

**Hendricks County Parks and Recreation
Park Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, September 6, 2017
2:00pm

Parks & Recreation Office
955 East Main Street
Danville, IN 46122

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm.

Board Present: Paul Miner, President
Matt Freije, Secretary
Gary Emsweller
Bill Harrington
Mike Hayden
Beth Switzer

Board Absent: Doug Moon

Staff Present: Jeremy Weber, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Administrative Assistant
Sarah Wolf, Park Naturalist

Guests: Ray Benson
Bob Niemeyer
Meghan Stritar, Parks Foundation of Hendricks County

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Agenda

Weber stated that an item should be added to the agenda to elect a new vice president of the Park Board, as Bob Niemeyer has stepped down from the board. Miner created an addendum to New Business (D-2) to handle this matter.

Switzer moved to adopt the agenda with the addendum; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

A-2. Approval of Minutes of August 2, 2017 Meeting

Freije moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Hayden, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

Benson welcomed Harrington to the board. Niemeyer thanked God for his time on the park board and stated that he will miss working with everyone. He also welcomed Harrington to the board.

C. CONTINUING BUSINESS

C-1. McCloud Nature Park Update

Weber reported that the contractor on the wetland project is scheduled to return tomorrow to finish up the punch list items. Park Manager Jim Holtsclaw and the maintenance crew are working on the last few boardwalks, so the wetland should be completed in the near future. Miner reported a conversation that he had with Holtsclaw recently about the need for some volunteers to help replant several young trees in the wetland that were knocked over in the frequent flooding this spring and early summer.

Weber advised that the grand opening of the arboretum is scheduled for Sept. 21 at 10 a.m. The interpretive signage and the fountain are not yet complete, but the grand opening will still take place. Stritar informed the board that she sent out 70 invitations to the grand opening.

C-2. Vandalia Trail Update

Weber reported that the construction inspector submitted some of the big change orders, and it appears that the project will be under budget. Because some of the construction issues are utility-related, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) doesn't participate in those, so Hendricks County Parks & Recreation's (HCP&R) share of this cost will be over budget by somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2,000. Overall, however, the entire project should be under budget by about \$25,000. Weber is starting to put together the punch list items for the trail, and he reports a number of errors and omissions on the part of the designer, as well as some unexpected construction, contractor, and drainage issues at the sewage treatment facility, and other obstacles to overcome, but the project is nearing completion.

Weber reported that some of the punch list items include damage that was done to the paved trail while completing shoulder work, damage to a retaining wall next to the sewage treatment plant, and damage to the railing of the bridge over Crittenden Creek. One of the most recent obstacles is that the design plans showed a water main in Amo that HCP&R could hook onto for restrooms; however, that water main doesn't actually exist. The existence of the water main was not verified during the design process, so now HCP&R is scrambling to get approval for wells as a water source. Weber reports a similar issue in Coatesville. Ordering the restrooms for each trailhead had been delayed while these issues were resolved, but Weber reported that HCP&R has made enough progress with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) toward a solution that restrooms were finally ordered yesterday.

Finally, Weber reminded the Board that Greg Midgley and the Friends of the Vandalia Trail have been wanting to donate a parcel of land along the Vandalia Trail in Coatesville to HCP&R, and he received the warranty deed today. The board expressed its gratitude for this donation.

In response to a question from Harrington, Weber advised that the total budget for the project was between \$2.1 million and \$2.2 million, which is an 80/20 cost-share with INDOT. The project is still scheduled for a November completion date.

C-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park Phase-In

Weber advised that HCP&R would like to move ahead with the first phase of the development plan that was outlined by Dennis Gibbs and his committee earlier this year, and he would like the board's input on what they would like to have constructed first. The goal is still to have the first phase completed sometime in 2018. Weber also informed the board that the Indiana Department of Natural Resource's

(DNR) Division of Fish and Wildlife has contacted him to discuss putting an archery range in at Gibbs Park. If HCP&R contributes about \$20,000, the DNR has about \$200,000 to put toward a nice archery range that Weber feels would draw a lot of park attendance and revenue. A similar archery range in Michigan brings in about \$38,000 per year in revenue between the months of April and November. The DNR only requires that the archery range be open to the public at no cost on a regular basis, and that it be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The range can be available to use for a fee several days a week, but also must be open to the public for no charge a couple days a week. DNR reports that maintenance would likely be limited to replacing targets every couple of years, and there is a possibility that an archery company would be willing to operate a pro shop at the park. DNR has seen pro shops at other parks where the archery company's staff also mans the archery range itself. Weber likes this opportunity a great deal. Miner added that there would be merit badge opportunities for Boy Scouts at an archery range, and HCP&R could also host archery tournaments. Weber stated that the archery range would likely be placed south of the parking lot, along the eastern boundary of the park or near the woods. Because of the ADA-compliance requirements, Weber feels it would be best to keep the range close to the parking lot. Miner added that the range must face north to keep the sun out of archers' eyes. DNR is gathering more information right now, and as soon as Weber receives it, he will let the park board know.

Weber wants to build modern restrooms at Gibbs Park, rather than port-o-lets like at Sodalis, but the infrastructure on the land is not in place yet. Weber doesn't think it would be very difficult to get electricity out to Gibbs Park, but HCP&R would likely have to put in a well and septic for water and sewage. Weber also discussed the idea of a wetland treatment cell to be added to the park.

Dennis Gibbs and his committee have also discussed permeable pavement for the parking lot at the park. Weber is not a fan of permeable asphalt, as it doesn't work well in Indiana, so the idea now is to install some grid work where grass would grow in it.

