



## **Park Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, June 7, 2023  
2:00 p.m.

955 E. Main Street  
Danville, IN 46122

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

**Board Present:** Matt Freije, Secretary  
Bill DuMond  
Paul Miner  
Jeff Pell

**Board Absent:** Mike Hayden, President  
Brad Eisenhart, Vice President  
Gary Emsweller

**Staff Present:** Ryan Lemley, Superintendent  
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent  
Jim Holtsclaw, Park Manager  
Sarah Wolf, Park Naturalist

**Guests:** Greg Midgley, National Road Heritage Trail

### **A. CALENDAR**

#### **A-1. Adopt Agenda**

**DuMond moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Pell; motion passed unanimously.**

#### **A-2. Approval of Minutes from May 3, 2023 Park Board Meeting**

**DuMond moved to approve the minutes from the May 3, 2023, Park Board meeting; seconded by Miner; motion passed unanimously.**

## **B. PUBLIC HEARINGS / PRESENTATIONS**

### **B-1. Public Comments**

Miner reported meeting a friend who has a metal detector at McCloud Nature Park awhile back, and they located and flagged where Granny McCloud's cabin was located within the park. He asked if there has been any response from Stantec about searching for what is located underground at that site. Lemley advised that there has been no further conversation from Stantec since they said they'd stop by and look at the site several months ago. Lemley offered to reach out to them again.

Midgley advised the Park Board that earlier this year, he toured a new three-mile-long section of the National Road Heritage Trail (NRHT) in Putnam County, and it has now been opened. The new section is southwest of Greencastle, near Reelsville, and the NRHT now stretches almost all the way across Putnam County. The new trail is open for hiking and all-terrain bicycles. Midgley said that it's a beautiful and scenic stretch of trail.

## **C. NEW BUSINESS**

### **C-1. Vandalia Trail Expansion – Fair Market Appraisal Report for Charles Arnold Property**

Lemley presented the Park Board with an offer to Charles Arnold for a perpetual easement on County Road 500 S. and Michigan Street in Clayton.

He feels this acquisition is a key component to a successful attempt to get Next Level Trails grant money in Round 4 of the state's application process to expand the Vandalia Trail from Clayton to a spot about 2.6 miles west of town along the north side of CR 500 S. The application is due by the end of July, but Lemley wants to submit the application during the second week of the month because he and Ivie both have vacation time scheduled in July.

The acquisition of an easement from Arnold is also crucial to the acquisition of an additional easement from a property owner (Tony Murrain) to the east. Murrain has previously expressed that the only way he'll consider an easement transaction is if the trail enters his property from the property that is currently owned by Arnold. If the Park Board can secure easements from Arthur and Murrain in the near future, Lemley feels the department's chances of success on a Next Level Trails grant application are good.

The proposed perpetual easement on Arnold's property is for 0.065 acres at a fair market price of \$7,350.00. It will be paid for by federal funding the department has received through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

DuMond expressed concern about how much the Park Board would be paying for this easement. He feels it is overpriced, with the per-acre price being about \$150,000. He doesn't understand how the offering price was calculated because \$150,000 per acre is extremely expensive and will set a bad precedent for future land acquisition attempts. Lemley stated that this easement offer was based off comparable prices in surrounding counties, but beyond that, he doesn't know how the per-acre price was determined because he had nothing to do with the creation of the appraisal.

Holtscaw explained that when someone is acquiring a smaller easement, the price per square foot or price per acre is higher than it would be when acquiring a large easement. He gave the example of purchasing a house. While a 1,000-square-foot house is likely cheaper than a 2,000-square-foot house, a buyer will pay more per square foot in the smaller home than they would in the larger home because the

smaller house will not be exactly half the price of a comparable version of the larger house.

**Miner moved to approve the offer to Arnold based on the information in-hand at this point; seconded by Pell; motion failed 3-1 (Miner, Pell, and Freije voting for; DuMond voting against). The motion failed because it did not have a majority of the entire Park Board's vote in favor, which would require four (4) votes in favor.**

DuMond asked to see the entire appraisal, which Lemley immediately provided him. Lemley also tried to call Ryan Buckley with Beam Longest & Neff to see if he can explain how the offer price came to be, but he only reached Buckley's voice mail. He left Buckley a message to call back within an hour, if possible.

