

TIMELINE
regarding
MORRISON SPRINGS PARK LAND SWAP
Red Bank, TN
(updated November 2022)

- September 21, 1936 - The J. L. Rogers family sells two parcels (totaling 11.97 acres at 3715 Dayton Boulevard) to the Hamilton County Board of Education for \$15,000, for construction of the new Red Bank High School.
- 1937 New Red Bank High School constructed at 3715 Dayton Boulevard.
- 1955 City of Red Bank incorporated.
- May 1960 Land for Morrison Springs Park (at least in part) sold to Red Bank for \$12,500.
- November 19, 1969 - Application submitted by City of Red Bank to the US Department of Interior’s Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR), for a federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant to develop 30 acres of Morrison Springs Park.
- Red Bank sought **\$70,175** grant from LWCF, on 50% cost-share basis.
- Remaining 50% of \$140,350 total project cost to come from City of Red Bank General Funds.
- January 8, 1970 Grant approved by USDOJ, BOR.
- January 15, 1970 Grant approval notification letter from BOR to Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), the federal agency’s state-level partner agency.
- Project summary: The complete development of a 30-acre tract (new), adjacent to and in addition to an existing 6-acre tract (pool and parking lot), for a total park of 36 acres.*
- January 29, 1970 1st project amendment:
- Add parking, paved road, culverts, trail paving and utilities;
- No change in costs.
- Summer 1971 2nd project amendment (undated), extending deadline until December 31, 1971
- August 10, 1971 Letter from BOR to TDEC requesting project closeout forms.

December 2, 1971 **Revised Cost Estimate** for modifications and increased costs:
 Family picnic sites reduced from 4 to 3;
 Group picnic site added;
 Trail reduced from 0.67 mi to 0.5 mi, and apparently no longer paved;
 Costs raised for ballfield, shelters, support facilities and amphitheater;
 Total project cost **raised from \$140,350 to \$157,810.38.**

December 17, 1971 3rd project amendment to formally add items (and costs):
 - Lighting for softball field;
 - Backstop and fence, and entrance gate;
 - Paint the buildings and shelters;
 - Drainage adjustments;
 Total project cost raised from \$140,350 to \$157,810.38.
 Federal share increased from \$70,175 to **\$78,905.19**

August 2, 1972 Notice of Settlement from BOR: Unused \$5,229.27 returned to BOR.

 Final fed. grant to Red Bank: \$78,905.19 – \$5,229.27 = **\$73,675.92**

Inflation: \$73,675.92 in 1970 is equivalent to **\$520,657.20** in fall 2022

August 17, 1972 Final Inspection of Morrison Springs Park by TDEC:
 - All work completed;
 - Park appears to have very limited use;
 - Several items poorly planned and built;
 - Amphitheater about to wash away, even after several attempts to control erosion;
 - Road cuts are eroding badly.

1981 US Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Outdoor Recreation absorbed by the US DOI National Park Service (NPS).

2003 election **Commissioners:** Pat Brown, Mayor
 Mildred Floy Pierce
 Howard Cotter
 Ronnie Moore
 Joe Glasscock

2006 TDEC’s Post-Completion Inspection finds Morrison Springs Park is unsatisfactory. E.g., the federally-funded amphitheater had decayed and been demolished by the City years earlier.

2006 election **Commissioners:** Howard Cotter, Mayor
 Mildred Floy Pierce
 Pat Brown
 Ronnie Moore
 Joe Glasscock

December 12, 2010 Red Bank acquired (by donation at \$0.00 cost) two parcels for Stringers Ridge Park:
Parcel 126L-A-001 (estimated 5 acres)
Parcel 126L-A-001.04 (estimated 5 acres)

2011 appraisals Converted part of Morrison Springs Park: **\$350,000 – \$362,000**
- Appraised at 14.63 acres
- Owned by City of Red Bank

Old Red Bank Middle School site (land only): **\$1,275,000**
- Appraised as if only 11.12 acres
- Owned by Hamilton County

Question: Was it an even swap between City and County?
Or did Red Bank owe Hamilton County about \$925,000?

March 14, 2011 Land swap approved by NPS, with a 3-year deadline for Red Bank to complete acquisition and development of the replacement parks.

The City of Red Bank is required by federal NPS regulations to provide replacement public outdoor recreation, with equal or greater land value and reasonably equivalent outdoor recreation usefulness and location.

April 21, 2011 Red Bank sends letter to TDEC to confirm details of land swap properties.

