

**SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION
PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2020

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held July 21, 2020 at Smyrna Event Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Mark Hardy called the meeting to order at 5:06pm.

PRESENT Twelve people were present: Mark Hardy; Jerry Bradley; Holly Phillips; Michael Potts; Ernie Felts; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Tommy Williams; Jimmy Stitt and Kay Arnold, staff; Brian Hercules, Town Manager; Rex Gaither, Assistant Town Manager; Charles King, Engineer

ABSENT Scott Poston, Carlos Rawls, Sr., Mayor Mary Esther Reed, Mike Moss, Director

SUMMARY Mike Moss is on vacation this week and Jimmy will fill in for him.

Prayer: Jimmy Stitt

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings: Ernie moved to approve June's minutes; Councilman Cole seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

Old Business: Concerning Essential Role of Parks and Recreation during C19, Jimmy reviewed an article from the July 2020 *Parks & Recreation* publication. Highlights included:

- 83% of U.S. adults agree that visiting their local parks, trails and open spaces is essential for their mental and physical well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 59% say it is very or extremely essential to exercise in parks and green spaces to relieve stress and remain healthy during this crisis
- Parents are more likely than nonparents to find parks, trails and open spaces very or extremely essential (68% vs 56% respectively)
- Millennials and Gen Zers are more likely than Baby Boomers to say it is very or extremely essential to do physical activities at their local parks, trails, and open spaces to maintain their mental and physical health (68 % and 65% vs 54% respectively)

Jimmy informed the board that park playgrounds re-opened to the public on June 27th, encouraging parents and guardians to use disinfectant wipes on the equipment before and after use. Up until June 27th, maintenance staff cleaned and disinfected park restrooms every two

hours, utilizing additional staff members from the Athletics Division and SOAC to accomplish the task system-wide.

Cedar Stone playground has been heavily utilized since it opened to the public on June 17th.

Because of COVID-19, outdoor recreation equipment is difficult to find, as more people are purchasing it. Bikes, kayaks, tennis racquets, baseballs and bats are all hard to find now.

SOAC staff is presenting Summer Camps for children through the end of July, with a maximum of 8 children and 2 instructors per camp. They have made modifications for C-19. Additionally, SOAC staff is leading kayak and family float programs.

New Business: Concerning Discussion of Fall Recreation League Operations, Jimmy reviewed information prepared by the Athletics Division covering:

- General guidelines taken by all leagues
- Guidelines specific to Smyrna Fast Pitch League
- Guidelines specific to Smyrna Baseball League
- Guidelines specific to Smyrna Adult Softball League
- Guidelines specific to Smyrna Youth Football and Stones River Futbol Club

Jerry stated that some baseball parents are unsure if they want their children to play rec ball. They recently received six refund requests from players.

Mr. Hercules spoke of the county-wide mask mandate that goes into effect tomorrow, July 22, 2020. He feels baseball and softball players can play on fields without the masks, but will need to wear them when in the dugouts. Mr. Hercules distributed copies of the “Declaration of Public Health Emergency by Rutherford County Mayor”, dated July 20, 2020, to the board members and reviewed. In part, it orders that cloth or other face coverings that cover the nose and mouth of a person are to be worn within all publicly-accessible areas of commercial business establishments, in public outdoor areas where social distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained, and within the publicly-accessible areas of business offices where there is direct interaction with the public and social distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained. The declaration states that the mandate does not apply to any person who is under age 12, as well as other specific exclusions.

Jimmy continued, stating the Fall rec league operations of Smyrna Adult Softball League, as well as Stones River Futbol Club and Smyrna Youth Football, are all on hold until August 29th, at which time they expect further direction from Governor Bill Lee. Tommy added that Soccer Select Teams have been training at Smyrna Rotary Park. Their soccer organization is lobbying Governor Lee to separate the sport of soccer from football and wrestling. They are anxious to return to being able to play games.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff: Jimmy reviewed upcoming events listed on the agenda. Two 5ks are scheduled to be held at Sharp Springs Natural Area. Mr. Hercules stated that he receives many calls concerning when masks are required when playing sports.

Director's Report: Jimmy reviewed the report, adding that he anticipates it will be November – January before we will be able to purchase kayaks for the Watercraft Rental Program.

The annual conferences for Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association and the National Recreation and Parks Association will be held virtually this year due to COVID-19, rather than in-person.

Work should begin soon on the new Soccer Annex Restroom/Concession building.

SplashTown and the SplashPad at Gregory Mill will not be opening this season due to COVID-19.

Handouts of an aerial of the pedestrian access connector to the Kuss Memorial were distributed for the board's review. Jimmy explained that we submitted the project for a grant to the TN Dept of Tourism Enhancement Grant program. Hopefully we'll hear if the project is approved in 2-3 weeks.

Jimmy gave brief update on maintenance activities: mowing lots of grass and trying to get back into a routine as dealing with COVID-19 disrupted everything.

Council Update: Councilman Cole reviewed highlights from the most recent meeting. Afterwards, he stated that he is proud that the department has been able to evolve and continue to offer alternative programming for the community. He still has the 2020 Tournament/Event Calendar that was distributed in February and it pains him to see everything that has been canceled due to COVID-19. He also stated that Zama Park will change the landscape of the Depot District and will be an enhancement to the downtown area. He added that the bid for Phase I Downtown Revitalization Project will go out next week.

Charles stated that the Lee Victory Recreation Park second entrance (off the round-about) Engineering and Design project will be presented to Council for approval at the August meeting.

Mr. Hercules stated that the Smyrna Rotary Club will be building an all-inclusive playground at Lee Victory Recreation Park. The Town of Smyrna will build the associated parking lot, fence, and restroom building. The total project will cost \$1.2 million. Smyrna Rotary will contribute \$675,000 toward the project. The Town will submit a grant request to the Christy-Houston Foundation for some funding too.

Jimmy added that he and Pete Johnson, Public Works Building and Grounds Manager, visited the David Price Miracle Field baseball and playground facility in Murfreesboro recently. They learned a lot of good information about all-inclusive facilities.

Other: Copies of the 2020 *Rutherford County Tennessee* magazine, sponsored by the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce, were distributed. Jimmy pointed out several places throughout the magazine that highlighted Smyrna, noting that the Kuss Memorial made the cover of the magazine.

Next, nominations for Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parks Advisory Board were taken. *Councilman Cole nominated Mark Hardy for Chairman. Tommy seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.*
Councilman Cole nominated Tommy Williams for Vice-Chairman, and then withdrew the motion. Tommy nominated Carlo Rawls for Vice Chairman. Michael Potts seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm.