

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
May 16, 2022

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, May 16, 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
Consuella Hopkins
Dan Farrell
Aimee Buccellato

VPA staff members present:

Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Jessica Williams, Executive Assistant; Annie Smith, Chief Development Officer; Tony Stearns, Director of Golf; Amy Roush, Development Director; Hannah Van Hoof, Special Events Coordinator; Rachael Zeiger,

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Canneth Lee, 1st District Councilmember; Troy Warner, 4th District Councilmember

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on April 18, 2022

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 18, 2022, by Dan Farrell, seconded by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of May 16, 2022, by Aimee Buccellato, seconded by Dan Farrell motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

IV. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Greater South Bend Pop Warner – Signing Day at MLK Center on May 21, 2022

Kalume Tshimanga explained that the 2022 Signing Day is day set aside to invite the community, to hear about the Youth Football Cheer Scholastic Program offered in South Bend. On Signing Day, Greater South Bend Pop Warner is also taking new registrations. Music, food, games, bounce house will be provided. T-shirts will be given to the first 20 Registrations. Numbers have been growing with a total of 200 participants, but the purpose of this event is to increase participation in youth football and cheer at Greater South Bend Pop Warner.

Motion to approve the Greater South Bend Pop Warner – Signing Day at MLK Center on May 21, 2022, by Dan Farrell, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

2. B&B Upholstery – Memorial Day Custom Car Cruise In at Charles Black Center/LaSalle Park on May 28, 2022

Robert Stuckey discussed the event is free. The purpose of this event is to display of custom cars to view and enjoy for members of the community. Food and refreshments will be provided for participants. This event will showcase 40 to 50 cars ranging in dates starting from the 1950s.

Motion to approve the B&B Upholstery – Memorial Day Custom Car Cruise In at Charles Black Center/LaSalle Park on May 28, 2022, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Dan Farrell motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

V. Interviewing of Interested Residents Mark Neal

Mark Neal opened the floor for interested residents to speak on a topic not on the agenda. There were no comments from the public.

VI. Outstanding Partner

Mindi Dugard and MindfulU was recognized for their contributions as a partner. Mindi offers yoga and mindfulness classes at Howard Park for free and accepts donations for community organizations. The donation classes have helped to fundraise \$10,000 for the Boys&Girls Club in 2021 and is now currently fundraising for the VPA Youth Scholarship Foundation.

VII. New Business

1. Harriet Tubman Bench Donation Agreement

Alfred Guillaume spoke about the presentation on the Harriet Tubman Statue at the previous month's meeting. Fundraising has produced nearly \$100,000 for the bench. The Bench has been purchased and has arrived at the holding center in South Bend. Guillaume gifted the City of South Bend and The Board of Park Commissioners the statue and had pictures taken. The Harriet Tubman bench will have a quote and all donors will be listed by alphabet. Aaron Perri explained there are two possible locations for the bench and is awaiting the informational panel and donor information. The Bench is approximately 6 weeks away from installation.

Motion to approve the Harriet Tubman Bench Donation Agreement, by Consuella Hopkins, seconded by Dan Farrell motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

2. BSA Day Camp at Fredrickson Park

John Cary spoke of the mission of the Day Camp and introduced Dawn Eddins and Jason Triplett. BSA wishes to provide a STEM camp for Scout members, schools, and the public to attend over the summer that is sustainable over the next 3-5 years. The camp schedule displays 3 separate weeks of activities for participants. To view more information, visit <https://www.lasallecouncilbsa.org/stemquest>. The camp is limited to 36 participants per day to provide a more personalized experience. Clara McDaniels asked about the safety protocols for the camp. Triplett explained there are safety manuals for each of the activities and one on one lessons with trained instructors. Each trainer is certified for 3 years and must gain recertification to remain a training instructor. Conversation ensues about the extent of safety protocols. McDaniels suggested to put an agreement in place with an addendum for BSA projectiles usage and safety guidelines. This agreement will be placed in front of the board for review at the next meeting. The Board of Park Commissioners agree.