2012 New Red Bank Middle School constructed on the converted 14.63 acres of Morrison Springs Park.

Lost in the conversion:

- 14.63 acres of open park land;
- Large parking lot;
- 2 big ball fields;
- 2 smaller ball fields;
- Concession stand;
- 3 picnic shelters with tables and grills;
- 1 large group shelter (converted into the community center);
- Amphitheater (actually demolished by City, unknown # of years prior to 2006)
- Trails (0.5 mi).

2012 election Commissioners: John Roberts, Mayor
Floy Pierce
Rick Causer
Kenneth Welch
Eddie Pierce

August 2013	Old Red Bank Middle School demolished, the site cleared.
2011 – 2014	<p>Red Bank city leaders chose to expand and upgrade the Norma Cagle Park ball fields (at Memorial and James Avenue) <i>instead of</i> fulfilling the City’s land swap obligations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Norma Cagle Park was expanded from 2 to 3 fields; - A concession stand, paved parking areas and a picnic shed also were added; - This expansion apparently was intended by the City to partially make up for the land conversion and loss from Morrison Springs Park of 4 ball fields, 3 picnic sheds and a concession stand; - However, NO coordination or formal agreement occurred between Red Bank and NPS. The Norma Cagle Park already was public recreational land; thus this ball field expansion/upgrade could not legally be considered part of the replacement of the land conversion.
2014 election	<p>Commissioners: John Roberts, Mayor Terry Pope Rick Causer Ed LeCompte Eddie Pierce</p>
January 27, 2016	City of Red Bank takes possession of 3715 Dayton Blvd from Hamilton County Department of Education, for a sale price of \$0.
2014 – 2020	No significant investment in parks by the City of Red Bank.
2016 election	<p>Commissioners: John Roberts, Mayor Terry Pope Carol Rose Ed LeCompte Eddie Pierce</p>
2018	NPS and TDEC realize that the land swap agreement never was implemented by the City of Red Bank. Negotiations begin about resolution.
2018 election	<p>Commissioners: Eddie Pierce, Mayor (partial term) Ruth Jenó, Appointed Replacement Mayor Terry Pope Carol Rose Ed LeCompte</p>
May 2019	NPS and TDEC realize that the original 2011 land swap agreement was substantively insufficient; and that the appraisals conducted then were not up to federal standards and are invalid. Months of negotiations with the City ensue.

May 2, 2019 NPS to TDEC: “It is likely had the City gone forward, developed and opened the property [3 acres at 3715 Dayton Blvd and 2 tracts at Stringer’s Ridge, per the original 2011 land swap agreement] to the public within the 3 years after acquiring then we would not be having to address this issue, but since they are currently out of compliance, we will have to re-visit this matter.”

May 3, 2019 City Manager Tim Thornbury to TDEC: “... at the time of the original conversion the City did not own this parcel of land but since then has picked up to two (2) other parcels [*ed: at Stringer’s Ridge*] that join the two (2) that were a part of the original conversion since they join the original 2 why can’t the city add the two (2) that join to have 4 parcels on Stringers Ridge and reduce the 3 acres of the Dayton Blvd parcel.” [no immediate answer from TDEC]

June 2019 NPS and TDEC investigate whether the Stringer’s Ridge parcels already have trails (biking, hiking), are already being used for public recreation, or are already protected under a conservation easement. A “yes” to any of these questions makes the Stringer’s Ridge parcels ineligible for the land swap.

July 8, 2019 City Manager Tim Thornbury to TDEC: “Red Bank would like to see if adding the additional 3 parcels [*ed: at Stringer’s Ridge*] as they all tie together to the White Oak Park would this be able to reduce or take care of the 3 acres needed at the old Red Bank Middle School site.”

Thornbury: “The property along Dayton Blvd is a very important piece of property for future development for the City and we feel that the 3 acres on Stringers Ridge would serve for better recreational services for the public instead of 3 acres being in the middle of town with minimal use from the public.”

October 30, 2019 NPS determines that the Stringer’s Ridge parcels will not work as replacement property for the land swap. Some or all of the parcels were already part of the conservation easement, already have trails and are already open and available for public outdoor recreation use. Using such parcels as replacement property is contrary to federal regulations. NPS suggests using the Dayton Blvd property as the core of the replacement obligation.

