



**ZIONSVILLE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
FOR
AUGUST 4, 2025
AT 7:00 P.M. EST
ONSITE MEETING
1100 West Oak Street**

This meeting was conducted onsite and via Zoom.

Council Members Present: Jason Plunkett, President; Brad Burk, Vice-President; Tim McElderry, Craig Melton, Evan Norris, Sarah Esterline Sampson, and Joe Stein

Also Present: Adam Steuerwald, Town Council Attorney; Mayor John Stehr; Deputy Mayor Justin Hage; Police Chief Mike Spear; Fire Chief James VanGorder; Cindy Poore, Director of Finance & Records; Jarod Logsdon, Superintendent of Parks & Recreation; Amy Lacy, Municipal Relations Coordinator and other Town staff.

OPENING

- A. Call meeting to order**
- B. Pledge of Allegiance**
- C. Attendance**

Plunkett All right, good evening. I will now call to order the Monday, August 4, 2025 regular Town Council meeting. If you would please, stand and join me for the Pledge of Allegiance.

All Pledge of Allegiance.

SWEARING IN OF POLICE OFFICER CONNOR HOLE

Plunkett All right, the first item on the agenda is swearing in of police officer, Connor Hole, and we have Mayor Stehr here to execute the swearing in.

Stehr Please raise your right hand and repeat after me. I, Connor Hole –

Hole I, Connor Hole –

Stehr Do solemnly swear –

Zionsville Town Council

August 4, 2025

Hole Do solemnly swear –

Stehr That I will support the Constitution of the United States of America –

Hole That I will support the Constitution of the United States of America –

Stehr The Constitution of the State of Indiana –

Hole The Constitution of the State of Indiana –

Stehr And the Ordinances of the Town of Zionsville, Indiana –

Hole And the Ordinances of the Town of Zionsville, Indiana –

Stehr I will follow the rules and regulations –

Hole I will follow the rules and regulations –

Stehr Of the Zionsville Police Department –

Hole Of the Zionsville Police Department –

Stehr Of Law Enforcement Code of Ethics –

Hole Of Law Enforcement Code of Ethics –

Stehr And I will faithfully –

Hole And I will faithfully –

Stehr Honestly –

Hole Honestly –

Stehr Impartially –

Hole Impartially –

Stehr Without malice or prejudice –

Hole Without malice or prejudice –

Stehr Discharge all my official duties –

Hole Discharge all my official duties –

Stehr As a police officer –

Hole As a police officer –

Stehr For the Town of Zionsville, Indiana –

Hole For the Town of Zionsville, Indiana –

Stehr So help me God.

Hole So help me God.

Stehr Congratulations.

Hole Thank you.

Plunkett All right, it's always, always special to be able to be a part of the swearing in for police officers, firefighters and we appreciate the family for coming out and a little extra special here – this is a Webbo Star so for those of you that – all right so. You guys don't have to wait. If you want, we'll pause for a minute and you guys can go out and take pictures and hang out and so. Good to see you.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA

Plunkett All right, first item up on the or next item up on the agenda is the approval of the Consent Agenda items. Are there any questions from Councilors?

Sampson I hate to be a stickler but because it wasn't recording the minutes say that approval of the town minutes and it doesn't mention that there was an adjustment. I don't know if that matters because if someone goes back and reads the minutes then it doesn't reflect that one adjustment. Do you know what I? Oh, am I? Do you know what I'm saying?

Lacy No I don't. Could you say it again?

Sampson Okay so last meeting we had I believe a correction and when I –

Lacy Oh, a correction in the minutes?

Sampson Yes –

Lacy Yes.

Sampson Yes and since it wasn't recorded –

Lacy Okay –

Sampson It's not noted that there was a correction.

Lacy So you just want that noted?

Sampson So that needs to be noted and then also the same sort of thing happened – I have to look for the page. I didn't write it down, I'm sorry – on page 11. The third line down it says Sampson, it should say Plunkett.

Lacy Okay and what is it?

Sampson Where it says Sampson on page 11 –

Lacy Yes –

Sampson Oh, oh yes. It should say Plunkett.

Lacy That should say Plunkett. Okay, thank you.

Sampson Yes, no problem.

Plunkett Any other questions from Councilors? Otherwise I would make a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items with the amendments noted by Councilor Sampson.

Melton Second.

Plunkett A second from Councilor Melton. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett Those opposed same sign.
[No response]

 Motion passes 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

REQUEST TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEM

Plunkett Up next is a Request to Speak on Agenda Item. Amy, other than the two we have here, are there any others?

Lacy No, just those two.

Plunkett Okay, so we have two people that filled out request to speak cards and after speaking with counsel, we're going to do that during the public hearing section instead of doing it now so we'll open up the public hearing and you guys can have your three minutes during the public hearing.

OLD BUSINESS

Consideration of an Alley Vacation (Kennedy) (Second Reading) Ordinance 2025-18

Plunkett First item or next item on Old Business is a Consideration of an Alley Vacation. This is Ordinance 2025-18. Obviously this a second reading. Are there any questions from Councilors? Otherwise I would entertain a motion.

