



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 7, 2026
2:00 p.m.

4481 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Board Present: Brad Eisenhart, President
Mike Hayden, Vice President
Vicky Byarley
Gary Emsweller
Paul Miner
Jeff Pell

Board Absent: Matt Freije, Secretary

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent
Alex Weidman, Assistant Naturalist
Hannah Mossbarger, Naturalist Assistant
Patty Seymour, Administrative Assistant

Guests: None

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

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

A-2. Approval of Minutes of December 3rd, 2025, Park Board Meeting

Byarley moved to approve the minutes of the December 3rd, 2025, Park Board meeting; seconded by Hayden, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

Assistant Naturalist Alex Weidman introduced the new part-time Naturalist Assistant, Hannah Mossbarger, to the Park Board and provided a brief overview of her contributions since joining the naturalist team. Mossbarger graduated from Indiana Wesleyan University in April 2025, where she studied environmental science and honors humanities. This past summer, she worked at the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies, focusing on fish ecology, small mammal trapping, and fieldwork.

During her presentation to the Park Board, Mossbarger outlined some of her plans for the department in the upcoming months.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Welcome Center & Administrative Office Bid Review/Request for Award & Construction Agreement

On December 18th, Patterson Horth publicly opened sealed bids for the Welcome Center and Administrative Office construction project at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park during a meeting at the Hendricks County Government Center. After reviewing the bids, staff from Patterson Horth presented a list of recommended vendors to department leadership, all of whom submitted low bids. Excluding alternative bids, the collective base bid totaled \$5,984,966.

After implementing some value engineering options and substituting necessary alternatives within the scope of work, the guaranteed maximum price (GMP) for the project was determined to be \$5,968,997. Lemley discussed the alternative options included in the project with the Park Board and informed them that the Town of Avon Plan Commission is requiring the installation of a 10-foot-wide asphalt trail along the road frontage of the new building, as well as an additional drainage pond. Consequently, the Park Board requested that Lemley provide a breakdown of costs for these additional requirements, as they represent additional project expenses.

Lemley explained that while the GMP exceeds the \$5.5 million budget for the project, he is confident that it can be achieved with selective contributions from the Operating Budget over the next two years, given that the project's final completion is scheduled for the end of March 2027. As a result of this timeline, the Vandalia Trail expansion project is likely to be delayed.

After a lengthy discussion, **Miner moved to approve the Bid Award and Construction Agreement with Patterson Horth for the guaranteed maximum price of \$5,968,997. The motion was seconded by Emsweller and passed unanimously.**

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D-1. 2026 – 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan – Park Board Goals

Ivie provided a summary of the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) Goals for 2026 through 2030, as discussed at last month's Park Board meeting, including estimated costs for each category. Ivie requested that the Park Board review and reach a consensus to approve the 2026–2030 CMP Park Board Goals.

Additionally, due to limited participation in the public input section organized by HWC Engineering, staff from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are requiring the department to conduct additional surveys and further expand this section of the draft CMP. Ivie has since developed an in-house electronic survey, which has been publicly advertised and distributed to additional park and recreation stakeholders.

Lemley noted that Phase II of the Eastern Expansion of the Vandalia Trail has been delayed due to additional expenses incurred by the Town of Avon for the construction of the Welcome Center and Administrative Office. As a result, the Vandalia Trail project is now scheduled for the 2028-2029 budget year. **After further discussion, the Park Board unanimously approved the established goals as presented.**

D-2. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Close-Out of Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant

Lemley announced that the Indiana Department of Natural Resources has accepted the final

reimbursement request payment for the Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, totaling \$313,268.71. This payment will be sent to the Hendricks County Auditor's Office.

As part of the close-out and payment approval process, the department has agreed to proceed with the expanded property encumbrance, which encompasses 112.25 acres of Park Board property within the easement encumbrance. To facilitate this, Lemley has approved a professional services contract with Fishbeck to revise the plat and legal description in order to comply with the grant requirements. The cost for these professional services will not exceed \$2,500.00.

E. PROPERTY UPDATES

E-1. McCloud Nature Park

The naturalist staff has completed a debrief of recent programming and is continuing to plan for greater success in the coming year. They have also started accepting field trip requests for 2026.

