

**MEETING MINUTES OF
PRAIRIE TRAILS CLUB INC.**

**North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library
208 Keller Avenue
North Judson, Indiana**

September 27, 2018

MEMBERS

**Russell Blais
Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Bruce Fingerhut
Carolla Heilstedt
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Brian McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Deb Mix
Sharon Smead
Peggy Stalbrink
Rich Stalbrink**

Call to Order by President

Bruce Fingerhut, President, called to order a membership meeting of the Prairie Trails Club Inc. (“PTC”) at 6:05 pm, CDT (7:05 pm, EDT) on September 27, 2018 in the North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library, North Judson, Indiana.

Approval of August 21, 2018 Minutes

Anita McMillin moved to approve the minutes as written for the August 21, 2018 meeting. Carolla Heilstedt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Later in the meeting Bruce noted that the subject, *Action on August 7 BIC Committee Recommendations*, included an erroneous description of the status of the PTC’s QR Code. In the third sentence of the fourth full paragraph on page 7, the minutes stated that Bruce “said the PTC’s QR Code is designed to be attached to our website but has not been activated.” A more accurate characterization would be that Bruce “said the PTC’s QR

Code is active but not attached to our website.” The QR Code is functional but not set forth at any PTC facility—such as a sign or publication. This adjustment was included in the final minutes posted on our website.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy Lucas circulated among the members a written copy of the Treasurer’s Report. The following summarizes the report:

1) First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)

Balance forward from 8/21/18	\$ 16,238.17
8/23/18 Deposit	
Membership & donation: Larry Wickert	200.00
8/27/18 Deposit	
Membership: Scott Mathews	25.00
8/30/18 Deposit	
Memberships: Rhonda Milner; Dave and Kathy Carrier (two lifetime)	<u>525.00</u>
	750.00
Ending FFBT balance as of 8/21/18	\$16,988.17

2) Northern Indiana Community Foundation (NICF) **3,927.08**

Total of 2 accounts: \$20,917.22

Kathy also provided an update effective September 25, 2018 on PTC Restricted Funds and Unrestricted Funds. FFBT holds all Restricted Funds as follows:

Luminous Fund Grant 1	Signage on S13, a Bass Lake Connector	681.56	232.60 paid Starke Co. Hwy.
Luminous Fund Grant 2	Signage on S13 incl. “You are Here”	5,000.00	
Hardesty Memorial Grant	Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage	9,627.56	1,004.88 paid Starke Co. Hwy.
Wine Timers Donation	K. Wittig Memorial Bench	350.00	
K&S Lucas Donation	K. Wittig Memorial Bench/Landscaping	100.00	
Jain Trucking	“Funds go towards picnic tables”	100.00	

RESTRICTED TOTAL 15,859.12

<i>SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS</i>	<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	<i>RESTRICTED</i>	<i>UNRESRICTED</i>
FFBT	16,988.17	15,859.12	1,129.05
NICF	3,929.05		3,929.05
TOTAL	20,917.22	15,859.12	5,058.10

Sharon Smead moved to approve Treasurer's Report with update of restricted and unrestricted funds. Peggy Stalbrink seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Report of Grant Application to Kankakee Valley REMC Operation Round Up

Kathy said Sharon, Carrola, Yancy and she developed a grant application to the Trust for Kankakee Vally REMC Operation Round Up. When KV REMC members round their bills up automatically, the Trust is able to donate to local non-profits. Sharon earlier identified and then outlined the grant opportunity to the group. Carolla was the primary author for the application. Kathy obtained letters of support from Kent Hackler, science teacher at Knox Community Schools; Irene Szakonyi, Executive Director of Starke County Youth Club; Deb Mix, Community Wellness Coordinator of Purdue Extension Service; and Sarah Origer, Director of Development at Starke County Community Foundation. Sharon also communicated with Trust representatives and drove the completed application to the KV REMC offices in Wanatah to assure timely delivery.

