

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

**BLPOA Community Center
6996 South State Road 10
Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana**

April 26, 2018

MEMBERS

Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Brian McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Deb Mix
Peggy Stalbrink
Rich Stalbrink

Call to Order and Remarks by Vice President

Rhonda Milner, Vice President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club (“PTC”) at 6:04 p.m., CDT (7:04 p.m., EDT) on April 26, 2018 in the Bass Lake Property Owners Association Community Center, Knox, Indiana. She thanked the BLPOA for allowing the PTC to use its facility without fee.

Rhonda said that as most members are aware, Bruce Fingerhut, President, recently bought a house in Alabama. He informed Rhonda recently he has decided to sell his house in North Judson and make Alabama his full-time residence. Timing of the move is undetermined.

Approval of March 21, 2018 Minutes

Linda Byer moved to approve the proposed March 21, 2018 minutes without amendment. Anita McMillin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Update on Wine Time Club Donation for Karen Wittig Dedication

Kathy Lucas thanked Brian and Anita McMillin for leading the effort by the Wine Time Club of Bass Lake for a bench along the Erie Trail memorializing Karen Wittig, a friend and a dedicated member of the PTC and our Board of Directors. She also thanked “Brian and Anita for inviting Steve and me to the April 18 Wine Time Club meeting at their home. Brian presented a check from the Wine Time Club to develop the memorial, and he added his thoughts of support for Dr. Greg Wittig and family in this time of great sadness.”

Brian reported he spoke with Greg on April 21. He said Greg is aware of the initiative to create the trailside memorial for Karen, but he added “the time is not yet quite right to have a detailed discussion about site selection” or the wording of a memorial plaque. Overall, “Greg is doing well” and would like to have a bike ride to honor Karen.

During the PTC meeting, Brian and Kathy cosigned a letter from our organization to Greg outlining the Wine Time Club donation and seeking Greg’s permission for us to move forward. Sites were suggested that might be appropriate for bench placement, including one at the intersection of the Erie Trail and Starke County Road 800 South. Brian will chair a PTC committee to help bring plans to fruition.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy circulated a written copy of the Treasurer’s Report among the members. Included were statements from the First Farmers Bank & Trust and from the Northern Indiana Community Foundation, as well as the following summary:

1) First Farmers Bank & Trust

Balance forward from 3/21/18		\$7,404.94
Deposit 3/22/18	\$30.00	
(Dues P. Bohac & \$5 donation)		
(Dues R & P Stalbrink)	50.00	
Deposit 4/4/18		
(Hardesty Grant)	12,000.00	
(NICF: The Hive Grant)	750.00	
Payment to <i>The Market</i> newspaper (24.00)		
(Ad for 5K Color Walk/Run)		
Deposit 4/19/18	350.00	
(Wine Time Donation for K. Wittig bench)		
Transfer 4/23/18 from PayPal	130.18	
(Dues Wittigs-\$50; D. Lucas-\$50 & \$10 donation; and J. Milausnic \$50 on 3/24/18)		
		\$13,285.38

Ending FFBT balance as of 3/21/18	\$20,690.32
2) Northern Indiana Community Foundation (Interest & dividends of \$9.86 less administrative fee of \$95)	\$9,895.82
Total of two accounts	\$30,586.14

Rich Stalbrink moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report as submitted. The motion was seconded by Deb Mix. The motion carried.

Report of Restricted and Unrestricted Use Funds in the PTC Treasury

Kathy said during the March 21 meeting Paul Byer asked which funds were generally available for PTC spending and which funds had use restrictions. She said he asked an important question and was promised a response at tonight’s meeting. By their terms, grants or donations may be limited to particular purposes and may also have a deadline when they must be expended or outstanding amounts would revert to the donor.

Steve reminded members that Kathy advanced from her personal account the \$275 IRS fee required to process the PTC’s application for 501(c)(3) status. At about the same time, she applied on behalf of the PTC for a Greenways Foundation grant for the amount of the IRS fee. When the Greenways Foundation later awarded the grant, rather than take it as reimbursement, Kathy donated the \$275 to the PTC on the condition that it would be “earmarked for wayfinding or interpretive signage”. This condition was set forth in the July 11, 2017 minutes. With recent generous grants for signage from the Luminous Foundation and from the Hardesty Memorial Fund Endowment, maintenance and other purposes are now viewed as more pressing needs. These minutes should reflect that Kathy has waived the restriction. The \$275 amount is now changed to the status of an unrestricted purpose.