Norris I make a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-18 on final reading.

Stein Second.

Plunkett I have a first from Councilor Norris, a second from Councilor Stein. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett Those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of a Resolution Regarding the Appropriation of Additional Funds (Fire Department Land Purchase, Police) (Public Hearing) Resolution 2025-08

Plunkett Up next on the agenda is first item of New Business which is a Consideration of a Resolution regarding the Appropriation of Additional Funds. This is for the Fire Department land purchase and also for Police and we have Cindy Poore, Director of Finance and Chief VanGorder here as well to present on this.

Poore Thank you. We do have an additional appropriation. This is for the purchase of land for the Fire Department for future location, two future locations of fire stations. We went through the process of finding where we had the reserve funds that we could use towards this purchase. We also spoke with our municipal advisor and the areas that you see in front of you on the resolution are what we came up with and if you want any more detail I can let Chief VanGorder talk to you.

Plunkett I guess I just have one question. We did have someone ask in a meeting last week how much total acreage is involved in this acquisition. Is that something you guys are comfortable sharing?

VanGorder Yes, it'll all be part of the public record. There are two parcels that we are looking at purchasing and due to the amount of the money today, I'd like to take two minutes, if I could, Mr. President, and kind of give a brief overview really for the community and this really goes back to how did we get here today and that started in 2022 when the Fire Department's strategic plan was developed and adopted. It identified the need for the Fire Department to complete a fire station assessment that should be completed. We did have conversations at that time with the Council and town Administration and they also concurred that they wanted to have a long-term plan that would ensure the health and safety of the Zionsville community and we also worked with you to develop funding for that and that's where we identified the use of some ARPA funds.

Request for Proposals were developed and advertised in March of 2024 with six proposals from various firms that were received in April of 2024. A selection team including myself, Mayor John Stehr, Town Councilor Evan Norris, Deputy Chief of Administration Jason Potts for the Fire Department, Deputy Chief Fire Prevention Josh Frost, our Local 5195 local district Vice President, Walter Leverich, Police Chief Spears, Captain Klykken were part of the interview team that scored those six proposals. The selection team unanimously selected

Woolpert as the top firm and entered into an agreement for services in June of 2024 utilizing those ARPA funds which were approved by the Council.

Over the next 11 months, Woolpert and their team concluded and conducted a fire station conditions assessment, analyzed the Fire Department incident response data, analyzed current and projected development projects, evaluated optimal locations for the fire stations and training locations for current and future needs of the community and they created a fire station program to ensure new buildings would meet the operational needs of the department for years to come and they formally presented their findings before the Zionsville Safety Board in June and then later the Safety Board did adopt those at a subsequent meeting.

Back in March we briefed the Council on a need to consider land acquisition as land in the Zionsville area, I think we're all aware, is rapidly changing hands and being sold and being moved into development status so we did ask the Council to approve a resolution where we would express interest in the purchasing of certain properties valued at over \$25,000 and we did that in April of this year. We engaged following that April approval with two appraisers, Egis and Terzo, I apologize if I mispronounced that, to conduct appraisals of both these locations and following Indiana statute where we're required to get two different appraisals and we're limited that we cannot pay any more than the average of those two appraisals.

And then Letters of Intent to purchase were developed by both locations and were presented. In one location in western Zionsville we are move, we are proposing to you today that these funds be used for the purchase of 12.255 acres and approximately addressed because its not been addressed is 3302 East 550 South with a purchase price of \$1,465,000.

The second location in eastern Zionsville is for a parcel of 2.812 acres located approximately at 3911 South U.S. 421 with a purchase price of \$2,390,000. I'd be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

Plunkett Thank you Chief. Any questions from Councilors?

McElderry Just a quick question – obviously the west parcel is the substantial amount of land 12, over 12 acres is plenty of land. Additional plans beyond just building a fire station?

VanGorder Great question Councilor. Yes, that would be the location of a future public safety training area. It was also chosen in that area because it's immediately adjacent to industrial buildings where we wouldn't cause any interference or challenges with any residential-type neighbors. It's purely agricultural at this time but immediately adjacent to that if you're familiar with the area, there's a large Subaru warehouse immediately adjacent to where this parcel would be located.

McElderry Great, thank you.

VanGorder Thank you.

Zionsville Town Council
August 4, 2025

Poore The other item for the additional appropriation is for \$4,000. The Police received a grant from Duke Energy. This grant was for a portable radar speed display and so we just need to appropriate that in order for them to make this purchase.

Stein Cindy, is \$4,000 the appropriation or is it \$3,600 – because I remember it said that Duke covered all but \$400 of it. So is it \$4,400 total?

Poore \$4,400 total.

Stein Got it.

Poore Yes.

Stein So \$4,000 appropriation.

Poore Yes.

Stein Okay.

Plunkett All right, any other questions for Cindy or Chief VanGorder? I would point out to Councilors that this is a resolution. We get one vote on this. This is also a public hearing. I have proof of publication of the public hearing and at this point I'll open the public hearing if there's any members of the public who would like to speak. Seeing none I will close the public hearing. Any other questions or comments for Cindy or Chief VanGorder?

