

SOUTH BEND BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
November 15, 2021

The Board of Park Commissioners of the City of South Bend, Indiana met on Monday, November 15, 2021, 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
Mr. Dan Farrell

Park Board members present and attending virtually as follows:

Consuella Hopkins

Park Board members absent were as follows:

Mr. Aimee Buccellato

VPA staff members present: Aaron Perri, Executive Director of Venues Parks & Arts; Annie Smith, Chief Development Officer; Matt Frazier, Marketing Manager; Amy Roush, Director of Development,

Other city representatives present: Clara McDaniels, Assistant City Attorney; Dan Parker, City Controller.

I. Call to Order

Mark Neal called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm.

II. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting on October 18, 2021

Motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 18, 2021, by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

III. Consent Agenda

Motion to approve the consent agenda which consisted of the September financials for November 15, 2021, by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carried. Roll call vote 3-0.

IV. Use of Parks – Returning Event

Motion to approve Angel of Hope Memorial Gardens events in Pinhook Park May 7th, October 9th, and December 11th, 2022, by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carries. Roll call vote 3-0.

V. Outstanding Partner – La Casa de Amistad

Aaron Perri wanted to recognize La Casa de Amistad for being a partner that help us be who we are by having partners that help us achieve. They just opened their new facility and VPA partnered with them for a Dia de Los Muertos event as well as them being a founding partner of Best. Week. Ever. Being able to work with them to bring Skate it Forward information to the community.

Juan Constantino started by agreeing that the partnership with VPA was phenomenal. He knows that he can reach out to staff at any time and will get a response. He mentioned both the access to ice skating and

to the pools in the summer for the children who are in their programs is important. The impact that the partnership has on increasing access to parks and areas for the families that they work with is important.

Mark Neal congratulated Juan on La Casa de Amistad receiving the non-profit of the year honor.

Aaron Perri presented the outstanding partner certificate to Juan Constantino, Executive Director of La Casa de Amistad.

VI. Interviewing of Interested Residents

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

VII. Potawatomi Zoo Bond Financing Report

Dan Parker, City Controller and Randy Rompolo, Bond Counsel for Barnes & Thornberg were present to share information relating to bond financing that the city is utilizing relating to both Morris and the Potawatomi Zoo relating to the hotel/motel tax. Dan shared that due to recent legislation .5% of the hotel/motel tax revenues will go to the Morris and .5% will go to the Zoo. Randy Rompolo shared that the financing would be up to 25 years for the Morris and up to 20 years for the Potawatomi Zoo. This would be backed by the redevelopment commission. Due to the structure of the financing of the hotel/motel tax for every dollar debt service there will be one dollar twenty or one dollar thirty tax revenues available which will allow for additional smaller projects. At this time the bond issue for the Morris would be open on December 13th and for the Zoo on the 22nd with the Morris with the Morris closing first in February and the Zoo closing 15 days after. It is an expected 6.5 million bond amount. Aaron Perri reminded the board that Josh Sisk shared the project overview at the November meeting and that there is no action required by the board, this information is to keep the board updated.

VIII. Reports by Organization – South Bend Cubs

Joe Hart and Chris Hagstrom were in attendance representing the South Bend Cubs. He started by acknowledging that the last 20 months have been unusual especially since they had no season in 2020. Even though there was no baseball season it was successful because they were able to hold movie nights and fund raiser events. Even though some minor league teams closed their doors for the season, Joe felt it was important that they support local non-profits and community organizations. One of the other things they provided was food for the medical industry and provided over 6,000 meals to the medical industry. Due to them being an outdoor space they were able to provide a space in a new way. One of the most impactful, Joe felt, was being able to provide a location for the South Bend School Corporation a place to hold their graduations. Ivy Tech also held their graduation at Four Winds Field. Even though some of the events were small they were able to hold over 100 events in a year when most things were cancelled. For 2021 the schedule wasn't released until February and for the first sixteen games (almost 20% of the season) there were restrictions. They were still able to host two concerts, Junior Achievement and Ronald McDonald House fund raiser events as well as holding the Ivy Tech and South Bend School Corporation graduations again. IUSB has also reached out to hold their graduation in 2022 at Four Winds Field. They recognize that it is more than a baseball stadium and hopes that the board recognizes that as well. Joe thanked Aaron, Annie, and Amy and the VPA staff for their assistance with COVID policies and helping them open for the season. Upgrades that need to be completed before the start of the 2022 season include light upgrades and, in the future, there will be an addition of women's locker rooms and rest rooms. Joe complimented the 1987 design of the structure because it was a forward-thinking design. April of 2022

