



## **Park Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 7, 2025  
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:** Brad Eisenhart, President  
Mike Hayden, Vice President  
Matt Freije, Secretary  
Vicky Byarley  
Gary Emsweller  
Paul Miner  
Jeff Pell (arrived at 2:11 p.m.)

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

**Guests:** None

### **A. CALENDAR**

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

**Byarley moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Hayden; the motion passed unanimously.**

#### **A-2. Approval of Minutes of April 2, 2025, Park Board Meeting**

**Miner moved to approve the minutes from the April 2, 2025, Park Board Meeting, seconded by Byarley; the motion passed unanimously.**

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

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

None

### **C. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **C-1. Supplemental Assistance for 5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan**

Ivie informed the Park Board that the current 5-Year Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) will expire in January 2026. He has initiated the process of creating a new CMP for the period of 2026-2030, which

will be submitted for review and final approval to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Ivie explained that having an up-to-date CMP not only helps the department stay aligned with its goals but also makes it eligible for grants from the DNR, such as the Land & Water Conservation Fund grant.

After reaching out to HWC Engineering, the firm that completed the County's master plan, to assist with gathering input from department employees, stakeholders, and the public, HWC submitted a formal proposal for the Park Board's consideration. Ivie referenced this proposal—previously provided to the Park Board—and requested authorization to partner with HWC Engineering for additional assistance in developing the new 5-year CMP.

The proposed scope of work includes the following costs: Public Surveys (\$3,000), Public Meetings (\$4,500), and Focus Group and Stakeholder Interviews (\$4,500), totaling \$12,000. After further discussion, **Miner moved to approve Ivie's request to enter into an agreement with HWC Engineering for the outlined supplemental services in developing the new 5-year CMP, seconded by Emsweller; the motion passed unanimously.** Ivie will handle all other aspects of the CMP, including the preparation of the draft and final documents.

#### **D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

##### **D-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Updates for Welcoming Center & Administrative Office**

Lemley reported that department leadership has recently met with Studio View Architects and Patterson Horth to discuss the development of the future Welcome Center and Administrative Office. He referred the Park Board to the conceptual plan layout that had been previously provided for their review and feedback. The discussions covered various topics, including building efficiency, kitchen and classroom spaces, exhibition areas, potential uses for these spaces, and exterior finishes. The next steps involve completing the schematic design phase by mid-May, which will then be presented for the Park Board's review and discussion at the June meeting.

##### **D-2. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Revision to Searcy Crop Lease**

Due to the implementation of the Hendricks County Bicentennial Tree Trail and the potential risk of herbicide overspray, Lemley requested the Park Board's approval to revise the annual crop lease agreement with tenant farmer Dan Searcy. After discussing the project with Mr. Searcy and his herbicide applicator, they collectively agreed to remove the associated crop field from the 2025 crop lease. The proposed revision will eliminate 9.5 acres of tillable land from the annual crop lease at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The Park Board authorized Lemley to proceed with this revision.

##### **D-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Bicentennial Tree Trail**

Lemley reported that substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the Bicentennial Tree Trail. A volunteer group of employees from Envita Solutions dedicated Arbor Day to assist with planting trees for the project, resulting in the planting of 115 trees during the event. Additionally, Envita donated \$4,000 worth of native trees for future planting at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

The next phase will involve installing the trail, which will outline the number "200," as well as completing the planting of the remaining trees. Lemley informed the Park Board that leadership from Visit Hendricks County has expressed interest in acquiring and constructing a professionally designed archway at the entrance of the future Bicentennial Tree Trail. Several ideas have been discussed, including the possibility of hiring Iron Timbers to create a 12-foot-tall tree sculpture made from metal and wood.

To date, Visit Hendricks County has donated \$25,000 towards the project. Although the planning

process is still in its early stages, Iron Timbers has provided an estimate of \$75,000 to \$100,000 to complete the project. Furthermore, staff from Visit Hendricks County are seeking input from public artists through a Request for Proposal process. Once Lemley gathers more information, he will seek the Park Board's approval to potentially implement the archway.

## **E. PROPERTY UPDATES**

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

Lemley announced that the Board of Directors of the Hendricks County Recycling District has decided to support a grant request for \$2,557.94 to install five composite benches on the new outdoor programming deck at the Nature Center. He praised Seymour for successfully submitting the grant application, which was awarded.

The maintenance staff installed the new Ray & Mary Benson Nature Center sign, shaped like a tree. To enhance the sign and conceal the mounting hardware, the staff added several custom details, including a blue jay, cardinal, squirrel, and acorns. Lemley commended the maintenance staff for their efforts on this project and informed the Benson family about the sign's installation.