Melton One comment – I'm just excited to see Perry Township on the radar as we move forward into the future just like anybody else might be happy to see Union be a part of the plan so thank you very much for doing all this work Chief and all everybody who was involved as well. I'm excited Perry Township is going to be in dire need of services in the future so with all the expansion and growth so thanks for all the effort and I'm excited to see this one step in the direction of expansion into the future.

Plunkett Anything else from Councilors? Otherwise I would entertain a motion.

Norris Motion to approve Resolution 2025-08.

Melton Second.

Plunkett I have a first from Councilor Norris, a second from Councilor Melton. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett Those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

**Consideration of a Resolution Regarding the Appropriation of Additional Funds
(Parks)
(Public Hearing) Resolution 2025-09**

- Plunkett Up next is a Consideration of a Resolution Regarding the Appropriation of Additional Funds. This is for Parks. This is Resolution 2025-09. We have Jarod Logsdon, Parks and Recreation Superintendent. It looks like Jon Oberlander also is here to present if needed.
- Logsdon Good evening Council. The Zionsville Board of Parks and Recreation have finalized commitments for the Next Level Conservation Trust program and received a \$3,000,000 grant reimbursement. The Park Board is proposing to allocate \$2,500,000 of these funds from the Parks non-reverting capital fund towards critical infrastructure components of phase 1 construction of the Carpenter Nature Preserve. Phase 1 development of the Carpenter Nature Preserve remains the Board and Department's top priority as identified in the 2023-2028 5-Year Master Plan and may open up as early as 2026 without the requirement of additional full-time personnel at this time. Happy to answer any questions related to this.
- Norris Jarod – may I?
- Plunkett Sure.
- Norris I've got some questions real quick. So I did some research into the Next Level Conservation Trust and can you help me understand because the trust has very specific requirements with regards to improvements, that money can't be used on improvements and things like that. So explain to me how this process works in conjunction with what we're intending to use those funds for.
- Logsdon Yes, so with the Carpenter Nature Preserve there were several grant opportunities kind of all at once so we were very purposeful in coordinating with DNR on several of those programs to ensure that what we had planned on the site would be compatible with all of those uses. So specifically with the Next Level Conservation Trust, one requirement was the conveyance of a conservation easement over the land, and we have completed that which triggered the reimbursement. The second requirement is that it becomes open to the public for recreation, natural beauty and public use.
- Norris Can I, can I read directly – I just, this is my one question –
- Logsdon Sure.
- Norris Money in the NLCT fund accounts may not be used for the cost of construction of or removal of structures and improvements, the cost and removal of and remedial action relating to hazardous substances or the cost of wastewater treatment.
- Logsdon So our, yep, our Next Level Conservation Trust grant was for the acquisition of the preserve so –

Norris Okay.

Logsdon Those funds paid, were matched against the actual acquisition. So they're not used for the construction or remediation like you mentioned.

Norris Okay.

Logsdon But the limitations on the back end after we've received the reimbursement are less.

Norris So, we can use this money on the back end –

Logsdon Yes.

Norris Once, now that we're being reimbursed. I'm seeing Jon back there as well. Okay.

Oberlander Sorry, if I could add a little bit of clarity to that. Jon Oberlander, Chief Legal Counsel. So, Councilor Norris, I read a lot of those restrictions too. Most of those restrictions are actually on the DNR. So the DNR can't use that money to purchase, finance improvements. That's why they purchase the conservation easement. There aren't nearly as many restrictions on the town, it's just on the DNR.

Norris Okay, okay. Yes, I was looking into this and I just want to make sure that I did my homework to make sure – I assumed that all this, all these boxes had been checked and everything but I wanted to make sure that I wasn't missing something.

Logsdon Appreciate that. Thank you.

Norris Thank you.

Melton Jarod, can you elaborate on the conservation easement and what that means to the town moving forward? I know we're already in it, right?

Logsdon Yep.

Melton But, so this is for the allocation of funds. I'm just curious publicly what – can you elaborate on what that means and –

Logsdon Absolutely. So there are a series of grants we receive regularly that have conservation easement requirements. Some of them are less restrictive, some are more. So with the Next Level Conservation Trust program, we committed 173 acres of the preserve will perpetually be used for public use and outdoor recreation. So this will always be a park, at least in those 173 acres.

Melton Great, thank you.

Burk Hey Jarod – appreciate all your work on this and particularly also our Deputy Mayor for really walking through this with me with a fine-tooth comb to show all

of the different expenditures within the \$2.5 and it's my understanding, if I recall, there's still \$500,000 that would be remaining of this and is that just going to remain in, in general fund use for you or do you have intentions on the extra \$500,000?

Logsdon No immediate intentions for that \$500,000. So we're actually coming out ahead pending this decision with \$500,000 in the bank.

Burk Correct. All right, thank you.

Stein Jarod, are there any time constraints where that money has to be spent within a certain period of time?

Logsdon It wasn't clearly defined with the DNR pertaining to this specific grant but other grants including the Land Water Conservation Fund does have a sunseting period of 2027.

