

SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 15, 2022

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held February 15, 2022, at Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Ernie Felts called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

PRESENT Thirteen people were present: Ernie Felts; Michael Potts; Clay Phillips; Carl Boyd; Tommy Williams; Gracie Dugan; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Mike Moss, Director; Jimmy Stitt and Kay Arnold, staff; Brian Hercules, Town Manager; Charles King, Town Engineer
Mark Hardy, visitor

ABSENT Mayor Mary Esther Reed, Charles Scurr, Eli Victory

SUMMARY Prayer: Mark Hardy

Citizen's Comments: None

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

Old Business: Concerning Pioneer Park Walking Trail, Mike began the discussion by stating that the perimeter trail has been planned for years and is included in the Parks Master Plan. Building the trail was a challenging project and changes to the drawings had to be made on-site during construction. The concrete trail is 8 feet wide, loops around the volleyball court, and is a beautiful walk through the park. The basketball court was re-paved two years ago and a new playground was installed last fall. Mike is glad that the project is close to completion. A street map was shown illustrating how Pioneer Park will eventually attach to Old Nashville Highway via a greenway system connection.

Ernie asked about the possibility of installing a small playground in the trail loop area. Mike stated that particular area floods from time to time, but he would first like to see how park users utilize the park.

New Business: Concerning Potential Upcoming SOAC Exhibits, a slide was shown depicting "Curious George Let's Get Curious!" exhibit, which we hope to have during the summer season 2022. The vendor says this exhibit is very popular and normally rents for \$60,000. We are able to rent it for \$24,999 plus shipping charges.

We also hope to book “Thomas Edison’s Secret Lab” exhibit for Fall 2022. This exhibit is STEM-based. We have rented this exhibit before, November 2018 through May 2019 for \$87,500 (6 months). We can rent it now for \$27,000 (3 months). Mike and Courtney recently met with representatives from Middle Tennessee Electric and they expressed interest in partnering with the town on renting this exhibit.

The vision of the SOAC, when first developing the concept, was the keep our displays/exhibits fresh and interesting, and we are trying to follow that vision.

Concerning Discussion of the Sharp Springs Lease Renewal and Agriculture, Mike informed the board that the Town secured a 25-year lease of the Sharp Springs Natural Area property from the US Corps of Engineers in March 1997. The lease expired February 2022, but a renewal of the lease is currently in progress at USACE. We also have several outstanding requests submitted to the USACE that we are awaiting approval on: Fence for Dog Park, parking lots for a couple of shelters, build mountain bike trail, and install playground. Mike has been told by the USACE that a lot of their workers are still working from home due to COVID-19 and it takes a very long time to acquire project approvals.

For several years, we have had a farmer grow crops on some of the Sharp Springs acreage. We will be opening bids in March to farm the land for the next 5 years. So far we have gotten interest from three different farmers.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff: Mike reviewed upcoming events listed on the agenda. He added that the Volunteer of the Year Banquet is Friday. SOAC Summer Camp registration opens in March.

Director’s Report: Mike reviewed his monthly report. Jimmy gave update on paving projects being done at the present time.

Brian asked about status of Paul Johns Park trail. Mike replied that the park is open but there recently was a sewer line problem that closed the trail again. The trail was quickly reopened after the repair.

Todd Lane renovations so far:

- Removed turf
- Installed correct crown slope
- Sod installed
- Cut out base paths
- Dugouts opened up, new benches installed, helmet boxes, installing new fencing in front of dugouts, knocked out some cement blocks to improve ventilation
- Adding new bullpen on 3rd base side

The department is working to pull the new soccer annex together by the first tournament date in March.

Visitation to SOAC is increasing now that we are fully open again. We’re having some out-of-towners visit after seeing advertisements on Instagram. We will have a Scavenger Hunt as part of our Spring Break program.

We are gathering quotes to paint the Kuss plane. SRM generously donated the material and labor to build a sidewalk from the Lee Victory Rec Park parking lot to the Kuss Memorial site.

Freedom Playground is being used a lot.

The Town is partnering with Tri-Star to present Kids Safety Day on May 7th.

The Athletics Office is working with all the recreation leagues to update User Agreements, insurance, and financial statements. Councilman Cole asked if we have improved our inspection procedures to keep a better eye on league financial activities. Mike stated we have implemented more measures and accounts are reviewed monthly.

Mike reviewed the 2022 facility reservations made to date. Council Member Cole asked what kinds of events are being held at Assembly Hall since it has the largest amount of rentals so far. We have lots of showers, private parties, wedding-related events, family get-togethers, etc. Councilman Cole what is asked for by renters that we do not provide. Wi-Fi access, kitchen facilities, ability to serve alcohol. Brian stated that park rental facilities are much more inexpensive compared to venues such as the Event Center. Mike stated that we refer customers to the Event Center if they ask for services that we do not provide.

Council Report: Councilman Cole reviewed highlights from the latest meeting

Other: Charles King gave update of the new entrance to Lee Victory Recreation Park. The contractor should resume work in March. Mike stated that the plans for that project were designed in 2008 and he is very happy to see it coming to fruition.

Sam Ridley Parkway is close to being complete. Brian stated that Charles and his staff have done a great job in getting the Sam Ridley Parkway project completed as quickly as possible. Now, there are traffic cameras located at StoneCrest Parkway and Old Nashville Highway where adjustments to traffic lights can be made as needed.

On the Downtown Project, they continue to work on underground utilities. Lights will be installed in approximately two weeks, and then sidewalks will be replaced along Lowry Street.

The town continues to have trouble with CSX in obtaining a railroad crossing easement and the town attorney is working on it now.

Brian stated that Mrs. Kuss and her two children visited the memorial today. Mayor Reed spent some time with them and they visited the Freedom Playground too.

Meeting adjourned at 6:14pm.