

Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Board Meeting

March 20, 2025

2:00 PM

Jimmy Davis Park Complex

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the minutes of the call meeting held on December 11, 2024
- III. Staff Reports/Updates
- IV. Review of three-year plan for additions, deletions, completions, or revised items.
- V. Other matters from advisory board members and staff
- VI. Next Meeting Date
- VII. Adjournment

Meeting Minutes
Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Board
Minutes of Meeting
December 11, 2024
Jimmy Davis Park Complex

Attendees: Annie Bishop, Gwendolyn Brundage, Patricia Hurt, and Janie Reid

Staff: Tweedy Victor Parham

Chairperson Janie B. Reid called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Gwendolyn Brundage moved to adopt the minutes as presented, and Annie Bishop seconded it. Since there was no discussion, the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Discussion:

Chairperson Reid stated that she had a conversation with County Manager Paul Van Haute, and he said that “they (BOC) were working the three-year plan as presented to them by the Jimmy Davis Partnership Advisory Board.” There were no questions.

Staff Updates:

Mr. Parham reported that all was going well. He stated that several people asked about the fence being locked at times and that it should be open and accessible to the public, and he answered them by saying that “the commissioners are working on it.”

The committee then reviewed the plan line by line to see if any action had been taken or if additions or deletions needed to be made. After discussion, we asked the commissioners to allocate funding immediately to purchase seating for the pavilion and tables and chairs for the inside. We also would like to buy some board games and a television for the building. Additionally, we request that the commissioners do an RFP for summer enrichment activities for the youth in the area to begin immediately once school is out for the summer.

Chairperson Reid reminded the members that their subsequent report to the commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2024.

Other matters from the floor

No discussion.

Next meeting date:

March 12, 2025

Respectfully,

Janie B. Reid

REPORT TO PUTNAM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS DECEMBER 17, 2024

Since our report to you, we have met once, on December 11th, which was previously scheduled and submitted to you in advance.

We want to thank the staff, particularly Mr. Parham and Mr. Haley. They have been very responsive to our concerns and those of the public. We observe them as hardworking and dedicated to their tasks.

During this meeting, we discussed the plan we submitted to you and discussed any concerns or actions you all took. We were pleased to learn that you are actively working on the three-year plan as submitted and that there were no questions from your side.

We spent considerable time at this meeting reviewing the three-year plan line by line to assess actions taken and identify any necessary additions or deletions. After our discussion, we requested an immediate allocation of funding to purchase seating for the pavilion and tables and chairs for the interior. Additionally, we would like to acquire board games and a television for the facility. Furthermore, we request that the commissioners issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for summer enrichment activities for the youth in the area, which will begin immediately after school ends for the summer.

A health fair was held on January 15th, attracting more than 80 attendees, primarily seniors. Due to the high turnout, additional chairs had to be brought in.

We are delighted with the progress made so far and look forward to discussing further items that we hope you will take up in future meetings before school is out. We also understand that you had plans to “fix” or address some of these items before the November election, hoping that SPLOST 10 would pass. Unfortunately, it didn’t, which was, in my opinion, very unfortunate.

I understand you’re actively working on the following, and we’re delighted.

- **Install Volleyball Court:** The nets are on-site and were used during last season.
- **Raised Beds:** This will be a discussion point during the budget process.
- **Upgrade Playground Equipment:** This is a proposed project for SPLOST 10.
- **Add Workout Stations:** Installation will occur when temperatures warm up.
- **Brown Bombers Field:** The County Manager and others in the community are working on this, having reached out to Major League Baseball and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum for responses. It's important to note that the Boomers were Putnam County residents who returned home from the war and started the team. Although it began as a recreation, they were well-organized and played in surrounding counties. It’s a piece of history that the African American Community doesn’t want to lose.
- **Seating at the Pavilion, Grill, and Tables** This was another proposed project for SPLOST 10.
- **Rental Fee Review:** This will be discussed during the budget process.
- **Modify Hours of Operation:** This will also be discussed during the budget process.
- **Aerobics, Knitting, and Tutoring:** These topics will be discussed during the budget process.
- **Additional Oversized Items (SPLOST 10)**
 - LED lighting for the field
 - New backstop and outfield equipment

A Three-Year Plan Proposal for the Operation and Maintenance of

**JIMMY DAVIS PARK
125 HOGAN BOULEVARD
EATONTON, GEORGIA 31024**

Scott Haley, Putnam County Recreation Director
Tweedy V. Parham, Jimmy Davis Park Grounds Maintenance Supervisor



Presented To:
Putnam County Board of Commissioners

By:
Jimmy Davis Partnership Advisory Council
Janie B. Reid, Chairperson
Annie Bishop
Gwendolyn Brundage
Patricia Hurt

October 15, 2024

October 15, 2024

The Honorable Bill Sharp, Chairperson
Putnam County Board of Commissioners
Putnam County, Georgia 31024

Chairperson Sharp and Commissioners,

I hope this message finds you well. In April 2024, you created the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council and appointed Gwendolyn Brundage, David Levester III, Annie Bishop, Patricia Hurt, and me as members. You entrusted us with writing a three-year comprehensive plan for the revitalization and upkeep of Jimmy Davis Park, an invaluable asset to the Putnam County, Georgia community.