Sampson You mean the beginning of the year or the end of the year?

Logsdon September 30th.

Sampson Did I overlook something? Were, were we ever given a breakout of the \$2.5 million? I keep, in the papers I've looked at I keep having a, like a lump listing –

Logsdon Yes –

Sampson Of what's in there.

Logsdon That detailed breakout was shared with Councilor Plunkett and Councilor Burk as we were discussing this but then it was kind of condensed just to show some milestones that were removed to show that \$2.5 versus the whole \$3.

Burk Yes I thought that was going to be shared with everybody –

Logsdon Okay.

Sampson I asked –

Plunkett Yes –

Sampson And I didn't get it.

Plunkett I didn't think it was finalized so that's why I didn't forward it so. And Jarod out of the \$2.5 just, just so we're clear – I know there was some confusion when this first came up or out of the \$3 even if you wanted to look at it that way, the \$500,000, the \$500,000 that was in the Land and Water Conservation Fund is required to be used at this facility.

Logsdon Yes.

- Plunkett The remaining \$2 million is not. It could be used for other parks, other park facilities, right?
- Logsdon Technically correct, yep.
- Plunkett I just asked him so out of the \$2.5, \$500,000 of that is from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and has to be used there but the remaining \$2, \$2 million that they're looking at here does not have to be used there. It could be used for other, other park facilities.
- Sampson Has there been any consideration of other park expenses that would come up knowing that we're having to kind of reel back with SB1 for the next three years, especially do you foresee anything falling short that would maybe need some of that funding?
- Logsdon You know I appreciate the fact that we will have a little bit of a reserve after this for future unknowns but we've been taking exceptional care of our park system in recent years including the Turkeyfoot rehab which this body approved so we're really not anticipating catastrophic failures of any existing components of our park system. Should that happen, it would be an insurance claim versus a capital replacement because truly we're, we're working on deferred maintenance in, in keeping our amenities in top shape. So to your question – we developed the 5-Year Master Plan to kind of guide where our capital resources will go and Carpenter Nature Preserve was the highest in that queue of projects to complete. There are additional wish list projects within that that may go unfunded especially now with some of the limitations but as far as having all of our parks open and in decent rapport, we will accomplish that. And as we look at our 5-year forecast, we are scaling back some of the initiatives and just waiting for other grant and funding sources to appear.
- Burk Yes that's the same question I had when it became clear that the money didn't have to spent on Carpenter and I think just talking to the Administration, Jarod, Meredith, the Mayor, I posed the same question of okay, let's not talk catastrophic challenges that would require a claim but just in terms of just strategy of spending. Is this the best use? Is this where you think we should spend \$2.5 million dollars knowing it could be somewhere else and everybody told me absolutely. This is where we need and would like to spend the money. So, it was a question I think worth asking. I don't know if you'd like to elaborate on that but, I mean, I asked the same question I think two or three times.
- Sampson I think it's just hard because not seeing the division of money and what's happening, there's nothing that we could specifically say hey, what about holding back on this for a year? Does this, does removing the conduit along the drive necessitate a step before opening? Because at some point, I mean, I would rather have an extra year of doing something that I didn't pay for in a time that we're cutting back in our budget and I think that the definition was we have to have it open within a reasonable time but now also since there's two grants within, we have to have it open by September 30, 2027. I feel like we didn't have a date, and this is the first time I heard that date and I just want to make sure that we're not running at a finish line that's further than our endurance so. I want the place open, it's just I also want to be very prudent with financial decisions that we're

making right now when we have some unknowns and like I don't believe we have the property – maybe we have them by now Jon, but the property tax valuations so we know that our actual revenue is set. So just all, all of the things kind of play into each other as we're looking at Lincoln Park. If, if we end up cutting a gas line do we – there are things that could pop up and if we put all of our eggs in this basket, do we need to put all of our – like, can we open with anything less than that?

Logsdon So this is the first phase of construction and the components within this, within this rendering you see in the memo are the items we committed to with the Land Water so it really is a bare bones project and so we had to look around to what we could cut to kind of lower that price tag from the \$3 million to the \$2.5 so. In addition to that, there are certain requirements of us when we are designing public facilities for ADA and avoiding dangers so I completely understand the concern of you never know what you're going to find when you dig in the ground but we are, we do have additional reserves for those unknowns. Just our general fund operating alone is 127% of our annual expenditures so we're still being prudent with the reserves we have but concerning the Next Level Conservation Trust, this was always the intention of those funds and that's how the project was formed.

Sampson Well and having no breakdown of the number what is the contingency in this \$2.5 million amount?

Logsdon Less than 8%. So every time we enter into these projects we ended up making concessions with things we have to sacrifice, sometimes quality, sometimes just putting them in later but I'll give you an overview real quick of the last couple years of projects and the contingencies we've utilized if that would help just kind of give an understanding of Parks capital projects. Starkey Park SP3 staircase the initial cost was \$170,000, the final cost was \$170,000. There was a 0% change. Overley-Worman Park which had a plethora of unknowns, original contract price \$3,734,066.93, final cost \$3,908,511.14, a difference of 5%. Heritage Trail Park phase 2 a difference of 5%. The Big 4 southern expansion a difference of 4%. The Big 4 Rail Trail northern expansion and widening a difference of 8%. The Big 4 Rail Trail trailhead a difference of -1%, we actually came in under budget. The Mulberry pickleball courts a difference of 5%. Zionsville Golf Course cart path rehabilitation project 4%. Turkeyfoot pedestrian bridge, knock on wood, will be 31% under budget and that's the latest project.

