

# SMYRNA PARKS AND RECREATION PARKS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

## MINUTES OF June 20, 2023

The monthly Smyrna Parks and Recreation Parks Advisory Board Meeting was held June 20, 2023, at Smyrna Outdoor Adventure Center, Smyrna, Tennessee. Chairman Clay Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.

**PRESENT** Ten people were present: Mark Hardy; Clay Phillips; Councilmember H.G. Cole; Molly Jennings; Nicole Green; Mike Moss, Director; Jimmy Stitt, Assistant Director; Kay Arnold, staff; Brian Hercules, Town Manager; Rex Gaither, Asst. Town Manager

**ABSENT** Ashley Lester, Michael Potts, Mayor Mary Esther Reed, Christina Treglia, Eli Victory

**SUMMARY** Prayer: Brian Hercules

Citizen's Comments: None

Review and Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings: Molly J. motioned to approve May 2023 minutes; Mark H. seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.

Old Business: Concerning Discussion of Improvements for the Hilltop-Rosenwald Basketball and Pickleball Courts, Mike M. began the discussion by stating that the basketball courts at Hilltop-Rosenwald Park have been half-courts for 7-8 years. Before then, the full courts were used by out-of-towners, and it was frequently a bad scene, fights, etc. Oftentimes there would be a rowdy crowd just hanging out around the courts, and the basketball courts are located at the back of the park. Currently, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the basketball courts at Hilltop Park are shared with the pickleball group with six courts designated for pickleball.

The tennis courts at Lee Victory Recreation Park are heavily used.

Mike M. displayed an aerial image of Patterson Park's shared space of pickleball courts and basketball courts, which is a refurbished tennis court complex. He also displayed another design option for basketball/pickleball courts.

Mike M. then displayed an aerial showing Hilltop Park's footprint, but altering the basketball courts to consist of four pickleball courts and two half-court basketball courts, with fencing to separate the two areas, and a perimeter fence. If we don't want to decrease the number of basketball courts as much, it could be reconfigured to be three pickleball courts and three basketball half-courts, keeping the lights on until 9:00pm. Jimmy S. stated that the pickleball

group and the basketball court users share the available space very well, and the pickleball group has grown in numbers quite a bit.

Mike M. asked for the board's thoughts on possible changes to the court area. Molly J. asked how many basketball courts are in the park system. There are 8, including the Hilltop Park courts. Molly J. stated that since the pickleball courts at Hilltop Park are currently all that the park system has so far, then make Hilltop four pickleball courts, with two half-courts for basketball. Council Member Cole and Clay P. agreed with Molly J.

Molly J. stated there seems to be adequate basketball court options currently available in Smyrna. Council Member Cole asked how many acres are unused at Hilltop Park; Mike M. replied approximately two acres, which is currently used as green space. He prefers to keep park amenities away from surrounding residential areas, if possible.

New Business: Concerning Discussion of an All-Inclusive Playground Grant, Mike M. informed the board that there is a good possibility that the department will apply for a \$500,000 grant, provided by TN Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. He would like to replace the playground at Hilltop-Rosenwald Park. The park already has an adequate parking lot, pavilion, and restroom building, which will need to be updated to make it ADA compliant. The Town owns the property that the park is located on.

Mike M. displayed photos of the existing playground equipment at Hilltop Park, which was installed when the park was built in 2003. He then displayed an image of an all-inclusive playground concept, using turf as a surface instead of a rubber surface. Mike M. feels it will re-energize the park with these improvements and serve that area of town well.

The Park Board members felt it is a good idea. Mike M. stated that the Town Council supported the idea of applying for the all-inclusive playground grant at the June 6, 2023 council meeting.

Concerning Discussion of unscheduled use of the Cedar Stone Park sports fields, Mike M. began the discussion by stating that the turf baseball fields at Cedar Stone experience all kinds of alternate use during unscheduled time. He's seen high school/college age kids playing pickup soccer games on the fields, parents and their children and neighborhood children playing on the fields, unscheduled baseball teams show up for organized practices, etc. The problems that this type of use causes is wear and tear on the turf, bends up fences, improper footwear used on the turf, etc. Mike M. is looking for ways to control/limit these types of activities and asked for suggestions. Brian H. and Clay P. suggested signage stating field usage guidelines. Other suggestions were: lock gates to individual fields, lock-up complex once the new restroom building opens, and more monitoring by staff. Mike M. added that the availability of a multipurpose turf field would help curtail these types of issues.

Reports of Officers, Committees, or Staff: Mike M. reviewed upcoming events listed on the agenda. With the annual Independence Day Celebration coming up on July 1<sup>st</sup>, Mike M. reminded the board that there will be family activities at Lee Victory Recreation Park as well as at SOAC, beginning at 5:00pm.

Director's Report: Mike M. reviewed his monthly report. Some of the recreation leagues are ending for the season. The department has been chipping away at the ADA Compliance Plan

that the Town adopted in 2019. Most recently, we completed an ADA parking area near the EA Victory Shelter at Sharp Springs Park. The new restroom building that is near completion adjacent to the Freedom Playground, will be ADA compliant, as well as have a designated Family Restroom with adult changing table. Work will begin soon on the restroom building at Cedar Stone Park near the playground and future tennis/pickleball courts.

As a follow-up from May's Park Board meeting, Mike M. asked Marty Smith to get with the athletic leagues to obtain their protocol on handling discipline issues/unruly behavior during league games. The Baseball League follows these steps: 1) go to coach, then if unresolved, 2) ask the offending person(s) to leave the park, then if unresolved, 3) call police. The Fastpitch League would like the umpires to handle the games better.

Mike M. displayed photos from the following recent events:

- Kids to Parks Day
- Simply Smyrna
- June in Creek
- Career Fair at Smyrna Elementary School
- Kuss Memorial field trips

Council Update: Council Member Cole reviewed highlights from most the recent meeting. Additionally, he spoke about some exciting upcoming improvements that will be made along Lowry Street: more sidewalks throughout the downtown area, curbs, light poles, and additional parking lots in the downtown area. Lots of work already taking place. The concrete beds along Lowry Street look good.

Other: Roundtable –

Clay P. stated that someone's tires got slashed at Cedar Stone Park during a tournament a few weeks ago.

Nicole G. asked when the Mountain Bike Trail will be ready to use. Mike M. replied that is close to being complete, most likely to open after the busy season.

The air show was a huge success earlier this month. Sunday was a sell-out.

Mike M. stated that he and Brian H. have been discussing a change to the Park Board meeting schedule. He asked what the board members thought about skipping the months of July and December each year. We can hold the holiday dinner meeting at the November meeting instead of December. We will still select the Lifetime Service and Young Leader Award recipients at November's meeting. No meeting in July or December 2023. The board members agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:14 pm.