



400 Lafayette Road - Noblesville, IN - 46060
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Park Board

- Stephen Andrews
President
- Larry Roudebush
Vice President
- Mark McCauley
Secretary
- Dr. Judith Campbell
Treasurer
- Tom Clover
Member
- Robyn Pauker
Member
- Susan Peterson
Member
- Chris Neeson
Attorney

The regular meeting of the Hamilton County Parks & Recreation Board was held Monday, June 19th, 2023, at 6:00 pm at the Administration Office at 400 Lafayette Road, Noblesville, IN 46060.



Present: Stephen Andrews, *President*
 Larry Roudebush, *Vice President*
 Dr. Judith Campbell, *Treasurer* (Virtual)
 Mark McCauley, *Secretary*
 Robyn Pauker, *Member* (Virtual)
 Susan Peterson, *Member* (Virtual)

Absent: Tom Clover, *Member*

Staff: Chris Stice, *Director*
 Bruce Oldham, *Deputy Director*
 Reese Ebersole, *Program Assistant*

Park Staff

- B. Christopher Stice
Director
- Bruce Oldham
Deputy Director
- Jaymee Ayers
Office Manager
- Amanda Smith
*Superintendent of
Natural Resources & Education*
- Chandler Bryant
Regional Parks Operations Manager
- Andy Kingsley
Coxhall Gardens Park Manager
- Kyle Stocks
Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Don Nicholls
Resource Development Specialist
- Christopher Gullion
Events Coordinator

Attorney: Chris Neeson

Guest(s): Jeff Mader, *Mader Design, President*
 Derek McGrew, *Iron Mountain Towers, Authorized Wireless
 Site Development and Zoning Professional*

****In compliance with the directive outlined by the State Board of Accounts, the County Commissioners and County Council, the Parks Board is meeting via video conference. Physically present are: President, Stephen Andrews; Vice President, Larry Roudebush; Board Member Mark McCauley; which meets the compliance requirements. Also, physically present representing the Parks Department are: Director, Chris Stice; Deputy Director, Bruce Oldham; Program Assistant, Reese Ebersole.**



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A.) Call to Order:

Mr. Andrews called the Hamilton County Parks & Recreation's June 19th, 2023, Board meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

B.) Agenda Amendments:

No agenda amendments were recommended.

C.) Public Comments:

Mr. Andrews opened the floor to public comments.

Derek McGrew – 103 Wilshire Ct. Noblesville, IN 46062

Derek McGrew, Authorized Wireless Site Development and Zoning Professional with Iron Mountain Towers spoke. Mr. McGrew stated that he understood that the Board had previously voted to not allow future cell tower development in Coxhall Gardens or on any land owned by Hamilton County Parks and Recreation; however, his client is offering the most lucrative offer he had ever seen in his 23 years of experience. Mr. McGrew presented the Board with several copies of a packet that contained proposed cell tower designs that he thought would fit in with the ascetics of Coxhall Gardens.

Making the meeting attendees aware of the previous events that lead to this discussion, Director Stice stated that in the February 13th, 2023, Board meeting, it had been decided that the Department would cease consideration of cell tower development. The decision was made based on Dr. Campbell's research and public opposition.

It was explained to Mr. McGrew that the main cause for opposition was not a monetary nor architectural issue. Dr. Campbell stated that the diminished support from the community would be too great of a loss to consider installing cell towers within Coxhall Gardens or any other HCPR park.

Mr. Andrews recalled that evidence was presented that 5G cell towers pose a health risk to park patrons.



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Mr. McGrew stated that there are no health risks associated with cell towers and he would not be in the business if it did. He stated that he would provide evidence to show this.

Mr. Andrews asked the Board if they would reconsider if counterevidence was presented to them.

Dr. Campbell refused to accept any evidence that Mr. McGrew would provide, stating that there are studies from other countries that show that there are health concerns associated with 5G cell towers. She also stated that the long-term health effects are unknown. She concluded that it does not matter why the public is opposed to cell tower development, because the Department would lose public support, including financial support if cell towers were installed.

Mr. McGrew acknowledged that no further discussion on cell tower development was warranted and left the Board Meeting.

