

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

**BLPOA Community Center  
6996 South S.R. 10  
Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana**

August 15, 2019

**MEMBERS**

Diane Blais  
Russell Blais  
Bruce Fingerhut  
Carolla Heilstadt  
Kathy Lucas  
Steve Lucas  
Anita McMillin  
Brian McMillin  
Rhonda Milner  
Sharon Smead  
Peggy Stalbrink  
Richard Stalbrink  
Rick Vlaming

**GUESTS**

Bob Albert, HVRM Liaison

**Call to Order by President**

Carolla Heilstedt, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club Inc. ("PTC") at 6:07 pm, CDT (7:07 pm, EDT) on August 15, 2019 in the Bass Lake Property Owners Association Community Center, Bass Lake, Indiana. Introductions were made around the table.

**Review and Approval of July 18, 2019 Minutes**

From the group discussion it appeared a significant possibility that some members may not have received the draft July minutes. Bruce Fingerhut moved to approve the draft minutes, as written, as the final minutes of the July 18, 2019 meeting. He qualified his motion by suggesting the July minutes be made subject to modification at the September meeting if then requested by any member. Russ Blais seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report**

Kathy Lucas circulated copies of the Treasurer's Report for the period that followed the July meeting. The report provided in substantive parts:

**I) First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)**

**Balance forward from 7/18/19** **\$ 31,661.55**

**INCOME**

07/19/19 Deposit <i>Indiana Greenways Foundation (NLT Match)</i>	5,000.00
07/19/19 Deposit <i>Membership dues: Russ &amp; Diane Blais</i>	50.00
08/05/19 Deposit <i>Marshall County Horse Ass'n (for maintenance)</i>	100.00
08/05/19 Deposit <i>Membership dues: Tabitha Balzer, Chris Balzer, Yancy Lucas and Nadia Corral Frias</i>	100.00
08/05/19 Deposit <i>Erie Trail T-shirt Sales (4)</i>	100.00
08/05/19 Deposit <i>Anonymous gifts</i>	25.00
08/05/19 Deposit <i>Mary &amp; John Reibold ("Thank You")</i>	25.00

**Total Income** **5,400.00**

**EXPENSES**

07/23/19 Check #1041 to Precept Partners <i>Webmaster Updates</i>	(75.00)
08/08/19 Check #1042 to Rick Vlaming <i>Reimbursement for sign materials</i>	(117.01)

**Total Expenses** **192.01**

**Total Transactions** **5,207.99**

**Ending FFBT balance as of 08/15/19** **\$ 36,869.54**

**II) Northern Indiana Community Foundation (NICF)**

**NICF balance as of 6/30/19** **3,933.75**

**Total of 2 accounts:** **\$40,803.29**

Kathy noted this report was the first in which account totals exceeded \$40,000. Most PTC funding is restricted to particular uses, although unrestricted funds have also improved in recent months. Sharon Smead reflected that the donation from the Marshall County Horse Association was made with an understanding of the great need for maintenance funding, but the intent was not that the donation be expressly restricted to this purpose.

Kathy then provided a written breakdown of restricted and unrestricted funding as set forth below:

**RESTRICTED GRANTS/DONATIONS**

Luminous Fund 1 (2017)	Signage for Bass Lake Spur	\$61.19 (signs, posts, weblink)
Luminous Fund 2 (2018)	Signage for Bass Lake General	5,000.00
Luminous Fund 3 (2019)	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
Hardesty Memorial Grant	Wayfinding/Interpretive Signs	8,057.50 (signs, posts, weblink)
Hardesty Memorial Grant (2019)	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
PTC Commitment	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
Peggy & Rich Stalbrink	Bench at Signal Bungalow.	0.00 (Bench done)
Marshall County Horse Association	Bench (Location TBD)	350.00
Indiana Greenways Foundation	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$33,468.69</b>

