



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 1, 2026
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 (arrived at 2:18 p.m.)
Vicky Byarley
Paul Miner

Board Absent: Gary Emsweller
Jeff Pell

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent
Avery Tyler, Park Manager
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 March 4th, 2026, Park Board Meeting

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

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

None

B-2. Avery Tyler – Welcoming and Introduction

Lemley introduced Avery Tyler to the Park Board and welcomed him to join the discussion. Tyler began his employment as the new Park Manager on March 9th. He studied Fisheries, Range, and Wildlife Management at Brigham Young University in Idaho, graduating in December 2023. After

spending eight years in Idaho, Tyler and his family returned to Indiana, where he is originally from. He provided the Park Board with a summary of his background and the experience he brings to Hendricks County Parks and Recreation. The Park Board welcomed Tyler to the team.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – Hendricks Power Utility Easement

Lemley informed the Park Board that Hendricks Power has requested a 10-foot-wide permanent utility easement for the primary electrical line needed for the future construction of the Welcome Center and Administrative Office at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. Lemley sought the Park Board's approval to grant this easement request. After a discussion, **Hayden moved to approve Lemley's request, which was seconded by Pell. The motion passed unanimously.** Seymour will coordinate obtaining Eisenhart's signature on the required documents when they are ready.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

D-1. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park – 2026 Crop Lease

Lemley requested approval from the Park Board to enter into an agreement with Dan Searcy for a cash crop lease involving 16 acres of tillable land at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, at a rate of \$240.00 per acre. He referred to an exhibit that included a map of the area to be farmed, which had been previously provided to the Park Board. Lemley noted that Searcy has requested permission to use a portion of the lean-to-barn on the Gibbs Homestead property for hay storage at no charge during this farming season, and this was considered by the Board. There was also discussion about the possibility of planting hay in the field in the future. After further conversation, **Hayden moved to approve Lemley's signing of the 2026 Crop Lease Agreement with Searcy at a rate of \$240.00 per acre and to allow Searcy to use the lean-to barn on the Gibbs Homestead property for hay storage during this farming season. The motion was seconded by Miner and passed unanimously.**

E. PROPERTY UPDATES

E-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley reported that the 17th annual Pancake Breakfast fundraiser, along with the 16th annual Maple Syrup Days, was successfully hosted at McCloud Nature Park on Saturday, March 14th. Lemley expressed gratitude to the Park Board for their hard work in organizing this annual fundraising event. Eisenhart mentioned that they served breakfast to 288 people and noted that next year they will end the last seating time at 12:30 p.m., as there were no attendees after noon this year or in previous years. Additionally, it was decided that the event will only be held one weekend next year. Lemley praised the naturalist staff for their efforts to expand and improve Maple Syrup Days. A diverse array of vendors, along with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry's "Woods on Wheels" interpretive exhibit, enhanced the educational programming for this large-scale event.

Lemley informed the Park Board that the digital files used for sign-making at McCloud Park had recently been deleted from the Easel software. This issue was reported to the Hendricks County Sheriff's Department as a potential cybersecurity breach. After some investigation, it was speculated that a former employee, who had previously been dismissed, gained access to the information and permanently deleted the associated files. Lemley reported that at the conclusion of the interview process led by Detective Sgt. Donaldson, the former employee returned all signage files via a flash drive. Additional discussion took place on the subject.

Lemley reported that the maintenance staff have started making improvements to the beehouse in preparation for the upcoming pollination season.

As of March 26th, TRAFx counters documented 1,763 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this

month.

E-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley informed the Park Board that the public restrooms at the Coatesville and Amo trailheads have been de-winterized and are now open for the season. Several small plumbing repairs were completed during the de-winterization process.

Following a detailed review of the department's budget, Lemley reported that he recently authorized completion of the bid documents, including the required Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), for the eastern expansion of the Vandalia Trail, Phase II. This authorization will enable Fishbeck Engineering to begin working intermittently on the capital project, with progress documented in quarterly reports submitted to the DNR. However, due to budget constraints, the work on the additional parking lot and the purchase of a railcar for the bridge will be postponed until further notice.

