



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 3, 2025
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
Paul Miner
Vicky Byarley

Board Absent: Matt Freije, Secretary
Gary Emsweller
Jeff Pell

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent
Patty Seymour, Administrative Assistant

Guests: None

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

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

A-2. Approval of Minutes of November 5th Park Board Meeting

Byarley moved to approve the minutes of the November 5th Park Board meeting; seconded by Miner, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

None

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. 2026 Park Board Elections

The Park Board conducted elections for executive positions, resulting in the following:

Park Board President: Brad Eisenhart

Park Board Vice President: Mike Hayden
Park Board Secretary: Matt Freije

Miner moved to approve the above elected positions; seconded by Byarley; motion passed unanimously.

C-2. Briarwood Estates – Connecting Path to Vandalia Trail

Lemley informed the Park Board that Ray Benson Jr., son of the late Raymond Benson, a longtime supporter of the Parks Department, has requested a discussion about a potential connection between his property and the Vandalia Trail. He proposed installing a crushed stone path from Briarwood Estates in Coatesville to the trail. The primary purpose of this connector would be to provide safe access to a segment of Vandalia Trail east of S.R. 75, thereby reducing the need for residents to travel along S.R. 75.

Benson Jr. owns an 8-acre parcel of land, known as Briarwood Estates, Section 2, and has offered to fund the proposed connection if it receives approval. The Park Board expressed support for enhancing pedestrian connectivity to the trail but has concerns about the proposal's feasibility, particularly regarding the steep incline and wet area. Therefore, the Park Board recommended inviting Benson Jr. to present his proposal for their consideration. Lemley will coordinate with Ray Benson Jr.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D-1. 2026 – 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan – Goals and Objectives

Ivie presented a summary to the Park Board outlining goals and objectives based on the Board's input. These goals will direct the department's focus over the next five years as part of the new comprehensive master plan. The Park Board engaged in an extensive discussion covering various topics related to McCloud Nature Park, Vandalia Trail, and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. They evaluated and prioritized the goals and objectives for each property accordingly. Ivie will compile a summary of the discussions to provide to the Park Board for their review.

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

Ivie informed the Park Board that once he receives the necessary documents from the Auditor's office, he will prepare the final packet for Board President Eisenhart to sign and will submit it to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for final close-out of this project. He reminded the Park Board that the total reimbursement from the grant fund will be \$313,268.71. Lemley added that close-out maps and the finalization of the easement encumbrance will be provided to the DNR to complete this project.

During their discussion, Lemley informed Eisenhart that he should expect the DNR State Grant Agreement for the eastern expansion of Vandalia Trail to sign. Eisenhart will notify Lemley once he receives the agreement.

E. PROPERTY UPDATES

E-1. McCloud Nature Park

The naturalist staff hosted their annual Winter Wreath Workshop, which was once again a popular and successful event.

The maintenance team has successfully replaced the deteriorating wood beams on the Truss Bridge over Big Walnut Creek. Additionally, some of the overlooks along Big Walnut Creek have received improvements.

TRAFx counter data was not collected in time for the meeting because accumulated snow covered the underground box.

E-2. Vandalia Trail

Fishbeck Engineering has submitted the final payment applications from J.R. Bowling for the eastern expansion of Vandalia Trail, including the 10% retainage fee.

Greater Indy Trailways has partnered with the Central Indiana Community Foundation to enhance promotion of the region's premier trails surrounding Marion County and has developed new trail logos for each featured trail.

The Stewardship Director of the Central Indiana Land Trust has acquired a grass and sedge seed mix and is planning to sow it throughout the native tree planting area that was completed earlier this spring. A preliminary site visit is scheduled to take place before the seed mix is applied.

The public restrooms at both trailheads were winterized and closed for the season.

TRAFx counters documented 940 patrons visiting the Vandalia Trail this month.

E-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley reported that the Town of Avon Planning Commission unanimously supported the proposed Welcome Center and Administrative Office to be located at Gibbs Park. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 4th, at the Hendricks County Government Center. Lemley noted that 80 vendors have expressed interest in submitting bids for 13 different aspects of the project. He emphasized that due to the detailed scope of work, Patterson Horth, Construction Manager as Constructor, advised that the construction timeline for the building will extend from spring 2026 through spring 2027. Looking ahead, the bid opening meeting is set for December 18th at 2:00 p.m. in meeting rooms 4 and 5 at the Government Center.

TRAFx counters documented 3,202 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Ivie presented the Park Board with a summary of the year-end budget fund transfers. Since all transfers stayed within the same budget classification, no formal action from the County Council was necessary. Ivie noted that they expect to submit only one request to encumber funds, with approximately \$80,000 remaining in the Land Acquisition line.

Ivie has submitted the rough draft of the five-year Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) to the DNR, which has confirmed receipt of the document. The DNR will review the CMP following the necessary protocol. The final draft is due by April 15, 2026.

The Winter/Spring 2026 issue of *The Explorer* has gone to print and should receive hard copies in mid-December.

Lemley informed the Park Board that a salaried employee's employment has been terminated within the department. Moving forward, department leadership has begun evaluating options for filling this vacancy.

F-2. Budget Report

Ivie stated that the budget report is for informational purposes only, as budget-related items were discussed earlier in the meeting.

F-3. Media Report

Ivie presented a summary of social media highlights from the previous month to the Park Board and pointed out that views on Instagram appear to be declining. He mentioned that he and the naturalists will explore ways to boost traffic on Instagram.

F-4. Parks Foundation of Hendricks County Report

Lemley announced that the Foundation will host its annual Picnic for the Parks fundraising luncheon on March 6, 2026, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds.

ADJOURNMENT

Hayden moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:29 p.m.; seconded by Miner, the motion passed unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Gibbs Homestead located at 4481 Gibbs Road, Danville, IN 46122.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brad Eisenhart, President