



## Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 4<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 2:03 p.m.

**Board Present:** Matt Freije, Secretary  
Bill DuMond  
Gary Emsweller  
Paul Miner

**Board Absent:** Mike Hayden, President  
Brad Eisenhart, Vice President  
Jeff Pell

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

### **A. CALENDAR**

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

**Emsweller moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Miner; motion passed unanimously.**

#### **A-2. Approval of Minutes from September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Park Board Meeting**

DuMond requested to add a sentence in the minutes for B-2. Kara Bergdoll – Request for Venue to Host Community Event, first paragraph, last sentence, to reflect the below statement.

...Additional discussion took place regarding the subject matter. Several Park Board members expressed reservations about the County Parks being used for political events.

**DuMond moved to approve the minutes with his edits; seconded by Emsweller; motion passed unanimously.**

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

## B-1. Public Comments

None.

## C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### C-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Maintenance Hub Updates

Lemley reported that Graber Post Buildings finalized exterior construction of the maintenance hub facility during the week of September 18<sup>th</sup> and has accepted keys to the facility. John Hall Construction is in the process of finalizing the entire site plan, which includes installation of dry hydrant within the fire protection pond, installation of fleet lot security fence and gate system, dispersing topsoil and sowing grass seed, along with installing the asphalt section of the roadway approach to Gibbs Road. The Indiana Department of Homeland Security interior build-out permit application packet is anticipated to be submitted in the upcoming week. Once the Homeland Security permit is issued, the required permit applications will be submitted to the Town of Avon. Lemley added that Ivie is using the funds from the Sodalis Payment to pay for the work that has been completed at Gibbs Park. DuMond asked when the project will be completed. Lemley replied that the majority of the work is anticipated to be completed by Spring of 2024. Miner suggested hosting a Park Board meeting at the maintenance hub facility. The Park Board discussed whether to host the Park Board meeting in November at the maintenance hub. Lemley added that the occupancy permit has not been provided by the Town of Avon yet.

### C-2. Vandalia Trail – Potential Parcel Donation

Lemley requested the Park Board to vote on the potential parcel donation within the Town of Coatesville. Lemley recommended declining the offer as he feels that the additional task of managing the remote and somewhat undesirable parcel of land outweighs the benefit. **Emsweller moved to not pursue the potential parcel of land donation within the Town of Coatesville; seconded by DuMond; motion passed unanimously.**

## D. NEW BUSINESS

### D-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Construction Bids for ADA Trail Expansion

Lemley reported that no bids were received for the construction of the ADA Trail Expansion project at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Lemley provided the Park Board with additional information regarding the project related to work done by Align Engineering, concerns from John Hall Construction, and last minute revisions required by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Public Notices were advertised in *The Republican* paper and additional contractors were directly invited to provide bids for the project. After further extensive discussion the Park Board directed Lemley to work with Align Engineering to revise the scope of work and re-advertise the project. Lemley will schedule a new pre-bid meeting for the end of October, with the intent to receive bids in time to reveal them at the November 1<sup>st</sup> Park Board meeting.

## E. PROPERTY UPDATES

### E-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley reported that the annual Family Campout event was held at McCloud Nature Park during the third weekend of September. The event was well attended with 44 guests camping out overnight in the park while also participating in a variety of educational and recreational programs and activities.

Park Maintenance Foreman, Oather Duncan, will be leading a team to re-roof the Nature Center in early October and is anticipated to be complete prior to the Fall Colors Festival.

Kolcun is in the planning stages of renovating the interior of the Nature Center with future assistance from the Maintenance team. To provide financial assistance with the process, the department will be submitting a grant application to the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) for the Robert A.

Wood Environmental Education Fund. The grant request total is \$4,064.60 and will focus on interior displays with seasonal transitions. It is intended to have the majority of the project completed in time for the annual 2024 Pancake Breakfast/Maple Syrup Days.

Lemley reported that Kolcun has initiated the development of formal written office policies and procedures to be implemented at McCloud Nature Center. Emsweller asked if the policies and procedures are specific to the McCloud Nature Center. Kolcun responded that they are for the Naturalist staff wherever they may be working.

As of Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, TRAFx counters documented 1,743 vehicles visiting the park this month.

#### E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley informed the Park Board that a large portion of stolen signs have been replaced along the trail. Seymour is in the process of ordering nine additional replacement signs that were previously missed on the original order. Freije asked if extra signs were ordered to be kept in inventory in case more signs go missing. Lemley replied that it is their hope that the vandal-proof hardware will help deter signs being stolen. Additionally, space is limited at this time for storage of such sign inventory.

Lemley reminded the Park Board that the Vandalia trailhead restroom facilities will be open through the month of November this year. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) provided approval to keep the restrooms open for a longer period of time dependent on weather conditions through the month of November.

As of Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, TRAFx counters documented 2,244 patrons visiting the Vandalia Trail this month.

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

The Avon High School Junior Day of Caring event took place at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park on Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. Students and teachers received a brief history of their park upon arrival, before working with maintenance staff on a variety of tasks that included cleaning signs, benches, picnic tables and removing excessive cattail growth from one of the ponds. Kolcun provided an interpretive tour through the reforestation field, ephemeral creek, and pollinator plot to conclude the event.

Lemley reported that he received feedback from the Gibbs family for the message they would like to have displayed on Lydia's memorial bench. The memorial message has been routed into the back planks of the bench and has been assembled by Maintenance Technician, Scott Hawkins. Lemley will coordinate with the Gibbs family on where to place the bench within Gibbs Park.