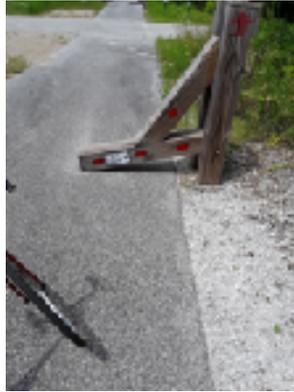
<b>SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>RESTRICTED</b>	<b>UNRESTRICTED</b>
First Farmers Bank & Trust	\$36,869.54	\$30,468.69	\$6,400.85
Northern Indiana Community Foundation	3,933.75	3,000.00	933.75
<b>BREAKDOWN</b>	<b>\$40,803.82</b>	<b>\$33,468.69</b>	<b>\$7,334.60</b>

Diane Blais moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report including the update of Restricted and Unrestricted funds. Rhonda Milner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Update on Maintenance and Repair of Erie Trail Gates**

Bruce provided an update on the status of maintenance and repairs to the Erie Trail gates. A chronic problem for the gate on the southeast side of Starke County Road 300 East has been a sagging north arm. He noted the original construction of the gate included duct tape. In the past, stopgap measures had lifted the arm a few inches from the surface, but the arm was again down. This time he “pulled bolts all the way through the top. I used a hole saw and chisel on the front to make it flat, added washers and put it back together.”

The gate and Bruce’s initiative to repair the gate are shown in the images on the next page. The first, second, and fourth images were provided by Bruce. The third was by Kathy.



Facing northwest, CR 300 East gate down before repair.



Closeup of gate damage.



Closeup following repairs.



Facing northwest, CR 300 East gate restored after repair.

Bruce said he has purchased materials to repair damages to the gate on the southeast side of County Road 100 West. He hopes to be able to work with Jeff Mencl to perform these repairs within the next few weeks.

Bruce concluded that “little black ants attacked me as I was making the repair” to the gate at CR 300 East. He has sought assistance from pest controller Brian Combs to help address any insect infestations to the gates.

### Update on Color Fun Walk during Monterey Days Festival

Kathy reported she spoke with Sports Unlimited in Knox to determine if the company could provide additional T-shirts for a color walk and at what price. She learned the cost would be about \$3.50 per shirt for small or youth sizes. A suggestion was made that the phrase “color run” be removed from the new shirts so unused shirts might be available for another purpose if not needed for the Monterey Days Festival event. Peggy Stalbrink moved to authorize Kathy to purchase up to 24 small or youth shirts with the “color run” reference removed. Russ seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Notice of the color fun walk has already been included in *Catch & Release*. Kathy and Carolla said they would send information concerning the color walk through the Monterey Days Festival promoters and on social media. Steve will cause a notice to be posted on the PTC’s website this weekend. Kathy will prepare registration forms for use onsite.

### Monthly Report of Erie Trail Extension Workgroup

Carolla reported the workgroup completed the SOQ with evaluations of three candidates for our engineering and architectural consultant. An objective process with scoring was applied. The Troyer Group “scored highest with everyone” who completed the scoring process. She has spoken with the Troyer Group and the other two candidates to advise them of the SOQ results. The workgroup will next meet with the Troyer Group and seek to come to an agreement on consultant contract terms. If an agreement is not reached, the workgroup will revisit evaluations of the other two candidates. One of these would then be the focus of a possible consultant contract.

Rhonda said she was disappointed the workgroup did not select Bob Aloia and Territorial Engineering. He has been a good and loyal partner to development of the Erie Trail. Carolla responded workgroup members are very respectful of Bob’s support and hope he will continue to engage with us. She added that the Troyer Group included Territorial Engineering as the surveying component for its application.

Kathy reflected that the written submission by the Troyer Group demonstrated the most varied and recent trail experience for this application. Steve Lucas agreed and said he was impressed that by its own inventiveness, and with the workgroup’s permission, Troyer communicated with INDOT and determined options for a trail crossing of US Highway 35. This issue has been a major concern. Russ said the Troyer Group seemed to have the most complete package for this particular grant. Going forward with what we hope will be another trail extension, Territorial Engineering may well be the best fit.

During the July PTC meeting, the members adopted a resolution as requested by DNR to clarify the intent of our “Addendum to Memorandum of Understanding” entered with the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum (the “HVRM”) in February. This resolution was taken by HVRM Liaison, Bob Albert, to the Board of Directors of the Railroad Museum. With Larry Wickert in attendance, the HVRM Board reviewed the resolution on August 10. Larry emailed later that day the Board approved the resolution “wording, and...once they get the minutes written up, they’ll send a copy to us.”

