



Johnson County Parks & Recreation Department will develop, operate and maintain parks that enrich the quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and preserve greenspace for future generations.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Johnson County Park Board of Directors
Johnson County Park Department
Thursday, September 4, 2025

The regular meeting of the Johnson County Park Board was opened at 6:00p.m. by Park Board President, Gary Cooper. Dannette Morgan, Penny Lee, Dan Cartwright, Jeri Thompson and Shalee Bradley were also in attendance. Park staff and audience in attendance: Kevin Leonard, Superintendent; Brad Wiser, Assistant Superintendent; Christy Howe, Recreation Director; John Young, Park Board Attorney; Peggy Racke, Indiana Live Steamers and Ben Cockrum, Indiana Live Steamers.

Roll call was taken of those in attendance.

Dannette Morgan moved and Jeri Thompson seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Jeri Thompson moved and Dannette Morgan seconded that the August 7, 2025 minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Claims for September were presented for approval. **Jeri Thompson moved and Shalee Bradley seconded to approve the September claims, as presented for \$47,511.95. Motion carried.**

Legal Report:

- John informed the Board he will have things to discuss during Kevin's report.

Christy Howe's Recreation Director Report:

- The Annual Car Show had a great turnout with 113 registered vehicles.
- The Movie in the Park went well. The weather was great and 106 people attended.
- Christy and Brad met with Corey Owens from Second Nature Lighting on July 16th and with Aaron Sparks on July 22nd to request quotes for lighting during Deck the Stalls. A third company was contacted with no response. Aaron Sparks quote came in at \$29,411.97. The Park will instead purchase lights ourselves and the maintenance crew will do the install. Christy expects cost should be less than \$600 to purchase lights. The Board discussed being okay with spending more if more lights are needed to appropriately light the area for the event.
- There are 3 events this month at the Park. There will be a movie in the Park on September 13th. The movie played will be Moana 2. Touch-a-Truck will be on September 20th. Construction hats will be passed out to kids. Bingo and Bluegrass will be on September 27th.
- Meineke Car Care donated \$500 to go towards the DJ/Music for Deck the Stalls this December. Christy will keep the Board informed on if Silly Safaris will be able to bring reindeer to the event.
- Penny Lee stated she would like to see the Park have signage at Independence Park promoting Johnson County Park and informing people on the amenities available to the public.

Brad Wiser's Assistant Superintendent Report:

- The Horse Park hosted six events in August. September has seven events scheduled. The Indiana Barrel Racing Futurity is taking place this weekend. All stalls are reserved for the event and 89 temporary stalls have been placed in Dunn Arena. Since we have two new barns this year, this will be the most stalled horses in the Horse Parks history totaling 541 stalls. We anticipate there to be an additional 100 horses tied out.
- The Sheriff's Department will be providing drone photography to the Park during the Futurity event. They will also get images of the campground and other areas of the Park.



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- Brad provided the Board with a draft of the 2026 Horse Park contract. Any changes from the 2025 contract are highlighted. Brad informed the Board that most changes are small price increases for various services and facilities. We feel that the increases are competitive with other venues. The Horse Park should finish 2025 out with 49 events covering 35 weekends. Brad stated he hopes to have the contract approved at the October Board meeting and can answer any questions from the Board prior to that meeting.
- Brad provided the Board with spreadsheets showing numbers for the Horse Park from 2022-2025. Brad informed the Board he puts these numbers together for yearly comparison and to show growth at the Horse Park year to year. The Report of Collections will show additional numbers not on the spreadsheets. The 2025 spreadsheet goes through August with an additional 15 events this year that still remain on the schedule. There was some discussion amongst the Board.

Kevin Leonard's Superintendent Report:

- Kevin and Christy will be setting up a booth during the Heritage Days event at the Johnson County Museum on Saturday, September 27th from 11am – 5pm.
- The first round of budget hearings went well. The Park budget was approved as submitted. The second reading will be on Thursday, September 11th.
- Kevin and Brad met with Wes Harrison again and confirmed the gazebo at Independence Park would not be worth repairing and should be replaced. Kevin presented the Board with an option he received from Wes and stated he would keep the Board informed. Penny Lee requested an octagon option to compare pricing. The Board discussed wanting the structure to stand out more than the existing shelters since it is a center piece of the Park.
- Kevin updated the Board on the protest that took place in August and stated there was no issues. Brad Meyer, who hosted the event, emailed Kevin to tell him one of the attendees had contacted him to express how great the Park was and plans to visit the Park again. Dannette Morgan confirmed that the event was well organized with the crowd and parking.
- Kevin informed the Board that he and Brad will be looking into rate increases for 2026. Those increases will be presented at the October Board meeting for approval.
- Kevin informed the Board that the Commissioners are working on an ordinance to address if individuals on the registered sex offenders list are allowed at the Park. John Young explained the situation to the Board and recommended that the Board create its own policy on whether or not individuals on the sex offenders list can be on Park grounds or camp. There was lots of discussion amongst the Board. **Dan Cartwright moved that the Park adopts a new policy stating that individuals on any sex offender registry are not permitted to camp at Johnson County Park. Jeri Thompson seconded. Motion carried.**

Presidents Report

- Nothing to report.

From the Floor and More:

- Jeri Thompson asked why the Board is not provided with information on the Parks account balances. Kevin Leonard stated he would make sure that information would be provided at future Board meetings.
- Jeri Thompson stated the dock at Lake Cottonwood was in disrepair and need worked on or replaced. Kevin Leonard stated the Park had caution taped the dock already and had plans to replace the dock.
- Jeri Thompson asked if picnic tables would be placed at the campground playground. Kevin Leonard stated that the maintenance staff would be putting tables out there soon.
- Peggy Racke asked why the Park does not mention the Indiana Live Steamers when they do the Fox recordings. Kevin Leonard stated the programs are edited for length and the Park is only granted enough time to bring up a few events and dates.
- Peggy Racke informed the Board there has been some vandalism in their area and believes it came from teenagers who attended one of the horse shows. Brad Wisner asked Peggy to provide the dates of when the vandalism took place and he would be sure to mention to the show organizers.



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- Peggy Racke informed the Board that they would possibly be receiving a large donation from a private donor. The donor requested a copy of the contract that ILS has with the Park to show that the Park has all intentions on keeping ILS at the Park. John Young stated that the contract is still with the National Parks Service and they have not received any information from them. The Board discussed various ways to get a copy of the contract. John stated the Park could not make any changes to the contract and could only provide the current contract that was sent to the National Parks Service. Kevin stated he would work with Peggy on providing what is needed for the donor.

Dan Cartwright moved the meeting be adjourned at 7:44 p.m. Motion carried.

Penny Lee, Secretary