



Park Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 5, 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
Vicky Byarley
Paul Miner

Board Absent: Gary Emsweller
Jeff Pell

Staff Present: Ryan Lemley, Superintendent
Eric Ivie, Assistant Superintendent

Guests: None

A. CALENDAR

A-1. Adopt Agenda

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

A-2. Approval of Minutes of July 1, 2026 Park Board Meeting

Miner moved to approve the minutes of the July 1, 2026 Park Board meeting; seconded by Freije, the motion passed unanimously.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS/PRESENTATIONS

B-1. Public Comments

Freije announced that due to switching jobs, his last Park Board meeting will be the September 2, 2026 meeting. His term expires at the end of 2026, and he will not seek reappointment. The Park Board and staff thanked him for his service of nearly 15 years and wished him well in his new employment.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1. E-Bike and E-Scooter Policy

Ivie informed the Park Board that after yet another close call involving golf carts on the trails at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park nearly striking pedestrians over Independence Day Weekend, Ivie posted on

Facebook, asking people to help spread the word that no motorized vehicles are permitted on trails. The post immediately exploded with questions and concerns about e-bikes and e-scooters, which was not the focus of the post at all, but which clearly showed that this is a passionate topic. Ivie does not recall ever fielding a complaint about e-bikes or e-scooters in his 10 years with HCP&R, but he believes that the Park Board should make a conscious decision on policies at the parks that HCP&R operate, given the nearly 90,000 views of the Facebook post and more than 350 comments on it.

Ivie reviewed Indiana Code 9-21-11-13.1 about e-bikes, as well as Indiana Codes 9-13-2-49.4 and 9-21-11-13.6 regarding e-scooters, outlining the three classes of e-bikes and their capabilities, where they are allowed and not allowed, the definition of e-scooters and their capabilities, and where they are allowed and not allowed.

Ivie explained that e-bikes and e-scooters are not a concern at McCloud Nature Park because the trails there are not multipurpose trails. Bicycles are not allowed on the trails at McCloud, so by State law, neither are e-bikes or e-scooters.

However, the trails at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and the Vandalia Trail are all multipurpose trails where bicycles are allowed, so by State law, e-bikes and e-scooters are allowed on the trails, too.

Ivie also provided an infographic to the Park Board regarding policies in various locations in Hamilton County, Marion County, Hendricks County, and with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, he shared the staff's recommendations with the Park Board:

- The staff recommends that the Park Board set a speed limit of 15 mph on the trails at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park. The vehicular speed limit inside the park is 15 mph. Aside from the speed limit, the staff recommends deferring to State law, which would mean that Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes, as well as e-scooters, will be allowed on the trails at Gibbs. Class 3 e-bikes will not be allowed on the trails but are allowed on the roadways and parking lots.
- The staff recommends that the Park Board specifically declines to set any policies regarding the Vandalia Trail and instead defers to State law. This would mean that Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes, as well as e-scooters, will be allowed on HCP&R's section of the Vandalia Trail. Class 3 e-bikes will not be allowed on the trail. There will be no speed limit since the allowed e-bikes and e-scooters top out at 20 mph, and the line of sight along the Vandalia Trail is much better than at Gibbs.

After some discussion, **Freije moved to approve the staff's recommendations at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and on HCP&R's portion of the Vandalia Trail and make them Park Board policies. The motion was seconded by Byarley and passed unanimously.**

C-2. Vandalia Trail – Finalized Engineering Service for Eastern Expansion (Phase II)

Lemley advised the Park Board that he has been in conversation with Kristen Nail, project engineer at Fishbeck, about lining up the bid packet for Phase II of the Eastern Expansion of the Vandalia Trail. This phase will extend the paved trail along the north side of County Road 500 S. from Michigan Street in Clayton to County Road 250 W. In those conversations, Lemley and Nail have discussed using a retired rail car as a bridge over one large culvert. Nail recommended working with Kurdziel Barker Bridge Engineering for this portion of the project.

Kurdziel Barker provided costs estimates of this project at \$23,500 for engineering services and \$115,000 for installation of the rail car bridge. The total cost is significantly lower than it would be to have a traditional bridge designed and installed over the culvert, plus the rail car would pay homage to

the former Vandalia rail line. The Park Board expressed that they like the idea of the rail car bridge. Lemley advised them that the idea for it came from Jessica Hartman of Fishbeck.

Hayden moved to approve this portion of the Vandalia Trail expansion project and for Lemley to enter into a contract with Kurdziel Barker for the design and engineering services necessary to implement a rail car bridge. The motion was seconded by Byarley and passed unanimously.

