

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF January 21, 2025

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held on January 21st 2025, at Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Clay Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:041 pm.

PRESENT Seventeen people were present: Chairman Clay Phillips, Vice Chairperson Christina Treglia; Molly Jennings; Megan Dietsch; Nicole Green, Michael Potts; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Mayor Mary Esther Reed; Mark Hardy; Eli Victory; Charles King, Town Engineer; Kevin Rigsby, Town Planner, Mike Moss, Director; Jimmy Stitt, Assistant Director; Christina Manus, Courtney Morgan and Ginger Levinson, Park's staff.

ABSENT none

SUMMARY Prayer: Mark Hardy

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Mike introduced representatives from Kimley-Horn, Kayla Ferguson, Kevin Tilbury, and Jack Stockhausen

Molly motioned to approve November's minutes, and Mayor Reed seconded the motion. The board unanimously approved November's Parks Advisory Board Minutes.

Old Business:

Review of 2025 Calendar of Events

Mike Moss presented the 2025 Event Calendar and invited the Park Advisory Board to the Volunteer of the Year Banquet, scheduled for February 21st at the Smyrna Event Center. He highlighted several key events, including the Easter Egg Hunt, Independence Day Celebration, Halloween in the Park, and more. Each attendee received a copy of the 2025 Event Schedule.

Review of 2025 Tournament Schedule

Mike Moss also discussed the 2025 Tournament Schedule, noting that the Parks and Recreation Department hosts about 30 tournaments each year. Some tournaments are organized by Smyrna athletic leagues, while others are independent. These events have a significant economic impact on the Town and contribute to tax revenues. Mike mentioned that the first tournament of the year will be a college softball event at Cedar Stone, hosted by Trevecca Nazarene University.

Mayor Reed requested that the 2025 Event Schedule be sent to VIP Magazine.

New Business:

Mike Moss introduced Kevin Rigsby, the Town Planner and Ginger Levinson, the SOAC Program Specialist Coordinator.

SOAC Learning Links Program

Mike invited Ginger Levinson to speak to the board about SOAC programming and outreach. Ginger began by providing some background on her education, which includes a Bachelor of Science, a Master's degree, and certification as a Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG). She has experience as an environmental educator, as well as in marketing and working for non-profit organizations.

Ginger then discussed the Learning Links program, which she initiated in collaboration with the Lavergne and Smyrna Libraries. This program allows anyone in the state to use their library card to check out a pass for a free visit to the SOAC for one week, available once per quarter. To date, this program has been utilized 51 times through the Lavergne Public Library. The mayor mentioned that the Smyrna Library is working on obtaining a grant for a public garden. In response, Ginger stated that she had recently submitted a letter of support for the public garden grant to the library. The mayor also discussed the possibility of exchanging calendars with the Smyrna Library to enhance collaboration.

Next, Ginger reviewed some programming statistics for the Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center (SOAC). In 2024, SOAC had 12,397 attendees across 252 programs. The SOAC staff diligently seeks alternative funding for their programs and exhibits. In 2024, they secured \$50,000 from HCA, \$20,000 from the Jennings & Rebecca Jones Foundation, and \$5,000 from MTE for exhibits. Additionally, SOAC has partnered with various organizations, including Regions Bank, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, MTSU, and the Native American Indian Association of Tennessee, to provide educational programming for its patrons. Ginger announced that their next partnership will be with the UT Agricultural Extension, offering a free six-week cooking and nutrition series starting on February 11th. Finally, Ginger outlined her programming goals for the upcoming year. These goals include increasing alternative funding, expanding community partnerships, enhancing bilingual learning opportunities, creating programs for guests with autism, and offering programs in multiple locations outside of SOAC.

Mike thanked Ginger and the entire SOAC team for their hard work and community outreach. The mayor reminisced about the Parks Master Plan's long-term goal to provide programming beyond just sports leagues and expressed satisfaction that the Parks Department is achieving this goal. Councilmember Cole also expressed gratitude, particularly for the partnerships and funding resources that SOAC has obtained.

