

**Mayoral Town Hall with Mayor Tabitha Gott**  
**Smyrna Opera House**  
**Town of Smyrna**  
**January 14, 2026 – 6:00 PM**

**Meeting Minutes**

**1. 6:00 PM – Call to Order**

- Mayor Tabitha Gott hosted a Community Town Hall to address resident-submitted questions and provide updates on town operations, public safety, development, and community initiatives. Questions were submitted in advance and organized by topic to guide the moderated discussion.
- Joining the Mayor were Town Manager Torrie James and Chief Brian Donner. Assistant Town Manager Jason McNatt, Finance Director Kathleen Igavino, and other town leadership provided additional operational insight from the audience.

**2. Public Safety**

- Police leadership clarified that homelessness and panhandling are not crimes. State-level legal decisions prohibit arrest for panhandling alone.
- If individuals are trespassing on private property and refuse to leave after notice, enforcement action may be taken.
- The Smyrna Police Department operates as a full-service agency handling calls ranging from ordinance violations to felony investigations.
- In the previous year, the department responded to approximately 19K calls for service.
- The department currently budgets for 36 officers and is near full staffing. Leadership noted the importance of forward planning to accommodate continued residential growth.
- The department maintains a high clearance rate for investigations and tracks officer-to-citizen ratios in line with national standards.
- Police leadership confirmed that the recent graffiti case remains under investigation and that additional leads have been received.

**3. Public Works and Infrastructure**

- Concerns regarding graffiti, vacant properties, and building maintenance were discussed.
- Town officials clarified that property maintenance on private buildings is the responsibility of property owners. The Town cannot perform work on private property without liability implications.
- Questions regarding traffic flow near shopping centers and along major corridors were addressed.
- Officials clarified that many primary roads, including U.S. Route 13, are under Delaware Department of Transportation jurisdiction. The Town may provide input, but DeIDOT controls design and traffic studies.

#### **4. Parks and Recreation**

- Additional youth-focused initiatives are under consideration, though land availability and funding remain determining factors.

#### **5. Town Services (Utilities, Permits, Billing, Code Enforcement)**

- Town leadership explained the structure of Smyrna's water system, noting it operates as a looped system supplied by strategically located wells and elevated water towers to maintain pressure.
- If a resident experiences low water pressure at a single home, it is typically not a system-wide issue. Public Works can perform on-site pressure checks to determine whether the concern lies within the homeowner's service line or within town infrastructure. The ownership division point is the service valve box located near the property line.
- The Mayor clarified the distinction between residing within the Town of Smyrna limits and residing within the 19977 ZIP code. Approximately 14,000 residents live within town limits, while the ZIP code serves approximately 31,000 individuals.
- Town taxes fund municipal services such as police, parks, and administrative functions. The Smyrna School District operates independently from the Town and is a separate governing entity with its own funding and decision-making processes.
- Town leadership explained that the 2024 tax increase followed multiple years without adjustments, despite rising operational costs. Officials described the increase as necessary to maintain services and stabilize town finances.
- Town services funded through taxes include Police Department, Parks and Recreation, Administrative operations, and portions of Public Works and infrastructure support.
- The Town anticipates future smaller, incremental adjustments rather than significant increases in order to remain financially responsible and avoid large corrections in the future.
- Finance leadership also noted that the Town is preparing to adopt updated county property assessments.
- Impact fees are one-time fees assessed on new construction. These fees help offset infrastructure and service costs associated with growth. The majority of impact fees support fire and ambulance services, with a smaller portion allocated to the Town.
- Impact fees are only collected when development occurs and are not an ongoing revenue source.
- The Town's annual budget process begins internally with revenue projections and departmental planning. Department heads submit proposed budgets, which are reviewed by administration, then presented to the Finance Committee, and ultimately to Town Council for approval.
- The process includes multiple layers of review prior to final adoption.

#### **6. Growth and Development (Planning, Zoning, New Projects)**

- Annexation refers to the voluntary inclusion of properties within designated growth areas into Town limits, consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

- Annexation allows property owners access to Town services, including municipal police coverage, which has an average emergency response time under two minutes.
- Developers are responsible for infrastructure costs associated with new development.
- Town leadership stated that retail recruitment depends on market metrics such as population, household income, and site availability.
- Several grocery retailers have expressed interest in the community, though large commercial projects often take years to develop.
- Development proposals must meet zoning standards and receive review from Planning and Zoning and the Board of Adjustment.

## **7. Community Events and Activities**

- Smyrna at Night is scheduled for June 20 and will again feature three stages and multiple performers. The event reinvests in the local business community and supports a designated nonprofit each year.
- The Mayor also highlighted the Unity in the Community initiative, which encourages collaboration among local organizations, schools, churches, and civic groups.

## **8. Other**

- The Mayor encouraged residents to attend Council meetings, join committees, and engage directly with Town leadership. Officials emphasized that committee participation and in-person engagement provide opportunities for meaningful involvement in municipal decisions.

## **9. Adjournment**

- The meeting concluded at approximately 6:45 PM.