



## Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 6<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 2:00 p.m.

**Board Present:** Brad Eisenhart, Vice President  
Matt Freije, Secretary  
Bill DuMond  
Gary Emsweller  
Paul Miner  
Jeff Pell

**Board Absent:** Mike Hayden, President

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

**Guests:** Evan Miller, Align Civil Engineering

### **A. CALENDAR**

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

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

#### **A-2. Approval of Minutes from October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Park Board Meeting**

**DuMond moved to approve meeting minutes from the October 4<sup>th</sup> Park Board Meeting; seconded by Freije; motion passed unanimously.**

#### **A-3. Approval of Minutes from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, Park Board Meeting**

**Miner moved to approve meeting minutes from the November 1<sup>st</sup> Park Board Meeting; seconded by Freije; motion passed unanimously.**

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

### B-1. Public Comments

DuMond informed the Park Board that he has made the decision not to seek reappointment to the Park Board for a second term. DuMond's term expires at the end of 2023. A letter providing such notification was submitted to the Hendricks County Council Chair (appointing authority). DuMond said that he suggested Mike Zonders as his replacement and added that he has enjoyed serving on the Board. The Park Board and staff expressed their appreciation and continued support that DuMond has provided throughout his term.

### B-2. Amber Gideon – Welcoming

Lemley welcomed and introduced the new Senior Naturalist, Amber Gideon, to the Park Board. Gideon will replace former Naturalist, Katie Kolcun, who submitted her letter of resignation via email on Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup> (Election Day). Gideon brings with her seven years of experience as a Naturalist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Park system along with 20 years of experience in customer service. Gideon previously worked at Summerlake State Park as a certified Interpretive Guide. Lemley highlighted that Gideon volunteered to meet with him and the Naturalist staff prior to beginning her first official day of work with the department and commended her proactive leadership. Gideon already has interviews for the vacant Part-time Naturalist position scheduled for Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Ivie added that Gideon has been diligent in completing tasks within the first few days of her employment already.

## C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### C-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – ADA Trail Bids

Lemley opened three submitted sealed bid packets for the ADA Trail Enhancement Project at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, and the bids were as follows:

All Star Paving	\$512,583.00
McCullough Excavating	\$419,044.75
OLCO, Inc.	\$836,133.00

Lemley reminded the Park Board that the bids are for construction of a 10-foot wide asphalt trail circling both ponds and traveling through a portion of the disc golf course and connecting to the main parking lot along with installation of an 8-foot wide concrete trail, with railing, that will lead to the top of the 30-foot tall outlook/sledding hillside. The bid packets were given to Evan Miller with Align Engineering Consultants for evaluation with the expectation of presenting an award recommendation to the Park Board during the January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, meeting. The Park Board discussed a variety of topics related to the future restroom facilities, utilities, budget, and construction schedule.

## D. NEW BUSINESS

### D-1. 2024 Executive Park Board Elections

**Emsweller moved to maintain current officers for 2024 with Mike Hayden serving as Park Board President, Brad Eisenhart serving as Vice President, and Matt Freije serving as Secretary; seconded by Freije; motion passed unanimously.**

### D-2. 2024 Park Board Meeting Schedule

Lemley presented the 2024 Park Board meeting dates. Park Board meetings will continue to be the first Wednesday of each month starting at 2:00 p.m. **Miner moved to approve the dates; seconded by Pell; motion passed unanimously.**

### D-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Phase II Development

Lemley reminded the Park Board that DuMond had previously requested to discuss ideas for the

development of phase 2 at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The remaining area of land covers approximately 40 acres with 34.5 acres of tillable land available. Lemley provided the Park Board a summary of previous discussions that took place with Hendricks County leaders regarding the upcoming bicentennial celebration of the County in 2024. Lemley presented the following topics for the Park Board to consider while discussing the future development plan.

1. 34 +/- acres of potential crop lease.
2. Welcome center and administrative office facility.
  - a. Design/Build Turnkey Facility
3. Trail expansion.