D.) Approval of May 15, 2023, Minutes:

Mr. Roudebush made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. McCauley seconded.

Yea: Mr. Andrews; Mr. Roudebush; Dr. Campbell; Mr. McCauley; Ms. Pauker; Ms. Peterson.

Nay: None.

Motion carries.

E.) Finance Report:

1.) Approval of Payroll and Claims

Director Stice read the finance reports. As of May 15th, 2023, there was a beginning cash balance of \$3,166,698.63. Revenue was \$3,841,315.90, as of June 19th, 2023.

Payroll



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was \$242,891.78 as of June 19th, 2023, being approved. Claims presented as of June 19th, 2023, to be approved was \$362,325.97. The ending cash balance as of June 19th, 2023, was \$6,402,796.78.

Mr. Roudebush made a motion to approve payroll and claims as presented. Mr. McCauley seconded.

Yea: Mr. Andrews; Mr. Roudebush; Dr. Campbell; Mr. McCauley; Ms. Pauker; Ms. Peterson.

Nay: None.

Motion carries.

F.) Committee Reports:

1.) Foundation Update

Mr. Neeson stated he was meeting with Jeffrey Carmichael from Hall Render within a week to discuss the scope of engagement regarding The Coxhall Garden Society Fund.

Dr. Campbell stated that she and other park representatives attended a meeting with the executive committee from the Friends of Hamilton County Parks. Dr. Campbell explained that the Foundation would like some clarification, along with access to original documents that they do not have in their records. There is another meeting scheduled for further clarification.

2.) Koteawi Trails

Deputy Director Oldham stated that the Trail Safety Committee had a meeting on June 15th, 2023. Ms. Peterson, Director Stice, and Deputy Director Oldham were in attendance. Conclusions were made regarding signage contents and placement. Some solutions can be implemented now, and others were budgeted into the 2024 budget. Deputy Director Stice stated that they will also continue to collect historical data, as well as data from the current summer.



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Ms. Pauker added that she conversed with a gentleman who is a long-time resident and spoke highly of Strawtown Koteewi Park. Ms. Pauker stated that he was willing to speak to the subcommittee about some horse trail improvements.

Deputy Director Oldham responded that he would like Ms. Pauker to send him the gentlemen's contact information.

Mr. Andrews voiced some concerns about the Potter's Bridge canoe landing. Mr. Andrews recommended that the Department investigate potential solutions to make the canoe launch require less physical proficiency to reduce liability. He stated that the rocks near the base of the canoe launch should be moved.

G.) Old Business:

1.) Project Updates

a.) White River Campground

Deputy Director Oldham stated that Opening Day was May 25th, and everything went well. Campground staff was still operating out of the Health Department Trailer. The new campground manager is back from leave. Progress on the building is continuing. Painting should be completed by the end of the week, which will allow park staff to work towards finishing the interior. Mr. Roudebush recommended installing handrails on each side of the steps.

b.) Morse Beach Shower House

Deputy Director Oldham stated the remodel of the exterior restrooms in the bathhouse are completed. The new design allows for much easier clean up according to custodial staff. Director Stice mentioned an incident involving human waste on the countertops to highlight the kind of issues seen at that facility and why alleviating the staff of structural hindrances was necessary.



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c.) Osprey Point Pavilion

Deputy Director Oldham stated that new sinks, countertops, and fixtures were installed in the kitchen. Acoustic lighting and panels have been ordered. Landscaping and repairs on the building's exterior have been worked on. The estimated date of completion for this project is July 14th, 2023.

d.) Coxhall Centerpiece Fountain

Deputy Director Oldham stated the Department has held multiple meetings in an attempt to continue the repair process. The Department has struggled to schedule a meeting with Tom Fansler of Smock Fansler Corporation, but there is one scheduled for June 21st, 2023.

