

DRAFT for Subcommittee Review (2/26/2026)

**Town of Ellettsville & Richland Township Reorganization
Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Report**

The Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries was charged by the Reorganization Committee to assess parks, recreation and cemetery activity in the Town and Township and to report on at least five questions related to these services. This subcommittee report represents the results of our deliberations, which included input from the Town’s Park Board, the public, and other entities with assets related to the subcommittee’s charge.

INVENTORY OF RELEVANT ASSETS IN THE TOWN AND TOWNSHIP

During its deliberations to assess resources, future obligations, and services, the subcommittee identified many assets and geographically-relevant resources that might affect future commitments and obligations. We present below a brief enumeration of resources and assets that are relevant to parks, recreation and cemeteries in the geographic area.

Parks (owner in parentheses)

- Ellettsville Town Hall Park (Ellettsville)
- Campbell’s Park (Ellettsville)
- Prominence Place and Tecumseh Pocket Parks (Ellettsville)
- Marci Jane Lewis Park (Richland Township)
- Will Detmer Park (Monroe County)
- Flatwoods Park (Monroe County)
- Memorial Park (Richland Township)
- Stewart Park (Ellettsville)
- Well’s Park (Ellettsville)

Recreation Assets

Ellettsville Town Hall Log Cabin

Trails

- Heritage Trail Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Ellettsville)
- Karst Farm Trails (Monroe County)

Sycamore Land Trust

- Porter Ridge Preserve

Area 10 Agency on Aging

- Endright Center (Ellettsville)

Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation

Events

- Monroe County Fall Festival (September)
- Ellettsville Summer Concert Series (May – July)
- Indiana Limestone Symposium (June)
- Independence Day Fireworks (July)
- Ellettsville Farmers Market (May – October)
- Hilly Hundred Weekend (October)
- Ellettsville 5K (and 1-Mile Fun Run)
- Santa on Sale Street

Cemeteries

Seventeen cemeteries are located in Richland Township. Nine of these cemeteries are abandoned, and seven of these are on private land. The Trustee's office in Richland Township is responsible for the care and maintenance of two abandoned cemeteries in the Township that are located on public land, Houston/Houstentown Cemetery and the Vernal/Mayfield Cemetery. These two cemeteries have not had burials in at least ten years.

The Methodist Cemetery and the Presbyterian Cemetery, which are private, are located in the Town of Ellettsville. There are presently no cemeteries in the Town of Ellettsville for which the Town is responsible.

Nonprofit Organization Assets

- Area 10 Agency on Aging
- Boys and Girls Club
- Ellettsville Main Street
- Ellettsville Youth Sports
- Greater Ellettsville Chamber of Commerce
- Richland-Bean Blossom Youth Sports
- Smithville Charitable Foundation
- YMCA Northwest
- Youth Sports

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS POSED BY THE REORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

When the Reorganization Committee first convened, they posed five questions to this subcommittee. The subcommittee's responses to the questions appear below.

Will the Parks Board continue to oversee these services?

The Parks Board is authorized under Indiana Code Chapter 36 and by Ellettsville ordinance. In light of the wording and prior authorization of the Ellettsville Town Council, the subcommittee recommends that the Park Board/department structure be maintained for parks and recreation services after reorganization. Our reading of Indiana State code Chapter 36 (and after consultation with Town and Township legal counsel) is that Chapter 36 would permit extension of the Park Board's jurisdiction to park and recreation services jointly for the Town and Township. Thus, parks and recreation services would be administered by a combined entity, representing the interests of the Town and Township, and overseen by a Park Board, representing both the Town and Township.

How will Parks Board membership be diversified in the future as seats on the board become vacant?

Town of Ellettsville Ordinance section 95.02 now addresses board composition. It calls for 5 at-large members, four of whom are appointed by the executive on the basis of their interest in and knowledge of parks and recreation. No more than two members shall be of the same political party; and the fifth member is ex-officio, appointed from the Richland Bean Blossom School Corporation's Board of Directors. We recommend maintenance of the same number of members and criteria for membership, 2 of whom would be appointed by the Town executive, two by the Township executive, and the fifth appointed from the Richland Bean Blossom School Corporation's Board of Directors.

How will the budget change, if at all, for Parks & Rec?

The subcommittee does not envision any immediate budget changes, but anticipates that park and recreation services would evolve over time and reflect local demand and assets. The budgets for the two jurisdictions in FY2026 totals \$126,083 (\$110,483+\$15,600), representing modest growth in Ellettsville (2023 to 2026 of \$73,152 to \$110,483) and minimal outlays in Richland Township (2026 FY\$15,600).

How many cemeteries are in Richland Township?

Seventeen cemeteries are located in Richland Township. Nine of these cemeteries are abandoned, and seven of the abandoned cemeteries are on private land, which shields the Township from any responsibility for them. The Trustee's office in Richland Township is

responsible for the care and maintenance of two abandoned cemeteries in the Township that are located on public land, Houston/Houstentown Cemetery and the Vernal/Mayfield Cemetery. These two cemeteries have not had burials in at least ten years.

What are the costs for cemetery maintenance?

The Town of Ellettsville incurs no costs for cemeteries or their maintenance. The Township Trustee maintains the Houston/Housten and the Vernal/Mayfield Cemeteries. The costs of required maintenance for lawn care is approximately \$5400 a year, and storm cleanup at approximately \$5500 a year, for a total of \$10,900.

FUTURE IDEAS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION IN THE TOWN & TOWNSHIP

Our deliberations helped to identify some principles and ideas that should be considered by the governing bodies, Parks Board, and other stakeholders to guide future activities related to parks, recreation and cemeteries. We briefly articulate these principles and ideas below.

1. **Better promotion of programs and assets.** The subcommittee was impressed by the scale and diversity of assets in our geographic area. The Town of Ellettsville, Richland Township, and many other corporations and governments offer programs and assets that enrich citizens' parks and recreation opportunities. We agreed that growth in the utilization of parks and recreation-program activity would benefit from better promotion of programs and assets.
2. **Emphasis on cooperation, cooperative activity and collaboration.** After repeated discussions with the subcommittee, we came to realize that future parks and recreation activity depended on cooperation among governments (e.g., town, townships, school corporations, county), nonprofits, and citizens. We believe inter-agency cooperation and collaboration should be emphasized by community leaders and governing bodies as a way to expand activities, utilize available assets, and grow participation.
3. **Expansion of involvement of nonprofits.** The subcommittee concluded that infrastructures for parks and recreation activities benefits from involvement of nonprofit organizations. Thus, we encourage the governing bodies for the Town and Township to call upon nonprofit organizations to expand their involvement in delivering parks and recreation services. Among the nonprofit organizations that the subcommittee believes can be important partners for expanded services are the Boys and Girls Club and Area 10 Agency on Aging. The subcommittee suggests that the Parks Board (1) create a Parks and Recreation Foundation to facilitate charitable

giving for parks and recreation activities and (2) develop a master plan for parks and recreation in the next five years.

See the accompanying Appendix for more details about master planning and park metrics.