More discussion was had on the topic, and DuMond continued reading the full appraisal. Freije tabled the discussion until later in the meeting to give DuMond time to review and for Buckley to call Lemley back.

#### C-2. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – ADA Fishing Dock Bids

Lemley presented the Park Board with the one and only bid that has been received to put a 40' x 20' ADA-accessible dock on the smaller pond at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, pursuant to the plans to add amenities to the park using grant money the department received from the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund.

Lemley solicited bids from three (3) vendors and received no bids from two (2) of the vendors. He believes the lack of bids is a result of the federally mandated "Build America, Buy America" program (since the dock will be paid for with federal grant money), and he suspects that the other two vendors use components from international suppliers.

The bid that was received is from Deaton's Waterfront Services, and it's for \$79,604.59. Lemley stated that this is substantially more than what the department paid in 2021 for the dock on the large pond, which may be a result of inflation and the "Build America, Buy America" program. The department estimated a cost of \$80,000 for the new dock, though, so Lemley recommends the approval of this bid.

Lemley added that there is a significant lead time on the installation of the dock, so it will probably not be installed until September or October.

**Miner moved to approve the purchase and installation of the dock, as bid by Deaton's Waterfront Services; seconded by Pell; motion passed unanimously.**

DuMond stated that he only voted in favor of the motion because the new dock was part of the grant application. Otherwise, he would be opposed to adding the dock on the small pond because he feels the money could be better spent on the large pond.

#### C-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Solar Security Lights

Lemley advised that the department purchased seven (7) solar-powered LED security lights for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park from Solar Lighting International, pursuant to the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund grant. The purchase price was \$12,206.00.

The department has already received the lights, but the poles have a 12-week lead time before they will ship. Once the poles are received, the maintenance crew will install the lights around the park, and that will satisfy that portion of the grant.

The lights will shine at 30% brightness unless motion is detected, at which time they will shine at 100% brightness. This amenity will help deter unwanted behavior in the park after dark when the park is closed, and it will assist law enforcement in safely contacting people in the park after dark.

#### C-4. 2024 Budget Proposal

Lemley advised that he and Ivie will be preparing the department's 2024 budget proposal in June. It is due to the Hendricks County Auditor before the next Park Board meeting. The department will be requesting a small increase in funding in order to purchase a new UTV (estimated by Edwards Equipment in Danville to cost \$18,200) for the maintenance hub at Gibbs, as well as another small increase for utilities at the new maintenance hub. Other than those requests, the department's 2024 budget request will closely mirror its 2023 allocated budget.

Lemley asked if anyone on the Park Board has any input on or questions about the 2024 budget, and no one did. **By consensus, the Park Board instructed Lemley to move forward with 2024 budget preparations and submittal.**

#### D. PROPERTY UPDATES

##### D-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley reported that the maintenance crew has completed exterior improvements to the Mill Cottage at McCloud Nature Park that included painting the exterior, sealing and glazing the windows, clearing out the gutters, and cleaning up the landscaping. They completed all of this work in about a week, and the building looks much better. The roof needs to be replaced, but the McCloud Nature Center needs a new roof even more urgently, so the maintenance crew will tackle that project first.

Lemley said that the maintenance crew also sprayed a large amount of herbicide on the invasive multi-flora rose that has infested the park, corrected some erosion issues along Big Walnut Creek, and stained the Hunt Palmer gazebo in May.

Lemley informed the Park Board that Ivie is working with Envirosigns to create an interpretive sign for the historic truss bridge. Ivie has provided Envirosigns with text and photos, and they are now working on the design of the sign, which will mimic the style of the interpretive signs in the nearby arboretum for the sake of consistency.

Joe Lembo has completed Counselor-in-Training interviews and has chosen six (6) teenaged participants to help him with camps this summer.

Lemley has approved a request from the United States Air Force to conduct some training at McCloud on June 26 during the nighttime. Lemley was informed by Ivie that the U.S. military has periodically conducted trainings at McCloud in the past, and there have never been any issues. Answering a question from Freije, Lemley stated that there will not be any department staff on-site during the training.

Lemley reported 1,972 vehicles in McCloud Nature Park during the month of May.

#### D-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley advised the Park Board that he and Ivie completed an online training on Round 4 of the Next Level Trails grant program yesterday, and if the Arnold and Murrain easements can be acquired in time, the department will submit a \$2 million grant request to extend the trail west for about 2.6 miles from Clayton. If awarded the money, it will be combined with the ARPA funding to complete the project.

