



Presented November 5, 2012

## Town Council Report: October, 2012 Parks and Recreation Activity Highlights:

### *Zionsville Parks Golf Course (ZGC)*

- Our ZGC gross operating profit for October 2012 was ~ \$14,749. As the days shorten and the weather worsens, October traditionally continues the trend of the fall months' decline in participation from the highs seen in July. The previous two year's October gross operating profits were in the range of \$17,200 to \$17,800 and both represented a \$10,000 to \$11,000 drop from each of their respective September totals. In 2012 our October run was about \$14,000 less than the previous month. Part of that larger drop (than in previous years) in the Sept to Oct numbers for this year's, may have been due to the fact our 2012 September numbers were \$1,000 to \$6,000 higher than in the two previous years. Also this October we had four days where we did not take in any daily receipts (although with some yearly pass play) and/or the course was closed for the day due to poor weather.

### *Park 5-Year Master Plan Process*

- The Park Board's intensive public input process has completed its main efforts. The Board will be meeting at a Saturday morning retreat on Nov 3rd to digest the large amount of material. Input process included...
- Six separate **stakeholder meetings** of key individuals each averaging at least 1.5 hrs in length. While more were invited, and certainly schedules can conflict, the Park Board still had about 45 participants (including Town Council members) assisting in this portion of the process
- The **General Public Input Meeting** on Thursday Oct 25 had 25 people who graciously donated 2 hrs of their time to cover 5 key areas and to help prioritize possible park efforts among the eight pages of closely-spaced topics they generated and discussed.
- As of the end of the day on 10/31/12, the **online survey** period was closed and the survey-tool shut down. We had 442 respondents who took the time to fill out this tool. Over half of them typed additional comments and considerations in the several sections we had provided for direct comment in the survey. While many people had suggestions for additions/improvements they would like to see put in place within the system, of the over 600 direct comments in the various places the survey allowed, the vast majority of them were very supportive and positive about our efforts, only a handful were truly negative overall. Given that usually people are much more likely to comment negatively on a topic than to communicate any other message, it would seem that many feel quite positive about the Town's park system and its direction the last few years.

### *Events/Activities in the Parks*

- Zionsville Youth Football League (ZYFL) again completed a season of play out at Mulberry Fields. A conservative estimate from the league for number of players, coaches, refs. and spectators, out at the fields for ZYFL play this season puts the park usage related to this event at over 10,000.
- Similarly, the Zionsville Boys and Girls Club finished up their flag football season out at Mulberry Fields Park. They ran on nearly the same schedule as ZYFL at Mulberry Fields for several Saturday's through the fall. While we haven't yet acquired their participation estimates, based on their proportions and slightly less games in their schedule, we'd expect their numbers to be around 2500-3000.
- The Maplawn Farms Inc's inaugural Haunted Farms Night utilized both the farmstead and Mulberry Fields Park as a staging area, was well attended by about 200 participants. This is especially good considering the weather on the Friday and Saturday evenings before Halloween. The Park Board leases the operation of this small corner of Mulberry Fields Park to the Maplawn nonprofit group. This group would not have a

home or a focus without that and the Park Board would not have access to this wonderful, low-cost (at least in taxpayer's dollars) programming partnership.

- The morning of October 6th, Zionsville Parks and Recreation partnered with the Central Indiana Bike Association (CIBA) to host one of their weekend rides out of Mulberry Fields Park. It was very cold and windy that morning but the ride still attracted 25 participants.
- Also the morning of October 6th, the Annual Hit the Brick Fundraiser (Optimists Club) utilized the rail trail to comprise a significant portion of their route. We heard this garnered 200-300 participants visiting our system (including some from outside the community who commented on how lovely our parks were).
- The St Vincent's Walk of Hope, also held on Oct 6th, had their 5th annual fundraiser walk (their first here in Zionsville) in support of the combat against cancer. Their 15 mile route (and also their shorter offerings) heavily utilized our park system, running through 5 of our parks (mainly as lunch/food/rest stops) and right by another 7 parks. Due to the colder weather their attendance was down a bit from expectations but they still reported numbers close to 1000. They raised over \$310,000 to go to cancer support right here in Central Indiana and they are already talking about how much their participants loved all the parks, the route, and our Town. They plan on being back in September next year.

### *Other Highlighted Matters*

- The Park Heritage Trail Project, Phase-1 is out to bid; 30 plan sets distributed to date (although some are sub-contractors and not main bidders). Several of the components in this project also address suggestions we have been receiving through some of Master plan Public input process so it is nice to know the Park Board/Dept's planning process (which one might recall utilized two public input meetings and a Design Charente process), was pretty well in touch with the nearby residents and much of the Town as a whole.
- We have an Eagle Scout project gearing up for work in early November (weather permitting). We are working with them to renovate the westernmost boardwalk on Trail 1 at Starkey Park. We have worked closely on the project and presuming the carpentry skills are as good as advertised with this particular group of scouts (something that is sometimes lacking with some groups of volunteers), our design input, requirements, and suggestions on some of the more traditional elements of a volunteer project should result in a lower maintenance finished project. We hope to reproduce this next on the easternmost boardwalk on Trail-1 as well but that may be dependent on finding just the correct properly-skilled group of volunteers.
- Park Staff hosted a tour of individuals from the community of Spartanburg, SC. These gentlemen were primarily wanting to view Mulberry Fields Skate-park and asked detailed questions about it's design and construction. They were very enamored of our skate park situation and loved how we involved the actual skater community during design. They also liked the how the splashpad and playground were tucked away into the softer nearby prairie elements. They complemented the Park's mix of both active and passive design elements and particularly liked the way the prairie species help our stormwater treatment system out there both clean the stormwater and eliminate the need for (the typically required) stormwater ponds they so prevalent in similar projects in their neck of the woods.