The West Central Quail Forever (WCQF) club hosted their quarterly meeting at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park recently and provided recommendations on how best to manage the pollinator plot. The Maintenance team recently bush-hogged the 8-acre plot to help curb the fast-growing weeds and foxtail. Lemley commented that Bill Fielding, President of the WCQF club, was pleased with how the plot was coming along and will continue to monitor the plot and provide management guidance over the next two years. DuMond asked if the plot would become a quail sanctuary. Lemley responded that the plot is viewed to be native habitat for the purpose of preserving the parcel of land for future education.

Lemley reported that the Maintenance team continues to remove the excessive cattail growth from the two ponds at Gibbs Park. A mini excavator was rented for a week to aid with the removal process.

Seven solar security light poles were installed by members of the Maintenance department. The solar light fixtures will be installed shortly. Additionally, installation of the floating dock on the secondary fishing pond is expected to be complete in the coming weeks. Lemley reminded the Park Board that both projects are part of the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

Emsweller inquired about the status of the illegal dumping incident that occurred last month at the maintenance hub site at Gibbs Park. Lemley replied that the incident has been addressed with the individual(s) and is confident that it will not occur again. Lemley provided the Park Board with a summary of the discussion that took place with the individual(s), noting that a positive outcome came from the unfortunate situation.

DuMond asked if park staff will have time to return to managing the Honeysuckle overgrowth. Lemley and Holtsclaw answered DuMond's question with a "yes".

DuMond inquired if the area around the maintenance hub would be able to be utilized for Park purposes and asked if a plan is in place for that area or if a plan can be developed for that area. Lemley responded by explaining that several portions of the area around the building serves the maintenance facility with utilities for the septic system, well system, and fire protection services, as well as providing drainage retention for the site and parking area. Lemley added that outside of those specific areas, portions of the property will be utilized for recreational purposes. DuMond asked if ample space would be available for native planting plots within the maintenance hub site development area. Lemley explained that the septic area and low-lying areas must be maintained with grass surface and suggested that the area adjacent to the maintenance hub entrance, off of Gibbs Road, could possibly be reserved for recreational purposes. Lemley reminded DuMond that the 22-acre plot is currently being farmed for agriculture purposes until a determination is made of how that plot will be utilized. DuMond requested to add discussion of development for the 22-acre plot to the December Park Board meeting agenda. Lemley said that the 22-acre field is part of the next phase of Gibbs Park development and would like to utilize a portion of it for the future HCP&R administrative office/welcome center, potentially. Additional discussion took place regarding a variety of topics related to the subject matter including possible use for the Hendricks County Bicentennial celebration for a potential Bicentennial Legacy Project. Lemley provided a summary of prior discussions that took place regarding future HCP&R temporary office building options previously discussed by Hendricks County Council and Commissioners, as a reminder to the Park Board.

As of Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, TRAFx counters documented 3,967 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

## **F. REPORTS**

### **F-1. Superintendent Report**

Lemley reported that the new Kubota 1100 Utility Vehicle was received from Edwards Equipment on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Lemley reminded the Park Board that the replacement UTV was ordered on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, but Kubota experienced significant delays in receiving parts for the manufacturing process.

The 2024 Summer Fun Run Series is scheduled to begin on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and will be kicked off at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

Lemley reported that Ivie has begun assigning tasks for the development of the winter/spring 2024 edition of *The Explorer* publication.

Lemley informed the Park Board that Ivie has communicated with Align Engineering the need for their

assistance to revise deed language for Phase 1 portion of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park to reflect the language required by the Indiana DNR for the recently received Land & Water Conservation Fund grant.

#### F-2. Naturalist Update

Kolcun informed the Park Board that they have conducted a few on-site field trips recently with local schools as well as an off-site program for Plainfield schools. Kolcun would like to add smaller pop-up programs as the season progresses and as they prepare for the upcoming fall festival season. Kolcun hopes to keep the programs that have historically been popular while adding some new programs, activities, and vendors to the festival events.

Kolcun shared with the Park Board that they are in the planning stage of the nature center renovations and hopes to have the project completed in time for the annual Pancake Breakfast fundraising event scheduled for March 2024. The intent is to have a soft grand re-opening event of the nature center.

Kolcun updated policies and procedures she plans to implement with her team, adding that she wants to ensure accountability of expectations are communicated clearly both with the Naturalist staff and volunteers. Kolcun is continuing to use the volunteer platform previously put in place by Sarah Wolf but will be reviewing and making updates to the program over the winter months.

Lemley commented that Kolcun is somewhat limited to what she would like to implement as she is following the previously scheduled and advertised programs and events through December but is excited to see what the new year will bring with some fresh ideas and enhancements to the department.

#### F-3. Budget Report

Ivie reported that the third quarter of the budget year has closed, and the department is in the process of properly utilizing all appropriated funding prior to the expiration of the 2023 budgetary claim calendar. Ivie added that he does not anticipate encumbering much funding at the close of the fiscal year.

Ivie reported that the Sodalis Payment Fund balance has been zeroed out to pay for two claims associated with work at Gibbs Park.

Ivie will remain in close contact with department leadership to finish out the budget year.

Ivie expressed appreciation toward Kolcun and said that she has been a pleasure to work with so far. Ivie commented that he has noticed Maintenance Technicians, Ralph Wilkerson and Scott Hawkins have been doing some good work recently.

Additional discussion took place regarding the Land Acquisition fund, Other Improvements fund, and the American Rescue Plan Act fund.

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

No one was present at the meeting on behalf of the Foundation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Miner moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by DuMond; meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.**

**The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, at 2:00 p.m. at the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department Main Building Conference Room.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Matt Freije, Secretary