

MURFREESBORO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2021

12:00 NOON

MPRC Members Present: Mr. Eddie Miller, MPRC Chair
Dr. Gloria Bonner, Mr. Leroy Cunningham,
Mr. Rick LaLance, Mr. Ronnie Martin, Mr. Trey Duke,
Mr. Tim Roediger (Vice-Chair), Mr. Ricky Turner, and
Mr. Don Turner (ex officio)

MPRC Member(s) Absent: Dr. Charlie Apigian

MPRD Staff Present: Mr. Nate Williams, Director
Mr. Thomas Laird and Ms. Rachel Singer, Asst. Directors
Mr. Fred Cosby, Ms. Brittany Garrett, Ms. Susan Hicks,
Ms. Mitzi Hughes, Ms. Gernell Jenkins, and Mr. Cody Saffel

Others Present: Ms. Angela Jackson, Exec. Director of Community Services
Ms. Kelley Baker, Asst. City Attorney

After the meeting was called to order, Dr. Gloria Bonner led everyone in a prayer and in the Pledge of Allegiance. Next, the minutes of the February 3, 2021, Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Commission (MPRC) meeting were presented for approval. Mr. LaLance made a motion to approve the minutes as read. Dr. Bonner seconded, and motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Williams introduced Mr. Trey Duke, the new City Schools Director and MPRC member. Mr. Miller welcomed him to the commission.

Ms. Gernell Floyd thanked Ms. Rachel Singer and Mr. Nate Williams for all of their support with the Patterson Community Center Maintenance Foreman staffing issues in 2020. After several attempts to get someone secured to the position, Mr. Fred Cosby was hired. Ms. Floyd was happy to introduce him to the commission members and said that he has the special skillset needed to handle the position, with over 20 years of experience. Mr. Cosby said he was glad to be a part of the Patterson Community Center staff.

Ms. Singer also reintroduced a current department employee, Ms. Susan Hicks, and announced that she has been promoted to Cultural Arts Supervisor. Ms. Hicks will be in charge of the performing arts and visual arts staff. Ms. Singer added that Ms. Hicks is a hard worker who has helped the Perform Murfreesboro program grow tremendously since her time with the department. Ms. Hicks said that she is honored to accept the new position and glad to continue working with the cultural arts programs. Mr. Miller thanked Ms. Hicks and said he was looking forward to the upcoming cultural arts programs and events.

The "HeART of Tennessee" item was taken off the agenda. It will be presented another time.

Ms. Brittany Garrett, Athletic Supervisor, requested tournament fees for the popular sport of pickleball. She mentioned that each tournament will be broken down by skill level and age. Staff proposes a fee of \$40.00 for participation in one event and \$10.00 for any additional

event entered. Tournament t-shirts will be included with the fees, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners will receive prizes. The tournament events will include Men's and Women's Singles, Men's and Women's Doubles, and Mixed Doubles. Mr. Roediger made a motion to approve the tournament fees as presented. Dr. Bonner seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Thomas Laird proposed turf field rental fees for practices and games at Richard Siegel Soccer Complex. He explained that the fee structure, which includes various rental options, will offer competitive rates for the use of synthetic turf fields for scheduled games and practices as the fields become available for use. Mr. Roediger asked if there were any projections for revenues/expenditures yet. Mr. Laird said that by the end of two years, the new indoor soccer facility with the other additions (including turf) are expected to be self-sufficient and give back to the City. He added that the goal is for the facility to pay for itself. Mr. Roediger recommended that the revenue/expenditure numbers for the soccer complex be reviewed in six months. Mr. Williams said there are already preliminary numbers for the two turf fields, and the revenues are up. He said that staff can certainly update the commission on the field rental monetary impact. Mr. Roediger suggested that the economic impact of the soccer complex be made available for the public to see.

Mr. Laird said that the economic impact from soccer is significant for the community. He explained that compared to tennis tournaments which can have up to 500 participants, soccer can have over 200 teams with 12-15 players for each team and can be 2 or 3-day events. He said a lot of hotel/motel taxes come in from the overnight stays. He mentioned that baseball/softball tournaments are sometimes just one day. Mr. Laird said that he would check numbers with the Chamber and report back to the commission.

Mr. Ronnie Martin stated that he hoped the local soccer teams were not being negatively affected by the out-of-town teams coming for tournaments, adding that Murfreesboro certainly wants the new business, but he does not want the local teams to suffer. Mr. Laird said that the local teams are better suited to the natural grass fields, and amenities for those areas of the soccer park are in the works. Mr. LaLance reminded the commission that Siegel Park's original soccer fields were overused a few years ago, and that's why the Jordan Farm acreage was added to the park for additional fields. Mr. Laird stated that there is consistency across the board for the competitive teams and local leagues. He informed the commission that all teams have to find their own fields for practices and that there is a true spirit of social equity among the teams.

Mr. Roediger made a motion to approve the proposed turf field rental fees for practices and games, and Mr. LaLance seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote. Dr. Bonner inquired as to how many teams served local children, since educational, recreational, and social development are important for all youth. Mr. Laird estimated there are 1,200 local soccer players per season and 500-600 select players. He also said that the youth baseball/softball teams serve 2,500-3,000 local kids per season. He said that all MPRD youth sports, including basketball and football, help to create good citizens. He agreed that the recreational sports available locally provide health, wellness, and social benefits for the community's children. He said the youth gain real-life scenarios by participating in sports. Mr. Williams stated that Mr. Laird, Ms. Garrett, and Mr. Cody Saffel are all doing well at

renting the soccer fields with the current limitations during renovations. Mr. Miller said that there were a lot of good points made in the soccer complex discussion.