Stantec began enhancement and management work on the arboretum on April 11th. They will conduct four additional management sessions throughout the growing season this year. Lemley mentioned that they had proposed a plant survey of McCloud Nature Park. While expressing interest in the proposal, Lemley concluded that the budget does not allow for such a project this year.

Lemley informed the Park Board that he received multiple inquiries regarding the possibility of a green ammonia production plant being built in Putnam County, just west of McCloud Nature Park and the Hendricks/Putnam County Line, and what, if any, impacts it would have on the nature park or its visitors. Hayden added that a plant that far away from the park would not have any adverse effects on the park and suggested remaining neutral on the topic. Ultimately, Putnam County officials voted against the establishment of the production plant.

TRAFx counters documented 1,524 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

### **E-2. Vandalia Trail**

Lemley informed the Park Board that a field team from the Central Indiana Land Trust (CILT) has completed the reforestation of the tillable land purchased for the eastern expansion of the Vandalia Trail. They planted 26,000 trees stretching from Michigan Street in Clayton to County Road 200 West. CILT is now pursuing a grant to plant a wildflower mixture of understory seed in the reforestation area later this fall.

J.R. Bowling continues to postpone their schedule to resume work on the eastern expansion of the Vandalia Trail due to undesirable soil conditions. The work was originally scheduled to resume on April 14<sup>th</sup>. While discussing this project, Lemley mentioned that he spoke with Clayton's Town Manager to address the large stumps and debris dump pile accumulating just outside the new culvert pipe installation at Lambert Park. The Town Manager told Lemley the debris would be removed.

The naturalist staff organized a community egg hunt at the Coatesville trailhead in April. They also represented the department at the Beautify Amo event hosted at Mill Creek West Elementary School.

Lemley reported that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Grant Coordinator received copies of all property deeds and easements for the eastern expansion of the Vandalia Trail. The information is now in the process of being submitted to the National Park Service as part of the approval process for

the Land & Water Conservation Fund grant.

TRAFx counters documented 1,165 patrons visiting Vandalia Trail this month.

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

Hayden commented positively on the appearance of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park after his visit last weekend.

Lemley reported that the Planning Director for the Town of Avon has granted written approval to use the residence at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park as a temporary administrative office for the department after the current office building is demolished. The Hendricks County Facilities Manager has allocated an estimated \$35,000 to \$40,000, so far, to upgrade the residence to meet code requirements for temporary office use. A variety of related topics were discussed.

The naturalist staff successfully hosted the Mystery by Moonlight Glo-Egg Hunt at Gibbs Park, along with the first of three Farmer Market events.

Lemley reported that the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) provided the grant award payment during a check presentation at Washington Township Park. The grant award of \$5,222.35 will fund the implementation of a sound garden at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

The installation of the prefabricated CXT restroom structures is scheduled for Friday, May 9th. Lemley informed the Park Board that the commercial septic permit has been approved by the State. However, the new Hendricks County Health Inspector has requested additional measures to be incorporated into the plans. The design engineer is currently coordinating with the inspector to address these requirements.

Meanwhile, the Public Water System permit is under review by the State and is expected to be finalized soon. Ivie also mentioned that he posted on social media about the arrival of the restrooms and has received positive feedback from the community.

Ivie presented a Media Report to the Park Board, summarizing its key highlights. He noted that the most popular post of the month featured Maintenance Technician Scott Hawkins holding a fishing derby plaque he crafted for the upcoming event. This post received 7,408 views.

TRAFx counters documented 4,310 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

## **F. REPORTS**

### F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that the maintenance staff attended the annual Maintenance Expo organized by the Indiana Parks & Recreation Association (IPRA).

Lemley reported that the Bobcat skid steer is undergoing professional repairs at Bobcat of Indy. He added that it may soon be time to replace this piece of equipment. Additional discussions were held.

Lemley informed the Park Board that he took new member Byarley on a detailed tour of W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and the Vandalia Trail. Byarley stated that it was a beneficial learning experience for her.

Lemley reminded the Park Board that annual performance reviews are due on May 30th. Eisenhart

invited the Park Board to provide any comments they wish to include in Lemley's review to him.

A discussion was held about the housekeeping arrangements for the new restrooms at Gibbs Park.

F-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported no issues or concerns with the budget thus far. Ivie will continue to maintain close communication with department leadership regarding the budget.

F-3. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

Eisenhart reported that the Summer Fun Run is approaching and that today is the last day to register to get the discount for the series.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the previous run/walk events hosted by HCP&R did not achieve the desired participation numbers, so they are pausing this program for now. They will continue to partner with the PFOHC to promote the Summer Fun Run Series.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Hayden moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:21 p.m., seconded by Freije; the motion passed unanimously.**

**The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 4, 2025, 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