

SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
WORK SESSION
March 24, 2026 6:00 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers and Via Videoconference

1. Call to Order

Mayor Boley called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present: Marv Atkins, Kelly Kobylski, Melissa Wilson, Leeah Stone, Chelsea Dana and Dan Hartman.

Staff present: Cynthia Wagner, Gina Pate, Chief Lockridge, Rick Welch, Matt Denton, Linda Drummond and Mayra Toothman. Chuck Soules was present via Zoom.

City Attorneys present: Padraic Corcoran.

2. Discussion of MARC Grant Application Process

Assistant to the Public Works Director Mayra Toothman noted that the City has submitted applications for the MARC grant cycle for fiscal years 2029 and 2030. The submission deadline for this has just passed, and the City is now waiting for the initial scoring results, which are expected to be released in June. This will coincide with the start of the second phase of the grant process, during which the City will complete the full application for funding. According to MARC's tentative timeline, cities will not receive final funding recommendations until January 2027, meaning it will be well over a year before it becomes clear whether the submitted projects will receive grant support.

The first project, the Eagle Parkway Trail, represents a significant effort to expand and enhance pedestrian connectivity. The proposed segment is approximately one mile long and will consist of a ten-foot-wide trail running along the west side of Eagle Parkway from 180th Street to 188th Street. This initial phase is designed to close existing gaps in the pedestrian sidewalks, especially in areas where neighborhoods currently lack a continuous route to the elementary school to the north. Staff has already identified the possibility of adding a crosswalk to serve residents living in the area to give them access to the trail. The long-term vision for the Eagle Parkway Trail includes a second phase that would extend the trail further north and then east to connect with Clay County trails. That portion of the project is expected to involve a partnership with Clay County officials. The City estimates that the total cost of Phase One will be around \$2 million, and we intend to request grant funding for eighty percent of the project amount, leaving the City responsible for twenty percent.

The second project, Streetscape Phase Four, focuses on revitalizing Commercial Avenue from Church Street to East Meadows. This stretch of roadway is poised for substantial improvements to both pedestrian and the streets. The project includes the full rehabilitation or replacement of sidewalks along the corridor, the milling and overlaying of the street surface, and the installation of multiple ADA-compliant ramps at intersections where none currently exist. These upgrades will help integrate this section of Commercial Avenue with the already improved downtown streetscape and the new Commercial Avenue sidewalks nearing completion. In addition to accessibility and road improvements, the project will add trees, contributing to both aesthetic appeal and environmental benefits. Stormwater infrastructure will also be upgraded, existing inlets will be replaced with drop inlets designed to catch leaves and other debris before they enter the sewer system and improve overall drainage. This project spans roughly 2.2 miles and includes the installation of five-foot-wide sidewalks to maintain consistency with downtown. The estimated cost for Streetscape Phase Four is approximately \$1.5 million, and as with the Eagle Parkway Trail, the City will pursue funding for eighty percent of the cost while covering the remaining twenty percent.

Mayra noted that together, these projects reflect a strategic focus on improving accessibility, connectivity, safety, and quality of life for residents. The lengthy grant timeline means that planning and coordination will continue over the next several years. These updates demonstrate that the City is proactively positioning these projects for long-term infrastructure advancement.

The Board thanked Mayra and staff for being proactive in seeking grant funding for City projects.

3. Discussion of Downtown Parking

Assistant City Administrator Gina Pate provided an overview of current parking conditions in the downtown area. She explained that the City once enforced a two-hour parking limit downtown, but this was repealed in 1999 because the police department did not have the capacity to manage timed restrictions.

Currently, the downtown area contains 994 parking spaces, more than the typical Costco parking lot. Concerns from business owners revolve around the spaces directly in front of their businesses.

Gina noted that to help address concerns, the City has been working with the Smithville Main Street District to encourage business employees to use public parking lots instead of occupying prime on-street parking. Contractors working on projects downtown are also being asked to park in these lots rather than on the streets. As new businesses open and foot traffic increases, this collaborative effort aims to maintain convenient parking availability for shoppers.