McElderry Jarod, I – first of all, I want to tell you I appreciate the fact that you did kind of cut back from what was originally proposed for the \$3 million dollars. So it appears that there has been some prudence in terms of making sure that what we're committing to is something that needs to be done to open the park and that was how it was explained to me as well is these are the minimum, this is the minimum that needs to happen for the park to open and for it sitting in my district I would love to see that park open for all the reasons that we planned it in the first place when the Carpenters purchased the property so thank you for doing that. I do think it probably would've been nice just to see the layout of the funds but I'm very comfortable with the \$2.5 million and the fact that you're holding back \$500,000.

Zionsville Town Council
August 4, 2025

Sampson I mean so basically looking at it again, extrapolating it basically says we're only making an access drive with reduced curbs and a parking area and doing some earthwork.

Logsdon Reduced earthwork, yes.

Norris And 5,000 linear feet of trail.

Sampson Where's that?

Logsdon Yes.

Sampson Oh, because we went down from 5,300.

Norris Yes. And three wayfinding finds.

Sampson Yes.

Norris Jarod, let me ask – can I ask you this real quick? Are there, are these based upon engineering estimates or are these actual like do you have contractor, like what's the project delivery system? Is this going to be design, bid, build? Design, build?

Logsdon Design, bid, build, yes.

Norris Design, bid, build? So you have engineering estimates then so these numbers should be very –

Logsdon Solid.

Norris Very solid. Okay. Thank you.

Melton Jarod, my concern is some of the language in that last sentence. It talks about the 5-Year Plan and then it talks about may open in 2026 without requirement of additional full-time personnel. I just feel like that like shifts full time. What about part time? Are we going to have additional part-time personnel? Are we – my big thing is people. People cost a lot of money and my vision for Carpenter may be different than other people's vision but as somebody that's sat on the Council for several years now, I'd like to go out there and not see structures and not see, I'd like to see the birds and the trees and the pathways and the ticks – I'll remember the ticks forever, by the way, but I think that's what a nature preserve is to me. I know this is a culmination of visions of, of a lot of people in town of the Town of Zionsville but I guess that's the part that concerns me. If it said shall open in 2026 without the requirement of additional full-time personnel, I'd be like oh, okay but it says may and anytime I see may I don't believe it.

Logsdon Okay.

Melton So, that's, that's my thought. I'm, is it part time? Are you planning on part-time personnel and you're just not mentioning that? But we're here to talk about the \$2.5 but because it's written in this memo, I'm bringing it up.

- Logsdon Yep, sure thing. I'm happy to speak to that. So understanding the challenges our town will face in the coming years, we are adapting the way we perform maintenance. So, historically, we have been building capacities and skillsets through recruiting full-time employees with minimal part-time seasonal help. We are shifting to a model where our existing full-time employees will coach and lead a team of seasonals and that is happening by removing ourselves from the town's mowing contract, utilizing those funds in the part-time line below what the actual contracted amount is and then we're moving those operations in-house. So just changing strategy to have more boots on the ground, teaching those skills and being able to maintain our park system for a little bit more effective dollar.
- Melton I appreciate the effort. I hope it pans out. As the town grows, I know we're going to have a need in the Fire Department, the Police Department, Planning – I mean every department is going to need to expand and we understand that. I understand that but I'm just a little leery of that because I'd rather see, like you said, the parks, this park get open, be utilized and then as we evolve the vision add things like buildings and structures that are not, that, that maybe aren't necessary to get it open so. That's, that's my big thing. I'm a little concerned. I love the idea of it, I'm glad you shaved the \$500,000, I'm glad that that's shifted as a reserve. My breakdown as I read through this – the \$3 million and the \$2.5, it's pretty clear that they, they were able to shave some things that didn't seem necessary in all cases but I don't really need the breakdown but I do understand your, your reasoning for, Sarah, for pulling that out but my big thing is really the things that's going to cost more above and beyond the \$2.5 as we move into the next 10 years so. I'm supportive of this and I appreciate you answering my questions.
- Stein Jarod, for purposes of the record, can you, I mean we keep talking about the breakdown and Sarah and I kind of think of things the same way a little bit and I don't think you need to necessarily lay it all out here but can you kind of give us the chunky items maybe from the large – the biggest spend as you have it laid out maybe down to the top three just so we know like okay of the \$2.5, \$1.7 of it is going to go toward these three items just so we have some kind of a flavor because I couldn't tell you, I mean I could guess that 5,000 linear feet of trail would be pretty salty from a price standpoint but there's also cart paths out there that make up a lot of – I mean is that trail in your mind or is that not? Is that?
- Sampson There's only three things left.
- Stein Yes so I, that's, that's kind of what – so for those that are watching online, what are some of the bigger ticket items and price tags on them? Not, not the whole list.
- Logsdon Yes so really it is this essential infrastructure just to get people safely out there navigating the site. So the, just reconstruction of the existing drive which is beyond its end of or beginning of life. That's already \$1.3 of that including the demolition and earthwork to remove it. So the \$2.5 goes exceptionally fast so we feel fortunate that we were able to still have the 5,000 linear feet of trail to at least get people out there but to your point, crumbling cart paths we'll mow beside and that's a, a rustic grass trail and we'll embrace the site and understand it's in a phase 1 condition with just our sights on the future for how it'll evolve.