The grant proposal included two components. One was a "science walk" and the other for the placement of bike racks. KV REMC awarded \$2,500 for the bike racks. At Kathy's request, Jerry Gurrado of the Starke County Initiative for Lifelong Learning ("SCILL") agreed to have his students fabricate the bike racks for an in-kind match. The science walk was not funded but may be revisited in a subsequent grant application.

Deb reflected that the addition of bike racks ties in with an active health initiative by the Purdue Extension Service. A core need cited by the initiative was to encourage Starke County residents and visitors to have better access to inexpensive or cost-free physical exercise opportunities. Strategic placement of the racks would encourage the safe use of bikes to access services and for personal enjoyment.

Proposal for Bicycle Repair Station

Brian McMillin said that in 2015 he and Anita were on the Root River Trail near Rushford, Minnesota. They saw a bicycle repair station near the trail. The station had the necessary tools to fix flat tires and to tighten or loosen fixtures. These and a manual air pump were tethered to the station. He did not recall if the pump had a psi reader. It was tethered to the station by a heavy wire cable encased in clear plastic tubing to help keep out the elements. He was not sure if station had a fixture to raise a bike to work on it. Both could be very helpful.

Brian asked if the membership might be interested in developing a bicycle repair station along the Erie Trail. Carolla checked her cell phone and found several providers online. She found that kits were available with or without air pumps. Those with pumps were more costly. Prices ranged from \$800 to \$1,800. Several members expressed interest in the concept. Members questioned where a station might be placed to be most effective. Suggested possibilities were at CR 100 West and in Aldine at CR 125 East. Security was cited as an important consideration.

Bruce said he would entertain a motion to authorize the expenditure of \$800 for purchase of a bike repair station. Carolla made and Rhonda seconded the motion. The motion carried. Options to fund the proposal will be considered during the October meeting.

Develop General Policy for Funding Priorities and Restrictions

During the August meeting, Bruce reflected on the need for a clear understanding within the PTC and by potential donors concerning purposes for which funds can be allocated. Typically PTC funds should be expended as approved by the board of directors or the members and not encumbered by use restrictions. But there are exceptions such as when seeking grants that specify the purposes for which funds must be used. Members agreed and asked for follow-up on policy development in the September meeting. With this background, Bruce circulated a proposed resolution:

Resolution Regarding Restrictions on Funding Offered to or Held by the Prairie Trails Club Inc.

The Prairie Trails Club Inc. ("PTC") can perform missions and goals most effectively if its funding is not limited to particular purposes. Funding offered to or held by the PTC should be expended lawfully following authorization made in a meeting of the board of directors or of the membership as a whole. Officers are authorized to cause the payment of fees and bills when appropriate to the conduct of ordinary PTC business.

In the absence of an authorization by the board or the membership as a whole, a member is not authorized to, and shall refrain from, making promises or commitments to potential donors regarding how funds would be expended. Exceptions apply if the restriction:

- (1) is appropriate to a PTC grant application made to a governmental unit, quasi-governmental entity (such as a utility or conservancy district), or a non-profit nongovernmental organization;
- (2) requires a reasonable cost-share for a major project such as new trail construction or land acquisition;
- (3) is on an approved PTC check-off list for donations; or
- (4) has been otherwise approved in advance by a resolution of the board or the membership as a whole.

Brian asked for a summary of what the resolution would accomplish. Bruce responded that it would help make clear, unless otherwise approved in advance by board or general membership vote, persons cannot promise to a potential donor that funds will be put to a particular use. Exceptions would be recognized for grant applications, qualified cost share projects, and items on an approved donation check-off list. Kathy added that if this resolution were approved, she could draft a new membership form with a donation check-off list for membership review.

Rich Stalbrink asked if the resolution would prevent the membership as a whole from specifying an approved purpose in advance. Steve Lucas answered the members could still elect to approve a purpose in advance. An example would be in subdivision (2) where the members would approve a requirement for a cost share for qualified special

purposes. But purposes could also be approved in advance on a donation check-off list or during a board or general membership meeting.

