



## Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 5, 2025  
2:00 p.m.

4481 Gibbs Road  
Danville, IN 46122

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m.

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

**Board Absent:** None

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

**Guests:** None

### **A. CALENDAR**

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

**Hayden moved to adopt the agenda as amended; Miner seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **A-2. Approval of Minutes of October 1, 2025, Park Board Meeting**

**Miner moved to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2025 Park Board meeting; Byarley seconded. Pell abstained. Motion passed unanimously.**

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

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

None.

### C. NEW BUSINESS

#### C-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Welcome Center & Administrative Office Request for Bid

Lemley reported that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Review of the future Welcome Center and Administrative Office at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park was held at Avon Town Hall on October 16, 2025. While the members of Town of Avon leadership who were present at the TAC Review all voiced support for this project, they had some revisions that must be completed. Most of the revisions are related to site development, but one unexpected and very costly revision is the addition of a 10-foot-wide asphalt trail bordering all Park Board property along Gibbs Road. The required trail will not connect to anything on either end, as the park is situated in a residential area, and it would require the removal of several mature trees around the Gibbs homestead. It would also be a cost-prohibitive addition to the project with the current budget. Lemley convinced the Town of Avon to allow the trail to only run across the Gibbs Road side of the park, including the land that will be developed into the new building. The trail does not have to extend around the Gibbs homestead, thus sparing some expense and all of the mature trees.

Lemley stated that the Town of Avon also required Hendricks County Parks & Recreation (HCP&R) to develop a Stormwater Operating Plan for the property that will be developed in this project, so the department now has a 22-page manual to satisfy this requirement.

Lemley said that the revised plan was submitted to the Town of Avon on October 31, and public notice will be in *The Republican* newspaper on November 6, 2025. Additionally, more than 70 written notices were mailed to surrounding property owners, advising them of the project. There is also a sign posted on the property. Lemley reported that inaccurate rumors about what is being built are already floating around with the public, but some area property owners have taken the time to stop in at the main office to ask for themselves, which is very much appreciated. The next step is for Lemley to present the application and plan to the Avon Plan Commission at their November 24, 2025 meeting.

Lemley requested that the Park Board approve HCP&R moving forward with advertising for competitive bids on this project. **Emsweller moved to proceed with advertising for bids; Freije seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

The timeline is now:

- Public advertisement in *The Republican* newspaper, HCP&R's website, and HCP&R's Facebook page from Nov. 12, 2025 through Dec. 2, 2025. The advertisement in the newspaper will be published on Nov. 13, Nov. 20, and Nov. 27, 2025.
- Pre-bid meeting at the Hendricks County Government Center, Rooms 4&5, on Dec. 4, 2025 at 2 p.m.
- Bids due by 2 p.m. on Dec. 18, 2025 at the Hendricks County Government Center, Rooms 4&5.
- Bids reviewed by Patterson Horth from Dec. 19 to 26, 2025.
- Park Board to award the bids at their Jan. 7, 2026 meeting.
- The State Release Design, Septic Permit, and Well Permit process began in early November and is anticipated to be finalized by late January or early February of 2026.
- Construction would likely begin in the spring of 2026 and be completed by the fall of 2026.

### D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

#### D-1. 2026-2030 Comprehensive Master Plan – Request for Park Board Adoption

Ivie summarized the progress that he and HWC Engineering out of Indianapolis has made on the 2026-30 Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) to this point. A rough draft is due to the Indiana

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by Nov. 15, 2025, and Lemley recently communicated with Greg Beilfuss with DNR to confirm what parts of the CMP need to be completed for the rough draft. The point of the rough draft is to make sure that enough has been completed thus far to be on track for a realistic completion of the final draft by April 15, 2026. There are still sections that need to be completed in HCP&R's CMP, but they require Park Board input and discussion, as well as analysis of the public input collected by HWC Engineering. Ivie requested that the Park Board think about departmental goals over the next five years and then discuss at their December meeting. He also requested consensus from the Park Board to submit the rough draft as it is to the DNR. **Consensus granted.**

#### D-2. Hendricks County Bicentennial Tree Trail – Entryway Proposal

Lemley informed the Park Board that Visit Hendricks County has submitted a preliminary entryway design for the Hendricks County Bicentennial Tree Trail at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Lemley is supportive of the proposed design and recommends that the Park Board approve it. Visit Hendricks County will fund the project. **Miner moved to approve the design; Pell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

### **E. PROPERTY UPDATES**

#### E-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley recounted the Fall Colors Festival at McCloud Nature Park on Oct. 11. Lemley estimates that about 800-900 people attended. He said the weather was great and the event was very well organized, so the flow was excellent. Lemley praised the naturalists for their preparation and execution of the festival.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the Fallween Spooktacular event scheduled for Oct. 18 at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park was cancelled due to severe weather. Lemley thanked Emsweller for loaning his wagon again this year for both events.

