

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

Wednesday, October 11, 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
Bill Harrington, Secretary
Doug Moon
Gary Emsweller
Mike Hayden

Board Absent: Matt Freije, Vice President
Beth Switzer

Staff Present: Jeremy Weber, Superintendent
Linda Brunner, Administrative Assistant
Meghan Stritar, Parks Foundation of Hendricks County

Guests: Ray Benson
Bob Niemeyer
Grant McCardle
Bruce Bowman

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Agenda

Harrington moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Emsweller, the motion passed unanimously.

A-2. Approval of Minutes of September 6, 2017 Meeting

Harrington moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Emsweller, the motion passed unanimously.

A-3. Review Current Budget Status

Brunner advised that Weber had not yet received the approved budget for 2018 from the Auditor's Office, and that the department's 2017 balances looked strong for finishing out the year. She advised that Weber was gathering information to put together costs for Phase 1 of Gibbs Memorial Park and to earmark funds for capital improvement projects.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

McCardle and Bowman introduced themselves to the Board, and Bowman further stated that as a retiree and resident of Hendricks County, he valued the parks and trails and was attending the meeting today to support the ongoing partnership of the Indiana Astronomical Society (“IAS”) and the Park Board, and his support for renewing License Agreement between the Board and the IAS.

C. CONTINUING BUSINESS

C-1. McCloud Nature Park Update

Weber advised that the contractor had finished all the punch-list work, and that while not 100% according to plan, the results are good. He stated the remaining work, finishing the boardwalks and seeding the trails, will be done in-house.

Weber talked about the Grand Opening of the Arboretum, held September 21st, stating that while the crowd was small, it contained several guests who had formerly been involved with Hendricks County parks, and some who expressed an interest in working with our department in the future.

C-2. Sodalís Nature Park Update

Weber had no new information to report on the plans for Sodalís. He stated that he and Miner had attended the most recent Plainfield Town Council meeting, and that a new staffer has been placed in charge of the project. He further noted that representatives of Plainfield want to meet in November to talk about where they are and where we are in terms of moving forward with developing an MOU. Representatives from the Town of Plainfield will be attending the Park Board meeting in November. There was discussion of the need for Plainfield to be proactive in helping us secure operating funding, as was previously discussed with the IAA, and a discussion of some history of joint agreements between county and municipal entities. The Board briefly discussed ongoing conservation efforts at Sodalís including ISU’s bat studies and the invasive bush honeysuckle problem. They also discussed a separate meeting with Plainfield in the future to explore the possibility of joining the County’s and the Town’s portions of the Vandalía Trail at Cartersburg.

C-3. Vandalía Trail Update

Weber advised that the work on Phase 1 of the Vandalía Trail is nearing completion. He said the contractor is trying to push for an extension of time due to the rain events earlier in the summer. He stated that, although the contractor is trying to file a claim for washout delays, it failed to follow INDOT procedures, so it may not have a viable claim. The construction inspector is currently working with INDOT to refute the claim.

Weber then led a discussion of the next phase of the trail, beginning with plans to conduct “kitchen table” meetings with landowners. Board members agreed this could be an opportunity to meet 1-on-1 with landowners and address individual concerns, and discussed enlisting the assistance of a local community leader to help educate the landowners on options, including going around fields rather than directly dissecting them, and the benefits and economic development potential of this high-priority designated trail. Weber stated he had been contacted by the ROW consultant requesting guidance on sending letters to landowners to set up meetings, and the Board agreed by consensus that Weber should advise the consultant not to send out letters at this time, but instead to make the personal contacts they had discussed. Miner reported that 56 miles of the trail had already been completed across the state.

D. NEW BUSINESS

D-1. IAS License Agreement

Bowman talked about the 12-year relationship of the IAS and Hendricks County Parks, and emphasized that he is strongly supportive of renewing the License Agreement between the two entities. He talked about the capital improvements made and time invested by the IAS, and reported on the quality of night sky viewing at McCloud, which is the IAS's primary outreach. For those not familiar with the astronomy programs, Bowman shared the programs' structure, and stated that the IAS very much enjoyed those programs. He stated he would like to be able to have more impromptu visitation by IAS members, and wanted to talk about having access to the lights at the park to ensure limitation of light pollution.