Deb moved to approve the proposed “Resolution Regarding Restrictions on Funding Offered to or Held by the Prairie Trails Club Inc.” as described. Rhonda seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Update on Wine Club Memorial for Karen Wittig

Kathy updated members on the status of the Wine Club Memorial Bench for Karen Wittig. She said Bruce and Paul prepared a site and placed a green-and-black bench along the Erie Trail near its current southeastern terminus at highway US 35. The bench is the second obtained by the PTC through the Lids-to-Benches initiative. The Wine Club of Bass Lake provided funding. Kathy added that Greg Wittig recently emailed language for a bench plaque in honor of Karen. The Specialty Shoppe in Knox is preparing the plaque.

Plan for Washing, Sealing and Signs at Bogus Run and Fell Ditch Bridges

During the August meeting, Linda urged maintenance this autumn on the Erie Trail bridges over Bogus Run and Fell Ditch. Bruce agreed and recommended they be power washed and sealed.

The BIC Committee conceptualized signs to be placed along the Erie Trail at approaches to the two bridges. The committee determined the signs should caution trail users the bridges have plank surfaces. They should also identify the streams by name. Traffic Control Specialists, Inc. (“TCS”) in Knox developed signs based on the BIC Committee concept. Below is the proof that TCS developed for the Bogus Run bridge:



The PTC contracted with TCS to provide signs for the four approaches to the two bridges (two signs each for the Bogus Run bridge and the Fell Ditch bridge). Funding for the signage was provided by a grant from the Hardesty Memorial Endowment Fund made through the Northern Indiana Community Foundation. TCS constructed the signs, and one for each bridge was shown during the meeting.

The membership discussed maintenance needed on the bridges and sign placement. October 1 was set as the date to commence both bridge efforts. Bruce, Paul, Steve and Russell Blais agreed to participate. Sealing would take place on a date as soon as is practicable after the completion of power washing.

Russ outlined recent discussions with NIPSCO and KV REMC regarding the possibility these utility companies might donate used power poles to help stabilize the bank at the northwest approach to the Fell Ditch Bridge. He said NIPSCO no longer partners with local nonprofits to make these donations, but KV REMC expressed a willingness to help. Paul and Bruce agreed pursuing the opportunity with REMC was a worthy endeavor. The PTC membership (perhaps through the Maintenance Committee) will develop a plan for addressing the logistics of pole acquisition and placement.

Governor's 2019 Budget and \$90 Million For Trails with Matches

Steve reflected that Governor Eric Holcomb announced a program including \$90 million for trail advancement, particularly connections between existing trails. Also, the Stellar Communities program in Starke County may include efforts to support trail connectivity. In August the Starke County Economic Development Foundation hosted an informational session about the Regional Stellar Communities Designation Program. This program is moving forward with Larry Wickert given a lead role.

Bruce recommended the formation of an informal workgroup to advance trail initiatives and to meet with potentially supportive governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations. The workgroup would make recommendations to the PTC membership that might include trail extensions or improvements either northwest or southeast of the current Erie Trail. If an opportunity arises, the workgroup can facilitate a quick response on behalf of the PTC.

Deb moved to approve the formation of a workgroup to address trail connectivity and other opportunities that might arise from the Governor's trail advancement program, the Regional Stellar initiative and other similar efforts. Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried. Bruce, Kathy Carrier, Carolla, Larry, Kathy and Steve volunteered to serve on the workgroup.

Preparations for October 16 Workday

The membership decided earlier in the meeting to hold an October 1 workday dedicated to the Bogus Run and Fell Ditch bridges. How far the bridge project would progress was believed largely dependent on weather conditions. The members agreed to defer further

preparations regarding the October 16 workday until a later date with communications to be made by email.

Scheduling Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for the BLPOA Community Center, 6996 South SR 10, Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana on October 30, 2018 at 6:00 pm, CDT.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm, CDT (8:56 pm, EDT).