

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19TH, 2024

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held on November 19th, 2024, at Smyrna Event Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Vice Chairperson Christina Treglia called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

PRESENT Sixteen people were present: Vice Chairperson Christina Treglia; Molly Jennings; Megan Dietsch; Michael Potts; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Mayor Mary Esther Reed; Mark Hardy; Eli Victory; Mike Moss, Director; Jimmy Stitt, Assistant Director; Christina Manus and Marty Smith, staff; Rex and Lynn Gaither; Charles King, Town Engineer; and David Santucci, Town Manager

ABSENT Chairperson Clay Phillips

SUMMARY Prayer: Jimmy Stitt

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

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

Mike Moss thanked everyone for attending the annual holiday dinner and board meeting. He gave a little background on the Park Advisory Board and the expressed gratitude for their time and efforts all year long.

Old Business:

Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association State Conference in Review

Mike Moss shared pictures from the Annual TRPA (Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association) Conference held earlier this month in Murfreesboro. The theme of this year's conference was "Lead, Guide, Grow." Mike expressed gratitude to the town leaders for supporting the participation of 14 staff members from the department. Throughout the year, Mike Moss, Marty Smith, and Jimmy Stitt collaborated with Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation to co-host the event. Some staff members attended all three days of sessions and classes, while others participated in daily sessions. Mike shared photos from off-site tours at Richard Siegel Soccer Park and Adams Tennis Facility, as well as images from educational sessions, the vendor expo, and the awards banquet. At the conference, Marty and Mike both received game awards, Christina Manus won an automated field lighting system, and Tyler Comer was honored for earning his Certified Parks and Recreation Professional certification.

Additionally, Vice Chairperson Christina Treglia attended the TRPA conference, representing the Tennessee Parks Department. She shared her enjoyment of the conference and noted that Smyrna had a strong presence.

Marty Smith highlighted the importance of networking and expressed his pleasure at reconnecting with colleagues from across the state. He mentioned that the current trends and discussions in parks revolve around lacrosse and wrestling. Jimmy Stitt also spoke about the significant amount of work involved in hosting the state conference, praising the efforts of Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation for executing it successfully.

New Business:

Selection of the Kenneth “Coon” Victory Lifetime Service Award Winner

Mike Moss announced the nominees for the 2024 Lifetime Service Award. The nominees are Gene Hardiman, Michael Fain, John Black, Marci Jameson, Richard Thomas, and Tony Trumphour. He invited the board to discuss the nominees.

Mayor Reed inquired whether Richard Thomas had won the award in the past, to which Mike confirmed that he had indeed received it previously.

Mayor Reed emphasized that all the nominees are deserving of the award and expressed her hope that they continue to be nominated in the future. She was particularly impressed with Gene Hardiman due to his long-standing service to the community, which began with his military service from 1946 to 1973. After his military career, he returned to Smyrna and dedicated the rest of his life to volunteering with organizations like the Masons, Shriners, and the Lions Club, where he has served for 50 years. The mayor noted that she had recently seen him honored at the Lion’s Club on Veterans Day, which deeply moved her as she learned about all he has done for the community.

Councilperson H.G. Cole pointed out that although the Lifetime Service Award sometimes recognizes achievements concentrated in one sport or organization, Gene Hardiman’s volunteer efforts have been widespread and diverse across many different organizations.

Mark Hardy agreed that Gene Hardiman is very deserving of the award but also wanted to highlight some important contributions from Michael Fain that were not mentioned in the nomination. He explained that Michael began coaching his son in football in 1992, and now his son is a coach in Florida. Despite the passing of his wife, Michael has continued to volunteer his time with the Smyrna Youth Football League. Mark added that Michael has a son with a disability whom he brings to every practice and game, showing that he is a positive role model for the kids he coaches. While Mark believes Gene would be an excellent choice for the award, he hopes to see Mr. Fain nominated again in the future.

Mike then asked the board to cast their votes. Gene Hardiman received the majority of the votes and has been named the 2024 Lifetime Service Award Recipient.