Director Stice updated the Board on the status of the fountain, stating that it was currently not functional. Mr. Andrews asked if the Department knew what the problem was and if they were in the process of receiving estimated quotes. Director Stice affirmed and stated that a study was done last year to determine the issues. He is attempting to have a meeting with Mr. Fansler and Dan Lawson, a member of the Foundation, to talk about the results of the study and how best to proceed.

e.) Potter's Bridge Roof

Deputy Director Oldham stated that the replacement of the roof has commenced. He added that the OSHA-required harnesses, ropes, and nets are all being installed.

f.) Williams House Renovation

Deputy Director Oldham stated that Ball State has completed the paint study and restoration class. The Department is awaiting the reports. Deputy Director Oldham stated that the paint study would find historical data and determine if lead paint was used. He also commented that the house was built prior to the use of asbestos.



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2.) WRC Utility Updates

Director Stice stated that the department is working with Reynolds Construction and Banning Engineering to complete the project. He explained that the Department has obtained the state health permit for development within the floodplains at WRC. The permit has allowed the Department to move forward with some minor modifications to the specs. Reynold Engineering will obtain final pricing from their subcontractors based on these modifications. Director Stice emphasized that this does not change the price that the Department is paying Reynold Engineering to complete the project.

Director Stice and Deputy Director Oldham updated the Board on the current construction at WRC, including the work that has been done on the construction access road and drainage crossing.

Director Stice explained that the majority of the construction at WRC will take place after it closes for the season. He also noted that the Department will continue to pump the septic tanks every week till the end of the season.

3.) Master Plans for Bray & HC Farms

Director Stice stated that these master plans are not to be voted on during this Board meeting. The Department wants there to be plenty of time for the Board, as well as the public, to process the information so that discussion and requests for approval can take place during August's Board meeting.

Director Stice introduced Jeff Mader noting his long history of working with Hamilton County Parks and Recreation, including aiding in the design of Strawtown Kotewwi Park. Director Stice opened the floor for Mr. Mader's presentation.

a.) Mader Presentation – *Mader Design LLC*

Mr. Mader explained the context of the presentation, stating that he has been working with the Department on the Master Plans for Bray and HC Farms for a year and a half. Mr. Mader and Director Stice decided that the two parks are close enough that is potential for a physical connection between them via trails, thus it made sence to cut costs and allow Mader Design to create the master plans for both parks simultaneously.



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i.) Bray Family Homestead

Mr. Mader stated he has worked extensively with Department heads to create these master plans. There has been great collaboration with the public, including a very successful public meeting in November 2022. The main focus is to provide several amenities for public use, as well as create spaces that can facilitate more interpretive opportunities.

A focus on creating native habitats for wildlife, including pollinators, was presented. Prairie fields and pollinator gardens are in the master plans. Native trees will be planted strategically so that the land is less susceptible to invasive plants. An existing mitigation wetland is on the property, along with multiple natural creeks, that will continue to be maintained.

Mr. Mader explained the plans for amenities at the park including multiple picnic shelters, a disc golf course, an intergenerational playground area, and nature play spaces. The maple syrup production area will be expanded by 5-10 acres with the intention of creating a space focused on native food production throughout the year. There are plans to grow a variety of native food crops including fruit and nut trees, and berry-producing shrubs. The idea is to expand on the Maple Madness program and create interpretation opportunities throughout the year.

There are new and existing structures on the property that have been incorporated into the master plans. Along with plans to build more structures, these will be used for storage, restrooms, housing maintenance and interpretive staff, as well as woodworking, and a four-seasons, rentable, clean kitchen.

Mr. Mader stated that some controversy ignited over the prospects of mountain biking trails being added to the park. After some deliberation, some trails on the northern end of the park will be dedicated to mountain biking. Plans for a pump track in that area have been included. Mr. Mader explained that Bray would be a better fit than HC Farms for a mountain biking trail because it has more land and fewer restrictions due to conservation easements.

The budget range is \$12,000,000 – \$16,000,000. It was explained that the budget reflects the value that would be added to the park if brought to fruition.



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ii.) HC Farms

Mr. Mader stated that HC Farms has conservation easements covering most of the property, except for future trails. He explained that Stantec/Cardino has already created the master plans for the ecological features of the park as part of the partnership with IDNR utilizing the in-lieu fee program. Mader Designs focused on structure proposals and worked with Stantec to plan the trail system to allow public access to as many of the areas of the property as possible.