The Park Board discussed a variety of topics related to future development of Gibbs Park including amenity options, crop lease options, potential mitigated wetland opportunities with DNR, and creation of a proposed master plan for that area. After the Park Board discussed the subject at length, Lemley was instructed to maintain the crop lease for the 2024 growing season, develop a request for proposal to create a master plan for phase 2 of the park for the Board to review at the February 2024 Park Board meeting, and collect preliminary design/construction estimates for the future welcome center/office building. Additionally, a plan will need to be created outlining options the Park Board and HCP&R staff would like to consider for such development, as an agenda item. **Dumond moved to approve the solicitation for proposals for phase 2 development at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park; seconded by Miner; motion passed unanimously. Pell moved to continue the crop lease for 2024 for the 34.5 tillable acres at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park; seconded by Freije; motion passed unanimously.**

## **E. PROPERTY UPDATES**

### **E-1. McCloud Nature Park**

Lemley commended Park Naturalist, Joe Lembo, for his continued commitment to the department over the past couple of months in response to the staffing challenges that have occurred. Additionally, Part-time Naturalist, Joy Fulk, has agreed to increase her work schedule/load in the interim to assist Lembo.

Lemley reported that the Winter Wreath Workshop took place at McCloud Nature Park on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The workshop was well attended with 48 registered participants. In preparation for the event, maintenance staff gathered grapevines from the park for naturalist staff to make into wreaths to serve as the base for participants to assemble and attach evergreen boughs and stems to the grapevine wreaths. Lemley commended Administrative Assistant, Patty Seymour, for helping with making grapevine wreaths and decorating the nature center for the event.

The Naturalist team and Lemley met with Carol Wood and Katy Cummings (Director of the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County), on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, to accept the grant payment for the Robert Wood Environmental Education Grant. Lemley noted that Senior Naturalist, Amber Gideon, was in attendance volunteering her time to meet Carol Wood, Katy Cummings, and the Naturalist staff prior to her official first day of employment with the department. The grant funds will go toward renovating displays within the Nature Center.

The department received \$1,680 in donations collected from friends and family of John and Marti McCoy through their recent celebration of life ceremony. In the lasting memory of John and Marti, the donations have been deposited within a non-restricted account to support future development of McCloud Nature Park. The Parks Foundation of Hendricks County will maintain the funding until the department is prepared to utilize the donations for a specific project.

Lemley reported that the Nature Center had experienced an issue with the main heating and cooling unit.

Rinehart Heating & Cooling determined that the pressure switch had been damaged and replaced it with reinforced material.

Lemley reported that a portion of the Maintenance staff completed the roofing project on the Nature Center and commended Maintenance foreman, Oather Duncan, along with Caleb Hawkins and Wayne Huffman for their efforts in finalizing that project.

The annual Pancake Breakfast fundraiser event, scheduled for the first two Saturdays in March 2024, and Maple Syrup Days will be advertised in the upcoming issue of *The Explorer*. Lemley mentioned that preparations are being made to complete some of the interior renovations proposed for the Nature Center in time for the Pancake Breakfast event.

TRAFx counters documented 1,226 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

#### E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley reported that the restroom facilities located at the trailheads in Amo and Coatesville have been winterized and are closed for the winter season. The restrooms will re-open on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, subject to favorable weather conditions.

Lemley requested to pursue an additional annual contract with Kim Cartright for cleaning and stocking the restrooms along Vandalia Trail for the 2024 recreation season. Lemley praised Cartright for doing an exceptional job in keeping the restroom facilities clean and fully stocked. By general consensus, the Park Board approved Lemley's request to re-new the annual housekeeping contract with Kim Cartright for the 2024 recreation season.

Lemley reported that tenant farmer, Eric George, submitted the fall payment earlier in the month for the crop lease area adjacent to the Vandalia Trail. Lemley mentioned that they had discussed potential plans for the 54-acre area of tillable farmland for 2024. It was noted that the portion of land currently being farmed by George is not necessarily desirable for planting due to soil conditions, location, and size of the land. Upon further discussion the Park Board directed Lemley to negotiate the crop lease contract for the 2024 growing season with Eric George. The agreements will then be presented to the Park Board for review and consideration in an upcoming meeting.