I am pleased to inform you that the council has recently concluded its plan. This document outlines specific strategic initiatives to preserve the park's legacy while ensuring it meets the evolving needs of our community. It emphasizes promoting health and wellness, fostering educational opportunities, and enhancing recreational facilities to make Jimmy Davis Park a vibrant hub of community life.

Our plan includes immediate and strategic actions such as upgrading playground equipment with inclusive options, adding workout stations, and enhancing the overall safety and accessibility of the park. These efforts aim to ensure Jimmy Davis Park continues to serve as a cornerstone of community engagement and a symbol of our collective commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

We hope you will begin working on these action items if this is acceptable. Although this plan has been completed, we want you to know that we are open to continuing to serve as the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council.

We thank you for this opportunity to work to help make a meaningful impact in our community while honoring Mr. Jimmy Davis, a World War II veteran and one of Putnam County's first Black commissioners. This act embodies a legacy of unity and perseverance.

Sincerely,

Janie B. Reid, Chairperson
Annie Bishop
Gwendolyn Brundage
Patricia Hurt

PLAN SUMMARY

The historical and community-driven legacy of Jimmy Davis Park in Eatonton, Georgia, is significant. Originally known as East Eatonton Park, it was renamed in 2008 to honor Jimmy Davis, a World War II veteran and one of Putnam County's first Black commissioners. For over 50 years, the park has served as a central gathering place, hosting sports events, social gatherings, and community activities.

Between 2007 and 2011, the park experienced growth with regular maintenance, activities, and meetings for organizations such as Eatonton-Putnam Family Connection and Putnam County Planning and Zoning, led by Planning Director Sharon Darlington. However, it has also faced challenges, including periods of neglect and funding debates among county commissioners and area residents. Despite these challenges, Jimmy Davis Park is a testament to community resilience and ongoing efforts to preserve and enhance public spaces in Putnam County for recreational, educational, and community purposes.

Recent efforts to revitalize the park began in 2023, focusing on cleaning, upgrading facilities such as basketball courts and landscaping, and improving infrastructure such as parking lots and buildings. This restoration process reflects ongoing efforts to preserve and restore community spaces to their full potential. Today, the park is on its way to becoming a vibrant hub of community life.

The park's mission emphasizes promoting health and wellness through physical activity, mental rejuvenation, and a sense of peace. To achieve this, the Jimmy Davis Park Partnership Advisory Council was established. Council members Annie Bishop, Patricia Hurt, Gwendolyn Brundage, and Janie B. Reid, along with Recreation Director Scott Haley and Jimmy Davis Park Grounds Maintenance Supervisor Tweedy Victor Parham, provide strategic advice on park operations, recommending recreational, wellness, and educational opportunities and healthy lifestyle initiatives for the community. They collaborate closely with local authorities to develop long-term operational plans, ensuring the park remains a vibrant hub for years.

The newly renovated park will offer various amenities, including computer access for neighborhood school children, office space for staff, a game room, a big-screen TV, fixed recreation equipment, a multi-purpose field, a community garden, an outdoor basketball court, and a pavilion with a grill. These are coupled with upgraded playground equipment and walking workout stations, further enriching its offerings and helping make it a go-to destination for community activities.

Jimmy Davis Park's legacy honors its namesake. It is a testament to the community's resilience and the enduring importance of preserving spaces that foster connections and well-being while maintaining vital neighborhood spaces.

GROUNDS and BUILDING EXTERIOR	GOAL	STATUS
Install surveillance camera.	To curtail vandalism	Completed
Install a fence around the complex. We know this action has been completed, but we ask that you consider removing the newly installed gates to allow patrons to enter the walking area and use the pavilion at their discretion. Access is now limited to only during the posted opening and closing hours.	The park is supposed to be enjoyed by all and available for use during non-traditional hours. Cameras have already been installed to curb vandalism.	The fence is installed; however, we ask that you revisit this item as soon as possible.
Redo parking lot to include striping.	To provide adequate and safe parking.	Completed
Refurbish the basketball court and install new rims and nets.	Time to refurbish; they were worn out.	Completed
Install a volleyball court.	One was there previously, and some community residents have requested that it be placed back.	Requested
<p>If ground space permits, planters for a “raised bed” community garden should be constructed.</p> <p>This could be a joint project with Putnam County Extension, Eatonton-Putnam Senior Citizen Center, and the community's youth.</p>	This garden would allow the residents to come together, socialize, and learn from one another. It would also increase access to fresh, healthy food. It could also be a teaching tool for youth, teaching them where food comes from, the importance of community and stewardship, and environmental sustainability issues.	When the weather permits.
Upgrade playground equipment by adding inclusive equipment.	All kids are created equal with the same desire and need to experience play. Play that will challenge and inspire them physically, supports and stimulates them cognitively, and facilitates an emotional and social connection.	In progress
Add work-out stations around the walking track and a sitting area in the centerfield walking track area.	This will allow park visitors to engage in an aerobic workout and strength, endurance, and flexibility training while walking the track.	In Progress