Weber then went through the revised License Agreement section-by-section, discussing changes in points of contact, notice requirements for IAS members' and immediate family's use and the process required for public activities. There was discussion of the limitation of the viewing area, the conditions under which the agreement could be assigned, and the indemnification and hold harmless language of the agreement.

Bowman stated he was planning to attend the IAS Board meeting when the agreement would be voted on, and that he appreciated the opportunity to appear before the Park Board to discuss the changes to the Agreement and to support the relationship.

Moon moved to accept the revised License Agreement between the Hendricks County Park Board and the IAS; seconded by Emsweller, the motion passed unanimously.

E. REPORTS

E-1. Superintendent Report

Weber provided a brief explanation of the current plans for W. S. Gibbs Memorial Park and the goal of opening Phase 1 next fall. He stated he was looking for a landscape architect to prepare design drawings so a determination could be made as to what projects to begin with. He reported that the tenant farmer had already seeded some trails, mostly bordering existing farm fields.

Weber gave a brief report on the NRPA annual conference that he had recently attended in New Orleans, where he attended sessions on workplace culture, marketing, and park planning, among others. He said he'd also had an opportunity to spend some time with representatives of park partners Brownsburg and Danville.

Weber reminded the Board of the upcoming Fall Colors Festival and PFOHC's Fall Colors Run on October 21st, and asked for volunteers.

Weber informed the Board the Tri-West Service Club had cleaned up the Arboretum in preparation for the Grand Opening, and had talked about serving on additional projects at McCloud. He reported that HCP&R had attended the Community Foundation's recent "Get Involved" event, making new contacts and recruiting volunteers. He also told the Board about the good turn-out at recent Volunteer/Staff cook-outs at McCloud.

On the marketing and communications front, Weber reported that HCP&R has had considerable media attention lately, including a segment on Fox59's "Our Town Friday" featuring the Vandalia Trail, with an interview with Greg Midgley and himself, RTV6 had featured the prairie maze at McCloud, Weber had been featured in the ICON, and Eric Ivie was interviewed on the HCCF's "Community Connections" series on WYRZ Radio, to name a few. He also reported that Visit Hendricks County had recently held a successful media event at McCloud with travel writers from across the state.

E-2. Youth Advisory Board

Weber advised that the first meeting of this year's Youth Advisory Board had not been very well attended, and that he and Freije were going to meet to discuss the vision for the group, including the possibility of taking some time off to revamp the program.

E-3. Committee Reports

Weber reported that he and Miner had discussed the need to establish several committees to work with Weber to plan and prepare for several upcoming events, and Miner asked for volunteers. The following committees were formed:

- Gibbs Memorial Park (Phase 1) Opening (Mike Hayden, Dennis Gibbs, Meghan Stritar)
- McCloud 15 Year Anniversary (Bill Harrington, Paul Miner, Meghan Stritar)
- Vandalia Trail (Phase 1) Grand Opening (TBD, will ask Greg Midgley, Representatives of Amo and Coatesville, Paul Miner, Meghan Stritar)
- Finance Committee, to work with Guerrettaz, Dawes & Baker in reviewing vision statement and attaching to 5-10-20 year plans, and to work as Budget Oversight Advisory Group (Bill Harrington, Paul Miner)
- 2018 Fee Committee (Emsweller, Brunner)

Weber reported that he had been asked by a representative of Susie's Place for permission to hold a fundraiser at Sodalis Park, and the Board discussed the request, since the Special Events Policy was still a work-in-progress. The Board agreed by consensus to allow Susie's Place to hold the fundraiser at Sodalis Park on May 19, 2018, at no charge, with HCP&R designated as a major sponsor.

E-4. Foundation Report

Stritar reminded the Board of the upcoming Fall Colors Run on October 21st. She stated that there were 63 registrants at this time, and that 4 volunteers had signed up. She advised there would be a food truck, campfire (with s'mores), hayrides, and other activities.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William O. Harrington, Secretary