

What Is The Proposed Cleveland Area Parks And Recreation Tax District?

The proposed new Cleveland Area Parks and Recreation Tax District will be a special Public Authority, authorized by Johnston County Commissioners and the North Carolina General Assembly with the specific purpose of providing parks and recreational opportunities in the Cleveland Community. It will function as an independent special unit of local government similar to a fire district, water district, or airport authority. It will:

- ▶ Be directly accountable to the people it serves
- ▶ Operate with a specific purpose (parks and recreation)
- ▶ Governed by a publicly accountable Board of Directors appointed by the County Commissioners
- ▶ Led by local residents who represent the community

Why Do We Need It?

The Cleveland Community is an unincorporated area of Johnston County that is not an official town or city. Because Johnston County Government does not have a Parks and Recreation department, none of our County property tax is used to buy or develop parks. Incorporated towns, such as Clayton, have assumed the responsibility for buying park land and creating parks and recreational facilities within their city limits. These town parks are funded with a portion of the city taxes they collect. Cleveland currently does not have a source of revenue for this purpose.

The Cleveland Community has a number of baseball, softball, and soccer fields, and a gymnasium, that are owned by Johnston County and leased to the Greater Cleveland Athletic Association (GCAA). The Pop Warner Football Association has no facilities of its own and practices wherever they can find space. The Pop Warner teams play their games at Cleveland High School thanks to the cooperation of the Board of Education. These associations do a great service in the community by planning and organizing youth sports with limited facilities. Parents and other supporters of our youth programs are grateful for the work these associations do, but are painfully aware that the community has outgrown the current space and is in desperate need for additional facilities.

There are no public playgrounds within the Community for young families to enjoy. There are no public-access open spaces, no picnic shelters, no walking or bike trails, no basketball courts, and no organized adult leagues or programs within the Cleveland Community. If approved, the new Parks and Recreation organization can begin addressing these needs.

Proposed New Cleveland “Central Park”

If the new Tax District is approved, the leaders of the new Cleveland Area Parks and Recreation District will have the opportunity to acquire a significant tract of land near the center of the Cleveland Community. An initial “master plan” for this property is shown HERE as an example of the type of open space and recreational facilities that are possible if community voters support the additional tax.



Local Revenue For Local Services

What Will The New Tax District Do?

The proposed new Cleveland Area Parks and Recreation Tax District will be created for the specific purpose of:

- ▶ Acquiring open space in the Cleveland Community
- ▶ Developing community parks for use by community citizens
- ▶ Building family recreational facilities including playgrounds, walking trails, picnic shelters, athletic fields, and eventually a community center
- ▶ Maintaining park and recreational facilities and grounds

What Will Happen To GCAA And Pop Warner?

The GCAA and Pop Warner organizations provide opportunities for thousands of children in the Cleveland Community to participate in organized sports activities. If approved, the new Parks and Recreation Tax District will work closely with and support these organizations by providing additional athletic fields and facilities. GCAA and Pop Warner will continue to provide youth sports programs while the Parks and Recreation organization will focus on acquiring land, building facilities, and providing resources for ongoing maintenance of both new and existing athletic fields.



Who Will Be In The New Tax District?

The new district will encompass citizens and properties within the existing boundaries of the Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department (McLemore Fire District). The population of the District is estimated at 27,000 residents.

How Much Additional Tax Will I Pay?

The suggested tax rate for the new park district is 4 cents per \$100 in property value. If passed, this will result in residents of a home valued at \$200,000 paying an additional \$80 per year in property taxes.

Local Revenue For Local Services

This special park district will rely on local property taxes to fund the purchase of land, build recreational facilities, maintain the facilities, and provide financial stability for the district. 100% of the tax revenues collected will be dedicated to the development and support of parks within the Cleveland Community. This local revenue can also be used to seek matching grants from organizations such as the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, enhancing the funds contributed by local taxpayers, and accelerating the purchase of land and construction of new facilities.

How Will The New District Be Formed?

If community citizens voice their support for the development of the new tax district, the Johnston County Board of Commissioners will likely approve a proposed governance structure for the new District in early 2018. Our County Commissioners will then ask Johnston County's Representatives in the N.C. General Assembly to prepare special legislation which will be considered in the 2018 Session of the N.C. General Assembly. If that legislation is approved, a voter referendum may be added to the November 2018 ballot. Registered voters within the proposed boundaries of the new Tax District will then have the opportunity to cast a vote that will determine if the new district will be formed.

Where Can I Learn More About The New Tax District?

Beginning in early 2018 the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce will organize and host public information meetings to encourage community discussion and address questions from Cleveland citizens about the formation of the new tax district.

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