Miner expressed an interest in obtaining an old cabin and/or barn on the property if HCP&R can find one that could be donated and relocated to Gibbs Park. Hayden reported that he and Emsweller discussed the barn idea while at the State Fair recently, and the donated Carlidge Barn cost about \$100,000 for disassembly, transport, and reassembly. Emsweller advised that there is a historical barn preservation group in Indiana that might have some grant money available for the move of an older barn, especially a pin-frame bridge. For \$100,000, Emsweller suggested that the board might consider just having a new structure built.

The park board gave the go-ahead for Weber to have some design work done on the archery range, the restrooms and wetland treatment cell, the permeable pavement (grid work), a nature playground, a bicycle skills trail, and a shelter and picnic area. The board further instructed Weber to get estimates on the design work to gain an idea for the cost involved.

Miner advised that HCP&R is still waiting to hear back from the Town of Avon about what the park's official address will be.

C-4. Special Events Policy

Emsweller expressed concern about the length and clarity of the definition in the policy and suggested that more work be done to make the definition more user-friendly. He also stated that the word “concern” in two different places within the policy may not be appropriate. He further stated that the special events policy refers to other policies and ordinances. He feels that the language of the other policies and ordinances should be included within the special events policy itself, rather than referring readers to other documents.

Additionally, Emsweller asked for clarification of denying special events “for cause as determined by the superintendent” – specifically, what type of event could be denied by the superintendent and not the board. Harrington cautioned that criteria should be created to specify what types of special events would not be permitted, for the protection of everyone involved. Emsweller and Harrington agreed that with the parks being public entities, there aren’t many special events that can be denied. Harrington stated that ideology cannot be controlled by HCP&R, but conduct – to some degree – can. Harrington will do some legal research to help with the continued development of the special events policy.

Weber stated that the object of the policy is for HCP&R to be able to host special events and collect revenue from them. Emsweller would like the policy to more clearly encourage special events to be held at the parks, not deny them. Switzer suggested examining the special events policies of other parks departments.

The park board will review the special events policy again at their next meeting.

D. NEW BUSINESS

D-1. Change in Park Board Membership

Bob Niemeyer has resigned from the park board, and Bill Harrington has been appointed to replace him.

D-2. Election of Vice President

Since Niemeyer was the vice president of the park board, that vacancy must be filled. Miner asked for volunteers to serve as vice president. Harrington expressed general interest in the position, but since he’s so new to returning to the board, he feels it would be best if he waits and learns for awhile. Freije volunteered to serve as vice president. Harrington volunteered to take Freije’s place as secretary.

Hayden made a motion to nominate Matt Freije as vice president and Bill Harrington as secretary; seconded by Emsweller, the motion passed unanimously.

E. REPORTS

E-1. Superintendent Report

Weber informed the board that there is nothing new to report on the budget. HCP&R hasn’t received the 2018 budget yet, and there are no problems with the current budget. Weber completed the budget hearings and now simply waits for final approval of the new budget. He reminded the board of the Fall Colors Run and Fall Colors Festival that will be held at McCloud Nature Park on Oct. 21 and invited board members to volunteer and/or attend. Weber stated that he will be setting up a meeting soon with Dan Searcy to discuss his farming lease on the Gibbs property for next year. Weber reported that he and Greg Midgley were interviewed by FOX59 yesterday for a segment on the Vandalia Trail upgrades that will be broadcast on

Friday morning on their “Your Town Friday” program. Weber also informed the board of a human resources issue that he’ll be addressing in a meeting on Friday, and that he will be attending the National Recreation & Park Association annual convention in New Orleans during the last week of September.

E-2. Youth Advisory Board

Freije reported that he’s still receiving applications from various high schools for student membership on the Youth Advisory Board (YAB). The deadline for applications recently passed, but he’s still getting some applications. Freije will have the YAB members volunteer at the Fall Colors Festival.

E-3. Committee Reports

Miner advised that the policy committee (Miner, Freije and Weber) will be working on refining the special events policy as previously discussed, and they’ll be working on a naming rights policy next. Harrington volunteered to join the policy committee and stated that his son-in-law knows a lot about intellectual property, so he’ll be a good resource, too.

Miner also advised that the finance committee met with Greg Guerrattaz (the county’s financial advisor), Mike Baker (president of the State Bank of Lizton), and Dennis Dawes (former head of Hendricks Regional Health) awhile back, and they all need to meet again. Guerrattaz looked through a list of 24 fund-raising ideas that the committee came up with and highlighted a few that are the best options. One of Guerrattaz’s suggestions was that HCP&R’s vision statement be revised to reflect some of the current parks projects. Miner would like the committee to meet with Guerrattaz, Baker and Dawes again soon to move forward with a plan to increase the department’s finances.

Weber advised that HCP&R will be meeting with officials from Plainfield Parks & Recreation later this month to discuss ownership and operations of Sodalis Nature Park.

E-4. Foundation Report

Stritar advised that the timing of her hiring with the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) was right before the McCloud Honeybee Fest, but HCP&R staff already had everything set up and ready to go. She looks forward to handling the vendors for next year’s Honeybee Fest. Stritar will be taking food to a couple of high school service groups who will be working in the parks next week. She advised that registration for the Fall Colors Run on Oct. 21 will be opening soon. She invited all of the park board members to attend the grand opening of the Arboretum at McCloud on Sept. 21. Stritar also encouraged more joint meetings between the PFOHC board and the park board.

Harrington requested that HCP&R include a tribute to the late Ed Hansen as part of the 15th Anniversary celebration of McCloud Nature Park. Hansen played a pivotal role in the creation of McCloud Nature Park and HCP&R, and he passed away on July 7, 2017. Miner agreed that Hansen should be recognized.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William O. Harrington, Secretary