- Stein Is it mainly the drive and some parking?
- Logsdon Drive, parking and the trail system.
- Stein Okay, great. That's help, I mean that's helpful.
- Sampson You mentioned the DNR – I have to get to my notes – the DNR was going to do two-thirds of a mile of Eagle Creek, right? Am I saying that right?
- Logsdon Yes.
- Sampson Where's the other amount coming from to, for the upkeep of all of the park? Is that, is that in a budget somewhere that would be picked up for – was it one-third was being picked up by DNR and two-thirds were us?
- Logsdon Yes so one-third of the park essentially will be on "autopilot." I don't like to use that term but because the DNR will be managing that for the next 10 years. The other two-thirds of the park we will be maintaining and that's how I mentioned the full-time/part-time maintenance model out there so changing trashcans, cleaning surfaces, things like that which we can encumber within our existing operating structure. I've anticipated approximately \$10,000 for supplies throughout the year for this site. So, again, that would be within our request in the 2026 budget while we're making concessions and reducing other lines to offset that.
- Plunkett Jarod, you, you mentioned – sorry, go ahead.
- Sampson I was just going to say so the part-time help is technically part of the team that you're making for your shift in existing workers coaching and leading the part-time people?
- Logsdon Yes.
- Sampson Sorry.
- Plunkett No, you're fine. So I think over the last gosh, maybe five months of meeting with the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor about this project, my question was always there's \$3 million there but what could we do with less. Not no. It was what can we do with less? Like what does a million dollars get us? What's a million five get us? What's two get us? The two responses we have are \$2.5 and \$3 and then I hear when Councilor Norris asked the question earlier – I'm a little bit confused about the build process now. Why wouldn't we get bids before as opposed to – I mean I feel like contractors now know the number and they're going to come in and max out that bid regardless. Like there's no chance for us to try to do more with what we have I guess.
- Logsdon These are just based on the real numbers of the market based on engineered reports from recent projects. Talking numbers publicly is always challenging but just attempting to be transparent with this body to feel comfortable in this decision.

- Norris Have you ever thought about a BOT route or?
- Logsdon One of my Park Board members, Doug Tischbein, is really trying to get us to explore that model and I'm in support for learning more.
- Norris Because that's still an option if we approve this funding today is that is, is going back to this the, what I call the project delivery process, is that still viable?
- Logsdon We are complete on design so usually that's something that you intercept at the beginning of design and work together towards the end product.
- Norris So we have gone through design then?
- Logsdon Yes, yep.
- Norris Okay. Well that –
- Logsdon But again, that requires passing ordinances at the Town Council level, whether those have been done in the past or not I'm unsure but it takes a –
- Norris Right, yes. I'm not saying that it hasn't been approved but that kind of, that kind of upsets the BOT –
- Logsdon Yes.
- Norris Process then.
- Logsdon But I am more than happy to learn more about that process.
- Norris I think it's something town-wide we should be taking more advantage of as well but that's a discussion for – I didn't mean to interrupt you, Jason, but I'm trying to, I'm trying to think about this. So if you have engineering estimates for \$2.5 then and you have full design plans then that's the price. Like we know that's going to be the cost, right? And it's just up to us to find a contractor that can build it for that price and we run the risk then of putting it out for public bid and not finding anyone that can match that price.
- Logsdon As we have with the history of our park projects to date.
- Norris So that's happened before?
- Logsdon Well, it has prior to my tenure here but we've always been design, design, bid, build.
- Norris Okay.
- Sampson Is there any sort of risk to – you, you talked in phases and I wasn't around during the voting of, of this. I mean, again, I want to say I love parks, I want, I want parks but I also don't want to be financially in a situation that promotes the next step. Like if we do this phase 1 to open, was phase 2 coming the year after? Would that, like are we starting an avalanche here in spending once we start?

