

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF MAY 21, 2024

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held May 21st, 2024, at the Smyrna Train Depot, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Clay Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:11 pm.

PRESENT Nine people were present: Mark Hardy; Clay Phillips; Michael Potts; Nicole Green; Mike Moss, Director; Jimmy Stitt, Assistant Director; Christina Manus, staff; Charles King, Town Engineer; Rex Gaither, Assistant Town Manager

ABSENT Molly Jennings, Councilman Cole, Mayor Reed, Christina Treglia, Eli Victory, Ashley Sanders Lester

SUMMARY Prayer: Mark Hardy

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings: There was not a quorum, therefore, April and May's minutes will need to be approved at the June meeting.

Old Business: Discussion of Growth Areas and Opportunities

Mike Moss explained to the board that as the area is growing, we are receiving more requests than ever. We are experiencing the need for more practice and multi-purpose fields.

Mike shared with the board a graph from the 2006 - 2020 Master Plan that stated where the potential growth for park facilities was forecasting. The locations were Rock Springs, south west Smyrna, Interstate 840, Baker Road, and the Lee Property. Mike then shared the updated Master Plan that included many of the same locations, Rocky Fork, Interstate 840, Baker Road, Lee Property, East Depot District, Enon Springs Practice Field Area, and northeast Smyrna. Mike told the board, that the department is looking for land and although we do not purchase expensive property, there may be opportunities out there with developers donating space. He asked the board to keep an eye out for properties in the areas list from the Master Plan.

Cedar Stone Park Tennis & Pickleball Courts Updates

Mike informed the group that the department had attended a recent pre-construction meeting for the Pickleball/Tennis Courts at Cedar Stone. The meeting also included Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Beech Construction (just completed the Cedar Stone Restroom Project) and Thomas and Hutton. The estimated start date for the construction is June 10th. The project is scheduled to be completed this winter. Mike stated that he appreciated all the work that Kay Arnold and other parks staff members have done to secure this grant. Kay Arnold acts as the grant administrator on this grant and has put a lot time into this project. The courts

will include 6 tennis courts and 6 pickleball courts, fencing, lighting, and bleachers. Colors have not been finalized, but Mike is leaning towards a red and gray color scheme to complement the existing esthetics of the park.

New Business: Discussion of Facility Use and New Requests

Mike explained to the board that as the area grows, our requests are growing. We are receiving more calls for soccer field rentals, travel ball teams, football games and practices. We understand the requests because the fields at our complexes are well taken care of, but if we allow outside groups to practice on game fields on a regular basis, the fields would not stay in the nice condition they are now. Mike asked the board for feedback concerning these request. Jimmy Stitt stated the biggest problem he sees is with soccer fields. He told the board that they have ran groups out of the fields at the Rotary Soccer Park only to find them come back the next day and jump the fence again. There have been times they have had to call the police. Mark Hardy also mentioned practices that were disrupted at Sharp Springs by non-scheduled soccer games. Mike mentioned turfing fields A and B at Rotary Soccer Park so that it can handle multiple users. Mike also discussed adding parking spaces in the multipurpose field area. Mike also stated that turfing the football fields at Lee Victory Recreation Park would allow for more playing opportunities.

Criteria for New or Additional Service Providers

Mike asked the group to look at a document provided that listed several examples of criteria the Parks Department would consider when approving new services. The list included space, budget, staffing impact on the town, whether the service would be duplicated, and if the service is largely needed in the community, along with some other items to consider. Mike asked the board for input on handling the requests. Jimmy stated that the City of Franklin started offering space for the game of cricket as they have a large population that moved there that participates in cricket as their primary sport. The board gestured that the criteria listed were good things to consider when developing new services. Mark Hardy and Nicole Green agreed with Mike's suggestions.

Charles King noted that the land beside Smyrna High School that we currently use for practice space is up for sale or auction. Mike will look into that land.

Jimmy Stitt noted that kids want to play recreation ball that aligns with their future high school, for example, the Stewarts Creek Football League development affecting Smyrna Bulldogs Football League's enrollment numbers and competing for space in Smyrna. Mike noted those were the type of situations we have to address and will continue to address as we grow.

Review of Existing League Manual

Mike stated that most towns do have policies in place in order for leagues to use their facilities. With the Smyrna leagues we have user agreements between each league and the Town of Smyrna. Mike shared with the board the Smyrna Parks and Recreation League Operating Manual. He highlighted page 4, listing the allocation of facilities. This section of the manual lists how the department prioritizes field usage privileges. Mike also spoke about the requirements of a league representative to attend monthly athletic meeting and to provide financial statements. Mike noted some of the manual needs updating, but it is a good resource on how to handle new sports and leagues that approach Smyrna for field space.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff:

Mike highlighted some important events coming up and reviewed the items under Communication on the agenda.

Director's Report:

Mike informed the board of busy weekends the department has been experiencing. This past weekend, crews arrived at 5am to begin work on tournaments. We hosted MSXL Paintball at Sharp Springs and an Adult League Tournament at Volunteer Park and a Girl's Fastpitch Tournament.

We currently have the "Life on the Edge" exhibit on display at the SOAC through a sponsorship with Middle TN Electric.

Kid's Safety Day was a success with Tri-Star Stonecrest Hospital giving away hundreds of bike helmets.

The new restrooms at the Cedar Stone playground are now open.

Mike will be working on the updating the 2017 Bike/Pedestrian Plan along with the Town Engineer and Town Planner soon.

Mike acknowledged all the volunteer groups we had over past month. Jimmy did a great job organizing these clean-up and service projects.

Asurion had 50 volunteers, Life Point Church had 75 volunteers, Town of Smyrna had volunteers for an Earth Day clean-up day, and Bridgestone had 35 volunteers.

Mike stated we are currently working on planning the Kuss Top Gun Night Run in September and the TRPA Conference in November.

Paddle Adventures is now open and available for online reservations
SplashPad opened May 21st, SplashTown opens May 25th.

Batey Farms is planning to plant sunflowers and corn at Sharp Springs this year.

Jimmy Stitt coordinated the last paving project of the 2023-2024 fiscal years with paving at Paul Johns and Gregory Mill. We are also having the Pickleball base surface installed this week at the Event Center.

Council Update:

Mike noted the storage building for Sharp Springs has been approved.

Charles King updated the board on various road projects.

Rex stated the Town of Smyrna would not be raising city taxes this year.

Rex stated the town's general fund budget is 57 million with an additional 40 million in utilities. The town has a healthy savings and is able to fund most projects without bonds.

Mark Hardy asked Mike about the status of Jefferson Springs Recreation Area and if we were pursuing managing that site. Mike said as of now, we are able to use the site for kayak programs and for greenway trails. We would need additional staff in order to maintain the entire park and we are not at that point yet.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.