

**Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board**  
**Courthouse, Old Courtroom**  
**Thursday, January 16th, 2025**

The Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 16, 2025, in the Old Courtroom, Kosciusko County Courthouse. Members present included: Rob Bishop, Mike Cusick, Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley.

Pledge and Prayer were said.

President Rob Bishop called the meeting to order.

**IN THE MATTER OF SWEARING IN OF MEMBERS:**

Alyssa Schmucker, County Auditor swore in the following members: Rob Bishop, Mike Cusick, Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley as 2025 board members.

**IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 12-19-2024 MEETING MINUTES:**

Rob Bishop asked about the approval of the 12-19-2024 minutes and it was asked to table them until the next meeting as no one had reviewed them.

Motion: Mike Cusick  
Second: Matt Metzger  
Ayes: 5          Nays: 0  
Motion Carried

To: Approve to table the approval of the  
12-19-2024 minutes until the next meeting.

**IN THE MATTER OF TRAILS MASTER PLAN:**

Scott Siefker appeared virtually and Deb Schmucker appeared in person from TSW (Taylor Siefker Williams) Design Group. Board members should have received the design guidelines and final documents for review prior to the meeting. TSW Design Group is asking that the Board move forward and adopt the draft so they can move forward with the Plan Commission and they can adopt it as part of their comprehensive plan. Discussion was had amongst the Board Members and some adjustments were requested to be made to the draft.

Motion: Matt Metzger  
Second: Aggie Sweeney  
Ayes: 5          Nays: 0  
Motion Carried

To: Approve the draft of the Trails Master  
Plan, as presented.

**IN THE MATTER OF CHINWORTH EXTENSION:**

John Nelson from Triad stated that they have received all the drainage and pedestrian crossing submittals and those have been reviewed and approved and sent back to the contractor. The materials are being constructed. Niblock has stated that around April will be the groundbreaking. Brightspeed has been asked to remove their utilities within the right of ways. They were given a notice to proceed.

**IN THE MATTER OF 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Alyssa Schmucker, County Auditor stated that it was suggested to schedule the meetings to every other month. It was discussed amongst the Board to continue to hold their meetings on a monthly basis.

**IN THE MATTER OF FURTHER BUSINESS:**

Rob Bishop stated that he has reached out to Pierceton and Syracuse. The next projects would possibly be Pierceton, North Webster, Winona Lake and Syracuse. Mike Cusick stated that Amy Roe has been working with Pierceton and that they would like to complete the Market Street Greenway. Amy Roe came to the microphone and gave her updates on the projects she has been involved in and where things are headed with those projects.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board  
Courthouse, Old Courtroom  
Thursday, February 20, 2025**

The Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025, in the Old Courtroom, Kosciusko County Courthouse. Members present included: Rob Bishop, Mike Cusick, Matt Metzger, Aggie Sweeney, and Troy Turley.

President Rob Bishop called the meeting to order.

**IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 12/19/2024 AND 01/16/2025 MINUTES:**

MOTION: Aggie Sweeney

TO: Approve the 12/19/2024 and 1/16/2025 minutes, as presented.

SECOND: Mike Cusick

AYES: 5 NAYS: 0

UNANIMOUS

**IN THE MATTER OF TRIAD ASSOCIATES INC – VS ENGINEERING INC:**

John Nelson, Project site manager made the announcement that effective February 1, 2025 Triad Associates Inc was bought out by VS Engineering Inc and that all employees and projects were merged into VS Engineering Inc. John also stated that there is a contract that needs to be signed by the President of the Commissioners from Triad Associates Inc to VS Engineering Inc. Rob Bishop assured him that was in the process.

**IN THE MATTER OF GREENWAY/CHINWORTH TRAIL EXTENSION:**

Triad Associates Project Site Manager John Nelson presented an update for Chinworth Trail Extension stating that a groundbreaking ceremony has been scheduled for March 20, 2025 @ 4pm. Amy Roe will provide more information later in the meeting. The plan is everyone meeting down by the bridge by the current trailhead parking lot and Niblock will have a piece of equipment and pile of sand. The shovels will come from the chamber and there will be enough hard hats and safety vest for everyone to have a photo op. Afterwards at the pavilion there will be refreshments served. VS is buying cookies with the Parks & Recreation board logo on them for the event.

