

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

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

October 15, 2019

MEMBERS

Diane Blais
Russell Blais
Linda Byer
Bruce Fingerhut
Joan Hardesty
Carolla Heilstedt
Mary Hollett
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Sharon Smead
Peggy Stalbrink
Rich Stalbrink
Larry Wickert

Call to Order by President

Carolla Heilstedt, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club Inc. ("PTC") at 6:04 pm, CDT (7:04 pm, EDT) on October 15, 2019 in the Bass Lake Property Owners Association Community Center, Knox, Indiana.

Approval of September 12, 2019 Minutes

Rich Stalbrink moved to approve the draft minutes as final minutes of the September 12, 2019 meeting. 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 September meeting. The report provided in substantive parts:

I) First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)

Balance forward from 08/15/19

\$ 37,175.04

INCOME

09/13/19 Deposit

<i>Betty Lucas Memorial: B.Franey/P.Redlin</i>	50.00
10/09/19 Deposit <i>Network for Good</i>	25.00
10/15/19 Mobile Deposit <i>Betty Lucas Memorial: Ralph E. Redecki</i>	100.00
Total Income	\$175.00

EXPENSES

09/13/19 Check #1045 to J. Mencl <i>Reimbursement for gate repair materials</i>	(18.99)
10/03/19 Check #1047 to Greentree Plastics <i>Purchase of four benches with lids exchange</i>	(620.00)
10/09/19 Bank charge <i>2IB Billpay</i>	(3.00)
Total Expenses	\$641.99

Ending FFBT balance as of 09/12/19 **\$ 36,708.05**

II) Northern Indiana Community Foundation (NICF)

NICF balance as of 9/12/19 **3,933.75**

Total of both accounts: **\$40,641.80**

Kathy noted part of the cost of benches applied to the PTC cost-share for the Erie Trail extension. She then broke down restricted and unrestricted funding as set forth below:

RESTRICTED GRANTS/DONATIONS

Luminous Fund 2 (2018)	Signage for Bass Lake General	4,411.19
Luminous Fund 3 (2019)	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
Hardesty Memorial Grant	Wayfinding/Interpretive Signs	8,057.50
Hardesty Memorial Grant (2019)	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
PTC Commitment	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
Indiana Greenways Foundation	Match NLT Grant	5,000.00
Marshall County Horse Association	Bench (on Trail Extension)	350.00
Lucas lakehouse guests' donation	Future Vision/website	700.00
	TOTAL	\$33,518.69

SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS	TOTAL	RESTRICTED	UNRESTRICTED
First Farmers Bank & Trust	\$36,708.05	\$30,158.69	\$6,189.36
Northern Indiana Community Foundation	3,933.75	3,000.00	933.75
BREAKDOWN	\$40,641.80	\$33,518.69	\$7,123.11

Anita McMillin moved to approve the Treasurer's Report including the update of Restricted and Unrestricted funds. Rhonda Milner seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Panhandle Pathway Round 2 Next Level Trails Grant Application

As promised during our September meeting, Steve Lucas sent a letter to the Friends of the Panhandle Pathway expressing PTC support of the Friends' intended grant application to extend both the north and south ends of the Panhandle Pathway.

Monthly Report of Erie Trail Extension Workgroup

Kathy reported the workgroup is continuing negotiations with the Troyer Group on a consulting contract. She reviewed extensively the contract proposed by the Troyer Group and urged several amendments, primarily related to liability issues. Discussions earlier in the day with Jonathon Geels, Troyer's Principal Landscape Architect, suggest progress. But there is not yet an agreement.

Communications with DNR are also promising, with a draft document for grant and cost share allocation moving forward. The understanding is the funding for our project now has Budget Agency approval, but the PTC also has not yet received a signed contract from the State of Indiana.

Kathy said Paul Byer performed preliminary brush removal and mowing on top of the railroad ballast fill to help facilitate required land surveying. On October 1 following Paul's efforts, she and Steve walked the two-mile stretch. "We met Gloria and Darlene Sanders, adjacent property owners along the extension, and had a delightful discussion with them regarding the extension." Paul emailed recently that he intends to augment surface clearing efforts atop the former rail line so surveying can be performed before the winter.