This topic sparked renewed discussion about the Arnold easement.

#### C-1. Vandalia Trail Expansion – Fair Market Appraisal Report for Charles Arnold Property (continued)

Miner expressed concern that the failed vote will delay proceedings with land acquisition for at least another month, which would make it pointless to apply for Next Level Trail funding in Round 4, in essence delaying the project for at least another year. Ivie confirmed that another application without trail connectivity will be a waste of time because that's why the department did not receive funding in previous rounds.

Miner asked when future rounds of grant applications will take place. Ivie stated that there is no way to know if or when that will happen.

DuMond continued to express opposition to the Arnold easement offer. He feels that the comparable properties' sales prices are too old, going back to 2021 or 2022, and that those prices don't even meet the current price being proposed for Arnold's property. DuMond is also concerned about Murrain changing his mind after seeing the price for Arnold's easement and then upping his own asking price. Lemley advised that Murrain has already agreed to a price, contingent upon the department's acquisition of an easement through Arnold's property. DuMond stated that he feels Murrain's property is more valuable than Arnold's, so he wants to know the per-acre price of Murrain's offer. Lemley advised that the Park Board will be paying Murrain \$9,300.00 for 6,358 square feet of easement. Midgley said that's about 0.14 acres and works out to about \$63,000 per acre.

Freije reminded the Park Board that this appraisal cost the department about \$1,500 to have done.

DuMond stated that there is no reference anywhere in the full appraisal as to where the \$150,000 per-acre price comes from, which causes him concern. Midgley agrees that the appraiser should have to state where the per-acre price comes from in the report. DuMond stated that his main point of contention is how the per-acre price was determined.

Freije tabled the discussion again to give Buckley more time to call back.

#### D-2. Vandalia Trail (continued)

Lemley said that he plans to reach out soon to elected officials and to Midgley for letters of support for the Next Level Trails grant application. He also needs to get an environmental review done through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Lemley reported 2,541 trail users during the month of May, in addition to 112 users of the equestrian trail, although whether those users were horses, people, or bicycles cannot be determined.

### D-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley reported substantial site development on the maintenance hub construction at Gibbs. He advised that the Washington Township Fire Marshal has recently contacted the department's contractor, John Hall Construction, and advised that they are not in compliance with local and state fire codes because there is not a nearby water source or hydrant that can be used to fight fires. Additionally, the entry road to the hub needs to be 20 feet wide and capable of supporting a 78,000-pound fire truck. The Fire Marshal is out of the office this week and will check back early next week. Lemley expressed frustration that the Fire Marshal was invited to the planning and review meetings with the Town of Avon but did not attend, and now these requirements are surfacing several months later at the eleventh hour. Lemley also stated that there is no public water service in the area, so he's not sure how the contractor can be expected to install a fire hydrant. Lemley has reached out to Align Civil Engineering Services for direction and guidance.

Lemley reported that the electrical work for the hub has already been completed, the plumbing was completed today, and the concrete pad will be poured on Friday. The building's walls will start going up in the next week or two. Lemley is pleased with the progress of the project. Holtsclaw explained some of the details of the construction to the Park Board in response to questions by Miner. Miner appreciated the explanation.

Lemley said that the County Council's approval of the use of the money from the purchase of Sodalís Nature Park for the maintenance hub construction was delayed until July due to a clerical error outside of his control. Lemley expects no problems in July, but he wanted to update the Park Board on the delay.

Lemley reported that the eight-acre pollinator plot at Gibbs has been planted. Some germination is already visible.

He advised that he recently received a check from the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County for the swing set at McCloud, and he was able to give them a tour of Gibbs in the process, including the new staircase on the east side of the hill. Lemley thanked Holtsclaw and maintenance crew members Oather Duncan III, Caleb Hawkins, and Ralph Wilkinson for their hard work on the staircase project.

Lemley said that Joe Lembo hosted a very successful Touch a Truck program at Gibbs in May with an estimated attendance of 500 to 600 people. Lembo also hosted a fishing program at Gibbs in May, and this past weekend, he hosted a family fishing derby, which had 43 participants.

Lemley reported eleven (11) pavilion rentals at Gibbs in May.