Lemley reported that the Maintenance team has removed accumulated fall debris from the entire trail and trailhead parking lots several times throughout the month.

Miner mentioned that the Mill Creek Schools Superintendent had indicated to him that the sanitary sewer installation project is nearing completion.

Miner asked when the grant awards will be announced for the Next Level Trails grant program. Lemley replied that it should be announced later in December. Additional discussion took place regarding a variety of topics related to the grant, Vandalia Trail, and additional funding.

TRAFx counters documented 1,207 patrons visiting the Vandalia Trail this month. The TRAFx equestrian counter documented 83 patrons this month.

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

Lemley reported that the Maintenance team has begun construction of the interior build-out of the new maintenance hub facility at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Electrical service panels and security cameras have also been installed.

Lemley reported that the fire protection pond for the maintenance hub is not maintaining a sufficient water level. The pond will continue to be monitored over the next month, along with researching and discussing potential solutions with John Hall Construction.

The memorial bench in memory of Lydia Gibbs has been placed near the ephemeral creek crossing at the request of the Gibbs' family.

Tenant farmer, Dan Searcy, submitted the fall crop lease payment in mid-November for the undeveloped tillable acreage at Gibbs Park. The Park Board directed Lemley to negotiate the crop lease contract for the 2024 growing season with Searcy. The agreement will then be presented to the Park Board for review and consideration in an upcoming meeting.

Lemley reported that the annual performance review process has been finalized for the department for 2023. It is the department's goal to increase park attendance by 5% in 2024 through a variety of avenues in coordination with the Naturalist team, the Maintenance team, and Administration.

TRAFx counters documented 2,634 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

## **F. REPORTS**

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

Lemley informed the Park Board that the winter/spring edition of *The Explorer* has been revised due to employment vacancies. The publication has been reduced to 12 pages with no event calendar. Once the Naturalist team is fully staffed, additional programming details will be announced and advertised through social media and the website. Ivie provided the Park Board with an explanation of occurrences that impacted the content in *The Explorer* that ultimately led to the decision of reducing the upcoming publication.

Lemley reported that two of the wayfinding signs for W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park have recently been damaged. Seymour will contact the Town of Plainfield to discuss a remedy for one of the signs that was previously located at the end of Saratoga Parkway at Gibbs Road in Plainfield. The maintenance staff will salvage what is left of the other sign and re-install it along South C.R. 300 East.

In preparation for the 2024 budget cycle, Lemley requested Park Board approval to purchase a new Kubota RTV-X1100C utility vehicle. Lemley advised that the cost of the unit will be \$22,234.31. In an effort to receive the desired type of equipment, the bid was received through Sourcewell; an efficient way to receive national and government buying authority, while also providing access to local dealers. \$20,000.00 has been appropriated within the Machinery & Equipment budgeted line item as part of the 2024 budget process. **Miner moved to approve the purchase of a new Kubota RTV-X1100C utility vehicle bid through Sourcewell in the amount of \$22,234.31; seconded by Pell; motion passed unanimously.**

### **F-3. Budget Report**

Ivie reported that one claims period remains for the 2023 budget year. Funds left over in some of the 2023 budget line items will be encumbered within the 2024 budget year. Ivie does not foresee any interruptions with purchasing items for ongoing projects. Ivie reported no other problems with the budget. Eisenhart inquired about the remaining funds under the CAGIT category. Ivie replied that most of what is leftover will be spent with a minimal amount leftover that will go back to the County's General Fund. Some discussion took place regarding the Innkeepers Fees. Lemley credited Ivie for doing a job well done managing the budget throughout the year.

F-4. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

Eisenhart reiterated what was discussed earlier regarding the Robert Wood Education Fund grant being awarded to Hendricks County Parks and Recreation for interior display updates at the McCloud Nature Center. Lemley commended Executive Director of the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County for her accomplishments for the Foundation and stated that she has been a joy to work with throughout the year.

Eisenhart shared comments expressing appreciation for HCP&R staff and commended them on all that has been accomplished over the past year.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Miner moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Pell; meeting adjourned at 3:49 p.m.**

**The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, 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