The maintenance staff is actively removing fallen trees from the park's trailways. They have also installed a four-stall bin to store aggregate, soil, and mulch for future use. This installation has freed up additional parking spaces for park staff. Additionally, they are making progress insulating and completing a basic interior finish for the maintenance garage.

Lemley submitted a proposal to the Park Board for structural engineering services regarding the inspection of the Mill Cottage, with a fee of \$4,000. The Professional Services Agreement will enable JPS Consulting Engineers, LLC to conduct a structural inspection to identify any life-safety issues in the existing Mill Cottage structure. Should any concerns requiring attention be found, a separate proposal for those repairs will be provided upon request. The Park Board discussed several aspects related to this project. **Hayden moved to approve the proposal from JPS Consulting Engineers, LLC in the amount of \$4,000; the motion was seconded by Emsweller and passed unanimously.**

As of December 30th, TRAFx counters documented 724 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month. The monthly vehicle total for November was 1,274 vehicles.

E-2. Vandalia Trail

The agreement with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant has been fully authorized and signed by Park Board President Eisenhart. The grant amount is \$994,000 and is designated for the Eastern Expansion of the Vandalia Trail.

With financial support from Connected Communities, a new logo for the Vandalia Trail has been established. This logo will be used by Greater Indy Trailways to promote and advertise the premier trails surrounding the Indianapolis area.

Lemley stated that he will meet with Ray Benson Jr. shortly to discuss his proposal for pedestrian connectivity from the Briarwood Subdivision in Coatesville to the Vandalia Trail.

As of December 30th, TRAFx counters documented 433 patrons utilizing the Vandalia Trail this month.

E-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

The Construction Design Release was received from the Office of Homeland Security for the Welcome Center and Administrative Office construction project.

On Wednesday, December 24th, a major leak was discovered in the main water line serving the smaller public restroom (Denali). Since both public restrooms are supplied with water from a single well, it was necessary to close them both. Jon Payne, Superintendent at John Hall Construction, promptly arrived at the site to assess the situation and perform the necessary repairs.

Lemley announced that Jon Payne retired from John Hall Construction at the end of 2025. Both Lemley and the Park Board expressed their gratitude for the work he has done over the past several years while collaborating on various projects.

After speaking with Tom Wiseman, the IDEM Field Inspector for the Drinking Water Branch, it was discovered that the activation packet for the public restroom water system was not fully processed by IDEM. Wiseman acknowledged the delay and has resubmitted the system activation packet. The sanitary survey and final walkthrough of the system are scheduled for completion on January 14th.

As of December 30th, TRAFx counters documented 2,560 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that the Winter/Spring edition of The Explorer publication has arrived and been distributed county-wide.

Hendricks County Commissioners re-appointed Mike Hayden to the Park Board. Hayden's term will begin at the beginning of 2026 and conclude at the end of 2029. Additionally, the Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District re-appointed Paul Miner to the Park Board.

Lemley spoke to the Brownsburg Kiwanis Club in December, sharing updates from the department during the meeting.

The vacant Park Manager position has been publicly posted and advertised.

F-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported that the December 2025 Innkeeper's Tax County Obligation Payment of \$526,479.90 has been submitted to the county. The department will receive half of the total tax collection amount.

Ivie provided the final budget report for 2025 to the Park Board for review, along with the initial budget report for 2026. Ivie and the department leadership continue to communicate closely about budget-related matters.

F-3. Media Report

Ivie presented the final media report for 2025 to the Park Board, highlighting the top social media posts from throughout the year. He noted that the department experienced impressive growth on social media, achieving over 1 million views on Facebook in 2025.

F-4. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

Eisenhart announced that he is no longer a member of the Foundation Board and has no updates to share. He will serve on the newly created Endowment Committee with the Foundation. It has been decided that this report will not be discussed during Park Board meetings unless specified otherwise. Executive Director Katy Cummings continues to maintain regular communication with the department and has fostered an open and trusting working relationship between the department and the

Foundation.

Eisenhart stated that he will order everything needed for the pancake breakfast fundraiser and pick it up on Friday, March 13th. Ivie posted volunteer sign-ups and breakfast reservations on social media.

ADJOURNMENT

Hayden moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:01 p.m.; seconded by Miner, the motion passed unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 1, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Gibbs Homestead located at 4481 Gibbs Road, Danville, IN 46122.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Hayden, Vice President