Northwest Trail Extension and North Judson Town Council Interface

Carolla said she learned from WKVI radio that the North Judson Town Council planned to discuss, at its September 16 meeting, the possible sale of the railroad northwest of town. She, Bruce Fingerhut, Russ, Steve and Kathy attended the meeting to express PTC hopes to extend the trail northwest toward LaCrosse in a way compatible with operation of the Hoosier Valley Railroad and supportive of development in North Judson. She said the Town Council was seemingly supportive of the value of the Erie Trail. Bruce asked that a liaison be appointed from the Town Council, but the response was that the PTC should provide a contact person who would attend meetings at least once monthly.

During the PTC meeting, Larry Wickert offered to be our contact person. Carolla thanked Larry for his offer of assistance.

Introduction of Joan Hardesty

Kathy introduced Joan Hardesty and expressed the organization's great appreciation for the steadfast support of the Hardesty Memorial Endowment Fund. Joan said that credit

belongs to her Uncle James Hardesty. She said she is also supportive, though, and will join the PTC.

Update on Vin Fiz Interpretive Signage

Steve reported Amanda Brewer of OTES and Yancy Lucas completed development of the interpretive signage for the epic 1911 flight of the *Vin Fiz*. This first US coast-to-coast flight was slated to land in North Judson but was forced to make an impromptu landing near Aldine. Steve again thanked the Luminous Fund for providing financial support to the PTC for an iconic signage project.

Vin Fiz signage includes two panels that will be erected at the Erie Trail crossing of County Road 125 East in Aldine. The PTC obtained the panels from OTES on October 9, and they were displayed during this PTC meeting. The left panel is shown below:



Report by Brochure Workgroup

As anticipated during the September meeting, the Brochure Workgroup presented a draft of the new trails brochure during this meeting. Susan Byer developed the draft for an initial printing of a new four-fold design on nine-by-thirteen inch paper. The current brochure facing was retained but with a new map by Yancy to identify official Connectors

and our TransAmerican elements. With support from Bruce, Russ led a successful effort to market advertisements. An initial printing of 3,000 maps is anticipated.

The membership had a lively discussion of whether to use a map insert showing Starke County within the State of Indiana or a more detailed Northwest Indiana map showing key highways. Carolla called the matter for a vote, and the majority supported using Starke County within the State of Indiana. She then urged the workgroup to bring the project to conclusion using Susan's draft as the core design element.

Formation of Workgroup to Develop Redesigned Website and to Update Future Vision Statement

Carolla outlined recent communications with Google for a program to improve the inter-connectivity of our website and its users. Google-for-Nonprofits will allow us to have multiple e-addresses and retain information in the cloud. Because our organization is a not-for-profit, the program will be without cost. She asked whether the membership would endorse participation in the program and authorize her to complete consultations with Google needed for the PTC to participate in Google-for-Nonprofits. Sharon Smead moved to authorize Carolla to take whatever action is reasonable for PTC participation in the Google-for-Nonprofits program. Steve seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Bruce reflected on the support Steve Antisdell of Precept Partners, LLC has given the PTC as webmaster almost from the inception of our organization. He said the service is exceptional and Precept Partners is now amenable to working with us to update our website. Precept Partners typically reduces its fees to us by 50% because we are a 501(c)(3) entity. Rhonda concurred and reflected she thought it was time to bring a fresh look. Kathy added that the PTC has "come so far" in the last two or three years that our vision statement looks dated and in some ways is obsolete. Other members echoed these perspectives and reflected an updated website should also maximize opportunities provided by Google-for-Nonprofits. Suggested vision topics were equipment storage and a chipper.

Carolla then established a workgroup to develop a redesigned website with inclusion of an updated vision statement. She appointed Bruce, Rhonda, Kathy, Sharon, Steve and herself to the workgroup. She said she would be glad to include other PTC members in the workgroup if they ask to participate. She said the workgroup is encouraged to meet with Steve Antisdell as soon as practicable.