Selection of the Young Leader Award Recipient

Mike reminded the board that the Young Leader Award Recipient will receive a \$1,000 scholarship from SiMA and the Smyrna Adult Softball League. The nominees for this award are Ashley Sanford, Lucy Green, Shing Shen (Ester), Jocelyn Payne, Lydia Hills, Breck

Williams, and Ariel Uhles. Mike asked the group for their insights on the nominees, acknowledging that they are all strong candidates and that it would be a difficult decision.

Marty Smith commented that Breck has played in the flag football league and has volunteered his time with them for three years. Councilmember H.G. Cole mentioned that Shing Shen volunteered with the Interact Club to help set up and clean up the Annual Wings of Freedom Fish Fry. Marty added that she also volunteered at Halloween in the Park, where she monitored an inflatable.

The group discussed the impressive accomplishments of the nominees and noted Jocelyn's detailed list of volunteer hours. The board voted to select Jocelyn Payne as the recipient.

Fee Schedule Review and Recommendations

Mike asked the board to review the current Smyrna Parks and Recreation Fee Schedule, along with the shelter fee schedules of neighboring towns. He wanted to gather thoughts on possible changes. The mayor inquired if Mike had any specific recommendations. Mike proposed raising the shelter prices from \$40 for a half-day and \$60 for a full day to \$50 and \$70, respectively. He is also considering increasing the corporate rental fee from \$100 to \$150, as corporate rentals often involve additional coordination of inflatables, tents, vendors, and even carnival ride requests.

The mayor asked about non-resident rentals since the fee schedules for other towns often differentiate between in-town and out-of-town fees. Mike indicated that approximately 50% of rentals come from out-of-town residents. Town Manager David Santucci suggested that we should probably raise the fees incrementally while providing discounts for Smyrna residents. It seems that other towns charge around 20% more for non-residents. Additionally, Mike suggested raising the ballfield rental fee at Cedar Stone from the current \$70 to possibly \$100.

Town Manager David inquired about the Cross-Country fees, and Mike explained that they are high because the events have a significant impact on the park, typically bringing in over 1,000 runners along with their parents.

Councilmember H.G. Cole asked if credit card convenience fees are consistent across the city, and Mike confirmed that they are.

Regarding Halloween in the Park, Mayor Reed and Councilmember Cole expressed interest in bringing back the pumpkin carving contest, while Town Manager Santucci proposed a pet costume contest.

Mayor Reed emphasized the need for a non-resident fee and a resident discount in the fee schedule. Mike agreed that we could implement a pilot program starting with the shelter and possibly the building rental fees.

Director's Report:

Mike reviewed the past month of tournaments and programs.

Mike announced the SOAC had won a \$50,000 grant from HCA to sponsor The Happy Brain exhibit next summer. He thanked Courtney Morgan for the work she had put into this grant.

Mike stated the flag football registration begins December 1st.

The Gingerbread Workshop is returning; the Christmas Lighting Ceremony, and parade are approaching.

Mike spoke about the opening of the seasonal skating rink on November 30th and additional programming that will be offered this season.

The mayor noted that from reading the November Athletic Committee Meeting Minutes that the SRFC soccer tournament was difficult. Mike agreed there was not enough parking for the teams and the Lancaster parking lot was not available for overflow. The board discussed different options for more fields and parking, but ultimately feel the park is landlocked and it is time to think about more park land in the town.

Council Update:

Town Manager David Santucci reviewed the latest Town Council meeting.

The town has renewed the USACE greenway lease and the TRC agreement.

Rex Gaither received the Government Finance Officers Association's 2024 Recognition of Outstanding Public Service Award.

Gov.deals.com will be going live soon for surplus items.

The Mayor stated December 10th will be the swearing in of Racquel Peebles, Jerome Dempsey, and Steve Sullivan for the Smyrna Town Council.

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

Charles King updated the board on several road construction projects around town.

Jimmy Stitt has finally found a company to replicate the black fencing around the Train Depot and has ordered nine sections.

The mayor requested that we had the snowflakes to the Spivery building parking lot area.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.