- Logsdon We, we had a very honest conversation during the bonding process and we believed and agreed that future phases should be funded through donations, grants and opportunities like that. I'm not saying there won't be a bond request 15 years from now for a nature center but at this point in time that is still our moniker and we're just trying to get it open, fulfill all our commitments to our grants and have the public begin to enjoy it but our Foundation has done an amazing job to date raising funds for it and I feel that they can help us into the next phase, whatever that timeline is.
- Sampson Is phase 2 already designed?
- Logsdon No.
- Sampson And what is listed in phase 2?
- Logsdon That's where it becomes more ambiguous. So we kind of broke it into chunks but there is a full Master Plan for the site. It includes a regional nature center, treehouses, overlooks. It's going to be an incredible place but where those fall is going to be completely dependent on donations, grant opportunities and future funding cycles.
- Norris As we sit here today, there's no phase 2 grant timing requirements?
- Logsdon Correct.
- Norris Okay, okay. Does that –
- Sampson That helps.
- Norris That helps?
- Sampson That helps.
- Norris Okay.
- Logsdon Yep.
- Plunkett Any other questions from Councilors? Thanks Jarod. I would point out this is a public hearing, and I have proof of the publication of the public hearing. At this point I will open the public hearing. I know we have three folks that filled out request to speak so we'll start with Jim and/or Nancy Carpenter, then we'll go with Tim Casady and then Ryan Cambridge. We take them as they come through. So first will be the Carpenters and then – yes. And you'll have three minutes. At two minutes I'll hold up one finger to let you know we're good and if you would just state your name and address for the record and –
- N. Carpenter Thank you.
- Plunkett We'll start your time after that.

- N. Carpenter Good evening. I'm Nancy Carpenter, I live, we live at 6517 South 800 East in Zionsville.
- J. Carpenter Jim Carpenter, live at the same place.
- N. Carpenter Okay, excuse me – so as you're aware, of course, development is well underway at the Carpenter Nature Preserve to hopefully see it open to the public sometime in 2026. There's great excitement and gratitude in our community that this amazing 215-acre property is not only preserved for posterity but promises to provide beauty, places to play, learn, hike and solitude that only nature can provide. With the support of the town, plans were developed for a stellar nature park to include trails, outdoor classrooms, an amphitheater, nature playground, a nature center and much, much more in the future. Over the last several years, the town, the state and other donors to the Carpenter Nature Preserve have worked in good faith to, with the understanding that awards from the state and federal conservation grants would be used to open the park, preserve to the public. Because my husband and I feel so strongly about the benefits of parks and nature for citizens of Zionsville, we made the choice to donate \$1.5 million in a bargain sale to the town for the preserve to the Town of Zionsville and \$500,000 to the Zionsville Parks Foundation to help the town further make this a reality. Okay, that messed up because Tim was going to go first so. As Tim will mention, there have been many other nonprofits as well as private individuals who realize that this is once again a generation, once in a generation opportunity to create a landmark nature preserve for our community as well as the entire region.
- J. Carpenter I just wanted to mention there, there were, there's some language in the Purchase Agreement with the Park Board that, and I'll just read it that's the easiest thing to do. "This additionally is understood that the Zionsville Park Board and/or the Zionsville Town Council is granted \$3 million dollars from the Next Level Conservation Trust to assist in the purchase and/or development of a majority portion of the property from Soaring Feather and that these funds would become available to the Zionsville Park Board and/or Town of Zionsville after the date of this real estate transfer." So it just seems fairly clear to us that the intention of buying it was to not only buy it but to use those grants further for the park. With that, thank you.
- Plunkett Thank you. All right, up next is Tim Casady.
- Casady Mr. President, Councilors, thank you for this opportunity. I'll try to be responsive to some of the discussion we've heard so I may stray off comment here a little bit but my name is Tim Casady, 540 West Sycamore Street, here representing the Zionsville Parks Foundation as its President. I also served eight years as the town, on the town's Park Board and was its President in '20 and '21.
- The Parks Foundation is a 501(c)(3) and is created to raise friends and funds for our parks, pathways and greenspaces and I think we have about a \$500,000 to \$800,000 means to supercharge the decision you have to make tonight. So I'll get to that in a little bit. Carpenter Nature Preserve is already an important beneficiary of our grants, trying to – money that we're putting out there and it's also a north star for our fundraising. This recipe has been created over the last five, six years but it has always from early on included financial grant support

from the state – two or three DNR programs. The one that we’ve been discussing tonight is the Next Level Conservation Trust program. The town applied in ’22. It is, we talked a little bit about it already but let me just say that the town’s application for this grant really nailed it and it focused on and utilized and leveraged the preserve Master Plan that had been completed just before that application and that Master Plan obviously as Jarod has said involves phases of construction. Phase 1 is pretty clear, phase 2 – we, we like to think of a, of a kick ass nature center coming as a part of phase 2. The Foundation now has relied on this, these state grants as a part of our messaging. We’ve relied on this funding recipe and we’ve been successful attracting private gifts and grants for the preserve, not just the preserve but especially for the preserve. In the past three years we’ve raised from citizens, companies and philanthropies over \$800,000 in cash and commitments earmarked for the preserve and these are for amenities that really depend on this construction getting done. It’s an amphitheater, an outdoor classroom, a wetlands boardwalk, a playground, habitat restoration and more than \$100,000 of these commitments have already been paid to the Parks Department and the town. So the recipe is set. We say that the cake is in the oven. DNR’s \$3 million dollars is here. Our donors are super excited and opening the preserve will inject even more energy and credibility to our fundraising to support the preserve. So please vote yes tonight for the submitted appropriation. Thank you for your time.

Plunkett Thank you. All right and then we have Ryan Cambridge.