D. PROPERTY UPDATES

D-1. McCloud Nature Park

Lemley informed the Park Board that a new storage building for the naturalists has been purchased, and the maintenance crew has added electrical service, lights, and a mini-split HVAC system to the building. The mini-split is not designed to keep the building comfortable for humans year-round. Instead, the thermostat will be set to prevent supplies from melting in the heat and freezing in the cold. Lemley reports that the naturalists have moved what program supplies they could salvage from the mold- and asbestos-infested Mill Cottage into the new building, and McCullough Excavating is set to demolish Mill Cottage tomorrow (Aug. 6, 2026).

Lemley told the Park Board about the maintenance crew's major projects on top of their routine duties, including the implementation of Turtle Cove trail at McCloud and the reconstruction of the emergency exit at the Ray & Mary Benson Nature Center at McCloud.

Lemley advised the Park Board that the naturalists successfully concluded summer camp season at McCloud and held the season's first Market in the Park at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park on Aug. 1.

Lemley stated that HCP&R's involvement with this year's Summer Fun Run Series concluded recently at McCloud Nature Park. All three HCP&R parks have hosted segments of the Summer Fun Run Series this year, as in past years.

As of July 29, TRAFx counters documented 1,949 vehicles visiting McCloud Nature Park this month.

D-2. Vandalia Trail

Lemley reported that he has been in conversation with Dustin Strahl of the Amo Park Board about that park board adding several picnic tables on concrete slabs to the Amo trailhead. Lemley is generally supportive of the project but asked Strahl to mark the proposed area. Strahl also revisited the topic of adding a shelter at the trailhead at some point in the future.

As of July 29, TRAFx counters documented 2,161 patrons utilizing the Vandalia Trail this month.

D-3. W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park

Lemley updated the Park Board on the progress toward construction of the Welcome Center and Administrative Office. He advised that the Technical Data Sheets have been received from the Indiana Department of Health for the commercial septic system, and Kruse Consulting is currently working on a plan submittal for the required system. Lemley estimates that we should finally gain permission from the Town of Avon and the Hendricks County Health Department in September or October of this year.

Lemley told the Park Board about the two ADA-accessible concrete pads that the maintenance crew installed at the park with ADA-accessible picnic tables and a permanent stand-up grill at each one. Three more pads, tables, and grills of this type will be added to the park later this year but will not be ADA-accessible. He also advised that the maintenance crew has been removing invasive plants, completing maintenance on the playground including replacing the tire swing, and are currently

working on major repairs to a culvert that sustained heavy damage during recent storms.

The maintenance crew continues to spend a lot of man-hours and money on aquatic pesticide in both ponds, so Park Manager Avery Tyler came up with a detailed proposal to add aerators to both ponds. The cost of the maintenance crew doing the work will be just over \$7,000 – half of what it would cost to hire a company to do it. The crew will be moving forward with this project soon.

As of July 29, TRAFx counters documented 6,188 vehicles visiting W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park this month.

E. REPORTS

E-1. Superintendent Report

Lemley reported that the Fall 2026 edition of *The Explorer* publication has been completed and sent to the publisher. Delivery of the magazines is expected in mid-August.

Lemley announced the hiring of Elizabeth Schafer as a part-time assistant naturalist.

Lemley thanked Tyler's father-in-law, Jeff Sutton, for cooking a huge amount of pulled pork for a recent employee luncheon and staff meeting at W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park.

The State Board of Accounts is currently conducting a physical audit of County assets, and HCP&R recently had to provide a mower and a truck for inspection. Ivie emphasized that this is routine and not a result of anyone doing anything wrong. All County departments are participating in this audit; HCP&R was not singled out. Lemley reported no problems with HCP&R's involvement with the audit.

Lemley mentioned the Elijah's Baby Bucket List blogger who recently borrowed a GRIT Freedom Chair at Gibbs for her son and later wrote a very nice article about inclusiveness and accessibility efforts in Hendricks County. She also made a very nice social media post about her experience. HCP&R and Gibbs were mentioned in both the article and the social media post.

E-2. Budget Report

Ivie reported no problems with the 2026 budget. Earlier in the meeting, Lemley mentioned that HCP&R's 2027 budget requests were approved by the Hendricks County Council earlier this week.

E-3. Media Report

Ivie presented the media report for July to the Park Board, highlighting the top social media posts from throughout the month, as well as the monthly viewership statistics for the website.

ADJOURNMENT

Hayden moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:55 p.m.; seconded by Miner, the motion passed unanimously.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Freije, Secretary