3. YMCA Aquatics Presentation

Jill Haboush introduced Charles King, Mike Bogdan, and Marcia Andrade to present on the expansion of partnership with the YMCA and VPA to include an aquatic center at O'Brien Fitness Center. 2,558 memberships of the YMCA Northside were impacted when YMCA Northside closed due to pandemic limitations. VPA and YMCA partnership expanded the offerings of both centers. O'Brien Fitness Center had an average of 940 memberships from 2015 to 2020. Membership continuously grew after the partnership by 84%. Bogdan explained the findings in the consumer research study about the potential aquatic center. Feedback from the public requesting a pool has prompted the YMCA to action. Haboush stated that this would be a new build. The Board of Park Commissioners discussed the need for a pool to

be affordable and accessible for all. Haboush spoke on the mission of the YMCA and emphasized the importance of scholarship implementation and assistance for access and memberships.

4. Hydro Facility Project – Landlord Estoppel Certificate

Clara McDaniels explained the certificate is between the University of Notre Dame and the City. This certificate provides additional assurance to the lender, city, and university. This certificate can be viewed on the city's website. Dan asked if all information in the document is accurate, McDaniels confirms.

Motion to approve the Hydro Facility Project – Landlord Estoppel Certificate, by Dan Farrell, seconded by Aimee Buccellato motion carried. Roll call vote 4-0.

VIII. Reports by Director of Golf – Tony Stearns

Jeff Jarnecke introduced the work done by Tony Stearns and the success surrounding the 3 golf courses in South Bend. In 5 years, the upward trend in revenue from rounds, food and beverage, and season passes has been exponential. Jarnecke states the dollar differences from 2015 to now shows hard work and effort. There has been \$500,00 of gross revenue gained this year thus far. Stearns spoke about the increase in golfers during the past two years and marketing strategies to gain traction during the pandemic. There have been improvements made at the golf courses including the Erskine Event Center. Erskine Event Center is 70-person event center which now includes an office area. Stearns showed the team building methods implemented to create a great customer environment. The addition of the event centers and innovations have helped reduce risk for golf operations. Commissioner Neal emphasized the excitement in seeing people enjoy golf at reasonable rates. Stearns explained the prices for golf have been raised for the first time in 5 years and remain under the industry average while still exceeding revenue standards.

IX. Business by Executive Director Aaron Perri

- The final MLK Center presentation was held on May 12. Perri showed conceptual renderings of the new center. Site plans were shared. Funding of 11 million dollars will come from the American Rescue Act.
- LaSalle Park/Beck's Lake bid was delayed for 2 weeks and pushed the entire project back. A public meeting will be held on this topic. Juneteenth events will proceed as planned.
- East Bank Trail reopened on May 6th and Leeper Steet bridge is still under construction. The dog park will remain closed for next few weeks for grass reseeding.
- The first draft of the VPA budget is due June 10. This will require board approval of user fees in the fall. The minimum wage is \$15 at VPA and \$12 citywide. 110 employees and youth will be employed this summer.
- There is an upcoming project at Four Winds Field. Baseball mandated upgrades are out to bid. Upgrades are being funded through PSCDA taxes along with the scoreboard and conceptual designs for a second deck.
- Howard Park public safety is still a concern. Perri discussed the two distinct issues recently at the park. Signage with the policy on drinking, smoking, violence, weapons, vandalism, excessive noise, etc. have been placed around the park area and online. Park ambassadors and management are present 5pm-9pm daily. Bird scooters have been banned and the geofence has been expanded. Group ride feature has also been eliminated. Pizza in the park initiative looks to be started soon to promote anti-violence in parks spearheaded by Common Councilmen Canneth Lee. Discussion ensued about strategies to enforce change and promote community engagement to protect our shared spaces. Perri expressed that problem solving for this issue is beyond one department. This is a city issue, and all parties need to work together. Perri will provide updates on a three pronged approach: Outreach & Education, Programming, and Enforcement.
- Venues Parks & Arts is a National Recreation and Parks Association Gold Medal Finalist for the year of 2021. This makes VPA the only agency to be nominated 2 consecutive years.

X. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 7:08 by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held June 21, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jessica Williams
Clerk, Board of Park Commissioners