After John, Rob Bishop took a moment to state that he had received an email for a press release on the ground breaking ceremony. Then he stated he received an email from Katie at KEDCO asking what the name of the new trail was going to be. Rob stated that a name was never decided for the trail. The previous trails that lead up to this point is called Lake City Greenway. Aggie then stated on the original master plan the new trail was titled as Chinworth trail. Mike Cusick stated that the trail through Winona Lake states Lake City Greenway, but is also known as Heritage Trail. It was mentioned that Ride-Walk could possibly become involved and there may be a rebranding, however for now the name should be Lake City Greenway. Alyssa Schmucker, Kosciusko County Auditor stated that all the funding and advertising has been referred to as Chinworth Trailhead and to rename it now, could cause issues. After discussion, it was decided to refer to it as an extension of the Lake City Greenway, Chinworth Trailhead project.

**IN THE MATTER OF CHINWORTH RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY:**

Amy Roe, HELP Coordinator shared that she had read the masterplan and design guideline for the Blue-Way agreement and it took her 4 hours. She stated the press release for the ceremony stated that the Parks and Recreation Board is inviting the entire community to the ground breaking ceremony at the Chinworth Trail extension that will extend .8 miles. It was suggested to invite the Kosciusko Historical Society members to the ceremony as they are the land owners of the property the trail will be constructed on.

**IN THE MATTER OF FURTHER BUSINESS:**

President Rob Bishop, stated that the Friends of the Trails program needed work and Aggie Sweeney will work with that. Aggie Sweeney gave a brief presentation about explaining the Friends of the Trails. The Trail Summit with getting Winona Lake, North Webster, Syracuse, Wawasee and the board together to discuss trail rules, rebranding, the master plan, and what the expectations are regardless of what trail you are on in Kosciusko County. Sharing the design deadlines and perhaps having them adopt the boards design guidelines. Rob and Matt Metzger will work on the Trail Summit.

Aggie Sweeney then stated the Trails Master Plan (Blueway/Greenway plans) will go before the Plan Commission on March 5, 2025 at 1pm. She asked if anyone else would be able to attend this meeting with her. Troy Turley stated he would be her silent partner for the meeting as everyone else had prior engagements.

Amy Roe came back to ask if Dan Thystrup needs added to the planning committee, he is from North Webster and is currently part of the steering committees. Amy also asked if Atwood was Incorporated and it is not.

Heath Roberts, President of the Etna Green Town Council, stated he had designed a trail in the Heritage Park, to build a trail with K21 Grant money 8 foot wide and ½ mile long. He has also constructed a handicap ramp to the pavilion and a trail to join their walking trail from the parking lot. There is another grant that they can apply for that needs to be completed with the current grant.

Mike Cusick then gave an update that Pierceton was interested in putting a proposal together to join to Winona Lake trails. Several options were presented but it comes down to land access.

A Leesburg town board member came to the podium to talk about possibly joining Leesburg with one of the trails that are in the works, by possibly using the sidewalks or other trails. Prairie Street would be the best connection and possibly the vacant railway bed. She also mentioned that a historical museum is coming to Leesburg.

Steve Figley, a resident by the Chinworth Trailhead, wanted to thank the board and say how this trail extension is going to make safe trails and commutes for 100's of families.

Craig Allabach from Winona Lake, came to state that he wants to extend an invitation to the towns of Etna Green, Pierceton, and Leesburg to join in the ride-walk plan and networking with the different trail systems.

Troy Turley stated he would be absent for the March, 2025 meeting.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board  
Courthouse, Old Courtroom  
Thursday, March 20, 2025**

The Kosciusko County Parks & Recreation Board met at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, 2025, in the Old Courtroom, Kosciusko County Courthouse. Members present included: Rob Bishop, Matt Metzger and Aggie Sweeney. Troy Turley and Mike Cusick were both absent.

Pledge and prayer.

Rob Bishop called the meeting to order.

**IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF 02/20/2025 MINUTES:**

Rob Bishop presented the minutes for approval.

Motion: Aggie Sweeney

Second: Matt Metzger  
Ayes: 3 Nays: 0  
Motion Carried

To: Approve the 02/20/2025 minutes as presented.

**IN THE MATTER OF GREENWAY/CHINWORTH EXTENSION:**

John Nelson, VS Engineering Inc, presented an update on the Greenway/Chinworth Trail Extension. Groundbreaking is today (March 20, 2025) at 4pm. All events will happen at the pavilion due to the weather. Construction is to start towards the end of April. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of July, 2025. A ribbon ceremony will be scheduled sometime in August.