<p>Restore the baseball field, name it “The Brown Bombers Field at Jimmy Davis Park,” and place a historical marker on the site.</p> <p><i>*The Eatonton Messenger is scheduled to do a news article on The Brown Bombers in the coming weeks.</i></p>	<p>This is to recognize World War II service members (residents of Putnam County) who returned home and decided to put together a baseball team. The team was called The Brown Bombers and played baseball in all the surrounding counties. One team member is still alive today @ one hundred years old.</p>	<p>February 2025 (Black History Month) <i>or</i> June 2025 (Juneteenth Celebration)</p>
<p>Keep the lawn and field manicured and regularly remove any debris or trash. Plant trees, shrubs, and seasonal plants as needed. <i>We suggest rose bushes and crape myrtles.</i></p> <p>Regularly pressure wash the front entryway, back porch, and cement or asphalt surface.</p> <p>Make sure that all electrical lights are always working correctly.</p> <p>Ensure that outside bathrooms are always working correctly.</p>	<p>To maintain a sense of cleanliness and community pride.</p>	<p>As often as needed</p>
<p>Purchase seating for the pavilion.</p> <p>Ensure the pavilion is lighted and has working electrical outlets.</p> <p>Build a grill near the pavilion for families and visitors for cookouts or picnics.</p>	<p>Parks and cookouts are synonymous. They provide a place for people to celebrate, cook, and socialize, whether it is a family reunion, potluck, or picnic. These grounds are perfect for family gatherings.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>

BUILDING INTERIOR	GOAL	STATUS
<p>Purchase tables, chairs, a flat-screen television, board games, and at least two computers that students will utilize to aid them with their school assignments.</p>	<p>The building is empty, with no furniture, leading some to believe the facility is not open. The few who have visited do not stay long because there is nowhere to sit and nothing to do inside the building.</p>	<p>As soon as possible.</p>
<p>Leasing of Building: The current rental fee for the facility and grounds is exceptionally high, which deters people from using the facility for family reunions, birthday parties, church programs, receptions, etc. We understand that the baseball field will not be rented to anyone requesting to use it for a stage or vendor space.</p>	<p>Current: \$500 + \$100 Staff = \$600 for 4 hours (1 rental per day) * \$250 Refundable Deposit is required * Total Due to rent - \$850</p> <p>Proposed: \$400.00 + 150.00 staff for 6 hours (1 rental per day) and a \$150.00 refundable deposit. Total Due to rent: \$700.00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking—The rental agreement will include the new lower parking lot and the parking lot in front of the building. • No entry allowed on the middle road. • No parking inside fence by the basketball court, pavilion, walking trail, playground, or athletic field. • No vehicles allowed on the athletic field or walking trail. • No parking under the pavilion. • The building and grounds must be vacated by midnight on each rental day. 	<p>Request that the form on the BOC’s website be amended to reflect these changes and that the building be available for rent at the proposed amount immediately.</p>

OPERATIONS & ACTIVITIES	GOAL	STATUS
Establish hours of operation to reflect seasons and ensure adequate staff are hired.	Adequate staff is required to ensure that the park is managed successfully, and hours of operation must be implemented that reflect certain times of the year. This is imperative so that the park will adequately serve the community.	Immediately
The community should be able to utilize the building for various events, such as parties, showers, meetings, etc. If the pavilion is rented to a group of two hundred or more, the renter will be responsible for renting two port-a-potties to accommodate the crowd, and the county's community event permit must always be adhered to.	Residents often struggle with finding a building to host family events, and churches and businesses in the area frequently desire to meet outside of their establishment; therefore, they often request to use the facility.	This is addressed in the rental information in " <i>building interior</i> " above.
<p>Regular activities in the building: enrichment classes such as aerobics, knitting, and kid's tutoring. Retired teachers and college students can volunteer for these activities.</p> <p>Advertise using social media and The Eatonton Messenger to solicit. Post pictures of activities at the park.</p> <p>Use the field to have baseball, softball, and soccer games at various times.</p>	The community is constantly asking for this service. Properly implemented and monitored will contribute significantly to building a healthy, educated, and vibrant community.	The department is now utilizing fields for practice, but other activities are needed.