

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF MARCH 18th, 2025

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held on March 18th, 2025 at Smyrna Event Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Clay Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

PRESENT Fourteen people were present: Chairperson Clay Phillips; Michael Potts; Eli Victory; Mark Hardy; Nicole Green; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Mayor Mary Esther Reed; Dave Santucci, Town Manager; Mike Moss, Director; Charles King, Town Engineer; and Christina Manus, Marty Smith, Jimmy Stitt, Courtney Morgan, staff

ABSENT Molly Jennings, Megan Dietsch, and Vice-Chair Christina Treglia

SUMMARY Prayer: Mark Hardy

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

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

Old Business:

Volunteer of the Year Recap

Mike Moss thanked everyone who attended the Volunteer of the Year Banquet honoring the Lifetime Achievement Recipient Eugene Hardiman and the Young Leader Recipient Jocelyn Payne along with many others. Mike shared pictures of the event. Mayor Reed asked that each league share a post before the banquet highlighting their athletes and volunteers so that we can share the information before the event. David Santucci commented that putting the presenters and recipients at a table up front may help the efficiency of the event. Mike Moss noted that they will be moving the banquet time up earlier next year.

New Business:

Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Presentation and Roundtable Discussion

Mike Moss introduced Nate Williams, Director of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation and both Assistant Directors Rachel Singer and Thomas Laird. Mike thanked the visitors for coming to the meeting and presenting.

Nate Williams began the presentation with a slideshow showcasing newly completed projects, projects currently underway, and future initiatives. Some of the slides featured images of their new skate and pump track, the facelift of Old Fort Park, the upcoming expansion of Patterson

Park, the development of Veterans Park, and future land donations designated for trails and greenspace.

Nate introduced the Assistant Directors and outlined their roles within the department, emphasizing that each oversees different divisions. Rachel Singer manages Outdoor Murfreesboro, which includes greenways and trails, cultural arts, the Wilderness Station, and Patterson Park. Thomas oversees several facilities including St. Claire Senior Center, McKnight Park, Adams Tennis Complex, Richard Siegel Neighborhood Park, and Barfield Athletics.

Rachel Singer then explained to the board the three pillars of her division: Environmental Education, Outdoor Adventure, and Natural Resources. Environmental Education includes programs at the Wilderness Station. Outdoor Murfreesboro encompasses activities such as kayaking, hiking, and summer camps. The Natural Resources pillar collaborates with the town's GIS to identify natural areas and assess land needs. Rachel stated they were recently awarded a grant from Oregon State University for their Youth LED (Leadership, Environmental, Design) Summer Program. This program is an intensive hands-on experience for teens to learn about habitat management, trail restorations, native plant care, and invasive species removal. The teens will actually be working in the field alongside Murfreesboro city employees and at the end of the program they will receive a Permaculture Certificate.

Rachel touched on the programs and expansion of the Wilderness Station at Barfield Crescent Park, the cultural art programs at Bradly Academy, Patterson Park and Cannonsburg.

Thomas Laird shared with the board that the city of Murfreesboro manages 162 basketball teams at ten different locations, 140 kids in the David Price Miracle League, and launched the Advantage Program in partnership with the Special Olympics. The city also hosts a number of youth and adult sports that are operated from private entities. Thomas touched on the operation cost of these facilities and stated that they were covering their operating expenses. Thomas explained their philosophy of training coaches, with over 300 basketball coaches. He shared that when the courts/indoor facilities were not being used by basketball leagues, they were in constant demand with Pickleball, other sports, and open play.

Mike Moss asked the board to feel free to ask the Directors questions about their department. Nate noted the department's budget is 16.5 million per year and they oversee 2,200 acres of land.

Councilmember Cole asked how many sports leagues do they provide in the city. They replied; girls' softball, volleyball, flag football, ultimate frisbee, 2 separate baseball leagues, 1 soccer league.

Questions asked:

What is the cost for rent of the indoor soccer facility?

\$240 per hour for the full facility and stated it is always booked.

How do you approach land acquisition?

Council members engage with potential donors for land and explore purchasing opportunities. They also collaborate with organizations like the America Battlefield Trust Association, which has generously donated 38 acres.

How do you address the homelessness issue?

They actively work to deter homelessness in public parks by partnering with a homeless task force. The city offers various shelters and resources and collaborates closely with the police

department.

What is something you did that you wish you hadn't?
The Easter Egg Hunt.

Can you describe your partnerships with local leagues regarding facility care?
They acknowledge that not all partnerships benefit the city. Sometimes, donations can make groups feel as though they own the park. To manage this, they have a designated fund for all park-related donations. When a league or partnership contributes money, it is designated for specific projects, but all funds are pooled into a single account.

Do you allocate a budget for land or have placeholders for opportunities?
Yes, they have over \$90 million allocated for land acquisitions over the next five years.

What do you need more of?
Everything! Aquatics is the most requested area. Schools do not provide indoor swimming pools, so it would be beneficial to have more fields, courts, and indoor facilities.

Do you have Park Police?
Yes, there are eight designated park officers. They are paid and managed by their police department but are specifically assigned to parks. Some officers remain at certain parks throughout the night, and the police department has almost fully covered the greenway with surveillance cameras.

How many gyms do you have? We have four gyms and many partnerships with local school gymnasiums.

Who handles your marketing?
The department has three marketing employees including a full-time photographer and graphic designer. The marketing team approaches branding similarly to how private sector companies would.

Are mobility grants still available? They are not as readily accessible as before, but we do have council members with connections at the state level who can help with funding opportunities.

Who writes your grants? The city has a grant coordinator who shares the same office building.

Mike Moss graciously thanked Murfreesboro Park leaders for coming to the meeting and blazing the trail for Smyrna Parks. Mike stated we have always worked together and look forward to continuing the partnerships and sharing of information.

Review of Director's Summit – Jimmy Stitt

Mike asked the board if we could table this agenda item until next month due to time. Jimmy briefly spoke about the summit, but will elaborate more in the April meeting.

Director's Report:

Mike displayed and reviewed the Director's Report.

Some highlights include:

HCA ribbon cutting will be held on May 15th at the SOAC for the sponsorship of the "Happy Brain" exhibit.

Flag Football received a sponsorship from Toyota of Murfreesboro to provide the entire league

with shorts.

A third section for the dog park is almost completed.

Council Update:

David Santucci reviewed the consent items, areas of interest in road improvements, and summarized the recently passed employee compensation plan. Mayor Reed announced the two new Park Advisory Board members are Tom Sage and Dalton Hidalgo.

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

Mike Moss expressed gratitude to Eli Victory and Clay Philips for volunteering to serve on the board. He stated they were both in our parks on a regular basis and appreciated the support they have provided. Mayor Reed spoke on behalf of the council and herself sharing their appreciation for their service to the board. She also reminded them they could reapply after one year.

The meeting at 7:30 pm.