

Wednesday, May 1st, 2024

President Wahlig called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Attending was President Wahlig, Vice President Selman, member Carpenter and Member Poor. Absent was member Adams. Also attending was Event Coordinator Tabitha Griva and Superintendent Hanna.

The March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes were approved with a motion by member Poor and seconded by President Wahlig. All in favor.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

**EASTER**-Griva reported they had made the decision to move the Easter event indoors and everything went very smoothly and successfully. She said it was very busy at one time, which was expected but she did not hear any complaints. Hanna mentioned at one time it did get hot in there, realizing the heat was on, but we opened doors and eventually turned the air conditioner on. Hanna mentioned it was great to utilize Commons Hall making games and activities available, then in the past just taking a picture with the Easter bunny and giving out grab bags. Hanna stated we had some great volunteers from Cardinal IG, Pharaohs Car Club, North Wayne Cruise-IN and 4-H Junior Leaders.

Vice

President Selman asked if there were a lot less kids having to move it indoors. Griva answered that other than being able to count the grab bags and prizes, we had about just about 20 prizes left over, but some of the bags did not have a prize egg. Griva mentioned maybe in the future making sure those prizes get passed out first before non-prize bags.

**YOUNG CHILD FAMILY FAIR**- Griva stated that once again another successful event. Griva said this event is just growing and getting bigger. We had beautiful weather for adding the food truck, coffee truck, bounce house and fire truck. Griva said people were able to be inside and outside.

**TREE MEMORIAL**-Hanna mentioned we had only 9 memorials this year, he was really impressed with how many people attended. Natalie Weibel was there, and she had nothing but great things to say about the ceremony. Hanna mentioned that having the ceremony indoors just works out so much better with preparing for the event and not taking the chance of cold windy brutal weather. Vice President Selman stated with any elderly that attend, it's much easier accessible for them to get in and get comfortable. President Wahlig stated that the Timber Frame is a beautiful spot but agrees on behalf of a lot of attendees are elderly. President Wahlig asked if the mayor came. Hanna answered yes, past and present mayors were there. Hanna mentioned while they were on the topic of the Tree Memorial, he has done some brainstorming on how to prepare to keep the memorial going after running out of space on the bronze tree. Hanna presented a drawing to the board of a structure he has come up with to be built at the Tree Memorial. Hanna stated that this project includes if the program continues to expand, we get 35 years out of the inside, you get another 35 years out of the outside by just purchasing a new bronze tree. Hanna also mentioned that he has always wanted to add vehicle parking, so when people wanted to come visit, they would have access to parking with a sidewalk leading to the Tree Memorial area. Member Poor asked if Hanna had an approximate cost for this project. Hanna answered no, but each bronze tree that had already been purchased was around \$3,000.00. Hanna said he called a company that has the same model T4 donor tree and gave him a quote of \$8,000.00 that included shipping. Hanna explained he contacted another company that quoted him a price of \$6,000.00 plus shipping. Hanna said we buy two more trees to put on the inside, that way the inside is full, and then this would get us another 12 years or so then could go back around the outside with six more, this would double the length of the program. Vice President Selman mentioned she loved everything about the idea. Hanna said he did speak to Mayor Martin about this, and he agreed 100% that this program had to continue. Hanna explained that it's not going to be

ready for next year and we don't have a place for the tree or leaves for next year. If we took memorials for the next two years and advertised, it as we are having a 25th tree memorial dedication in the spring of 2026. Hanna said he thought that would give us time to get this up and have a grand reopening on the 25th anniversary. Hanna explained it's not necessarily the 25th year, but it's the 25<sup>th</sup> memorial dedication. It will give him time to get numbers by July of this year and budget for 2025 then get started January of 2025. Hanna stated everything will be in and ready to go before the spring of 2026 when we have our 25th grand reopening of this. Hanna said we have a little over \$13,000.00 in our Tree Memorial account. This would only pay for the bronze trees and that it had nothing to do with this whole structure, but we also have money in our non-reverting fund we could work with. Hanna explained that originally the donation cost of \$75 used to pay for the tree, the leaves, and the engraving. Now it pays for about half of the tree. Hanna said he believes we could raise the donation cost to \$100.00. If we agreed to move forward, Tabitha would like to get started on updating the brochures. President Wahlig replied she thought \$100.00 would be a good place to start. Hanna also suggested taking memorials with the deadline using the calendar year. The month of April is busy at the parks and if we ran the memorials January-December, we could properly prepare for everything it entails with plenty of time and not the last minute. Hanna stated a summary to the board of the plans for the updated Tree Memorial project which included, increasing the price of the Tree Memorial to \$100.0, to run the program January 1 to December 31, pursue on structure and cost to move forward, work on completing the project in 2025 and having a grand reopening 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026 and asked the board to vote on the new project. Member Carpenter so moved. Vice President Selman seconded.

**ADOPT A TREE FESTIVAL**-Hanna reported the festival went very well again this year giving away around 380 trees. Hanna said they had great attendance, the bird houses were a huge hit, bird suet feeders and probably the best weather we've ever had in the past years. Reba Wicker, from the Purdue extension office made some made-up literature on how to care for your tree and plant it. She passed that out to people, which we haven't had in the past. And they were very appreciative of that as well.

**SCCF GRANT** - Griva reported that she has submitted the grant application for the SCCF grant.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**TRAIL SAFETY DAY**- Griva mentioned this event will be held Saturday, June 1st. This event is partnered with the Steuben County Trails. They will have a table set up passing out free helmets, an obstacle course as well as a bike repair station.

**FIREFLY TOUR**- Griva said the Firefly tour will be Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. That it will be held here on at the stage, and we'll have a food truck and a dessert truck available. Griva mentioned there will be a bounce house and some yard activities for kids to do too. Concessions and activities will start at 6PM and the performance will begin at 7PM. Griva mentioned she does have the Steuben County Auditorium scheduled to be a backup for inclement weather.

**SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM**-Griva reported that the summer recreation staff are all hired. We have four returning from last year and one new hire. Griva mentioned she just ordered a bunch of recreation equipment with the generous grant from JDAI. Griva said the program will start June 3<sup>rd</sup> with 124 participants signed up. Griva mentioned Meijer of Angola once again gave us a generous donation to feed the kids on Fridays. President Wahlig asked if we planned on still going to Pokagon on Fridays. Griva answered that is still the plan unless another local business invites us in as some have in the past including The Archery Tag in Ashley, Backyard Putt-Putt and a quick 4-h trip we have taken them too as well.

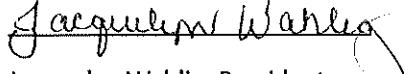
**PIG OUT IN THE PARK**- Griva said Pig Out in the Park will be held this year Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. We will be having the meat through Mr. Meatz, Cookies from Suttons and Water donated by Culligan. Member Poor asked if we decided to go with one meat this year, with the confusion of people not knowing the difference of brats or patties. Hanna said we quoted the same numbers as last year with the change of a quote for them to do the cooking. Mr. Meatz came back with the lowest quote. Hanna explained Mr. Meatz cooking gives the guys a chance to not be cooking the whole event and being able to talk to attendees.

**CONCERT IN THE PARK**-Griva said Pig Out in the Park is also Friday June 7<sup>th</sup>. We'll have Mad Anthonyms and Shigs in Pit. Griva said she will be emailing Shig in Pit this week to see if it is possible we get another line going at the concert that attendees were in line a big chunk of the performance.

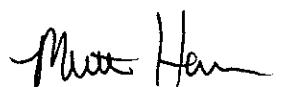
**SUMMER SEASONAL MAINTENANCE**- Hanna reported that the summer seasonal staff is secured. There will be two returning and three new employees that are high school seniors. Hanna said That will be starting in June, so of our five seasonal staff, four of them are not starting until June 3rd. Hanna reported the month of May is going to be a little crazy around here for our staff.

**READI 2.0 GRANT**- Hanna mentioned he got an e-mail the other day from Councilman Randy Coffey and Mayor Martin regarding the Ready 2.0 grant, which is a multibillion-dollar initiative that Governor Holcomb put in place. This grant includes billions of dollars. Hanna said they take the State of Indiana and break it up into different regions. We're obviously in the Northeast Indiana region for this READI 2.0 grant, which Hanna believes this region will receive \$45 million worth of grant money. Hanna explained that for each region the state has its own goals where that money should go. Hanna said one of the things that that Councilman Randy Coffey and Mayor Martin heard was lakefront recreational development and so, Mr. Coffey asked Mayor Martin if this would work for the center lakes property. Mayor Martin sent an e-mail to Jennifer Danic at the Community Foundation attached Hanna to it. Everybody feels like it would be a good fit for READI 2.0 funding. Hanna mentioned he came up with an e-mail and had the Mayor, Jennifer, and Amanda Cope, with the city review it to send to our regional contact for the Northeast region. Hanna mentioned in his email the roadblocks that we've hit with LWCF funding and that it's got an ingress egress easement that we don't own it. The owner is not willing to sign a federal encumbrance on that easement, which has kept us from applying for LWCF funds. Hanna stated he also noted in the email that the property itself is under a conservation easement. Hanna mentioned he sent an e-mail to our regional contact and Isaac Lee at the Steuben County EDC as well.

No further business, meeting adjourns 10:42 a.m.



Jacquelyn Wahlig, President



Matt Hanna, Secretary