Special events, which often involve road closures, continue to affect downtown parking. The City is coordinating communication with business owners and using social media to keep the public informed during these periods. Some concerns have also come from activity surrounding the Mill and Main Street apartment complex. Although those residents will have designated evening parking, those spaces remain open to the public during core business hours. The apartment construction project will double the on-street parking along Mill and Main Streets by adding seventeen new spaces. Work on this improvement is anticipated to begin next month.

Gina noted that Wayfinding will help direct many visitors to where public parking is located. The City plans to work with the Main Street District and the Chamber of Commerce to improve communication and signage. A broader wayfinding plan completed in 2022 calls for directional signage, an LED sign near City Hall, and a pedestrian kiosk. The city received a \$600,000 grant with a required 20% match to implement these improvements. Engineering work, recently approved with BG Consultants, sets the installation timeline for fiscal year 2027.

Gina noted that we have reviewed potential upgrades to City-owned parking lots. The Streets Division has already restriped several lots, including the lot across from Major Lumber, the lot behind City Hall, and Heritage Park. However, transforming gravel lots or conducting full resurfacing projects would be costly and would require further budget discussion if the Board wishes to move ahead.

The Board discussed parking access and management in the downtown area, including questions about who monitors private residential parking during events and how visitors can reach certain off-street lots, particularly near the funeral home. Staff clarified that access comes from adjoining lots and that enforcement within private parking areas is the responsibility of property owners. Concerns were raised about business-specific parking signs seen in other parts of town and whether similar arrangements could be used downtown. Staff explained that these are privately controlled and not applicable to downtown's shared-use

approach. The Board noted that business owners have expressed frustrations about parking availability during construction, which has made some designated employee parking temporarily inaccessible. Despite inconvenience, Mayor Boley emphasized that construction is temporary, with completion expected by late summer.

Gina noted that the improved wayfinding signage will help visitors locate the roughly 900 available parking spaces, many of which are consistently underused.

The Board agreed that enforcing parking rules downtown would place an unnecessary burden on police and that better signage and markings would be more effective.

4. Discussion of Temporary Alcohol Sales Provisions During 2026 FIFA World Cup

Chief Lockridge outlined that the revised state statute that temporarily allows alcohol sales for twenty-three hours a day and permits businesses to remain open for twenty-four hours between June 11 and July 19. Under the statute, municipalities are automatically opted in unless they explicitly opt out, meaning the city will default to the extended hours unless action is taken. Currently, the City's Ordinance restricts alcohol sales between 6:00 a.m. and 1:30 a.m. Chief noted that staff had looked into how nearby communities are responding. Independence plans to allow establishments to remain open but not to sell alcohol during the expanded hours, while Kansas City, Gladstone, Excelsior Springs, Kearney, Parkville, and Riverside intend to follow the state statute. North Kansas City and Liberty have chosen to opt out and maintain their existing ordinances.

Chief Lockridge explained that staff had talked with local establishments and concluded that the impact of extended hours is likely to be limited, largely because most businesses are unlikely to have the staffing capacity to operate nearly around the clock.

Chief Lockridge noted that there are three options possible: take no action and follow the state statute, opt out and continue enforcing the City's current Ordinance or adopt a temporary Ordinance allowing extended hours with customized limits.

Chief noted that staff recommended taking no action and allowing the state statute to apply, noting that local establishments typically do not have issues and that the flexibility could help businesses increase sales based on nightly demand.

The Board supported option one to take no action and follow the state statute. They added that business owners could decide whether to remain open during the expanded hours. The statute automatically expires on July 20, at which point the City's Ordinances will resume on July 20.

5. Adjourn

Alderman Hartman moved to adjourn. Alderman Kobylski seconded the motion.

Ayes – 6, Noes – 0, motion carries. The Mayor declared the work session adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Linda Drummond, City Clerk

Damien Boley, Mayor