

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

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

July 19, 2018

MEMBERS

**Bruce Fingerhut
Carolla Heilstedt
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Yancy Lucas
Brian McMillin
Anita McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Sharon Smead**

Bob Albert

Call to Order by President

Bruce Fingerhut, President, called to order a membership meeting of the Prairie Trails Club (“PTC”) at 6:03 p.m., CDT (7:03 p.m., EDT) on July 19, 2018 in the North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library, North Judson, Indiana.

Approval of June 21, 2018 Minutes

Carolla Heilstedt moved to approve the June 21, 2018 minutes without amendment. The motion was seconded by Kathleen Lucas. The motion carried.

Report of Work Day with Marshall County Horse Association

Sharon Smead reported on the successful June 23 joint work day by the Marshall County Horse Association (the “MCHA”) and the PTC held on the Erie Trail between C.R. 300 East and the Fell Ditch Bridge. She said she was accompanied by Linda Collyard, Shylar Clemons, David Clemons, Eileen Miller, Joyce Heistand and Shaun Maciasyek of the MCHA and by Bruce, Paul Byer, Anita McMillin, Brian McMillin, Rhonda Milner and Steve Lucas. She and Scotty Eskridge began efforts to open the trail corridor for equestrian use between Bogus Run and C.R. 100 West.

Sharon said a couple of days later she and Bruce walked the Erie Trail from the Bogus Run Bridge to C.R. 100 West. They removed vegetation to help make the space suitable for horseback riding, but the area still suffers from the lack of an adequate parking area for vehicles and horse trailers. She added that Scotty Eskridge had agreed to bush-hog the area.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy circulated among the members a written copy of the Treasurer's Report. Included was the following summary:

1) First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)

Balance forward from 6/21/18	\$ 23,757.26
6/22/18 Deposit <i>(Di & Russ Blais membership; \$100 Good Oil donation)</i>	150.00
6/26/18 Deposit <i>Hannah Fingerhut lifetime membership; donation From Bruce Fingerhut</i>	600.00
7/6/18 Deposit <i>Rick Vlaming membership & donation</i>	50.00
7/6/18 Deposit <i>Cambe Chevrolet 200; Heartland Church 200; Jain Express LLC 100* (*restricted for picnic tables)</i>	500.00
7/6/18 Deposit <i>(Member P. Bohac T-shirt sale)</i>	24.00
7/18/18 Traffic Control Specialists, Inc. <i>(20 Erie Trail signs, hardware and posts)</i>	(858.40)
Ending FFBT balance as of 7/12/18	24,222.86

2) Northern Indiana Community Foundation (NICF) 3,925.11

Total of 2 accounts: \$28,147.97

Carolla moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Sharon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Report of Restricted and Unrestricted Use Funds in PTC Treasury

Kathy distributed printed copies of a spreadsheet for “PTC Restricted/Unrestricted Funds”. The spreadsheet reported in substance (with clerical corrections):

Restricted Grants/Donations		Orig. Amt.	Expended	Remaining
<i>Luminous Fund Grant 1</i>	<i>S13 Spur Signage</i>	\$1,000	\$85.84 <i>(7/15/18 to TCS ERIE signs)</i>	\$914.16
<i>Luminous Fund Grant 2</i>	<i>S13 Spur Signage+</i>	5,000		5,000
<i>Hardesty Memorial Grant</i>	<i>Wayfinding & Int. Sign.</i>	12,000	<i>(previously \$600 and 7/15//18 \$772.56 to TCS ERIE signs)</i>	10,627.44
<i>Wine Timers Donation</i>	<i>K. Wittig Mem. Bench</i>	350		350
<i>K&S Lucas Donation</i>	<i>K. Wittig Mem. Supp.</i>	100		100
<i>Jain Trucking</i>	<i>Picnic Tables</i>	100		100
			TOTAL	\$17,091.60

Summary of Accounts	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted
<i>First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)</i>	24,222.86	17,091.60	7,131.26
<i>Northern Ind. Community Foundation (NICF)</i>	3,925.11		3,925.11
PTC TOTALS	\$28,147.97	\$17,091.60	\$11,056.37

Carolla moved to approve the summary and Rhonda seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Maintenance Committee Update

Bruce identified members of the Maintenance Committee as being Sharon, Paul, Linda, Kenny Bailey, Donna Osborne and he. Other PTC members are welcome to join the Committee.

During our June meeting, the PTC authorized up to \$9,600 to pave bad spots west of Range Road to C.R. 100 West, contingent on Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum (“HVRM”) concurrence. Bruce said on this basis the PTC sought proposals from contractors and received four. The fourth was texted from Les Jensen to Rhonda late this afternoon. Rhonda passed her cell phone around the room for those present to view the Jensen proposal.

Following discussion among the membership, Jensen’s proposal was determined to be the most attractive. His proposal was the least expensive at \$6,750. Jensen’s is a Starke County business. Like another proposal his included repairs on the west side approach to the Fell Ditch Bridge, as well as the bad spots west of Range Road to C.R. 100 West. The work areas of these two proposals were the same, but Jensen’s scope of work was comparable or superior. Carolla and Kathy volunteered to assist Bruce with drafting a written agreement for repairs by Jensen to the Erie Trail. There was consensus from PTC membership that this written agreement could be drafted and executed without the need

to bring it to the members for another vote. Bob Albert said he would help obtain written HVRM concurrence for the work.