Ms. Singer requested approval of greenspace fees for Oaklands and McKnight Parks, which are structured like those already in place at Cannonsburgh. The proposed greenspace areas at Oaklands and McKnight Parks are about the same size as the greenspace at Cannonsburgh, with similar amenities and function. Ms. Singer also reviewed the proposed fees as follows: ½ day rentals, \$125; full day rentals, \$200; parking lot with greenspace rental, \$100. Mr. Martin asked if the greenspace rentals would keep the public from using the other areas in the parks, outside the greenspace areas. Ms. Singer said the public could still use the areas outside the rented greenspaces. Mr. Martin clarified that the playground and pavilion at Oaklands Park were not part of the greenspace that will be considered. Ms. Singer said that was correct and that greenspace at Oaklands Park is where the Old-timers Baseball group plays. Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the greenspace fees as presented. Mr. Cunningham seconded. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Melinda Tate reviewed upcoming MPRD programs and events. She mentioned that today was Happy National Walking Day. She then invited the community to the Willie McGowan Fish Fry and Bake Sale scheduled for April 10th from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center and to a free Murder Mystery Escape Game scheduled for April 24th on Civic Plaza from noon until 5:00 p.m. Those interested in the Murder Mystery game may reserve a time slot for groups of one to four by contacting Helen Belcher at 615-642-3170 or at hbelcher@murfreesborotn.gov. Ms. Tate announced that more greenway cleanups were coming up through the Guardians of the Greenway program on all Thursdays in April from 9:00-10:00 a.m. at various trailheads (trailheads and dates listed on the City's website under the Parks and Recreation link). Signups are underway for the Murfreesboro Track and Field program (ages 9-14); the Youth Volleyball League (ages 17 and under); and for Summer Youth Basketball (ages 13-17). Exciting hikes offered through the Wilderness Station are scheduled for April 10th (Machine Falls), April 11th and 25th (Spring Spectacular Hikes and Picnics), and April 17th (Burgess Falls). Also available are free online fitness classes through the Sports Com Facebook page. The Barfield Beach Party is scheduled for May 7th at 5:00 p.m. at Barfield Crescent Park. MPRD Summer Camps are about a third full, so parents interested in getting their children signed up for one or more camps need to register soon, either online or at the main MPRD office, Sports Com or Patterson Community Center. Ms. Tate additionally announced that Boro Beach (Sports Com's outdoor pool) will open on Monday, Saturday, May 29th, and the Boro Beach Bash will be held on Memorial Day from 10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Ms. Tate reminded everyone that the City's website has a link to the Parks and Recreation Department where there is an interactive calendar for people to click on a date to see the MPRD offerings for that day. Also, she mentioned that the department's brochure, the *Rec Connection*, is on the Parks and Recreation link with current and upcoming MPRC events/activities being listed and that there are a variety of department Facebook pages available for the public to find out about MPRD information as well.

Mr. LaLance asked if any of the greenway cleanups have been or are offered for youth during afterschool hours, such as beginning at 3:30-4:00. Ms. Tate said that those who would like to help with greenway cleanups at times other than the times already set by the department, can call the main MPRD office and be directed to someone who can help them

get set up with a cleanup. Also, Ms. Tate said that businesses and companies frequently call the department and set up their own dates for their employees to volunteer with greenway cleanups.

Mr. Ricky Turner asked if there would be a limited capacity due to COVID-19 for the Boro Beach this summer and if COVID measures would be taken, such as temperatures of patrons. Mr. Williams said that MPRD will continue to follow state and local COVID protocols as directed, but temperatures would not be taken and there would not be a limited capacity for patrons due to COVID. Mr. Miller complimented MPRD staff for all the upcoming activities.

Mr. Turner also requested an update on the plans for a new park on the west side of the City since he's been seeing all the news about the City selling land in the Blackman area, land that he thought was put aside for a large park with athletic fields. He does not want the people on the west side of town to be underserved as it pertains to recreation/athletics. Mr. Williams said that a large park is still planned for the western side of the City, but it may be more suited to the Franklin Road area rather than the City's property by 840.

Mr. LaLance explained that Council has been studying the best possible land uses for the two relevant properties that the City owns in the western area of town, the property by 840 and the Highway 96/Veterans Parkway property. He said that the costs to build a park by 840 came in 20-50 million dollars more than expected and without raising taxes, that was not going to be practical. Mr. LaLance added that COVID hit next, which set park plans back some more. He said recent considerations by Council of the two properties have shown that the Highway 96/Veterans Parkway acreage might be the better site for a large park. Mr. Martin stated that the 840-area property will have more commercial value than park value and that the City would like to get the best price/value out of each property. Mr. Martin mentioned that some people are not seeing the whole story on the potential park site properties. He said that the original 100 or so acres proposed for a park are not going to be cut to 15. The Blackman property by 840 is about 120 acres, while the Highway 96 property is 160 acres. The idea is to have a large park still, but probably at the Highway 96/Veterans Parkway site, with a small pocket park being possible for the area by 840. Mr. Martin further shared that the State plans to improve sections of Highway 96 by the potential park site, which would allow for better accessibility to a park there. Mr. Turner said that he was just trying to watch out for residents on that side of town. Mr. Williams agreed that a park is still being considered for the western side of the City, but as Mr. Martin mentioned, the properties need to be used in a way that the City can get the best investments possible. Mr. Williams added that the Highway 96 property is a good area for a possible large park.

Meeting adjourned: 12:50 p.m.

Minutes Approved:

Eddie Miller, MPRC Chair

Nate Williams, MPRD Director