

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
January, 23, 2023

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, January 23, 2023 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
Sam Centellas

Park Board members present and attending virtually as follows:
Consuella Hopkins – Vice President

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director; Jessica Williams, Executive Assistant; Hannah Francis, Special Events Manager; Amy Roush, Development Director; John Martinez, Chief of Park Operations; Macey Hanna, Director of Recreational Experiences; Matthew Moyers, Community Standards Coordinator; Rachael Zeiger, Special Events Manager.

Other city representatives present: Jenna Throw, Assistant City Attorney; Troy Warner, Councilmember.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on December 12, 2022

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 12, 2022, by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda of January 23, 2023, by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Use of Parks – New Events

1. Wild Ones South Bend Native Plant Sale on May 6, 2023 at Pinhook Park
Ann Garvey and Jody Makowski both presented on the native plant sale. There will be many plants from different sites available. There will also be education on native plants and the advantages of having them in our homes. This plant sale is open to the public and all plants are safe.

Motion to approve the Wild Ones South Bend Native Plant Sale, by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

2. Garden Walk with the Art League on June 28, 2023 at Leeper Park – East
Larry Clifford presented on the garden walk. The annual Arts in Bloom Garden Tour will showcase the Leeper Park eastside rose garden. This will take place from 10:00 am – 7:00 pm. There will be 250 – 300 people throughout the day walking through the rose garden. This event is open to the public.

Motion to approve the Garden Walk with the Art League, by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

V. Interviewing of Interested Residents

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

VI. New Business

1. Edge Adventure Lease Reassignment

Sally Birch and Ben Kopp presented the Edge Adventure lease reassignment to the Board of Park Commissioners. Edge Aerial Adventure will be absorbed by Signature through January 1, 2026. Burch gave a year-end review for April 30 – November 6, 2022. The park served 4102 people with \$104,000 in sales. Signature is excited for the opportunity to within the community and broaden their work in the adventure industry. Kopp stated the goal is to grow the community and engagement. Eventually Signature would like to expand to specialized events and add special amenities that complement the park. There will also be rebranding. Burch predicted for the 2023 year there should be 7,000 people attending the park.

Motion to approve the Edge Adventure Lease Reassignment, by Sam Centellas, seconded by Consuella Hopkins motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

VII. Report by Organization

1. Ecological Advocacy Committee

Steve Sass presented on behalf of the Ecological Advocacy Committee. Sass and his daughter Lindsey have spent time during the fall and winter removing invasive wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) and bush honeysuckle (*Loniceraspp.*) from Woodlawn Park. In October 2021, 25 of the University of Indiana faculty worked at removing some of the invasive plant species. University of Notre Dame students came out to remove the stumps of some of these invasive plants as well. The Sanctuary subdivision removed over 200 rapidly growing pear trees. Sass expressed that Callery pear trees are illegal in the state of Ohio. The Natural Resources Management Plans has been slower to implement. There are 41 1-3 year tasks which a few have been completed. Calling frog surveys had been implemented in 2021 and Sass is looking to start the surveys again this year. Breeding bird surveys and atlasings were performed by Sass as well. These are 5-year surveys that build over time. There are 386 plant species identified via plant surveying. 159 of these species are invasive in Indiana. Sass shared a list of the parks with the most invasive plant species. Lastly, the 2023 EAC Cohort consists of Steve Sass, Amy Gillan, Ally Pudlo, Charlene Roundtree, Andrew Schnabel, Andrew Tucker, and a student. The student member will need to be approved by the Board of Park Commissioners. Matthew Moyers stated a student from St. Mary's College would like to be endorsed by the board at the next scheduled meeting.

VIII. Report by Chief of Park Operations John Martinez

John Martinez presented the Facilities & Grounds 2023 Goals & Strategies. There is a plan to refocus the Park Ambassador Program & Outreach Program by restructuring, reestablishing expectations, and generating a new monthly operational report. There is also a strategy of developing an Intranet Maintenance Operations Manual. This manual is meant to include business continuity improvements, staff resources/policies, a maintenance schedule with budget and labor allocations, and inventory, branding, & specifications. Martinez explained the next goal is to focus on staff benefits, advancement, and retention. This will be done by scheduling one on one meetings with full time staff to discuss career paths, implementing a certification committee, and performing cross workgroup interviews and training. Lastly, there will be two new park operation improvements. The trim crew and all staff will be focusing on the details more robustly and the exterior restroom program will be more developed.

IX. Business by Executive Director Aaron Perri

- A meeting on Kennedy Park Improvements was held on January 10. Perri shared the presentation with the Board of Park Commissioners. There is intent to apply for a \$7.5 million grant through the FDNR from the Land Water Conservation Fund. This is to be matched by the city. The Kennedy Overall Master Plan includes expanding the aquatic center experience, added athletic fields, restored restrooms, a picnic grove, and new sidewalks and trails. A phasing plan was also shared. Phase one is the aquatics facility expansion.
- The Lakota Group has been hired for assessment of improvements for Potawatomi pool, the greenhouse, the playgrounds, the splashpad, and parking and traffic designs. Lakota Group will do their first condition assessment of Potawatomi on February 2.
- A resolution for nearly \$64 million in projects is to go in front of the Common Council. These are TIF bond to be allocated to projects such as Kennedy Park, the park at Martin Luther King Dream Center, Voorde Park, Walker Field, Park, South East Park, as well as trail projects and a pedestrian bridge.
- MLK Dream Center groundbreaking was January 15. The building is officially offline, and staff is operating out of O'Brien Center.
- Perri introduced Macey Hanna as the new Director of Recreational Experiences
- The Department of Community Investment previously presented a project to the Board of Park Commissioner adjacent to Sorin Park. This project included neighborhood changes as well as a new Youth Services Bureau building led by South Bend Heritage. The Sorin relocation road alignment portion has been removed.
- The Ethnic Festival is scheduled to take place on September 9, 2023.

X. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:16 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held February 22, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessica Williams
Clerk, Board of Park Commissioners