best. Week. Ever. 2021 will take place August 1-7 this year.
- VPA Foundation is raising funds for a Farmers Market type of event this fall.
- VPA Foundation has raised \$150,000 for park projects so far this year.
- VPA received a donation to establish a tree-focused internship program that will improve our tree nursery program and overall tree canopy.
- VPA is offering an adopt a tree program to raise funds for the new Native Tree Trail at Pinhook Park.
- The Leighton Plaza Brick Campaign raised \$10,000 for Youth Jobs Program.
- The Development Team working closely with the IDNR to submit two large grants this summer.
- The Development Team is working on an annual giving program in conjunction with the VPA Foundation to raise reoccurring low-dollar donations on a regular basis.

IX. Report from Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron gave the following updates:

- Because of recent incidents at park properties, VPA is working through security policies and procedures to make sure we are doing our best to make things as safe and welcoming as possible. One tool VPA is working on with the IT Department is installing cameras at several locations.
- There is an ongoing structural investigation at Charles Black Center due to visible cracking in masonry. Early reports show that defined specs in the construction documents were not followed properly by the contractor. The City does not have final reports on that yet. The City continues to get reassurance that it is covered under warranty bond and is safe for occupancy. A third firm was also hired to review the structural integrity and reports.
- 2022 Budget Kick-off session begins in May. The City does not anticipate operational changes this year. Right now, everything looks stable from a revenue standpoint. 2021 is also a Teamster negotiation year.
- City Cemetery Grand Opening is May 26 at 10:00 am.
- Potawatomi Zoo staff, Aimee Buccellato, and VPA Facilities & Grounds Team met to talk about a master plan kick-off discussion.

- VPA is one of four finalists in the Gold Medal Award competition for National Parks and Recreation Association.

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, June 21, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eva Ennis