Steve added that the earliest outstanding grant was from the Luminous Fund in late 2016. The BIC Committee communicated with Kathy Carrier in late 2017 to describe a possible collaborative effort with the Starke County Highway Department that could maximize funding effectiveness if spending were deferred. Kathy Carrier indicated she supported such a collaborative effort and agreed to a deferral. The BIC Committee is now actively engaged with the Highway Department and will, within the next month, ask the Starke County Foundation to release Luminous Fund grant money so we can move ahead.

Kathy said the NICF Hive grant is flexible as to purpose. The grant “provides general support for the operations and programming of the Prairie Trails Club.” It seems well designed to help us prepare for the 5K Color Walk/Run. For purposes of this report the grant is described as having an “unrestricted purpose”, but the Hive grant does have a use deadline.

Rich reflected that it’s important for the PTC to apply grant amounts to their intended purposes before the grant expires. Neither the donor nor trail users are well served by reversions. Kathy agreed and said our recent success with grant making applications now “keeps me up at night” with concerns for meeting deadlines. She distributed an

overview with very general descriptions of grant purpose. She added that in applying funding from various grants, however, the particular terms should be carefully reviewed.

Kathy circulated a written overview of restricted and unrestricted purpose grants. The substance of the overview is set forth below. At the request of several members, the overview is augmented with deadlines in [brackets].

RESTRICTED PURPOSE GRANTS/DONATIONS

Luminous Fund Grant 1 (2016)	Signage for W. Bass Lake Connector (S13)	\$1,000	[see above]
Luminous Fund Grant 2 (2018)	Signage for W. Bass Lake Connector (S13)	5,000	[9/1/18 update]
Hardesty Memorial Fund Grant	Wayfinding & Interpretive Signage for Erie Trail, North Judson and Connectors other than S13	12,000	[3/13/19]
Wine Timers Donation (WTD)	K. Wittig Memorial Bench	350	[timely]
K&S Supplement to WTD	K. Wittig Memorial Bench	100	[timely]
TOTAL		\$18,450	

UNRESTRICTED PURPOSE GRANTS/DONATIONS

Greenways Foundation (K Lucas Reimbursement)	501(c)(3) Application	\$275	
NICF The Hive (K Lucas Presentation)		750	[2/22/19]
TOTAL		\$975	

A significant portion of financial support for PTC activities comes from sources other than grants and donations that have specified purposes. These include membership dues and activities fees (now most notably the 5K Color Walk/Run). For this meeting Kathy provided a full summary of funds and the location of those funds, including their identification as restricted or unrestricted use.

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS BY LOCATION

	RESTRICTED	UNRESTRICTED	TOTAL
First Farmers Bank & Trust	\$12,450.00	\$8,240.32	\$20,690.32
Northern Ind. Com. Foundation	6,000.00	3,990.82	9,895.82
TOTALS	\$18,450.00	\$12,136.14	\$30,586.14

5K Color Walk/Run Committee Report

Kathy provided a report on behalf of the 5K Color Walk/Run Committee. Donna Osborne placed a save-the-date ad in *The Market* and is promoting the event through a Facebook website.

Kathy said Peggy Bohac is speaking with North Judson town officials about the timing and needs for the event. The committee is exploring signage with Kenny Bailey. Most of the materials remaining from last year’s event are being stored by Donna and Steve Os-

borne. “Within the next week or two we’ll do an inventory of T-shirts and color packets to determine how much needs to be ordered.”

Peggy Stalbrink and Linda volunteered to assist with organization. Deb volunteered to help with the event. Kathy gladly accepted their offers on behalf of the committee.

BIC Committee Signage and Mapping Report

Steve reported that following review and membership direction on March 21 regarding black-and-yellow signage, the BIC Committee completed an inventory of needs. In an April 6 email he provided a list of needed signs and posts to Rik Ritzler, Starke County Highway Superintendent. The next day he spoke with Rik who said the listing was “okay” and that it would be included with a large Highway Department request circulated for bids. Steve said he sent Rik an email “earlier in the week to ask about the status” but has not yet received a response. He will follow up.