### **August 20 Next Level Trails Workshop at Indiana Dunes State Park**

On August 1, the PTC received notice from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources that the second round of workshops for Governor Holcomb’s have been scheduled. The notice stated: “

Both first-time and returning applicants will find these sessions valuable. Workshop topics include: program guidelines, first-round recap, second-round details and changes, information on how to apply or reapply, and insight on making your application more competitive. DNR staff will be available at the in-person workshops to answer applicant questions after an approximately one-hour presentation.

One of the workshops was set for August 20 at Indiana Dunes State Park. DNR added that workshops were free but “those interested should RSVP.”

Carolla reported she has made reservations for five representatives from the PTC. Bruce, Kathy, and Steve said they plan to attend. Russ said he would also attend if it is possible.

Bruce suggested the IDSP workshop might also be a good time for a trails extension workgroup member to meet with a representative of the Troyer Group. The workgroup will seek to achieve such a meeting.

### **Announcement of Hoosier Valley Master Planning Project**

Bob announced that on August 14 Kurt West Garner Consulting made its preliminary presentation of the Hoosier Valley Master Planning Project. As introduced in a 35-page document, “master planning” helps to guide an organization in developing facilities and resources, and to plan for growth through program and partnership development. This planning is often “married to some level of financial planning to provide a framework in which the organization’s goals can be realized.” The HVRM’s “master planning process will address these aspects and be a framework for the organization looking 15-30 years into the future.” Bob invited PTC members to review the preliminary presentation and to offer productive thoughts on its advancement by the HVRM.

## **Resolution in Support of Constellation of Starke Solar System in Scale**

Launched in 2011, Stellar Communities is led by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs and seeks to boost community and economic development and promote local and regional partnerships. As Larry reported previously to the PTC, one of this year's four finalists for Indiana's "Stellar Community" top award is the "Constellation of Starke" comprised of Hamlet, Knox, North Judson and Starke County.

During our April 24, 2019 meeting, members were informed that Starke County Attorney Marty Lucas, through the Constellation of Starke, proposed a solar scale model starting with the Sun at the Main Street trailhead. With the current nine miles of trail, the model would end at US 35 with the planet Neptune. With the anticipated extension of the Erie Trail to Starke County Road 700 East, Steve suggested that any model should include the additional two miles. He said his understanding is that the proposal has gained traction recently, and the PTC has been asked to consider adopting a resolution in support.

Rich Stalbrink inquired about the Constellation of Starke and asked whether approval of the resolution would require the PTC to assist with funding the Solar System in Scale. Bruce, Carolla and Kathy provided a brief overview of the Constellation of Starke and added that Larry might provide an update on its status at a later meeting. Steve added approval of a resolution would not commit to assisting with funding.

Sharon said she was confused by the phrase "Solar System in Scale". Several other members expressed similar sentiments. Rick Vlaming suggested the concept might be described as a "scale model" or "in perspective" rather than "in scale". Bob said he had not heard of the concept before but thought it compatible with the Hoosier Valley Master Planning Project.

After further discussion, Rhonda moved to adopt the following resolution:

The Prairie Trails Club Inc. (the "PTC") issues this resolution supporting development by the Constellation of Starke of "Our Solar System in Scale" using the full length of the Erie Trail in Starke County from Main Street in North Judson east to County Road 700 East. The Constellation of Starke is urged to render the sun and the planets from Mercury through Neptune, with art objects, so as to maximize the project as a Starke County destination. The Constellation of Starke is also urged to consider placement of the sun rendering northwest of Main Street, and within the Town of North Judson, to form a hub that would connect the Erie Trail, Norwayne Field, and a new nonmotorized trail northwest toward English Lake. In issuing this resolution, the PTC recognizes that effectuation of "Our Solar System in Scale" would require site approval by the Town of North Judson and the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum.

Brian seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for the BLPOA Community Center, 6996 South SR 10, Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana for Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 6:00 pm, CDT (7:00 pm, EDT).

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm, CDT (8:37 pm, EDT).