Cambridge Thank you Council. I appreciate the opportunity to be here. My name is Ryan Cambridge. I am a local small business owner, a professional park planner and registered landscape architect and also the current Park Board President for the town. I live at 10330 Arilla Circle in Zionsville. I’m not normally one for prepared remarks but I want to be respectful of your all’s time. I know we’re not the only thing on the agenda so I am here to encourage you to allocate those funds to Carpenter for a variety of reasons but I want to say first and foremost that I do understand to the greatest degree that I can the challenges that we face as a community in Indiana as it relates to budget, further complicated by some of the stuff that’s recently come down the pipeline. However, responsible fiscal stewardship also includes making strategic investments that secure our community’s long-term future and I really do believe that Carpenter Nature Preserve is one of those for Zionsville.

This 215-acre nature preserve will become the largest park in our system and it’s uniquely situated along the riparian corridor of Eagle Creek. It’s an irreplaceable natural asset that’s rich in biodiversity and it also addresses one of our community’s pressing challenges as it relates to growth and that’s having sufficient greenspace in growing areas of the town. This very Council or the Town of Zionsville Council recognized this urgency when they adopted the town’s 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan which did identify Carpenter Nature Preserve as a top priority for those reasons.

As a park advocate and speaker on the topic as part of my profession, one of the things I always like to say and remind folks is that – and this is statistically backed for those that are interested in, in diving into that later on their own time – that parks really are not red or blue issues, they’re green. They benefit

everyone, every resident in every town regardless of whether they use those facilities or not. Robust studies, and the data gets better and better with very year, consistently demonstrates significant economic values and benefits of high-quality parks including increased property values, improved public health outcomes and enhanced community safety. Just as a single example of many research by the NRPA, the National Recreation and Parks Association, shows that properties adjacent to high-quality parks, I think high quality is important, can see up to a 20% increase and are critical factors when people decide where to live.

The town's population is continuing to grow and without adding new parks to our system our level of service and our quality of life will go down with time. Each person in this room, as I'm wrapping up, have been benefitted from the visionary decisions of other Councils in prior generations to invest in our park system. We all cherish what we have. Today it's our turn to make a decision to create a lasting legacy and Carpenter Nature Preserve is really more than just a park, it's as commitment to our community's future, a choice that will positively impact every resident for generations to come and as a Park Board President, small business owner, father of Zionsville kids and resident myself, I would encourage you to approve this funding, invest in our future, invest in our kids' future and continue to do what we do so well which is our parks. Thank you.

Plunkett Thank you. Right on time. All right, are there any other members from the public who would like to speak? Seeing none, I will close the public hearing. Any questions or discussion from Councilors? This is a resolution so we have one vote and if there are no other questions, I would entertain a motion.

McElderry I would move to approve Resolution 2025-09.

Stein Second.

Plunkett I have a first from Councilor McElderry and a second from Councilor Stein. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

All Aye.

Plunkett Those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

OTHER MATTERS

- Plunkett Up next on the agenda is Other Matters and I know Councilor Norris had something for Other Matters.
- Norris Yes, if I could, thank you Mr. President. I've got some prepared remarks here that I'd just like to make very quickly. I wish to address a significant issue this evening prompted by a recent incident in our community. After discussion with Council leadership, we want to reaffirm that this Council unequivocally, unequivocally condemns acts of antisemitism in the strongest possible terms. Recently an incident occurred in our town involving what is believed to be two juveniles who allegedly inscribed a swastika on private property. I'd like to express my gratitude to the property owner for their prompt and decisive action in contacting the Zionsville Police Department to investigate this matter. Additionally, I extend my appreciation to the Zionsville Police Department for their diligent efforts in addressing the situation. I'm relieved to note that this appears to be an isolated incident and has been resolved swiftly. As a community, it is imperative that we continue to educate our children about the harmful consequences of such behavior and work together to foster a welcoming community for all. Thank you.
- Plunkett Thanks. Councilor Norris, I think, wrapped up the sentiments of this Council pretty well so thank you for that. I just want to take a minute real quick and congratulate the Zionsville Chamber for another incredible street dance this last weekend. They do such a great job and it was perfect weather and just a ton of fun and obviously we've got school starting tomorrow so we'll be praying for a safe and happy school year for everybody that starts so.
- Sampson A reminder to look out for the kids at the bus stops and –
- Plunkett Right –
- Sampson Remember the bus safety and –
- Norris Stop for the school busses.
- Sampson Stop for the school bus, yes please.
- Plunkett That's right. Anything else from Councilors?

ADJOURN

- Plunkett All right, at this point I would make a motion to adjourn.
- Burk Second.
- Plunkett Second from Councilor, from Vice President Burk. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Zionsville Town Council
August 4, 2025

All Aye.

Plunkett Those opposed same sign.
[No response]

Motion passes 7 in favor, 0 opposed.

The next regular Town Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 18, 2025 at 7:30 a.m. in the Zionsville Town Hall Council Chambers. Final notice will be posted in compliance with the Indiana Open Door Law. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amelia Anne Lacy, Municipal Relations Coordinator
Town of Zionsville