

Noblesville Daily Times

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MIDLAND TRACE

Board allows trail around Hazel Dell

By Katie Wampler
Daily Times

Friday, November 19, 2004

The verdict is in – the Noblesville Schools Board has caught trail fever, too.

The board's five members unanimously voted to allow the city to develop and maintain a trail around the southern perimeter of Hazel Dell Elementary at Tuesday's board meeting. The motion pleased school board members, city officials and trail enthusiasts alike.

Board member Larry Jacobi said he voted in favor of allowing the city to develop the trail because "it's a joint venture with the city and the school, and it will give people a nice place to walk... I think it's wonderful that the school and the city can work together on this."

Kevin Heber helps lead a grass-roots group of trail enthusiasts dubbed Friends of the Midland Trace. The group formed to inform and energize Noblesville and Westfield about the trail, as well as volunteer to develop the Midland Trace trail themselves if necessary.

The trail around the school is crucial to the implementation of the Midland, which is slated to parallel State Road 32, connecting Westfield and Noblesville. The Midland also would link with the Monon Trail in several places.

"This is a wonderful start for the City of Noblesville," Heber said, "and it will hopefully be the first of many steps in getting the trail opened from Noblesville to the Monon."

Yet trail enthusiasm is not limited to Friends of the Midland.



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At the meeting, Assistant Superintendent for Business Paul Kaiser said, "It's exciting for our community. I compliment our city park's department and the organizations for trying to do this. I think it will make Noblesville a neat place to live."

Don Seal, Noblesville's director of parks and recreation, said he expects to begin developing the trail in the spring of 2005, weather permitting. The city's impact fees will fund the trail, he said.

"We're thrilled (about the trail)," he said Wednesday. "We will be getting some specs together soon to take over to the school. We'd like for it to be open by the next school year."

Seal said he would collaborate with Friends of the Midland to develop the trail west of the school, which runs through a Precedent development.

Heber agreed that this is the next step for his group and plans on meeting with officials of the Precedent development company.

Still, the Midland is far from complete, Heber said.

"I think (Noblesville) still has a ways to go to catch up with Westfield in terms of getting a design completed," he said, "but this should hopefully help push that along."

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