



Presented August 7, 2017
Town Council Report for July 2016
Parks and Recreation Activity Highlights:

Park Programming

- *Zionsville Bike Challenge (ZBC)*: In this, our fourth year, this successfully program appears to be fully matured. Originally conceived by the Park Department/Board, the successful provision of this program is dependent on cooperative partnerships to provide “staffing”. With us from the start, has been the Dow AgroCyclist Club, and these last two years we have been joined by the Zionsville Triathlon Team. The program was conceived to attract new riders (or former riders returning from a long absence) to the lifetime sport of bicycling. There are numerous health benefits as well as it being just plain fun. This year’s 125 registrants was within 3 of matching last year’s numbers and the program was designed to offer newcomers to work their way up each year, potentially through 4 challenge levels (over 4 years). Since our registration this year showed 50% newcomers to the program and the other half returnees, with most returnees at the upper three challenge levels, it appears we are hitting the original design goal. All told, ZBC participants logged nearly 35,000 miles during the 6 week challenge! The Zionsville Community Team again extended their undefeated defense of the traveling trophy (a 100+ year old engraved brick, originally from Zionsville’s Main Street). Zionsville’s Team rode 14,582 miles; the AgroCyclist’s got in 10,829 miles with the Tri-Team following closely behind in mileage at 9,575.
- Our annual cooperative venture with Central Indiana Bicycle Association (CIBA) the ZFL ride out of Mulberry Fields Park was again a great success. Even with the weather threatening for over half of the 5 hour event, we still had participation numbers at about 75 riders. Without full-time recreation staff, such partnerships as this with CIBA and the ZBC’s partnerships are the only way to reach meaningful numbers of citizens with traditional recreational programming.
- *Environmental Programming*: Our Park Naturalist, Mindy Murdock, had 919 in total attendance in programs throughout the parks and at the Zion Nature Center for the past month. Over a half of those (557) were self-directed drop-in visitors to our Nature Center (i.e. not related to a particular program).
- *Day Camps*: While only representing 20% of the overall, monthly attendance reported immediately above, these popular programs completely filled again this year. And even though they are only a bit over a fifth of our overall monthly numbers, they represent a significant time investment to yield such wonderful programs. This is likely why they fill up so quickly and also why we are able to charge enough for these programs to completely support themselves. Indeed, for the second year in a row these programs generated enough in fees to cover all their direct operational costs, including the part-time wages for the counselors. This year the camps even generated sufficient profit so that it be used to support other worthy environmental programming, programs for which we may wish to never charge a fee or for which we at least wish to have a reduced fee.
- *Zionsville Parks Golf Course (ZGC)*: July had XX days where the course was fully closed and enough bad weather on Y other days that our gross revenue for those days was at \$500 or less (including two that were \$100 dollars or less). The gross revenues for July 2017 were our second lowest ever at ~\$33,073. In 9 full seasons of operation, ~\$51,433 in 2012 was our highest for this month. 2015 was our lowest season for this month at ~\$31,456. Our average for this month over those 9 full seasons of operation has been ~\$43,401.

Other Highlighted Parks Matters

Maintenance Updates:

- The several rounds of severe weather has been playing havoc with the urban forest across our Town and its parks. To name just a few, we cleared 4 downed trees and/or their vegetation from the trails at Creekside Corporate Park, numerous trees/limbs from the Big-4 Rail Trail, downed vegetation in Starkey Park, numerous smaller trees and limbs within the system, and a large tree limb from the east side of Town Hall
- To mirror the Street Department's asphalt crack sealing efforts now that they have their new crack sealer, for the first time in its history the park department is looking to seal asphalt cracks along the Rail Trail and along some of the internal park pathways. Towards that end we are clearing vegetation out of some of the cracks and blowing them clean. Then we look to borrow the Street Department's equipment (crack sealing trailer and their street roller) to both seal the cracks and hopefully also push down some areas where roots are raising the trail. A more expensive but perhaps more lasting solution would be to cut the trail, grind down to and grind out all the offending roots, lay gravel back and then re-asphalt. Sealing cracks helps extend the trail surface's life in any case; we just want to try this extra an see if that provides measurable benefit on the root issue.
- We are still waiting on the completed fabrication on the metal stairs for Trail SP-1 at Starkey Park. Even though this was ordered back in the spring, we are told this specialty item is still 4 weeks from completion.