Update on Constellation of Starke Initiative

Larry provided an update on the Constellation of Starke initiative. Following extensive collaboration and by the September 20 deadline, representatives submitted a Regional Development Plan for the Stellar Communities Designation Program. The COS Executive Committee will make a final presentation to program officials in November. In December, the four finalists will learn which is designated the Regional Stellar Community. He said each of the three remaining finalists will receive funding in the amount of \$333,333.

Larry added the Starke County Community Foundation just awarded the COS Executive Committee the 2019 James R. Hardesty Leadership in Philanthropy Award. He identified committee members Andrew Rowe, Jacque Ryan, Jessica Martinović, Martin Lucas and Bob Aloï.

A copy of the “Stellar Development Plan 2019” for Starke County was circulated among the members. Of particular note were the first priority of improving the former Bass Lake State Beach as a county facility, second priority of connecting upgraded share-the-road routes to the Erie Trail and adding a trailhead with bathrooms along CR 210, and fourth priority of scale model of our solar system along the Erie Trail. PTC endorsement of a solar system scale model was delivered on September 15 and is referenced in the Stellar Development Plan.

Report of 2019 Starke County Comprehensive Plan

As proposed during our September meeting, Steve on September 15 tendered written comments on behalf of the PTC with respect to the first draft of the 2019 Starke County Comprehensive Plan. The first draft recognized the Erie Trail and its Connectors but without focusing on them as might have been hoped. The PTC comments seek greater emphasis on the trail and plans for its extension, to add the Connectors depicted in the Stellar Development Plan, and to otherwise refine the discussion of trail opportunities in Starke County.

Report of Joint Workday with Marshall County Horse Association

Sharon reported that five or six members of the Marshall County Horse Association joined PTC members for a joint work day on September 14. The primary direction of the effort was removal of bush honeysuckle from the horse trail between County Road 200 East and County Road 300 East. Paul brought his tractor and Bruce chained large honeysuckle plants that were then pulled out by their roots. Our new PTC member, Mary Hollett, participated in the workday.

Schedule Joint Workday with CISMA on November 16

Since the early spring, Erica Luchik, Northwest Regional Specialist for Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management (“SICIM”), has coordinated efforts in Northwestern Indiana to define and develop Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (“CISMA”) groups. Her efforts are also supported by the Purdue Extension. A CISMA is a local county or multi-county organization dedicated to helping control invasive species and promoting native species of plants.

Linda reflected that a similar effort begun in Starke County a few years ago failed. The current effort would combine Starke and Pulaski Counties into a single CISMA. During a CISMA meeting held on October 2 at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area, North Judson, she suggested a good working field trip might be a joint workday with the PTC to control invasive species along the Erie Trail. November 16 was identified by CISMA participants

as a good date. Ultimately, two possible initiatives were proposed: (1) Continuation of the efforts between CR 200 E and CR 300 E which were the subject of the joint workday with the Marshall County Horse Association; or, (2) An initiative centered on the bridge over Bogus Run that would target primarily Siberian elm trees (*Ulmus pumila*). Linda added there was also an invasive species west of Bogus Run, which is new to Starke County, known as “mugwort” (*Artemisia vulgaris*). Erica emailed that either of the two initiatives would be a worthy joint workday and left it to the PTC to make the selection. Following discussion and Linda’s recommendation during the meeting, by consensus the PTC membership selected the initiative centered on the bridge over Bogus Run.

Erica later developed a flyer for open public distribution as set forth below:

PRAIRIE TRAILS CLUB &
STARKE/PULASKI COUNTY CISMA INVITE
YOU TO AN

Invasive Species Workday

Learn how to identify and manage
invasive species, such as Siberian Elm.

NOVEMBER 16TH, 2019 • 9 AM CST
MEET AT REST PARK (INTERSECTION OF ST. RD. 10
& CO. RD. 250 W) JUST EAST OF NORTH JUDSON.



QUESTIONS? CONTACT STEVE LUCAS AT 317-437-7032
OR SKADAD2008@GMAIL.COM

Next Meeting

The next PTC meeting was scheduled for the BLPOA Community Center, 6996 South SR 10, Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana for Thursday, November 21, 2019 at 6:00 pm, CST (7:00 pm, EST).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 pm, CDT (8:44 pm, EDT).