Discussion of the Town Mobility Plan

Mike asked Kevin Rigsby, the Town Planner, to explain the Smyrna Mobility Plan. Kevin stated that the last plan the town adopted was in 2017, known as the Major Thoroughfare Plan. This has now been shortened to the Smyrna Mobility Plan. The town began working with Kimley-Horn in late summer 2024 to address the long-term needs of all users of the transportation system, including drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and trucks.

Kevin Tilbury from Kimley-Horn started the presentation by outlining the reasons for the need to update the plan: population growth, changes in funding, updates to plans and designs, and the need to prioritize the community's transportation needs. Having a plan in place will better position the town to receive grants and funding for mobility enhancements. Kevin Tilbury also discussed current statistics, noting that there are 74 miles of existing sidewalks, 3.7 miles of designated bike lanes, and 11.5 miles of greenways. On average, there is approximately 15 minutes from a home to a park in Smyrna. Kimley-Horn has been reaching out to the Smyrna community for public input. They attended Halloween in the Park, where they spoke to over

1,000 people, and have an online survey currently available on the town's website. They found that 80% of residents believe transportation has worsened over the past five years. Additionally, 96% of citizens drive as their primary form of transportation, 16% use bikes, and 20% walk for recreational purposes. Furthermore, 63% stated they would walk or bike more if facilities were improved.

Kayla Ferguson from Kimley-Horn stated that they have determined Smyrna needs 44.8 miles of stand-alone bikeways, sidewalks, and greenways, along with 30.9 miles of roadways to fill in the gaps in mobility. This plan is still in the draft stage, as it will not be completed until spring. Kimley-Horn shared maps of the proposed additions and will continue to gather survey responses. They also plan to meet with the mayor and council soon to discuss project prioritization before finalizing the plan.

Jimmy Stitt asked if any of these proposed additions were already in the planning phase. Charles King confirmed that several sidewalks and road improvements were already in progress. The mayor requested that the projects already planned be flagged to assist in ranking the proposed needs. The mayor inquired whether the funding for greenways had changed. Kayla responded that it has changed. Mike Moss stated that there are GNRC (Greater Nashville Regional Council) and RTP (Recreational Trail Program) grants available. Kayla confirmed that the plan will include options for seeking funding and grants once the Mobility Plan is complete. Kimley-Horn is also updating the City of Murfreesboro's Greenway Plan and plans to work with Smyrna to connect their sidewalks and greenways.

The final steps of the project are identifying existing safety and connections, comfortability in walkways/biking, ease of implementation, and public input such as proximity to employment.

Mike thanked Kimley-Horn for presenting the plan to the Park Advisory Board and requested that board stay involved and take the survey online. The mayor asked the group to reach out to her with prioritization recommendations.

Jimmy Stitt inquired if we could ask developers to create connectivity when neighborhoods are being built leu of impact fees. Kevin Rigsby explained the existing laws for request pertaining to exchanges and they have to be proportionate to the project.

The board discussed several items on the map and areas of concern.

Vice chairperson Christina Treglia, mentioned some cities are were using a land transfer tax to fund these type projects. The mayor will look into that.

Communications:

Mike announced the upcoming Cardboard Classic at Pioneer Park Saturday, January 25th, Couples Paint Night on February 14th, and the Volunteer of the Year Banquet. The mayor inquired if there is a Park Board table, and Mike replied yes, and hopes everyone attends.

Director's Report:

Mike reviewed the Director's report, highlighting Todd Lane Field 3 lighting, Cedar Stone Tennis/Pickleball updates, Rotary Soccer Park Improvements, the new "Gear Up" exhibit at the SOAC and Cedar Stone's turf batter's box improvements.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff – Round Table Discussion

Council Update:

Mayor Reed spoke about Rutherford County's desire to open a forensic facility in Smyrna near the DMV.

The town will be working on a walkway from Washington to Front Street to include raising the concrete around the roundabout.

The fireworks for Independence Day have been secured.

The mayor discussed several annexations and rezoning items that were on the council.

Round Table:

Eli Victory announced kudos to the Stewart's Creek Band for performing in the Inauguration Parade this week.

Mike Moss discussed terms that are ending and asked members who are on their first term to reapply.

Mike reminded everyone to bring the refreshment funds next meeting

Mark motioned for the meeting to be adjourned and Clay Phillips seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm.