



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 4, 2026
2:00 p.m.

4481 Gibbs Road
Danville, IN 46122

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

Board Present: Mike Hayden, Vice President
Matt Freije, Secretary
Vicky Byarley
Gary Emsweller
Paul Miner

Board Absent: Brad Eisenhart, President
Jeff Pell

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

Guests: Grant Hiestand – Indianapolis Admirals R/C Boat Club
Brian Brozek – Indianapolis Admirals R/C Boat Club
Gene Wisner – Indianapolis Admirals R/C Boat Club

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

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

A-2. Approval of Minutes of February 4th, 2026, Park Board Meeting

Miner moved to approve the minutes of the February 4th, 2026, Park Board meeting; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

None

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. Indianapolis Admirals R/C Boat Club

The Indianapolis Admiral Sailing Club is proposing to make W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park their

permanent location for weekly events. In previous seasons, they have temporarily used the ponds at Gibbs Park while their usual site at Grand Park in Westfield was occupied by the Indianapolis Colts. The Club plans to utilize the larger pond two to three Saturdays a month from May through October. Their model boats are wind-controlled, and they typically have 10 to 12 boats in the water at a time.

During discussions, topics included docking locations, sharing pond space with anglers, and coordinating with naturalists in case other event programs are happening simultaneously. **Miner moved to approve the Indianapolis Admiral Sailing Club's request to use W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park as their permanent home for sailing events, as proposed. Emsweller seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D-1. 2026 – 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan – Public Presentation & Final Submittal

Ivie reported that he has resumed work on finalizing the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) for 2026–2030. As part of this process, he has reopened the public survey section of the CMP over the past several weeks, resulting in an additional 353 survey responses. Previously, HWC Engineering collected 84 public input surveys, bringing the overall total to 437 completed surveys. The current public surveys will close on Friday, March 6th. The Park Board further discussed the CMP survey results. A public presentation of the proposed CMP is scheduled for March 18th at 7:00 p.m. in meeting rooms 4 and 5 at the Hendricks County Government Center. Lemley commended Ivie for leading this project.

D-2. McCloud Nature Park – Management Agreement for Interpretive Beehouse

Lemley requested the Park Board's approval to enter into an agreement with Bob Gruener, President of the Putnam County Beekeepers Association, for the professional management of the interpretive beehouse located at McCloud Nature Park. The agreement is for the amount of \$2,280 for the 2026 calendar year. Lemley explained that managing this unique park feature has been challenging, as the observation hives have become increasingly undesirable over the last few years and will require operational repairs and updates before professional management services can be implemented.

Additionally, Lemley shared plans to add a small wildflower pollinator plot, approximately ¼ acre in size, around the beehouse structure. The Park Board discussed the beekeeper's responsibilities, as outlined in the professional services agreement. **Freije moved to approve Lemley's request as proposed; the motion was seconded by Miner and passed unanimously.**

D-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Revised Property Deed for Land & Water Conservation Fund

Lemley informed the Park Board that Fishbeck Engineering has prepared a revised exhibit plat along with a legal description to accurately reflect the changes regarding the property encumbrance. Ben Comer from Abstract & Title has finalized all the paperwork for the property deed, which will be legally recorded at no cost to the department. Lemley will seek President Eisenhart's signature on the documents. He reminded the Park Board that a significant portion of the Park Board property referenced in the Land & Water Conservation Fund encumbrance can only be used as a park and recreation facility indefinitely. The Park Board acknowledged that this task will be considered complete once President Eisenhart signs the necessary documents.

E. PROPERTY UPDATES

E-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley referred to the structural inspection report previously provided to the Park Board, which was conducted by JPS Engineering for the Mill Cottage. The report indicates that the facility is structurally sound; however, it recommends some preventive maintenance repairs to enhance the Cottage's

lifespan. Lemley summarized the minor repairs suggested in the report for the Park Board. The main concern is the unknown mold growth throughout the facility, which will require professional testing and treatment, as it could pose a health and safety hazard for anyone who enters or works inside. Additionally, the cost of remediation could significantly impact the budget. Currently, the space is being used for storage of the naturalists' programming supplies and materials. The Park Board discussed various topics related to potential remediation efforts and costs, the health and safety impacts on staff and volunteers, the current and future use of the space, and alternative storage options. It was noted that some naturalist staff experienced illness after spending time organizing and cleaning the Cottage's interior, unaware of the mold presence before the inspection was carried out. After further discussion, it was suggested to contact the Health Department as a potential resource and to explore possible collaboration options with them. Lemley will contact the Health Department to discuss and will update the Park Board accordingly.