Steve reminded the members that also during the March meeting, Bruce discussed the possible purchase from “Imagine That” in North Judson of 20 new black-and-gold ERIE TRAIL signs. Bruce brought a sign from the original Erie Trail initiative west of County Road 100 West that was of similar design but with the prior designation for the “North Judson Erie Trail”. Imagine That offered two alternatives and Steve said he hoped that tonight the membership would provide direction for moving forward. “When we approve a sign design, it could also form the basis for branding PTC business cards and perhaps a product available for purchase at an event such as the 5K Color Walk/Run or on our website.”

The membership then reviewed the sign bids Bruce obtained from Imagine That. Amounts were stated for two types of signs. The first type provided for an aluminum base of .080 gauge that would be exterior vinyl covered. The second and more costly type would have a black powder base coat on aluminum.

Paul expressed the opinion that the second option was preferable. The resulting sign would be more durable and resistant to vandalism and would lend itself to repairs in some circumstances. Linda agreed and added that the latter option would provide a sign that should retain its vibrance for a longer period. Kathy said most powder coatings emit far lower VOCs than vinyl and are more environmentally friendly. Brian added the ERIE TRAIL sign was central to our purpose and we should seek good quality.

Deb recommended getting another local bid for the second option. She suggested that a representative of the BIC Committee contact Traffic Control Specialists in Knox for a quote.

Steve asked the membership whether there was agreement that the PTC should pursue the second type for ERIE TRAIL markers and that a second bid should be sought from Traffic Control Specialists. There appeared to be unanimity.

Linda moved that the membership approve the second type, which would apply powder coating, for black-and-gold ERIE TRAIL signage and that Traffic Control Specialists be invited to bid with the specifications referenced in the Imagine That bid. Kathy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kathy reported that on or about April 2, the much-anticipated Erie Trail signage was placed on the billboard at the intersection CR 450 East and CR 210 on the southwest end of Bass Lake. She repeated thanks to Kathy Carrier for funding and spearheading the effort. Brian said he and Anita observed the billboard during one of their frequent bike rides around Bass Lake and that he discussed the signage with Russell Blais. An April 26 image of the billboard follows:



Steve said late last year the PTC received conceptual approval from the North Judson Town Council and the North Judson Parks and Recreation Board for a sign at Norwayne Field to help visitors find the Erie Trail. He added signage is also needed for USBR 35 and the American Discovery Trail to get trekkers through North Judson. Funding from the Hardesty Memorial Fund Endowment can be used for this purpose. Steve said Peggy Bohac “got us on the Town Council agenda for the meeting on May 7 at 6:30 p.m., CDT to discuss needs and seek approval.” He said it could be helpful if members who are able would attend the meeting and express support.

Deb distributed an attractive trail map developed by the Cass County Visitors Bureau. The two-sided map 16" by 9" map folds down neatly to 2 1/2" by 3 1/2". Brian noted it could fit easily in a pocket. Deb obtained cost estimates for developing a similar map for Starke County trails and bike routes.

2,500 maps for \$3,359
4,000 maps for \$4,200
5,000 maps for \$4,778

Members questioned whether this kind of mapping would qualify under the Hardesty Memorial Fund Endowment if the fund is not exhausted by onsite signage needs. There was agreement that a similar Starke County map would be attractive as well as useful to trail users.

Maintenance Committee Herbicide Purchase Report

During the March 21 meeting, the membership authorized Paul and Linda Byer to make a bulk purchase of a generic glyphosphate solution. The Byers reported that earlier in the day they bought, from Gen-Tech Farm Seed in Argos, 30 gallons of the solution (\$357) and a hand pump (\$125) to assist with Erie Trail weed and exotic species control. By PTC check, Kathy reimbursed them during the April meeting. Paul said the solution and pump can be stored at their home.

Scheduling Next Meeting

The next meeting of the membership was scheduled for The Depot, Starke County Chamber of Commerce Office, 400 North Heaton Street, Knox, Indiana on May 24, 2018 at 6:00 p.m., CDT (7:00 p.m., EDT).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm, CDT (8:45 pm, EDT).