A discussion was had about if/how to charge for future hayrides. Lemley discussed simply accepting donations. Freije suggested using a QR code to route people to a website to pay. Ivie advised that the credit card machine was available, but he didn't think about it until the event had started, and there was no time to learn how to use it. The Park Board seemed favorable to HCP&R exploring different avenues for hayride collections in the future.

Lemley advised that the maintenance crew has replaced some of the deck boards on the truss bridge at McCloud due to some weather-related deterioration.

Lemley said that he is pleased with Stantec's management of the arboretum, and he provided some photos in the Park Board materials. Stantec's contract runs through 2026, and Lemley said he'd be interested in signing another two-year contract with them when the time comes.

Miner recently purchased 10 Eastern Red Cedars to be planted at McCloud in memory of his late brother, and Lemley intends to have the maintenance crew plant them around the bird viewing area since four large hazardous trees were removed by Cummins Tree Service earlier in the month. The trees will be planted soon.

Lemley forwarded some public feedback about ADA accessibility at McCloud. After some discussion, the Park Board took the matter under advisement.

TRAFx counters documented 2,546 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

### E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley reviewed the final invoice from J.R. Bowling with the Park Board on the Clayton expansion of the Vandalia Trail and advised them that it has been submitted for payment.

Lemley advised that the open hours of the restrooms at the Coatesville and Amo trailheads have been shortened as Daylight Savings Time has ended and days are getting shorter.

Lemley updated the Park Board on a luncheon meeting he recently attended with leadership from the Central Indiana Community Foundation to discuss the ongoing Greater Indy Trailways project. While that organization refers to the Vandalia Trail as a “premier” trail, they are not able to provide any funding for it since it is outside of Marion County. However, there is an effort being made to unify all of the trail systems in the Indy metro area through a logo that everyone will use, digital maps, a consistent mile marker system, etc.

Lemley reported that the maintenance crew has done a good job keeping up on trail maintenance, including clearing the entire trail of leaves and walnuts, repainting some doors and trim on the restrooms, along with routine mowing and trimming.

TRAFx counters documented 1,615 patrons visiting the Vandalia Trail this month.

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

Lemley updated the Park Board on an issue with one of the two sewage lift stations at the park, resulting in the backup pump running for 435 hours already. Lemley reported the issue to the company that installed the system, and they replaced a faulty low-water lift station float. They have also sent the pump back to the manufacturer for rebuilding or replacement.

Lemley reported that the maintenance crew has finished up the development of the Hendricks County Bicentennial Tree Trail, which included, but was not limited to the installation of seven large sponsorship benches with concrete pads, as well as slit-seeding of the entire 7 acres of turf. Seasonal maintenance has also been completed on the 8-acre pollinator garden and the small prairies surrounding the disc golf course. The entrance sign and signage throughout the park have also gotten much-needed TLC.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the Hendricks County Recycling District recently awarded HCP&R a \$5,000 grant for three standard picnic tables and one ADA-accessible picnic table to be placed in the park. Lemley estimates that they will be installed in the spring of 2026.

Lemley advised that a dishwasher was dumped along the entrance to the Gibbs maintenance hub on Oct. 28. After reviewing security camera footage, Lemley identified the culprit and has remedied the situation.

TRAFx counters documented 4,625 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

## **F. REPORTS**

### F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley advised that the Bobcat required unexpected maintenance when the Bob-Tach mounting system broke. A new Bob-Tach was purchased and installed by the maintenance crew. The John Deere tractor is also going to need some maintenance on its sporadic power losses.

Lemley reported that the 2026 Winter/Spring edition of *The Explorer* magazine is completed on our end and is off to the graphic designer. The final product will go to print on Nov. 21, and HCP&R should receive the magazines by mid-December. This issue will cover programming and events from January through April of 2026.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County awarded HCP&R with a \$3,900 grant through the Robert A. Wood Environmental Education Fund. This grant will be used to replace worn out fishing equipment and to add to the equipment that is available for patrons to borrow. One of the new pieces of equipment is a holder for fishing poles that fits on the GRIT Freedom Chairs.

#### F-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported no major issues with the budget, other than money running out as the budget year draws to a close. He has been trying to avoid moving money out of the Land Acquisition Fund, but it's looking inevitable at this point in order to cover the last few large construction and engineering invoices of the year. Ivie is going to try to save as much of that Land Acquisition Fund as possible so that it can be transferred to Non-Reverting Capital in December.

#### F-3. Media Report

Ivie reviewed the media report from October, sharing data for how the department's website, Facebook page, and Instagram feed performed last month. He advised that another post about the McCloud Prairie Maze went wild on Facebook, and the naturalists reported that it translated to a lot of visitors to the maze leading up to and through its final weekend of operation.

#### F-3. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Hayden moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:13 p.m.; Freije seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in the HCP&R main office at 4481 Gibbs Road, Danville, IN.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Matt Freije, Secretary