November 4, 2019 City Manager Tim Thornbury: “The City would like the option of showing you [*ed: TDEC*] and the NPS the location of the 3 acres [*ed: at 3715 Dayton Blvd*] since it is unclear where it was originally located on the property. If NPS would allow the City to do this it would help in the development of the property.”

February 14, 2020 First TDEC letter to Red Bank, to Mayor Pierce, notifying the City about rescission of the 2011 land swap agreement.

May 15, 2020 National Park Service sends letter and project amendment to TDEC, rescinding the March 14, 2011 approval of the land swap, due to Red Bank never fulfilling its obligations.

May 20, 2020 TDEC sends second letter, to Red Bank Mayor Jenó, informing the City that it is out of compliance with the federal government, and the 2011 land swap agreement is rescinded.

Red Bank must propose a new mitigation package to NPS and TDEC.

NPS previously ruled that the mitigation package may not use the Stringer’s Ridge parcels, and suggested that the 3715 Dayton Blvd property be the core of the replacement offer.

Reading between the lines: Between May 2020 and August 2020, the City of Red Bank made a deliberate decision to forgo resolution of its out-of-compliance status with the NPS, and proceed with selling the entire 11.97-acre former middle school property at 3715 Dayton Blvd.

August 18, 2020 In preparation to sell the entire 11.97 acres at 3715 Dayton Blvd to private developers, the City of Red Bank pays to have the property appraised. The appraised value at that time was **\$3,075,000**.

September 1, 2020 Red Bank issues a *Request for Proposals*, to solicit offers from developers who wish to purchase and develop the entire property at 3715 Dayton Blvd; deadline of January 5, 2021.

Nov. 3, 2020 election Commissioners: Hollie Berry, Mayor
Stefanie Dalton, Vice Mayor
Ruth Jenó
Ed LeCompte
Pete Phillips

January 5, 2021 Three private development proposals were submitted in response to the September 1, 2020 RFP. No formal public hearing on the proposals was ever held. The three proposals, in summary:

Empire Communities

- Purchase offer: \$3,500,000
- 149 townhomes and single-family row houses – 9.03 acres
- Green space – 1.7 acres total, in three pieces
- Commercial – 1.0 acre
- Property tax revenue (estimated annual) – \$199,813

Thousand Hills Company

Purchase offer: \$800,000 + \$350,000 public amenities = \$1,150,000 total
 96 homes, townhomes, live-work spaces, and apartments
 Green space – 3 acres total, in 4 pieces (1 piece is public)
 Commercial – 0.63 acre
 Property tax revenue (estimated annual) – \$114,918

Town Center Development Group

Purchase offer: \$1,125,000
 ~56 Homes (estimated from sketch; actual # not in proposal)
 Green space – 1.8 ac (only 1.2 ac is public)
 Commercial – 7 to 9 units (acres undeterminable)
 Property tax revenue (estimated annual) – not provided

July 20, 2021 appraisals Updated formal appraisals paid for by the City of the two relevant sites – the converted land at the new middle school, and the 3715 Dayton Blvd site:

Converted site at new middle school: \$1,455,000
3715 Dayton Blvd: \$3,770,000

- If Red Bank chooses to use *just* 3715 Dayton Blvd as replacement for the land conversion, it will take ≥ 4.62 ac (rounded up to 5 acres, to be safe) of the 12-acre site to mitigate;
 - And Red Bank also must provide some new active outdoor recreation facilities somewhere.

September 7, 2021 Red Bank Board of Commissioners votes to hire new City Manager, Martin Granum, to start official duties October 11, 2021.

November 16, 2021 Red Bank Board of Commissioners reached a consensus allowing the City Manager to **terminate the Sept. 2020 Request for Proposals** to sell the old middle school site, along with the resulting 3 development proposals.

November 8, 2022 Elections for Red Bank commissioners:

2022 Election for Red Bank, TN, Board of Commissioners						
Red Bank District	Current Commissioner	Term Ends	Status of Current Commissioner	Candidates for Each Seat		
1	Hollie Berry (Mayor)	2022	Running for Re-election	Hollie Berry	versus	Dari Owens
2	Stefanie Dalton (Vice Mayor)	2024	Continuing	n/a		n/a
3	Ed LeCompte	2022	Stepping Down	Jamie Fairbanks-Harvey	versus	Lawrence Miller
At Large	Ruth Jenó	2022	Stepping Down	Jeff Price	versus	Hayes Wilkinson
At Large	Pete Phillips	2024	Continuing	n/a		n/a