will start the season. He also shared that 97% of the apartments are leased at The Ivy at the Berlin Place and that they are currently seeking businesses to lease the first-floor spaces.

Mark Neal reiterated how they are utilizing the space for the entire community – Four Winds Field is a City of South Bend Park and the ability to be able to use it in that sense is very beneficial to the community and is a community asset.

Aaron shared that the funding sources for the improvements that are required for the field are being provided through Professional Sports Development Area tax revenue which Aaron briefed the board on earlier. It is on track to achieve it's 2 million dollar a year cap and the light project will be under 1 million and is bid out at this time. Funding for the second deck is a little more complex, but worth the effort to improve the field. Joe mentioned that it is enjoyable to work with the City and VPA in this public/private partnership. Aaron shared that the South Bend Cubs paid their lease through the entire pandemic even though there was no ticket revenue. Joe is looking forward to play in next year, felt that the play in 2021 was affected because of the year off and feels that the facility and the city is a testament to the positive partnership and our community.

IX. Unfinished Business

1. 2022 Fees

Mark started the discussion by mentioning that Dan had a chance to speak with Tony about the fees before this meeting, since he couldn't attend the last meeting. Recreation nominal increases, mainly relating to packages and rentals. On the golf side it is part of the five-year plan, but we are only seeking approval for the 2022 year fees. Mark mentioned that Council member McBride was at the last meeting and asked Aaron if he had any conversations with council members. Aaron said that his conversations with council center around supplying equitable opportunities to facilities and programs. Aaron mentioned that the city has approved a wage increase of \$12 per hour for part time and \$15 full time and that does affect both golf and recreation. Mark asked that we confirm that First Tee is on the organization reports for the 2022 schedule.

Motion to approve 2022 Fees, by Dan Farrell, supported by Consuella Hopkins, motion carries. Roll call vote 3-0.

X. New Business

1. 2022 Board of Park Commissioners schedule

Mark mentioned that the January meeting is adjusted to a Tuesday and that the regular meetings are the third Monday of the month except for December which will be the second Monday.

Motion to approve 2022 Board of Park Commissioners schedule, by Consuella Hopkins, supported by Dan Farrell, motion carries. Roll call vote 3-0.

XI. Report by Chief Development Officer Annie Smith

Annie Smith thought the timing of her report was beneficial to give an overview of the successes of the entire development team. She highlighted for the board the following:

1. Volunteer numbers – over 673 volunteers to date committing over 2,700 of volunteer hours which is a value of over \$75,000
2. Development team was awarded seven different grants which valued 1.2 million and large part of that was COVID relief for the Morris, but it also included grant money for trails at pinhook, historic preservation at Walker Field, also for an art event at Howard Park. We are trying to apply for at least two grants a month.

Dan asked if Annie was pleased with the success rate and she feels that the grants that are written are very compelling, but that some grants are extremely competitive. Mark asked if the grant writing helps drive programs that VPA offers, and she feels it has a positive effect on the department. Aaron mentioned being eligible for a very limited grant for art by Jean-Michel Basquiat on a court at the MLK Dream Center which was not something that happened in the past. Annie feels that smaller grants (\$5,000 or less) can have a huge impact especially at the centers.

3. Monies raised under \$600,000 and this is not relating to the Morris and is park specific. The Morris is currently at 6.7 million, not including the commitment from the city and they are around 5 – 6 million out in asks and are hoping to be at 10 million committed by the end of the year (not including the city commitment).
4. Howard Holiday Market starts the Friday after Thanksgiving. Three weeks in Howard Park that will highlight local vendors and local sponsors.
5. Skate it Forward will be targeted in the next week, have already received applications for this season. We are working with other city departments to raise awareness for residents who receive other notifications. Annie also mentioned that we are creating more information and a bigger push in Spanish to raise awareness.
6. In January in conjunction with the VPA Foundation we are going to launch a “low donor” program, because we are currently missing engaging those individuals who can give \$100 to support centers, events, or programs. This is also great story telling mechanism and would include an internal grant opportunity from employees for the VPA Foundation to help manage. Aaron said it would be the VPA version of the “Awesome Fund”.

Dan stated this is it is a 1 to many marketing tool as opposed to the 1:1 that we have been doing for the large capitol campaigns. This is an opportunity to add to a water bill Aaron mentioned it being a part of emails that are sent out. Annie mentioned that we would do an email blast, social blast, potentially direct mail, and using the VPA Foundation to help get 10 people engaged each and be able to tell those stories. Creating efficacy by having input by the public on smaller projects.

7. Annie also mentioned that her team is working on BWE for next year, as well as community events for the Morris birthday year.

Consuella asked if there were any fundraisers that she missed in the year. Annie stated that there were none in 2021. There were direct asks, but no events.

XII. Business by Chief Executive Director Aaron Perri

Aaron Perri gave the following updates:

- Aaron started by stating that he is currently seeking applicants to fill the position that Eva has transitioned from, and Amy will continue to fill in until that position is filled
- Solar panels have been installed at the Howard Park Event Center and now that is complete, we can seek the LEED gold standard acknowledgement and feels that will be decided around February. There is second screen that was installed near the entrance of the Howard Park Event Center that will show the energy savings the panels are generating.
- Indiana Parks & Recreation Association Conference was in Muncie the previous week and VPA gave three presentations at the conference which included:
 - Jonathan and Aaron – Big Ideas to Life – Boomer as the case study
 - John and Aaron – Park Health Dashboard – can tell at any given time what the state of a park is and that the public can see in real time
 - Kintae Lark – Friday Night Life presentation which also won an “Innovative Program Award” at the conference
- At 6 -8 p.m. tonight at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center is the first meeting for the resident advisory committee redevelopment project. Eight community members who have been selected by the mayor’s office and they are getting an orientation of the project and the goals. The contract has been approved by the Board of Public Works with Meticulous Design + Architecture out of Indianapolis and they are 100 % owned and operated firm. They are known to engage and inspire the community that they are doing their project as part of their mission.
- An American Academy member is coming to South Bend next Monday to meet the staff and to present the award that VPA received from NRPA to both the staff and the City Council.
- Seitz Park Phase 1 – the work has come to screeching halt. Water is coming from somewhere and they are trying to figure out where it is coming from. It could be an old drainage, but they sent a dive team to go under and try and get a better picture. This will delay the project.
- Howard Park Ice trail will open Monday November 22nd with an official opening day on Friday November 26th.
- Budget – it has been a good year
 - Property tax disbursement is one million ahead and earned revenue is up going into the ice skating season and we are hoping to be at 105% of earned revenue for the year.
 - No position changes – the biggest change is the part time raise in pay to \$12 and full time to \$15.38. There were two positions that were impacted by the budget – one was automatically raised because of the fulltime raise in pay passed by the city, the other position was not approved for a fee restructure.
- Season Pass is different this year – it becomes your skate tag and if you own your skates you can get on the ice. Dan asked how the season passes are selling?
- Dan also asked about the power line project and Aaron said they had to coordinate with the Coal Line Trail project but will be off the trail very soon.
- Aaron wants to use this time to line up projects and events for the 2022 year even though we are reaching the end of the year – it isn’t a time to put off projects and events until after the first of the year.
- Aaron ended by making sure the board notes the information that was included in the packet relating to the tree lawn. There is a missing link between the Forestry department and the ordinance that the city has on the books. This will be a project that is for the new year.

XIII. Adjournment

No other questions or comments from the Park Commissioners, meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm by President Mark Neal.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, December 13, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. at Howard Park Event Center and virtually.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Roush