Lemley reported that the naturalist staff has been actively preparing for the upcoming Maple Syrup Day event on March 14th, which coincides with the Park Board's Annual Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser. Lemley updated the Park Board on the planned activities that the naturalist staff will offer throughout the day. This includes information about the vendors who will be present and the involvement of Boy Scout Troop 301, which will provide various demonstrations and hands-on activities for attendees to enjoy and participate in. Additional discussion took place regarding the Park Board's Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser event.

Discussion occurred regarding the potential donation of a bridge located along the Hendricks/Putnam County Line Road abutting the western property line of McCloud Nature Park. Lemley will keep the Park Board updated with any further information from the Hendricks County Engineering Department.

Lemley reported that the naturalist and administrative staff are collaborating to apply for the Gary Emsweller Grant through the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC).

At Miner's request, discussions took place regarding a potential watershed and macroinvertebrate study for undergraduate and graduate students studying these subjects and the importance of the ecosystem they provide.

As of February 26th, TRAFx counters documented 749 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley provided the Park Board with an update on the eastern expansion of the Vandalia Trail, Phase II project. Due to budget constraints this year, the design work for the trailhead parking lot and the necessary permitting may be postponed until future budget cycles. Lemley and Ivie are engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the feasibility of completing this task within the current calendar year.

Lemley informed the Park Board that they have received positive feedback about snow removal on the Vandalia Trail following recent snow events. He also noted that the maintenance staff will continue to monitor weather patterns and may plow the path as necessary in the future.

Lemley provided an update to the Park Board regarding the pedestrian access connection from Briarwood Estates, located just east of SR 75, to Vandalia Trail, which is being installed by Ray Benson Jr.

Lemley reported that this month's TRAFx data was significantly inflated and inaccurate. It is

speculated that a tree branch or another object may have skewed the data in Amo, as the collected visitation figures indicated that nearly 14,000 patrons used the trail this month.

The Coatesville TRAFx counter recorded only 324 individuals utilizing the trail during the same period.

E-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley reminded the Park Board that the grand opening of the Hendricks County Bicentennial Tree Trail is scheduled for April 25th at 10:00 a.m.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the 18-hole disc golf course at Gibbs Park has recently been ranked as the 11th best course in the state of Indiana and 875th in the United States, according to the annual report generated by Team UDisc.

Lemley provided the Park Board with an update on the status of the review and permitting process with the Town of Avon for the construction of the new Gibbs Park Welcome Center and Administrative Office. Additional discussions were held regarding the possibility of future naming rights for the new facility and the grand opening timeline.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the vendor of the sewage lift station, along with the product distributor, will provide a new Meyers lift station pump for the primary public restroom facility at no cost to the department, as the original pump was determined to be faulty within the warranty period.

As of February 26th, TRAFx counters documented 2,875 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that the Bobcat skid loader is facing ongoing issues that hinder its performance for park maintenance. Additionally, these problems are leading to significant costs to maintain the equipment and ensure it remains functional for its intended purposes.

Lemley announced that the department leadership has selected Avery Tyler as the new Park Manager. Tyler brings extensive related experience and meets all the qualifications outlined in the job description. He will start his employment with the department on March 9th.

Lemley informed the Park Board that Joy Fulk, the Part-time Naturalist Assistant, has recently resigned from the department.

F-2. Budget Report

Ivie has reported no issues or concerns with the budget thus far. There was a discussion regarding the management of contractor payment applications for the Gibbs Welcome Center and Administrative Office, and coordination with the County Auditor's office.

F-3. Media Report

Ivie reported that website traffic has been low this past month. The most recent Facebook post about Maple Syrup Days received 24,171 views. Instagram is still a work in progress regarding increasing traffic through that social media platform.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Freije, Secretary