He advised that a "do not enter" sign in the disc golf parking lot was stolen, and another sign was nearly stolen. Replacement signs were put up yesterday by the maintenance crew.

Lemley stated that he approved a disc golf tournament at Gibbs for July 8. There are eighty (80) registered participants for the event.

At DuMond's request, Lemley repeated the information about the eight-acre pollinator plot that has been planted, and he detailed the work that was done prior to and during the planting.

Lemley said that 5,021 vehicles visited W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park in May.

C-1. Vandalia Trail Expansion – Fair Market Appraisal Report for Charles Arnold Property (continued)

Freije asked if Buckley has called back yet, but he has not. Lemley advised that Holtsclaw just informed him that, based on some quick online research done by Holtsclaw, the price of an easement acquisition is generally derived from taking the fair market value of the land without the easement and subtracting the fair market value of the land with the easement.

Holtsclaw elaborated that having an easement through a piece of property devalues that property if it was to be sold to someone else, so the purchase price of the perpetual easement is designed to offset that financial loss by the property owner. In Arnold's case, the easement will cover nearly half of the total property, which makes it less appealing to future buyers.

DuMond stated that this logic is not the basis of the full appraisal report and that the methodology is not contained within the report. Holtsclaw asked to look at the full appraisal report to see if he might find some clues as to how the appraiser came up with the fair market price.

Freije asked the Park Board if holding up a \$7,350 easement purchase is worth possibly losing out on \$2 million in Next Level Trails grant money. DuMond stated that he understands Freije's point and that it is the same point that Miner has been trying to make, but he's concerned about what the purchase of Arnold's easement will do to Murrain's asking price for an easement on his property, as well as the precedent set for future property or easement purchases. DuMond repeated that he wants to understand how the appraiser came to the \$150,000 per-acre price of the easement.

Holtsclaw announced that the logic behind the easement purchase price is listed on the second page of the appraisal report: the appraiser took the fair market value of the Arnold property without the easement (\$50,700), subtracted the fair market value of the property with the easement (\$43,350), and \$7,350 is the difference. It just happens to work out to \$150,000 per acre but again, that's because the parcel is so tiny (0.26 acres total). DuMond said that he overlooked the second page of the report.

To give DuMond time to process this new information, Freije tabled the discussion once more.

**E. REPORTS**

E-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that department has received its new 72-inch diesel John Deere mower that was ordered earlier this year to replace an old 60-inch Kubota mower.

Lemley said that there was a repair made to the dump bed of one of the UTVs.

Aside from that, his superintendent report outlines everything else that's going on with the department. The Park Board had no questions.

E-2. Naturalist Update

Wolf reported that Nature Day Camps at McCloud Nature Park begin next week. She said that since the department did not hire a part-time naturalist for this summer, she and Linda Nichols have to help Joe

Lembo more with camps this year. She stated that she likes helping with camps, but that doing so makes it difficult to complete other tasks.

Wolf said that there are a variety of weekday and weekend programs scheduled for the summer, as well as a week of the Summer Fun Run Series on the Vandalia Trail later this month. Tomorrow, there is a bike parade on the Vandalia Trail in conjunction with the Amo Fish Fry, and she thinks Midgley will be in attendance.

DuMond stated that McCloud will be a SAG stop during the B&O Bike Tour this Saturday, and he expressed his appreciation for that. He said that the McCloud SAG stop is always popular among the event's participants.

Miner thanked Wolf for continuing to do programs along the Vandalia Trail.

Lemley passed out some McCloud 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemorative patches to DuMond and Pell. Wolf explained the patches and the scavenger hunts where people can earn a complete set of patches.

#### E-3. Budget Report

Ivie reported no problems with the 2023 budget.

#### E-4. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

No members of the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County were present to give a report.

#### C-1. Vandalia Trail Expansion – Fair Market Appraisal Report for Charles Arnold Property (continued)

Freije opened the floor to more discussion about the Arnold property and summarized the previous discussions.

**Miner moved that with the new information discovered by Holtsclaw, the Park Board approve the offer to Arnold; seconded by Pell; more discussion was had, including DuMond expressing his appreciation to Holtsclaw for finding the new information; motion passed unanimously.**

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.**

**The next Park Board meeting will be held on July 12, 2023, at 2 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Matt Freije, Secretary