

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

Wednesday, January 4, 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: Gary Emsweller, President
Beth Switzer, Vice President
Paul Miner
Bob Niemeyer
Matt Freije
Mike Hayden

Board Absent: Doug Moon

Staff Present: Jeremy Weber, Superintendent
Linda Brunner, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Ray Benson
Sara Nahrwold
Sherrie Haas
Linda Ash

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Agenda

Freije moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Niemeyer, the motion passed unanimously.

A-2. Approval of Minutes of December 7, 2016 Meeting

Weber advised that the minutes emailed to Board members had erroneously stated that others had volunteered to serve on the Gibbs Memorial Park Task Force, when in fact only Miner had actually volunteered. He advised that the minutes distributed at the meeting this date had been corrected accordingly.

Miner moved to approve the minutes as corrected; seconded by Niemeyer, the motion passed unanimously.

A-3. Review 2017 Budget Status

Brunner advised that she was awaiting the combined appropriations and encumbrances to be entered into the county's financial system, which was expected to be completed by the 3rd week in January, and that she would create a spreadsheet detailing the 2017 budget status when those numbers were available, to be distributed at the February board meeting. There were no questions regarding the budget status.

B. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

B-1. Election of Officers for 2017

The following officers were elected for 2017:

President – Paul Miner

Vice President – Bob Niemeyer

Secretary – Matt Freije

B-2. Committee Appointments

The following committee appointments were made for 2017:

Foundation – Emsweller stated that it would be in the best interest of the Board for him to step down from the Foundation Board and for the Park Board President to serve in that capacity.

C. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

C-1. Public Comments

Benson wished everyone a Happy New Year, and said he was looking forward to working with the new leadership of Hendricks County Parks Board.

Sara Nahrwold, Hendricks County Flyer, introduced herself and was welcomed to the meeting.

Sherrie Haas and Linda Ash introduced themselves and talked about their current effort to create a Friends of the Park Foundation to help fund expansion of Scamahorn Park in Pittsboro. Amenities planned for inclusion are baseball diamonds, soccer fields, basketball courts and concession stands. They expressed interest in working with the County Parks Board, and also in hosting a Summer Fun Run in 2018. Miner stated that the board would welcome the opportunity to partner with Pittsboro Parks in the future, and thanked Haas and Ash for attending the meeting.

Later in the meeting, Benson talked about the presentation by the Indiana State University Center for Bat Research at the previous Board meeting and stated that he'd like to see their research incorporated into our educational programs. Weber advised that O'Keefe and her graduate students have, in fact, come to the park to share their research and educate park patrons about the endangered Indiana bats.

D. CONTINUING BUSINESS

D-1. MOU - Town of Plainfield

Weber distributed the First Amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding he had received from the Town of Plainfield. He advised that based on his reading, it basically reiterated what was contained in the original MOU with the exception of revised dates. The Board agreed by consensus to defer signing the Amendment until its next meeting, and in the interim, to ask that County Attorney Steuerwald review it. Weber will contact the Town of Plainfield and advise that the Amendment is being reviewed by counsel.

D-2. Vandalia Trail Update

Weber stated he had met with the construction inspector and INDOT regarding issues that had surfaced with construction of the Vandalia Trail. Cost overruns have become a problem, and he advised the Board of the potential for the project going \$22,000 to \$25,000 over budget. He is currently working with Beaty and CECon, for ways to make up the overruns, who have come up with ideas that could result in a reduction from current projections to approximately \$800. He and Holtsclaw will be meeting with the contractor and INDOT in the next week or so to discuss and attempt to resolve the problems.

Weber then moved on to Phase II of the Vandalia Trail, advising that he had met with Butler Fairman & Seufert regarding the right-of-way acquisition grant. He reminded the Board that BFS had identified a

parcel that was owned by CSX, and was now working on acquiring that parcel. He reported that BFS had taken it upon themselves to meet with a landowner who had previously opposed the trail, and BFS is now advising the Board to withdraw its prior offer and start negotiations from scratch. Weber advised that he would research the details of that offer and report back to the Board. Weber further advised that after learning of misguided comments about the trail at the last Plan Commission meeting, he invited Commissioner Gentry to the office to share with him the plans for further expansion of the trail. Gentry expressed his interest, and agreed to meet with landowners along the trail to talk to them about their potential concerns.

