

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF MAY 18, 2021

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held May 18, 2021, at Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Ernie Felts called the meeting to order at 5:07pm.

PRESENT Eleven people were present: Carl Boyd; Clay Phillips; Ernie Felts; Mayor Mary Esther Reed; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Michael Potts; Charles Scurr; Mike Moss, Director; Jimmy Stitt and Kay Arnold, staff; Rex Gaither, Assistant Town Manager

ABSENT Scott Poston, Eli Victory, Tommy Williams

SUMMARY Prayer: Mark Hardy

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings: Mayor Reed moved to approve April's minutes; Clay seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

Old Business: Concerning Parks Master Plan Update, Mike informed the board that in order to apply for the TDEC \$500,000 grant to help build the tennis / pickle ball court project, that the department's master plan must be updated within the past five years. Our latest master plan was created in 2006 and expired in 2020. In this month's email packet, we included a list of "accomplishments" and "not completed" projects in relation to the 2006-2020 master plan for the board's prior review. Also in the meeting packet were two forms we asked the board members to complete and bring to this meeting: Facilities Assessment Evaluation (existing and future) and Program & Activity Evaluation. Mike asked for the completed forms to be turned in before leaving the meeting. Mike displayed the department's 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan pulled from the first reading of fiscal year 2021-2022's budget document so that the board could see what is currently being planned.

Mayor Reed asked if we are aware of any new, trendy activities. Mike replied that multi-purpose buildings are popular. We currently have only 6 tennis courts to serve all of Smyrna and the surrounding area; we need more to help alleviate the demand. The future of the splash pad at Gregory Mill will need to be addressed as we continue to spend a lot of maintenance time on repairs to keep it running. We would like to build a greenway link from Gregory Mill Park to Smyrna High School.

Council Member Cole asked Mike to explain the department's long-term goals for Lee Victory Recreation Park (LVRP) to the newer Park Board members. Mike stated that in the previous master plan, the property between the LVRP and the Event Center was planned to be built with a "central park" theme, with a mini amphitheater area and corporate-sized shelter that would accommodate 200-400 people. There were other nice amenities planned as well. The second entrance to LVRP, to be built soon, will help put things in place to build the planned "central park" area in future phases.

So many people use LVRP every night of the week. The playground at Cedar Stone Park stays packed with kids. A well-made Master Plan looks down the road so that planners will know where and how the town will grow in the future.

A public survey will be available on the town's social media accounts beginning May 21 through June 4 for citizens to provide valuable information to help guide the planning process for the new master plan. The information that we gather will be revealing and enlightening. We have lots of work to do in order to update our master plan in time to submit the grant application. Mike displayed and reviewed the timeline from the engineering firm working on the master plan update.

Mayor Reed stated she feels we should open discussions with the county government regarding providing tennis courts for schools and the public. The county does not provide tennis courts on school campuses.

Councilman Cole stated that we should consult National Recreation and Parks Association's national park facility standards to determine where we are over or short park facilities for a town our size.

New Business: Concerning Top Gun Night Run Update, Mike reported that the event is scheduled for November 5, 2021, and planning is underway. There are currently 173 runners registered for the event, with a maximum of 750 participants. The course has been certified, sponsors are coming in, the band is lined up, the medals have been designed and look very nice. The t-shirts will be long sleeved this year. It will be a family-friendly event and we look forward to it.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff: Mike reviewed upcoming events listed on the agenda. The SOAC is offering five Summer Camps this summer and they are all full. We added a Food Truck Night at Cedar Stone Park on July 23rd. The Blue Raider Blitz will be held at LVRP on July 28th, and we expect a large crowd.

Director's Report: Mike reviewed his monthly report. He added that we are preparing for the Freedom Playground Grand Opening Ceremony on May 26. We plan to open the new playground at Old Rock School Park very soon. There were 93 teams at the Paintball Tournament held last weekend at Sharp Springs Park. We may need to increase the facility rental prices for Paintball Tournaments since they typically pay \$10,000 at other places throughout the country. We are currently doing repairs at the Splash Pad – large water leak – will be ready by opening day. We have experienced a lot of vandalism at numerous parks in the past few months. They are breaking toilets and sinks with large rocks.

Ernie stated that people are bringing their dogs, large and small, to LVRP inside the ballfield complex. Mike replied that the league officials on site should enforce the “No Dogs in the Ball Complex” rule. There is signage at the park that states the policy. Council Member Cole added that a lot of people have emotional support animals that they keep with them, and it could be a delicate situation in those instances.

Additionally, Ernie stated that parents are speaking aggressively to umpires during the games. Mike replied that they have been made aware of that problem from other leagues also and the Athletics Office sent an email to league board members just this week reminding them to enforce the Coaches Code of Ethics and the Parents Code of Ethics that every league agreed to in their annual User’s Agreement with the Parks Department. Everyone at the park should be polite to others and act right.

Mayor Reed requested that the dogs inside the ball complex and aggressive comments be discussed at the next Athletic Committee Meeting.

There was discussion about the recent incident at Hilltop Park that made it on a Nashville television news station. The news story wound up being about the fact that there are no cameras at the park and the people involved in the incident were unhappy about that. Mayor Reed stated that the news station also reported inaccurate information about the incident, and they emailed the Town’s PIO today with an apology. Mike stated we may need to put a gate/barrier at Hilltop Park to stop after-hours use. The full court basketball goals have not been re-installed and he is not sure if he will put them back up or not. Jimmy added that Hilltop Park has been a major vandalism hotspot. Charles asked if we have ever re-imagined Hilltop Park – change the makeup/design/purpose of the park. Mike replied that various things have been considered in the past.

Council Report: Councilman Cole reviewed highlights from the latest meeting. The first reading of the FY2021-2022 took place. Property tax rate continues to be low for Smyrna residents. He complimented Rex Gaither, Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director, of his managing the town’s finances. Smyrna is very blessed and is in great financial shape. Mayor Reed added that expanding the roads and sewer access on the west side of town is a point of concentration for the town.

Other: Mike stated that the Farmer’s Market at the Depot District begins Saturday. There will be NO Airshow parking at Event Center parking lot this year. Mike displayed the Musco Lighting brochure that features Cedar Stone Park ball field lights on it.

June’s Park Board meeting will be held at the Event Center to continue the Master Plan update. July’s Park Board meeting will be held at Cedar Stone Park.

Meeting adjourned at 6:31pm.