The maintenance staff has begun the process of locating the 26,000 bare-root native trees that the Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI) planted last fall. During the week of April 13th, some members of the maintenance staff will join CILTI's field staff in a collaborative effort to find the newly planted trees and mow the rows in preparation for the upcoming mowing season.

The Coatesville Easter Egg Hunt is set for Saturday, April 4th. Lemley acknowledged Danville Wal-Mart, Texas Roadhouse, and Bubba's 33 for their contributions of prizes and coupons for the event.

As of March 26th, the TRAFx counter recorded an estimated total of 1,144 patrons using the trail this month. The estimated total is affected by a malfunctioning TRAFx reading at the Amo trailhead, which the maintenance staff is currently investigating.

E-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley informed the Park Board of positive progress over the past month regarding pre-construction preparations for the upcoming Welcome Center and Administrative Office at Gibbs Park. Lemley attended a pre-construction meeting at the Avon Town Hall on Tuesday, March 24th, which was attended by two members of the Avon Town staff, construction manager Patterson Horth, and architect Studio View. No issues or concerns were raised during the meeting. Lemley went on to explain that, although they initially received verbal approval at the pre-construction meeting to proceed with construction, they later discovered that the Town of Avon is now refusing to issue the building permit. After contacting the Town of Avon, they were informed that a "sanitary tap-in permit from the West Central Conservancy District (WCCD)" is required before the building permit can be issued. Since no public sanitary sewer is available for connection, a commercial septic system was originally designed for the project. This system has been clearly indicated on the building plans that were previously submitted and reviewed by the Town of Avon and its representatives. Currently, the commercial septic plan is under review by the Indiana Department of Health, which is a lengthy process. Lemley informed the Park Board that he has made extensive efforts to urge the Town of Avon to permit site work on the project while the Department of Health reviews the septic system plans. The Town has stated that a building permit will not be issued until the commercial septic permit is granted. The Park Board discussed various topics related to this situation. Lemley plans to reach out to the Hendricks County Health Department and the State Health Department to request an expedited review and permit process for the commercial septic system.

Lemley reported that John Hall Construction has completed the installation of the Cold Climate Water Sampling Station for the newly installed public water system at Gibbs Park. This installation meets the requirements set by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). Completing this

process should address the deficiency noted in the IDEM inspection report and allow the project to be closed out with them.

Lemley informed the Park Board that they recently discovered damage to the sanitary sewer force main line connected to the primary four-stall family restroom. The damage was likely caused by equipment and vehicles driving over the settling ground above the septic force main line. Fortunately, the system installer promptly repaired the damage at no cost to the department.

Lemley provided an update to the Park Board on the Bicentennial Tree Trail ribbon-cutting ceremony, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 25th, at the Firefly Pavilion in Gibbs Park.

Park Manager Avery Tyler is working with the Naturalists to install a new sound garden near the playground at Gibbs Park. In addition, an Eagle Scout troop has built 10 bluebird house boxes, which will be installed at Gibbs Park by the maintenance staff in the near future.

Measurements of the silo were provided to Visit Hendricks County to evaluate potential options and feasibility of a mural unique to Gibbs Park and the county in the future.

As of March 26th, TRAFx counters documented 4,719 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

F. REPORTS

F-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley announced that the interview process for the Part-Time Summer Assistant Naturalist position has been completed. Donatella Mudica is set to join the department in mid-June. Mudica is a second-year student at Purdue University, pursuing a dual major in Wildlife and Forestry. She also has relevant experience, having worked as a Naturalist Aide at a nearby Indiana DNR property.

Lemley notified the Park Board of the decision to terminate a part-time employee for violating the policies outlined in the Hendricks County employee manual.

Lemley reported that the public presentation and final input session for the 2026 – 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) took place on March 18th at the Hendricks County Government Center. Two County Council members and Park Board President Eisenhart attended the presentation. Ivie is making further adjustments to the 211-page document by incorporating new information gathered during the public presentation. He aims to submit the updated plan to the DNR by the April 14th deadline. Additional discussions on the topic also occurred. Lemley praised Ivie for leading the presentation and for his dedication to completing this extensive task.

Maintenance staff attended the annual Indiana Parks & Recreation Association (IPRA) maintenance exposition hosted at the Boone County 4-H Fairgrounds in Lebanon on March 12th.

The Parks Foundation of Hendricks County (PFOHC) hosted its third annual Picnic for the Parks fundraising luncheon on March 6th. The event was well attended and raised over \$60,000. This year's focus was on improving accessibility within local parks and showcased the department's recent achievements, including the promotion of the GRIT Freedom Mobility Wheelchair program. Lemley praised Byarley for her contributions in creating a video that highlighted the mobility wheelchair featured during the event. Additionally, Lemley noted that the visibility of the GRIT wheelchair program at the luncheon led to an opportunity for Courtney Wallace, a blogger from Visit Hendricks County, to test the mobility wheelchair and share her experience. She wrote a review discussing the

accessibility features at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park, which can be found on her blog at visithendrickscounty.com. Ivie mentioned that Wallace provided valuable feedback after trying out the wheelchair. There was also a discussion about motorized mobility track chairs, like those acquired by Indiana State Parks with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

Drew Gamble, the Resource Planner for Burke Engineering, conducted satisfactory inspections for stormwater pollution prevention at the maintenance facilities of McCloud Nature Park and W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. In response to Gamble's ongoing request, the replacement of the existing diesel fueling station tank at McCloud Nature Park has been initiated. This request was coordinated through the fuel supplier, Keystone Cooperative, as they provided a new double-walled fueling station for the maintenance hub at Gibbs Park.

Lemley reported that the summer edition of *The Explorer* publication is complete and has been sent to the printers. The naturalist staff plans to complete the county-wide delivery process during the week of April 20th.

Avery Tyler is currently working on obtaining his herbicide applicator's license through Purdue University.

Lemley informed the Park Board that he had requested a quote for a replacement unit for the failing Bobcat skid steer while it was undergoing repairs last month. He received an estimate of approximately \$75,000 for the purchase of a new Bobcat skid steer, along with a trade-in value of just over \$14,000 for the old unit but noted that the trade-in price may vary based on the condition of the equipment at the time the new unit is purchased in early 2027, contingent on funding approval. Lemley asked if the Park Board would support his request to the County Council for funding to replace the unit during this year's budget hearings. The Park Board acknowledged its support for Lemley's request.

F-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported that there were no issues or concerns with the budget. He informed the Park Board that he is covering some expenses related to the various stages of construction for the new Welcome Center and Administrative Office by using funds from the Innkeepers' Share of the Development of County Parks Account. This is done in anticipation of needing to supplement part of the project with funds from the department's operating budget. Additional discussions were held regarding budget-related items.

F-3. Media Report

Ivie provided the Park Board with a summary of social media engagement and website visitation statistics from last month. The most viewed Facebook post in March was an advertisement for Maple Syrup Days, which garnered 12,807 views. The top Instagram post featured a video clip showcasing amphibian activity at night and received 756 views. The Naturalists have a full schedule planned for the summer season and will focus more on their programs while continuing to actively post on social media.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Ivie expressed his satisfaction with the park staff as a whole and shared positive comments about the new Park Manager, Avery Tyler. He noted that Tyler has been getting along well with both the naturalist staff and the maintenance team, as well as with department leadership, during his first few weeks in the role. Lemley added that the Maintenance Foremen have also adapted well to Tyler's arrival.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3:05 p.m., Hayden moved to adjourn the meeting, and Freije seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regularly scheduled Park Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Gibbs Homestead located at 4481 Gibbs Road, Danville, IN 46122.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Freije, Secretary