D-3. W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Planning Update

Weber reported that the W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park Task Force had gathered for its first meeting that morning. The group consists of Mike Hayden, Amy Shumaker, Dennis Gibbs, Bob Niemeyer, Paul Miner and Weber. The meeting resulted in a productive discussion, and the group is putting together a good plan. Gibbs plans to have a report ready for the Board in March.

E. NEW BUSINESS

E-1. Nature Center – Upgrade of Exhibits

Weber distributed a drawing of a shadowbox wall under construction at the Nature Center. The wall will highlight the major ecosystems in McCloud Park. Weber reported on the project's status. He reminded the Board that there had been \$10,000 designated in the 2016 budget for new exhibits for the Nature Center, but when the bid came back at \$50,000, it was determined that the upgrade would be done in-house, utilizing the talents and skills of the department's staff. The current estimate is well below the original \$10,000, allowing staff to improve other areas of the Nature Center in addition to the shadowbox wall. Additional upgrades will include a new snake enclosure, a microphone in the birdwatching area, and repair of a touch-screen computer.

E-2. Parks Awareness Campaign

Weber distributed an outline of talking points compiled by Eric Ivie summarizing the information gleaned from research and his meeting with Weber and Miner, and encouraged Board members to bring up these points when they talk with people in the community to make them aware how parks can help with economic development. He informed the board that the first news release of the campaign had appeared in the Hendricks County Flyer the preceding Saturday, focusing on parks' economic impact on surrounding communities. Miner advised the board that many sectors of the community are fully in support of parks, and it is a goal of the campaign to get people aligned. He recommended sharing the talking points with appointing bodies and encouraging others to bring them up in public meetings. He reminded the Board that the purpose of the campaign is to help make the community aware of how parks benefit communities economically, through health and wellness, and socially. He stated that sources included the National Parks & Recreation Association, Visit Hendricks County, Realtors and Builders Groups, among others, with emphasis on local statistics.

E-3. Park Board Retreat

Weber brought up the topic of a retreat to gauge members' interest in conducting a retreat this year. There was discussion of a change in the format from prior years, with less focus on staff reports and more focus on the parks awareness campaign and/or other areas of development. Asked whether the Board would consider bringing in town boards, Weber indicated that was a possibility. Board members expressed interest, and Weber stated he would put together a list of potential dates for the retreat and distribute it to board members.

E-4. IAS Contract

Weber distributed a copy of the contract entered into between the Park Board and the Indiana

Astronomical Society in 2005, and discussed some items that needed to be updated regarding members' use of the park at night. The board discussed potential liability and the need to insert a notice requirement and contact information for nighttime park users. Weber said he would revise the contract, run it by Attorney Steuerwald, and bring it back to the Board at its March meeting. He stated he would contact the IAS in the meantime and advise that the contract was being revised.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Weber advised that Wolf had been busy with the new displays, programs and school outreach. She has an interest in providing geocaching at McCloud, and Weber will talk to the policy committee about this. He further reported that Holtsclaw and his crew have been working on the piers and decking in the Wetland area to be able to open up the trails, and will finish this project by Spring. Weber then talked about a Nature Playground at McCloud and asked the Board if they would approve this as a 2018 project. The Board agreed by consensus that this would be a valuable project and Weber indicated he would come back to the Board later this year with more detail and a fundraising plan. Weber made the board aware of an issue that had arisen with Human Resources regarding part-time employee hours, and reported the matter had subsequently been resolved. He advised that he would be attending the opening retreat for Leadership Hendricks County the following weekend.

F-2. Youth Advisory Board

Freije moved to nominate himself to continue to lead the Youth Advisory Board in 2017, seconded by Switzer the motion passed unanimously.

Freije reported that the YAB had decorated ceramic plates for display at the Nature Center at its Christmas meeting, and at their next meeting would be making aprons for their volunteer day at the PFOHC Pancake Breakfast at McCloud. He stated the following meeting would provide members with some sort of career leadership opportunity. Emsweller advised Freije that Gibbs wanted a YAB member to serve on the Gibbs Memorial Park Task Force, and Freije said he had a couple students in mind.

F-3. Committee Reports

Weber reported that the Policy Committee had scheduled its first meeting for the following week.

F-4. Foundation Report

Weber reported the Foundation would be meeting for a Mission and Vision Exercise on January 16th, and would report to the Board after that.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, Niemeyer commended Weber on his presentation to the joint workshop of the Council and Commissioners. He also thanked Emsweller for his tremendous leadership and service to the Board, seconded by Switzer and others.

The meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Freije, Secretary