



Portage Parks Foundation Board Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2025

Portage Parks Foundation Board Present: Pete Strazdas, Jason Kamrath, Steve Meier, Chris Pollack, Jeff Ruhland, Lora Seifert, Patti Lent, Shannon Myers, Chris Fusciardi

Board Absent (excused): N/A

Board Absent (unexcused): N/A

Guests: Ms. Kathleen Hoyle – Director of Portage Parks & Recreation & Senior Center
Ms. Tara Gish – Chairperson for Portage Parks Board

Meeting started and roll conducted at 5:30 pm.

I. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve July 23, 2025 minutes by Mr. Ruhland and second by Mr. Meier
Unanimous vote to approve.

II. 2025 MEETING CALENDAR

Remaining Meeting Dates: Nov 12th

III. ADDITIONAL / SPECIAL BOARD MEETINGS

N/A

IV. FINANCIAL UPDATE – Mr. Fusciardi

a. *Income/Expense Budget Statement (as of August 31, 2025 statements)*

- Huntington Account Balance - \$171,014.95
- PayPal - \$0
- Donations Received - \$3,486.34

b. *Project Fund Balances*

1. ADA Swing - \$25
2. Scholarship Program - \$1,960
3. Bike Repair Stations - \$0
4. Trail Endowment - \$2,464



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5. General Fund – \$39,712.86
6. Oktoberfest Fundraiser - \$4,434.64
7. Inspirational Garden (Judy Acker-Smith) - \$79,469.40
8. Leaf-A-Legacy Tree Program - \$42,949.05
9. Special Projects - \$0

V. COMMUNICATION UPDATE

- a. *Website Corrections & Updates*
 - Mr. Fusciardi to remove Judy Acker-Smith link and replace with Leaf-A-Legacy fundraising link. Longer term plan is to feature the Judy Acker-Smith project in a “Past Projects” link
- b. *Emails & Responses* – No new activity
- c. *LARA & IRS Form 1024 Status* – Mr. Fusciardi & Ms. Myers
 - LARA filing by October 1, 2025 – **On track for submission**
 - IRS 990N filing by November 15, 2025 – **On track for submission** (2025 submission will require filing a 990-EZ form)

VI. PROJECTS/PROGRAMS UPDATE

- a. *Bike Repair Station* – 5 locations determined
 - Eliason Nature Reserve Trail – completed and operational
 - Celery Flats – completed and operational
 - Lakeview Park – **STATUS: No new activity**
 - Fund approval granted in May 2025 meeting
 - Bicentennial Park at Portage Creek – **STATUS: Not scheduled**
 - Bicentennial Trail Head at Kilgore Rd. – **STATUS: Not scheduled**
- b. *Trail Endowment Fund* – Funds transfer - **STATUS: No new activity**
- c. *Scholarship Program* - **STATUS: No new activity**
- d. *ADA Swing* – **STATUS: No new activity**
- e. *Judy Acker-Smith Inspirational Garden* – Goal of \$150k reached.
 - i. **STATUS:** Work is complete. Dedication occurred August 31st, 2025. Attendance was estimated at 50 people.



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VII. NEXT STEPS & ADJOURNMENT

a. FUNDRAISING EVENTS UPDATE

Corporate Sponsor(s) by Park Location: Ms. Hoyle

- Corporate Sponsor(s) by park location – an etched glass plaque of the corporate sponsor was under discussion. More discussion to progress regarding ideas, costs. Labor vs. Monetary Donation (\$1k, \$5k or \$10k sponsorship amounts). Twenty (20) parks in total. Mr. Kamrath requested a DRAFT of the Corporate Sponsorship guidelines from Ms. Hoyle for potential corporate park location sponsors opportunities. **STATUS: No change**

Annual Portage Parks Membership: Ms. Hoyle

- Portage Parks Annual Membership – discussion pertained to the Portage Senior Center membership and their success. Ms. Hoyle will provide the 5 different levels that can potentially be added to the website. **STATUS: No change**

Leaf-A-Legacy Committee: Ms. Hoyle & Mr. Strazdas

- \$150,000 Federal Grant will be awarded to the Portage Parks and Recreation Department upon submission and receipt of the Tree Restoration Plan by the Federal Government. IN PROCESS by Parks & Rec Dept.
- Mr. Strazdas shared an email stating Consumers Energy has donated \$50,000 for tree renewal. In a press release on May 8, Mr. Strazdas committed Portage Parks Foundation funds (via Leaf-A-Legacy donations) to match the Consumers donation to commemorate the May 7, 2024 tornado event.
- One final communication will be sent to the public for donations in the November Portager. Input to that communication will need to be provided to Ms. Hoyle in October.
- Leaf-A-Legacy tree planting event will be held at Celery Flats on September 26, from 10am-Noon.



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Oktoberfest Annual Fundraiser (September 13, 2025 – 2pm to 7 pm): Mr. Meier

- Event held at South Westnedge Park Pavilion.
- Revenue: \$9,164 (including \$2,500 Fawley door donation)
- Expenses: \$5,967
- Net profit to Park System: \$3,197
- \$2,000 to be maintained in Oktoberfest account and \$3,197 to be transferred to General Fund (will be reflected in November financials; Mr. Ruhland motion, 2nd by Mr. Meier; unanimous decision)
- Full budget template and record of event (including suggestions) to be held in Mr. Pollack's records for reference next year.

Judy Acker-Smith Inspirational Garden: Ms. Hoyle & Ms. Myer

- Fundraising complete and remaining funds to be transferred to the city at November Foundation meeting. Ms. Myers and Mr. Fusciardi to determine exact amount to be transferred prior to November meeting.

Summer Concert Fundraising – Mr. Kamrath

- Four events generated \$1097 net profit.
- Consensus of Foundation members is that this fundraising effort will continue for 2026 concert series.



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MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS

General Fund: Ms. Hoyle & Mr. Strazdas

STATUS: No change

- Mr. Strazdas requested an updated list of projects from Ms. Hoyle that can be funded by the General fund, such that one check can be written to cover all. Previously identified items up for consideration are:
 - Picnic in the park - \$750 (Annually)
 - Mr. Crispy Give Away - \$500
 - Garlic Mustard Pull - \$400 (Annually)
 - Park Passport/Walking Stick - \$1,200
 - Free Lending Library - \$500

Historical Markers: Ms. Hoyle

- Potential for Historical Markers throughout the Portage Parks System

STATUS: No change

 - Two Locations identified: Austin Lake Tavern & Lathrop Hotel (approximately \$30K-\$50K each)
 - Sponsors needed
 - 12 site locations determined, w/ possibility of 15 total.

West Lake Outlook Renovation: Ms. Hoyle and Mr. Strazdas

- A \$50K grant opportunity exists toward renovating West Lake Outlook (replacement of damaged awning)
- Mr. Strazdas to write support letter (vote unanimous to proceed)
- Ms. Hoyle to submit application

The Meeting adjourned at 6:28 PM. Motion to adjourn by Mr. Strazdas

Next Meeting: November 12, 2025 at 5:30 pm at 320 Library Lane Conference Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Pollack, Portage Parks Foundation Board Secretary