

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held September 21, 2021, at Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Ernie Felts called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

PRESENT Twelve people were present: Ernie Felts; Michael Potts, Carl Boyd; Clay Phillips; Tommy Williams; Charles Scurr; Gracie Dugan; Mayor Mary Esther Reed; Marty Smith and Kay Arnold, staff; Brian Hercules, Town Manager; Charles King, Town Engineer

ABSENT Councilmember H.G. Cole, Mike Moss, Jimmy Stitt, Eli Victory

SUMMARY Prayer: Brian Hercules

Citizen's Comments: None

Marty will fill in for Mike Moss tonight as he is in Nashville attending the NRPA Conference, along with Jimmy Stitt and two other staff members

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings: Michael Potts moved to approve August's minutes; Clay seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

Old Business: Concerning Discussion of Final Layout of Tennis and Pickleball Courts (at Cedar Stone Park), Marty explained that after the public meeting for Grant Application, held on August 5th with 37 in attendance, many of the attendees made it clear that pickleball players need their own designated courts instead of trying to share tennis courts with the entire community. After that meeting, Mike contacted the project designers and asked them to try to work that out. The result was to revise the design to 6 tennis courts and 6 pickleball courts and that new plan was submitted as the grant project. Hopefully having both types of courts will provide something for all the players. Charles asked about the tree canopy in the vacuity of the tennis/pickleball court project. Unfortunately, most of those trees will have to be removed to make room for the new courts.

New Business: Concerning Discussion of SplashTown 2021 Operations, Marty displayed a slide showing 2021 Pool Revenues (\$202,887) and 2021 Pool Visits (39,750). He compared these numbers with 2019 pool statistics, the last year the pool opened due to the COVID-19 pandemic closing most facilities during 2020.

Marty explained that we implemented some Covid-related protocols during the 2021 Pool Season such as have only 1 Funbrella available for private rentals and only 1 rental slot per day for private pool parties. We opened up more deck space for the crowds to utilize. Typically the pool

operations are reduced to weekends only once school starts back in August each year. This year we were able to open limited hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, in addition to weekend days. We attracted a pretty good crowd during the limited weekdays that we opened and hope to be able to do it again next year. Of note, until late July, our pool was the only public pool open in 2021 in this county and we hit capacity numbers nearly every day during the pool season on nice weather days.

Marty stated that we are currently evaluating the possibility of increasing pool admittance prices to take effect for the 2022 Pool Season. Our current daily admittance rate is \$6 Adults (age 13+) and \$5 Child/Senior (age 1-12 & 55+). Murfreesboro's rate is \$7 Adults and \$5 Children.

Questions and statements that followed:

What are the number of adults and the number of children we have on average daily?

Do we open 30 minutes early for membership holders?

A board member stated she and her family were usually able to get into the pool quickly without waiting because of capacity limitations.

Is there ever a ½ price Saturday or something similar?

Are there plans to increase the pool area due to growth in our area?

Smyrna seems to have the most inexpensive admission prices in the area.

Marty shared some information pertaining to providing pool operations. Pool chemical costs are rising quickly. As is true around the country, filling open positions is difficult. We have 27 lifeguard positions that we try to fill each year. Each day the pool is open requires 13 lifeguards per shift, along with 2 Gatehouse Staff. We try to pay competitive wages and we pay 2nd year and 3rd year returnees increased wages in an effort to retain experienced lifeguards.

Most of our lifeguards work 40 hours per week during the pool season, and with the stresses of the job and the extreme heat they have to endure, they tend to get physically worn out by the end season. Additionally, by the end of the summer we start losing lifeguards due to returning to school or other reasons.

Mayor Reed stated she would like for staff to prepare statistics for the Park Board members to review, such as number of adults and children that utilize the pool, number of Summer Passes sold in 2021, operating costs of pool, our admission prices compared to surrounding communities, along with a recommendation from staff.

Mayor Reed stated that expansion of the pool is part of the long-term growth plans, but will not be happening in the short-term. Brian added that there are PUD amenities in numerous neighborhoods throughout Smyrna that have pools for their residents to use too.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff: Marty reviewed upcoming events listed on the agenda.

Director's Report: Marty reviewed the monthly report, adding that there are 359 participants registered for the Top Gun Night Run so far and that there will be food trucks and a band at the event, scheduled for November 5th. There are 38 Town of Smyrna employees registered to participate in the Night Run.

Marty reviewed the Fall Recreation League registration numbers. Afterwards, Mayor Reed asked if the Stewarts Creek football program affected the Smyrna Youth Football program. It has made

an impact on the program because Stewarts Creek has 101 participants. Mayor Reed asked if the department will provide the past 5 years of Spring and Fall league participants in order to gauge how our league registrations may have changed.

There was some discussion among the board members about the challenge in finding enough coaches for all the leagues. There are times that the leagues cannot serve all the kids that want to play due to lack of enough coaches. It is also becoming difficult to find enough, or even retain, referees and umpires for the league games. Acquiring league uniforms and equipment is a challenge as well due to COVID backlogs. Many leagues are not back to pre-COVID numbers yet. Marty added that it is a different time in youth sports now. Charles stated that the quality of coaching that his grandchildren receive playing at Cedar Stone has been excellent.

Council Report: Mayor Reed reviewed highlights from the latest meeting. Afterwards, the Mayor spoke about the Red Bicycle Restaurant that is currently remodeling existing downtown space and will be opening soon. Additionally, a State Farm Insurance office recently opened next to the Red Bicycle restaurant on Lowry Street. Most certainly, new storefronts will be opening along Lowry Street in the future.

Other: Ernie asked if anyone had ever heard of Solar Farms. Mayor Reed and Brian stated there is one located on airport property and one at Square D. Ernie thought the open lot next to the Event Center would be a good spot for one.

Brian stated that the new entrance road going into Lee Victory Recreation Park is on schedule and will be a great addition to the park. The recent Rotary Fish Fry was very successful, raising over \$200,000. They plan to contribute \$100,000 to building the restroom building at Freedom Playground, which will cost approximately \$250,000 when completed. There is a great need for adult-size changing tables and this new restroom building will have them, along with family restrooms.

Mayor Reed asked board members to “Like” Town of Smyrna’s Facebook page and also to share public information posts on their own Facebook accounts.

Meeting adjourned at 6:11pm.