

**THE MORGAN COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MET IN A REGULAR SESSION ON MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024 AT 10:45 A.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT WERE BRYAN COLLIER, DON ADAMS, AND KENNY HALE. LINDA PRUITT, MORGAN COUNTY AUDITOR AND DEB VERLEY, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, WERE ALSO PRESENT.

PLEDGE

PRAYER – *Bryan Collier*

**MINUTES**

Kenny Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2024 meetings. Motion seconded by Don Adams. Motion carried 3-0.

**PARK VEGETATION**

David Mow, Morgan County Soil & Water and invasive species specialist, recommended that the Park purchase a spray tank for the Bobcat, or contract with a certified herbicide applicator. There are a lot of invasive species in the parks, including garlic mustard (which is a 10-year commitment), and poison hemlock. Kenny Hale stated that poison hemlock is everywhere and asked what they could do. Mr. Mow stated that the Weed Control Board has authority from the state legislature to send a certified letter to the property owner requiring them to control the invasive weeds. If they don't, the Highway Department can do the control and assess the property owner's taxes for the cost. Mr. Hale stated that it's along the waterway, which belongs to the state. Lisa MacPhee, Soil & Water District, stated that there is a regulatory board, but it is ultimately the landowner's liability. Mr. Hale stated that if the park takes care of its section, the rest will repopulate. Ms. MacPhee stated that if the Weed Board met, they could notify the remaining landowners that they also need to take care of the problem so it doesn't keep coming back on them. Mr. Mow stated that the weed infestation is also along the roads and poison hemlock is just one of the invasives. There are also infestations of lesser celandine, Japanese hops, mugwort, and callery pear at Old Town Waverly Park and along the White River Greenway Trail. These are all invasive, but are not on the noxious weed list. Bryan Collier stated that the board will need to update the appointments on the weed board and get a game plan together. Don Adams stated that he would like to see a spraying program started along the trails with a small sprayer that will fit on an ATV or golf cart. Linda Pruitt stated that I.C. 15-16-8-4 puts the duty to destroy detrimental plants in the hands of the township trustee and outlines the process.

**ECLIPSE UPDATE**

Volitta Fritsche, Morgan County Parks Director, stated that they had an eclipse program at the Wilbur Schoolhouse and it was a full house. They received several compliments.

**PARKS UPDATE**

Crews are working at the Waverly playground to install four new pieces of equipment. The butterfly and frog were installed at Burkhart Creek and they look really cute. Several people have already posted pictures on social media of their children playing on them. The wi-fi is now installed at the Pierce shelter house and adds a safety feature in order to make contact in what was a dead zone for cell phone service. Mowing has started in the parks. The floors in the restrooms at Burkhart Creek are starting to bubble and it is rust coming up from the bottom. Kenny Hale stated that they need to clean it really well, put on etching primer and put on good epoxy. There will be more construction on the cabin at Waverly.

**WILLOWBROOK PICNIC AREA**

Park crews have been maintaining the Willowbrook area for several years and the plan has been to have a park there. The county is limited with what can be done with the property since it is under FEMA regulations, but there is a walkway from I-69 down to this area. Ms. Fritsche stated that there are still some houses in the area, but the public area could be marked off and picnic tables and trash cans could be moved in. Bryan Collier stated that the Council should be made aware of how much is done on a shoestring budget. If the county would lose the help of the few very dedicated individuals that do all the work for the parks, the system could collapse. The budget could not catch up fast enough to do what is being done for a fraction of the cost because of the dedication of a handful of individuals. Ms. Fritsche stated that park crews already mow the area and the picnic tables were free. They need to update some trash cans at Waverly, so they could move those to Willowbrook. Since they are paying for the maintenance out of the park budget anyway, Ms. Fritsche felt that it should be part of the parks. Kenny Hale stated that putting up a cable or fence would require a reuse request for FEMA and this could take up to a year to get approved. There would only be roadside parking unless they use an old gravel road between Willowbrook and the interstate. Installing a parking lot would also require a reuse request. Ms. Fritsche noted that the previous five-year plan stated that the board would continually look for places in the county for parks and this area is in the trail plan. Mr. Collier suggested beginning the process for the reuse request. Don Adams made a motion to move forward with a reuse request for a parking lot and fencing. Motion seconded by Bryan Collier. Motion carried

3-0.

**DISC GOLF**

Kenny Hale stated that he met with an old friend, Barry Armor, that is involved with a disc golf club. Mr. Hale mentioned that they have discussed the possibility of this in Waverly and they will be meeting at Old Town Waverly Park to put together a plan. Mr. Hale will keep them updated on the progress. Mr. Hale stated that the national disc golf championships will be held in Indiana in 2026.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Kenny Hale made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Don Adams. Motion carried 3-0.

Morgan County Parks & Recreation Board

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Bryan Collier

Attest:

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Kenny Hale

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Linda Pruitt, Morgan Co. Auditor

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Don Adams