**IN THE MATTER OF GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS PLAN:**

Katie Clark, TSW (Taylor Siefker Williams) Design Group, appeared remotely, presented the final Countywide Greenways and Blueways plan, aka trails master plan, and related design guidelines to adopt and present to the Commissioners on March 25, 2025 @ 9am. This will be presented to the Area Plan Commission at the April 2, 2025 meeting if Commissioners approve on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

Motion: Matt Metzger  
Second: Aggie Sweeney  
Ayes: 3 Nays: 0

To: Approve the final Countywide Greenways and Blueways plan MAH Design and master plan, as presented.

Motion Carried

*It was discussed that Rob Bishop and Aggie Sweeney will attend the Commissioner's meeting on March 25, 2025 @ 9am to present the design and master plan for adoption. It was also discussed that Rob Bishop and other Park Board members available will attend the Council meeting on April 20, 2025 @ 6pm, to provide their annual update.*

**IN THE MATTER OF KOSCIUSKO FRIENDS OF THE TRAILS:**

Aggie Sweeney explained this group would work in coordination with the Parks Board and would support the group together. Troy Turley and Aggie worked together to get an overview of the Friends of the Trails. This would be a group of volunteers to help with projects and assist with maintenance of the trails. They could also organize fundraisers and help with financial support. It is suggested to create an email and Facebook page for the Friends of the Trails group. Aggie has volunteered to manage this and help get this started. Matt Metzger agreed to help assist in getting these items set up.

Motion: Matt Metzger  
Second: Aggie Sweeney  
Ayes: 3 Nays: 0  
Motion Carried

To: Approve the creation of Friends of the Trails, as presented.

**IN THE MATTER OF ESTABLISHING A FUND AT THE KOSCIUSKO COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:**

Aggie Sweeney stated she was wanting to set up a fund at the KCCF that can accept contributions and gifts to support maintenance and planning for the trails and trailheads. The fund type would be a "Field of Interest" fund that is non-permanent. This means it would not be

an endowment where the principle is invested. It would be a non-permanent fund where it could earn or lose money as long as the funds are there and would be invested along with the other non-permanent funds that the KCCF has. The Parks and Recreation Board would be making recommendations to the KCCF as to where the funds would be distributed to when needed. Rob Bishop recommended that this idea be brought before the Commissioners. Aggie stated that she was approached by an anonymous donor that once this fund is set up, they will make an anonymous donation of \$10,000 non-restricted. Amy Roe, questioned if the funds would be open to those to approach the PRB to request funds or a matching grant. It was stated that this could be a vehicle to assist with matching grants, but not large projects.

**IN THE MATTER OF PIERCETON CONNECT TRAIL:**

Glenn Hall, Pierceton Town Council and Chad Salzbrenner, Fleis and VandenBrink presented the update about the Pierceton Trail and OIRI funds. This is a trail from Winona Lake to Pierceton. The goal is to make Pierceton a destination point along with trail system. The different routes being considered and the costs for each were discussed.

**IN THE MATTER OF OTHER BUSINESS:**

Rob Bishop stated that the Syracuse - Wawasee Trails requested a Letter of Support. Tracey Ford, Executive Director of the Syracuse - Wawasee Trails gave thanks for the support and providing the Letter of Support. The next level of expansion is a planned 2.2-mile trail that is a school-to-school connection. USI is the engineering company that is working on this trail.

Aggie Sweeney gave an update on the Clean Waters Partnership Virtual Presentation of the Greenways and Blueways Trail. There is a virtual meeting on April 14, 2025 @ 2pm. Aggie will share the link to those that would like to attend.

Rob Bishop is currently working on the Trail Summit. He is hoping this will happen sometime this summer.

The OIRI (Orthopedic Industry Retention Initiative) Funding was briefly discussed.

Amy Roe recommended that PRB should report to the KCCRV board as they have been given the task to give funds for tourism. The PRB agreed to attend the May 14, 2025 @ 9am meeting of KCCRV, if it can be arranged.

A member of the audience asked to speak to the Board at the end of the meeting. He thanked Aggie for being at the recent meeting of the Warsaw Common Council. He stated that there were 18,000 residents within the City of Warsaw, making up 20% of the residents in the county. He stated he didn't feel the board knew who their stakeholders are and that they (Warsaw residents) are not represented by the Board. Rob Bishop stated that he was unable to attend the Warsaw meeting but he sent a letter of support as the President of the Kosciusko County Park Board. The man then walked out of the meeting. The man was later identified as Gary Parker, a resident of Warsaw.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.