



## **Park Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
2:00 p.m.

955 E. Main Street  
Danville, IN 46122

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:58 p.m.

**Board Present:** Mike Hayden, President  
Brad Eisenhart, Vice President  
Paul Miner  
Jeff Pell

**Board Absent:** Matt Freije, Secretary  
Bill DuMond  
Gary Emsweller

**Staff Present:** Ryan Lemley, Superintendent  
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent  
Jim Holtsclaw, Park Manager  
Joe Lembo, Park Naturalist  
Patty Seymour, Administrative Assistant

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

### **A. CALENDAR**

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

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

#### **A-2. Approval of Minutes from June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Park Board Meeting**

The minutes from the last Park Board meeting could not be approved because there were only four members of the Park Board at the last meeting and only two of them are at this meeting. **The matter was tabled until next month's meeting.**

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

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

None

#### B-2. Vandalia Trail – Equestrian Discussion with Greg Midgley

Midgley informed the Park Board that recent discussions have taken place in Putnam County about equestrian accommodation(s) and what guidelines should be considered on whether to develop a policy for equestrian accommodation with the newly opened pedestrian/bike trail within Putnam County. Midgley explained that the top four items of importance for the policy would be, 1. Equestrian group involvement; 2. Is there adequate space for a dedicated equestrian path; 3. Town(s) engagement; 4. Coordination with neighboring agencies, like Putnam County. Midgley said that he reached out to the Town of Coatesville and the Town of Amo to discuss their interest on such subject and explained that creating a policy on a dedicated equestrian trail does not line up with the Town of Coatesville's long term planning goals in regard to trail development, while the Town of Amo would like to encourage more use of this type of trail.

Midgley requested Park Board input on creating a high level policy for the equestrian section of the Vandalia Trail. Extensive discussion took place about a variety of topics related to the history of Vandalia Trail construction, equestrian group involvement, trail maintenance, and advertisement of equestrian trail amenity. It was determined that Hendricks County Parks and Recreation department will continue to offer use of the dedicated equestrian trail and will maintain the creek crossing on a routine basis.

### **C. NEW BUSINESS**

#### C-1. Vandalia Trail – Secured Easements for Eastern Expansion

Lemley advised the Park Board that right-of-way agent, Jonah Thacker, with Beam-Longest-Neff (BLN) presented the purchase offer, previously approved by the Park Board, to Charles Arnold for a perpetual easement on County Road 500 S. and Michigan Street in Clayton, in the amount of \$7,350.00. Arnold accepted and signed the purchase agreement in June. Upon obtaining Arnold's signature, Thacker was able to secure the easement from Tony Murrain's parcel along County Road 500 South in the amount of \$9,300.00. Both easements were funded from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) budget dedicated for expansion of the Vandalia Trail. The Park Board now owns the land needed to construct the trail leading into Lambert Park in Clayton, heading west to a point near County Road 250 West.

Lemley explained to the Park Board that he was led to believe that Lyle Pringle was fully prepared to sign the intent on selling the Park Board a perpetual easement through his property (connecting parcel to County Road 250 West). Through several conversations with Thacker, Pringle verbally agreed to sign the documents upon receiving compensation of \$7,500.00 along with reviewing the letter of assurance previously approved by the Park Board regarding native tree plantings, trail head distance, etc. Lemley added that the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) provided funding in the amount of \$2,175.00 through private donations while the department provided funding in the amount of \$5,325 (fair market value), totaling \$7,500.00. Upon physical delivery of the documents and payment, Pringle had changed his mind on supporting trail development and presented additional demands prior to him considering the sale of an easement on his property. Regardless of Pringle rescinding his word on selling the easement, HCP&R will proceed in submitting their application for consideration within round 4 of the Next Level Trails grant program as other opportunities have presented itself to allow for such trail connectivity.

#### C-2. Vandalia Trail – Next Level Trail's Grant Submittal

Lemley advised that Ivie is working on compiling documentation for the Next Level Trails grant submittal for the eastern expansion of Vandalia Trail. The application submittal deadline is August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Letters of support have been provided by the Hendricks County Council and the Hendricks County Commissioners. Ivie added that most of the supporting documents are in place and will be requesting \$1.7 million of the grant to fund the trail expansion. Board President, Mike Hayden, will sign the documents upon completion of the grant application.

#### C-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Maintenance Hub Update

Lemley informed the Park Board that the Washington Township Fire Marshal placed a stop work order on the vertical construction of the maintenance hub building due to unsatisfactory fire protection measures. Although construction site and utility plans were submitted to all required agencies in late 2022 for review and approval, and respective fees were paid for such reviews, HCP&R was recently made aware that the Fire Department Plan Review did not occur at that time. Therefore, leading to the current status of not being able to continue with vertical construction of the building until fire protection measures have been adequately satisfied. Lemley referred to the fire plan sheet, designed by Align Engineering, and previously provided to the Park Board for their review and requested Park Board authorization, pending a reasonable quote, to approve a change order with John Hall Construction for the installation of a wet pond required for fire protection measures for the maintenance hub building. Upon further discussion, **Miner moved to approve Lemley's request of approving a change order, pending a reasonable quote, with John Hall Construction for installation of a wet pond not to exceed \$40,000.00; seconded by Eisenhart; motion passed unanimously.**

#### D. PROPERTY UPDATES

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

Lemley reported that he met with John Flood, Archaeologist with Stantec, on June 14<sup>th</sup> to better identify the potential site for Granny McCloud's cabin. Upon completion of Flood's initial investigation, Flood's professional research does not link the site to the McCloud Family. Lemley added that a survey recording of the historical is estimated to cost \$8,000.00. Lemley has postponed further work associated with the project at this time.