Director Stice and Mr. Mader emphasized that the property's uniqueness lies in the various streams that flow throughout the park and the topography that surrounds them. Mr. Mader stated that the master plans aim to highlight those special features for public enjoyment.

The existing farm field will be converted to mostly prairie with some reforestation and wetland deployments. Due to DNR restrictions, trails had to be carefully placed, but there are plans for trails to hug creeks and boardwalks to cross creeks.

Mader Engineering is proposing a central hub area where the homestead is located currently. The plan is to create a 50-space parking lot, decorated with interpretive artistic pieces. The location will also include several structures including a maintenance barn, rentable picnic shelters, and public restrooms. The terrain will make it challenging, but the master plan aims to make all trails stemming from the central hub as ADA-accessible as possible.

Mr. Mader stated that north of the central hub there are plans for an outdoor amphitheater classroom. This area can double as a shelter and a programming location. The classroom will be Wi-Fi accessible to aid with programming efforts. The area does not have very much potential for a size expansion given the landscape of the area.

There are several main attractions that Mr. Mader included in the master plan. A pedestrian suspension bridge connecting high points near the center of the park is in the master plan. Also included is a central overlook/wildlife viewing tower. The tower will be several stories tall and have an elevator. Another attraction point is to have several Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the park that will



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also allow for remote wildlife viewing cameras to be installed in key locations.

There are existing wetlands on the north end of the property, but the objective is to modify them for both ecological and recreational enhancement. The master plans also call for temporary wetlands on the southern end of the park. The topography allows for these wetlands to be easily created by slightly altering the terrain.

The budget for the ecological side of the master plans is already being spent, but the estimate for Mader Engineering's contribution is \$7,500,00 - 10,500,00. The majority of the budget would go into the viewing tower, suspension bridge, and extensive trail systems.

H.) New Business:

1.) Asset Decommission

Director Stice explained that the Department is required to review assets and request some of the assets to be decommissioned that have little value to the Department. Once the Board votes to decommission an asset, the Department submits that request to the County Commissioners. Most decommissioned assets are auctioned off and the Department receives those revenues back as cash into the 1219 account.

The Department presented the Board with a list of assets they wish to decommission.

Dr. Campbell made a motion to decommission the assets listed. Ms. Pauker seconded.

Yea: Mr. Andrews; Mr. Roudebush; Dr. Campbell; Mr. McCauley; Ms. Pauker.

Nay: None.

Absent: Ms. Peterson

Motion carries.



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2.) 2024 Budget

Director Stice gave a brief overview of the proposed 2024 budget as presented in an orange report within the Board packet. Director Stice explained that the 1,000 series involves personnel changes, which is the focus of the budget requests. These requests include adding two new full-time maintenance positions, due to newly acquired park land. Additionally, the Department is working with HR and WIS to reclassify/update 1 full-time and 5 part-time positions. The 2,000 series involves minor updates with utilities and expenses. There is no budget increase request for the 4,000 series, which involves various projects throughout Hamilton County Parks: Bur Oak Bend's parking lot, Geist Park's trailhead, Cool Creek Park and Potter's Bridge ADA and restroom modifications, Prather Park playground updates, kiosk and trailhead updates at Strawtown Koteewi Park, and maintenance equipment and tool replacement.

Mr. Roudebush made a motion to approve the 2024 budget as presented. Ms. Pauker seconded.

Yea: Mr. Andrews; Mr. Roudebush; Dr. Campbell; Mr. McCauley; Ms. Pauker.

Nay: None.

Absent: Ms. Peterson

Motion carries.

I.) Director's Report:

Director Stice informed the Board that the Board packet contains a recreational impact fee study timeline from Lehman & Lehman.

J.) Deputy Director's Report:

None.



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K.) Additions and Announcements:

None.

L.) Adjournment:

Mr. Roudebush made a motion to adjourn. Mr. McCauley seconded. Motion carries. Hamilton County Parks & Recreation's June 19th, 2023, Board meeting is adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Hamilton County Parks & Recreation Board

Approved

/S/ Stephen Andrews
Stephen Andrews, President

/S/ Mark McCauley
Mark McCauley, Secretary

Date: 7/17/23