

Parks and Recreation Subcommittee  
May 21, 2009 Minutes  
Submitted by Ralph Stacy

The Parks/Recreation/Cemetery Transition Sub Committee met on Thursday, May 21, 2009 at 8am at Zionsville Town Hall. In attendance were committee members Art Harris, Ralph Stacy, and Dan Montgomery was not present. Special guests Gary Pruitt- Director of Fishers Park and Recreation, Ed Mitro- Zionsville Town Manager. Others in attendance were Candice Ulmer- Union Township Trustee, Judith Essex- Eagle Township Trustee, Jeff Glass- President Zionsville Park and Recreation Board, Matt Dickey-Superintendent Zionsville Parks and Recreation Department, Jim Sanford and John Ulmer from Union Township.

Art Harris introduced special guest Gary Pruitt, Superintendent Fishers Park and Recreation Department who talked to us about the Fishers Park and Recreation Advisory Committee which was created by town ordinance in 1990 and now has a \$2 million budget. The staff consists of 26 full-time and 16 part-time employees with 532 acres to manage with a 50/50 active/ passive park make up. Their Advisory Committee has monthly meetings, Fishers Town Council meets twice a month plus monthly work sessions; and make recommendations to the Fishers Town Council who makes the final decisions. Many park and recreation issues, about 50%, go directly to the Fishers Town Council and not the Fishers Advisory Committee. The composition of the Advisory Committee is 7 members with annual elections of a President and Vice President with 1 member from the Fishers Town Council, and the other appointments, based qualifications and interest; from the community at large with no required political balance, no pay, with no term limits, 4 year terms with a somewhat staggered terms. The Advisory Committee has no input in their annual budget with no financial responsibility. A matter of fact Gary Pruitt does not review all disbursements and this is done by the Accounting Department. Some grants are not available for the Advisory Committee set up, such as Land and Water Fund. Mr. Pruitt was asked many interesting questions with the most interesting being: If you were looking for a job with a Park and Recreation Department and everything was the equal and you had a choice to work with a Park and Recreation Advisory Committee or a Park and Recreation Board as outlined under Indiana Code which would you select? He answered a Park and Recreation Board as outlined under Indiana Code! Sometime during this discussion we took the opportunity to introduce those in attendance.

Ed Mitro, Zionsville Town Manager, stated that there were some issues with the Zionsville Parks Department before but with Matt Dickey there is better communication, a more working relationship with day to day operations being interacting with the Town Manager and Matt. Park Impact Fees were discussed and the need for reenactment. Ed expressed that the Zionsville Park and Recreation Board serves our community well and would not favor an Advisory Committee!

We again had discussion of future Park Board or Committee compositions of 5 member vs 7 member board with and early appointment from Eagle and Union Township during

the last quarter of this year with no vote but the opportunity to obtain some on the job training before being a fully appointed member next January. It was again noted that the current Park and Recreation Board has a member term expiring in January, 2010 and that there is a School Board appointment that has no limit term. Maybe we should appoint the 2 township representatives plus the 3 remaining board members for a total of 5 in January, 2010 with no party affiliation, no School Board appointment, and selection based on qualifications and interest. Maybe operationally, day-to-day, see attached ZIONSVILLE ORGANIZATION – 2009 chart provided by Ed Mitro; the Park Superintendent needs to report to the Town Manager and the Park Board needs to legally delegate this authority. It was suggested we start in January, 2010 with a 7 member board with possibility of having a 5 member board at a later date with earlier above modifications. A HUGE MAJORITY of community members attending today and in past meetings have favored a Park Board guided by Indiana Code which established Park Boards in the 1970's, with continuation of budget planning process beginning with the Park Board.

Announcements made of upcoming Zionsville Parks and Recreational Department- Elm Street Green Park public input on Thursday, May 28 at 9:30am at Zionsville Lions Club and upcoming presentation of a road sign redesignating Zionsville as a National Wildlife Federation Certified Community Wildlife Habitat on June 5 at 9am ceremony at Zionsville Town Hall..

The next meeting will Thursday, June 18, 8am, Town Hall.