Lemley highlighted that John and Marti McCoy received personal tours of McCloud Nature Park recently by Park Naturalists, Sarah Wolf and Linda Nichols. Lemley reminded the Park Board that the McCoy's were influential in the development of McCloud Nature Park. Marti McCoy painted a portion of the mural that is displayed in the nature center.

Lemley informed the Park Board that Ivie finalized the development of an interpretive sign that will better educate park patrons on the history of the truss bridge that connects the park over Big Walnut Creek to the other side. Lemley complimented Ivie on a job well done.

TRAFx counters documented 1,941 vehicles visiting the park this month.

##### D-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley advised the Park Board that 26 Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) signs were stolen along a portion of the Vandalia Trail from State Road 75 to the Crittenden Creek bridge. Vulgar comments carved in the handrail within the same vicinity were also discovered. The theft and vandalism have been reported to the Coatesville Police Department. Maintenance staff remedied the vandalism immediately while administrative staff will be working on purchasing signs to replace the missing ones.

Lemley reported that the Town of Coatesville installed solar powered speed identification monitors along the trail crossing at State Road 75. The speed monitors inform motorists of their rate of travel as they approach the trail crossing zone.

Naturalist staff hosted the annual Vandalia Trail Bike Parade on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Greg Midgley assisted with the program and the event was in partnership with the Amo Fish Fry.

In partnership with the PFOHC the Summer Fun Run Series was hosted along Vandalia Trail on June 27<sup>th</sup> through July 4<sup>th</sup>. Significant time and effort were dedicated to aesthetic enhancements prior to the highly attended event.

TRAFx counters documented 2,659 patrons visiting the Vandalia Trail this month.

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

Lemley informed the Park Board of a drainage issue along Gibbs Road and requested a quote from John Hall Construction to remedy the standing water problem. The quote came in at \$3,950.00 to provide positive drainage enhancements.

Lemley advised that the Hendricks County Council voted in support of appropriating the remaining funding of \$196,814.96 from the Sodalis Nature Park funding.

Lemley reported that the memorial bench for Mary Benson was recently installed on the berm of Bluegill Pond in honor of Mary Benson and her family's support and dedication to the park's department over the years.

Ivie designed updated property maps for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park which include up to date information on new park amenities and features.

TRAFx counters documented 5,344 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

### **E. REPORTS**

#### E-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that Sarah Wolf has resigned from her leadership position of head Naturalist. Wolf is transferring to Hendricks County Clean Water as their Environmental Educator. Interviews to fill this position will be conducted in the coming days and weeks. Joe Lembo has been assigned to Lead Naturalist in the interim. Ivie complimented Lembo on a job well done in taking the lead in accommodating some unforeseen circumstances recently.

Lemley reported that Steve Maple, Building Commissioner for the Town of Pittsboro, recently contacted him to discuss a potential nature preserve surrounding future residential development and requested if the Park Board would have interest in a potential partnership with the Town of Pittsboro. Lemley and Holtsclaw met with Maple and their Park Board President, Jeff Porch, and discussed several topics relating to the subject. Lemley shared that he is supportive of providing limited guidance with the development of the future Nature Park and requested Park Board authorization to invite the Town of Pittsboro leadership to the August 2<sup>nd</sup> Park Board meeting. After some discussion the Park Board approved Lemley's request.

#### E-2. Naturalist Update

Lembo reported that the summer camps are coming to an end and so far, they have seen over 100 camp participants this year. Lembo highlighted that one of the Counselor in Training students was a summer camper over the past several years that Lembo led and is doing a great job in the training program as she is now helping out with the current summer camp programs as a Counselor in Training.

Lembo informed the Park Board that program adjustments have been made to accommodate for the limited number of staff until the vacated lead Naturalist position is filled. Eisenhart suggested to evaluate the programs during this time. Lembo said that he and Linda Nichols did just that recently adding that the Homeschool Ecology Series will continue along with Tadpole Time and Senior Center programs as they tend to bring in a larger audience. Ivie commented that he and Lemley met with the Naturalists prior to Wolf's resignation to discuss revamping some of the programs and focusing more on the quality of programs offered versus the quantity of programs offered and concluded that emphasis on recreational programs that include educational components will be center of their focus, going forward.

#### E-3. Budget Report

Ivie reported that as they are halfway through the year, they have 50.4% of the budgeted funds left. Due to inflation and multiple unforeseen circumstances, some of the line item amounts will be transferred to different line items, which is not unusual at this time, and does not require Council approval.

Hayden inquired about Account 32700, addition of \$15,000 in utilities. Ivie responded that due to Gibbs Park being annexed into the Town of Avon and with the new addition of the maintenance facility, utility expenses have increased, especially the stormwater fee they are required to pay to the Town of Avon in addition to electric and gas utility forecasts for the maintenance hub. Ivie concluded with providing the Park Board a summary of the 2024 Budget Line Item requests that differ from the 2023 Budget Line Items.

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

Eisenhart reported that the Summer Fun Run Series is going well and have a record number of participants this year so far.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.**

**The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 2:00 p.m. at the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department Main Building Conference Room.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Brad Eisenhart, Vice President