



Responses to a Parks Questionnaire
(from the *Save Red Bank Central Park* Citizens' Group)
by the 2022 Candidates for the Red Bank, TN, Commission
September 2022

Side-by-Side Candidate Responses to Each Question

Question 1. Compared with other priorities for the City, how important do you think parks and recreation lands, and related amenities are to the Red Bank community, economy, and culture? Why?

District 1 Candidates

Hollie Berry:

Parks are crucial to every dimension of our city; they strengthen our economy by attracting businesses and customers for those businesses while increasing property values, lifting both sales tax and property tax revenue throughout the city without rate increases. They make our community more resilient to future threats, including flooding, heat waves, pandemics, and any number of curveballs the future may throw our way. They improve our residents' physical and mental health by providing them with public access to safe, clean, enjoyable outdoor spaces to exercise, stay active, and socialize. Public spaces serve as a unique antidote to our increasingly anonymous, isolated, and divisive modern existence by providing gathering spaces for neighbors to meet and form genuine connections and community.

Dari Owens:

Clearly, parks and recreational public lands are highly valuable to any vibrant community. These are the places citizens come together, and I'm grateful to live in a town where we have many options.

The amenities anchoring these spaces are equally important, allowing Red Bank to prosper with tax revenue from new and existing shops and restaurants. Beautiful parks and unique businesses work together to create a symbiotic environment ripe for visitors and revenue.

District 3 Candidates

Jamie Fairbanks-Harvey:

Communication with constituents is our first priority to learn direction for city priorities. The term Parks is a vague term for a variety of spaces that can provide more recreation or more congregation. For any park, there must be a mechanism to balance financial income to meet maintenance needs. If we can't afford to upkeep parks, then delay implementing sites. Especially do not increase or add a tax for parks. Citizens can find ways to recreate with neighbors without leaving their neighborhood also.



Lawrence Miller:

Parks, recreational facilities and greenspaces are essential as tangible assets to benefit our community. They bring benefits to individuals in terms of health and wellness. There is ample scientific research that shows that urban parks promote active living and opportunities to avoid chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and respiratory problems. In addition, people gain mental health benefits from opportunities provided by park and recreational facilities, including socializing with friends and family, spending time in nature, and exercising.

Red Bank as a whole is missing economic benefits from a more robust presence of parks and recreation. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has documented the significant gains that come from infrastructure improvements in parks. These include - direct and indirect employment, increased property values, transactional opportunities on and near parks, and integration into city-wide management issues such as stormwater runoff and air pollution.

NRPA research has determined that 94% adults agree on “the importance of their local government investing in infrastructure improvements that promote economic activity in their community.”

I attended the Red Bank Commission’s strategic planning retreat last spring as an observer. I was heartened by the fact that the issue of parks and recreation surfaced as one on the Commission’s top five priorities. I fully support the Commission on this effort which was focused on the “10-minute Walk to a Park Initiative.

At Large Candidates

Jeff Price:

There are several published studies that recognize the value of parks and recreational lands and how they contribute significantly by improving property values and promoting healthy lifestyles for residents. They can also help in creating a sense of pride in the community and provide a higher quality of life for residents.

In my opinion, we need parks and recreational lands and they are essential to our community, but finding other income streams to fund these endeavors outside of property taxes would put less financial strain on our citizens. With respect to parks, we have to look into grants and other funding mechanisms to meet this critical need.

Hayes Wilkinson:

I think parks and green spaces are crucial to a thriving city and community. Access to parks and the outdoors are a big reason why my family and I chose to settle in the greater Chattanooga area. This region in particular has become renowned for being a hub in the Southeast for all kinds of outdoor recreation, including hiking, rock climbing, and cycling. In a recent study conducted by UTC, mountain bike tourism alone in Hamilton County was found to have an impact of roughly 6.9 million dollars annually on our economy. With our central location, Red Bank is ideally situated to become an outdoor recreation hub of Hamilton County.

Parks and green spaces provide gathering places for us neighbors to both recreate and build community. Parks also raise adjacent property values, and the reason for this goes beyond the obvious benefits of having a more beautiful city. Parks attract both locals and visitors alike, which in turn attract businesses, creating the foundation of a thriving place where people want to live.