



Presented February 4, 2019

## **Town Council Report for January 2019 Parks and Recreation Activity Highlights:**

### ***Park Programming***

- *Environmental Education and Recreational Programming:* Our regular programming in this area (including those programs more traditionally viewed as “recreational” in nature such as dog walks, birthday parties, etc.) saw a total of 630 participants/visitors (down a bit over 200 from last month). Of additional note, 329 of this month’s totals represent “drop-in visitors” at our Nature Center (unconnected to any particular program). For the last three months the drop-in visitors to the center have comprised a bit over 50% of our attendance, but this can be quite varied as the drop-in visitors generally tend to range from 25%-60% of our total contact numbers. Also, per normal operations, impromptu programming was offered to the drop-in visitors at our center. In an unusual month, only 67 (of the 329 subtotal) received this added content.

### ***Other Highlighted Parks Matters***

*Several Key Park System Upgrade Projects:*

- The State has opened up the first round of a new grant program, called “The Next Level Trails” grant. This is funded by the Toll Road proceeds. While the program was being discussed in the fall of 2018, details didn’t come out until mid-December and the first round for \$20 Million spread across the State was announced at the same time (opening Jan 1 and closing Feb 15). The State is emphasizing they greatly prefer “shovel-ready” projects. They also are more (although not solely) interested in projects that are regional in nature and/or along a State-identified Visionary Trail Route. Zionsville’s portion of the Big-4 Rail Trail was the first trail project built upon what the State later identified as this 52-mile Visionary Trail Corridor. We have two remaining portions of our corridor to complete, a portion southward (eventually to 96<sup>th</sup> Street), and a portion northward to our common boundary with Whitestown. The Parks Department is in the process of spearheading a grant application for both a southward portion (but only to Zionsville Road at this time) and the full northward portion. These are 80% grant funds-20% local match and the local match can be partially donation values (although having actual dollars in the game and/or even an overmatch helps our applications chances). We are working with the same consultant firm chosen by the Boone County so as to build on that consistency and common ground. While final numbers are still in flux a bit as this is a fast moving project, we anticipate around a \$2 million total application. This would project to around a \$400,000 local match in local dollars and or cash (or more if we over match to build a stronger application for the State). The State’s application process supports paved trails over other surfaces as this allows more varied uses and users and we would project a 12 foot wide surface in both directions with grading to support 15-feet when that becomes necessary due to usage-levels. We should hear around June about how our application fared.