Steve moved to approve Jensen's \$6,750 proposal for Erie Trail repairs to the bad spots west of Range Road to C.R. 100 West and to the west side approach to the Fell Ditch Bridge. The proposal would be memorialized by a written agreement approved by PTC President Bruce Fingerhut following consultation with Carolla and Kathy. The agreement would become effective after HVRM concurrence and following signature by Bruce and Les Jensen. Brian seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

In an email, Russ Blais reminded members of the continuing need to fix the pavement bump caused by a large cottonwood tree growing alongside the trail west of C.R. 125 East in Aldine. Greg and Garrett Trusty of Stormy's Tree Service, LLC cut down the tree on August 31, 2017. Later that day Paul and Linda chemically treated the stump to stop regrowth. See September 27, 2017 PTC Meeting Minutes. But the bump remains and was identified recently by membership as a continuing maintenance priority. See May 24, 2018 PTC Meeting Minutes. The membership discussed adding this pavement repair as an additional contract requirement with Les Jensen but decided that doing so might add a complexity that would jeopardize timing. Rhonda looked online for equipment rental needed to saw cut and remove the cottonwood tree root. Bruce made a ballpark estimate that a basic repair would cost between \$200 and \$300. The PTC agreed to pursue this fix as an add-on to a Jensen contract if he is interested, or as a stand alone project if he is not.

Wine Club Memorial for Karen Wittig Update

Bruce said he, Linda and Paul prepared a site on the south side of the Erie Trail and near US 35 as a possible site for the placement of the green bench being held for the Wine Club Memorial to Karen Wittig. If the site is approved by Greg Wittig, Bruce, Paul and Brian will soon place a concrete base there to help secure the bench. Wording for a plaque to dedicate the site is yet to be determined.

Lids-to-Benches Initiative Update

Kathy provided an update on the continuing PTC initiative to acquire benches through Green Tree Plastics in Evansville. Through Green Tree's ABC Program a not-for-profit corporation is able to work with school children (kids from daycare through university level) to learn about the values of recycling. The school children are involved with the collection, sorting and weighing of the qualified plastic lids. Last September, the PTC obtained two benches through the ABC Program. During the November meeting the members voted to continue participation.

With great volunteer support from kids, parents and grandparents, lids were collected at several locations in Starke County. As anticipated during the PTC's most recent meeting, the "Bass Lake Beach Brigade" sorted and weighed lids at Bass Lake on July 14. Diane Blais baked cookies for the Brigade with members consisting of kids from age 3 to __. Kathy reported the belief is the PTC now has enough lids for a third bench. Terms and

conditions of the ABC Program are changing effective August 1, and she will check on the significance of those changes.

Erie Trail First Responders Update

Rich Stalbrink was unable to attend the meeting. Kathy reported she spoke recently by telephone with him. Rich told her he has conferred with Starke County Sheriff William A. Dulin. They have agreed Sheriff Dulin will help set a get-together of first responders, ideally on the Erie Trail, so all will be better familiar with how to get emergency services to those who may need them. Kathy also reported she spoke with Starke County EMA Director, J. Nier, who expressed enthusiasm for participation in the process. Director Nier said people who may need assistance while on the trail should turn on their cell phone's GPS application so emergency responders can triangulate the signal and locate them. Carolla reflected that it is important for trail users to understand measures first responders are taking to coordinate and to support public safety.

BIC Committee Signage Update

Steve underscored the notation from the Treasurer's Report that payment has now been made to TCS in Knox for the ERIE TRAIL signs and accompanying hardware. He said a coordinated PTC effort was needed to place these signs within the Erie Trail corridor. He said efforts were moving forward with the Town of North Judson for signage placement within the municipality and with the Starke County Highway Department of signage placement on the four approved Connectors.

Steve suggested the BIC Committee needs to meet to help advance the signage efforts. He noted Bruce has suggested replacing signage (such as small STOP signs) that help with public safety and trail usage understanding. Others have suggested yellow triangle signs to indicate "Plank Bridge" at the approaches to the Bogus Run Bridge and the Fell Ditch Bridge. These could support safety and emphasize interest for those who enjoy the retro feel of a plank bridge. He said Rick Vlaming has offered use of an auger that can help with post placement. The hope is the BIC Committee will meet in time to make recommendations at the August membership meeting.

Membership Drive and Fiscal Strategy

With annual dues payable on August 1, Bruce shared his thoughts on a membership drive and possible guidance for a PTC fiscal strategy. He asked the membership to think about individuals who might be interested in joining our organization. Bruce said he would write a letter to support the membership drive.

Kathy circulated a spreadsheet that identified current membership, including lifetime members. For those paying annual dues, the spreadsheet also showed whether payment

was in 2016, 2017 or 2018. She urged those present to suggest any corrections to the spreadsheet. No corrections were suggested.

Bruce suggested the membership endorse a goal of maintaining a \$5,000 minimum with the Northern Indiana Community Foundation. Members reflected that the PTC has a good relationship with the NICF and wished to maintain that relationship. Bruce said a ready \$5,000 minimum could help the PTC to benefit from important match opportunities and that matches were typically required for grants pertaining to trail improvements and extensions. He also urged the members to report trail labor to Kathy because portions of matches can sometimes be “in kind”.

Bruce suggested a renewed emphasis should be placed on extending the Erie Trail to C.R. 600 East. The extension would provide better connectivity to the east side of Bass Lake and particularly the Bass Lake County Beach. The extension would also underline the Erie Trail’s role as a main stem route for Indiana’s trail systems.

Scheduling Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for the Bass Lake Property Owners Association (“BLPOA”) at Bass Lake on August 21, 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).