

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, April 16, 2019, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Conference Room located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Leslie Lazarus – Vice Chairperson  
Connie Barbour  
Robin Cook  
Brandie Davis  
Peggy Scott

Members Absent

Perry Harris  
Jeremy Pearce  
Councilman David Steven

Staff Present

Michael Scott – Town Manager  
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Lawrence Davis, Public Works Superintendent

**Call to Order**

Vice Chairperson Leslie Lazarus called the meeting to order at 5:07 pm.

**Invocation**

Vice Chairperson Leslie Lazarus offered the invocation.

**Welcome New Members Robin Cook and Brandie Davis**

Vice Chairperson Leslie Lazarus welcomed new members Robin Cook and Brandie Davis to the Appearance Commission.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2019 and March 19, 2019**

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Robin Cook, to approve the February and March minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

**Financial Report**

**Appearance Commission General Fund Balance – \$17,060.00**

**Donate-A-Tree Account Balance – \$1,010.99**

**J. B. George Fund Balance – \$956.00**

**J.P. George Fund Balance – \$552.66**

**Other Business:**

Town Manager Michael Scott introduced himself to the members of the Appearance Commission. He explained he was acutely aware of the Appearance Commission's projects. Mr. Scott explained that unlike other Town advisory boards, the Appearance Commission's authority was designated in the Town's Code of Ordinances. Mr. Scott further explained the Appearance Commission's funding was included in each fiscal year and was accounted for in the Public Works Department Budget. Mr. Scott stated he was aware the Town could do a better job of carrying out the desires of the Commission and he intended to rectify the situation.

Mr. Scott explained with limited staff, some projects could not be completed right away, but improvements needed to be made. Included in the proposed budget was an extra \$4,000 for temporary labor to assist with some of the Appearance Commission's project in the event Public Works staff were

unable to complete the projects. After July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Town would try to do better in assisting the Appearance Commission.

Another issue the Public Works Department has been trying to rectify is the removal of the tree stumps. The gentlemen recommended by Perry Harris didn't meet all the criteria needed by the Town. Staff has worked with him to complete everything necessary to allow the Town to use his service. All of that should be completed by the end of April.

Mr. Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission he understood their frustration that things were not getting completed as they should and he had no excuse for it. He asked the Commission to create a list of items that needed to be completed by the Public Works Department. These would be items the Appearance Commission voted on and approved. This list should be included in every agenda, reviewed every month and included in the minutes. After every meeting, the Clerk will provide the list to the Town Manager for review.

Robin Cook questioned if there was a document stating what Public Works does and what the Appearance Commission does. Mr. Scott responded the goals of the Appearance Commission are outlined in the Town's Ordinance, but there was not a document that outlined the role of the Public Works Department. The Appearance Commission acts on its own advice and the Commission decides their projects and how to spend the budgeted funds, but all projects should be for beautification of the Town. Mr. Scott stated that in his opinion, the Appearance Commission should not be paying for sidewalk repairs. Regular sidewalk repairs should be the responsibility of the Public Works Department. It would be acceptable if the Appearance Commission wanted to pay the difference for stamped and colored concrete in an area because that would be above and beyond normal sidewalk maintenance. Mr. Scott explained he would like the Appearance Commission to focus on making our community a better place esthetically for all of the citizens and our visitors. He preferred the Appearance Commission focus on beautification projects.

Robin Cook questioned how a citizen would report damaged sidewalk to the Town. Mr. Scott responded anyone could contact him, the Public Works Department or the Town Clerk.

Brandie Davis questioned if anyone had addressed installing speed bumps on Lee Street. Mr. Scott responded the issue hadn't been brought to his attention.

Vice President Leslie Lazarus questioned if the mulch could be refreshed twice a year instead of once a year. Mr. Scott responded extra funds have been included in the budget to refresh the mulch twice a year.

## **DSDC Report**

Jeremy Pearce provided an update to the Appearance Commission via email on the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation's monthly meeting. Topics of discussion were as follows:

1. The DSDC is working to get some local tax credits and potential grants to attract new businesses to downtown
2. The Ava Gardner Museum is holding a festival on May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 1<sup>st</sup> to unveil an new exhibit
3. Ham & Yam is May 4<sup>th</sup>
4. There are 3 Rhythm & Brews concerts downtown this summer – June 21, July 19 and Aug 16
5. The Smithfield Independence Celebration is June 30<sup>th</sup>
6. The Community Garden on 5<sup>th</sup> st has been reinstated and looks to provide fresh local produce

## **Election of New Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson**

### **Chairperson**

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Connie Barbour, to nominate and appoint Leslie Lazarus to serve as the Appearance Commission Chairperson. Unanimously approved.

### **Vice Chair-Person**

Connie Barbour made a motion, seconded by Brandie Davis, to nominate and appoint Peggy Scott to serve as the Appearance Commission Vice Chairperson. Unanimously approved.

## **Wayfinding**

Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott explained the project to the new members. She explained the Appearance Commission approved using some of its funds for the plantings around all the large gateway signs which will be installed at the 4 entrances to Town. Each sign will have three large Nellie Stevens hollies, hydrangea on the sides and vintage jade in the front. Estimated cost for the plantings was \$1200 per location.

## **Projects**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus reviewed the approved projects that needed to be completed.

- **Stump removal** – The Town Manager provided an update on this project.
  - Town Hall Park & Parking Lot: Grind stumps and plant 3 trees
- **Concrete –Update on concrete from Public Works** – Due to the absence of Public Works Staff this item was not discussed.
  - 3 places: 2 places at “sodosopa” Ruffin Johnson Ins.
- **Tree types-** Update if trees are ordered from Public Works – Due to the absence of Public Works Staff an update could not be provided.

Voted and approved at a previous meeting to plant the following:

- 3 Front street: Chinese Elm Trees
- 6 Johnston street: Prunus Serrulata (Kanzan Cherry)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Street: Acer x Freemanii (Autumn Blaze Maple)

Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott explained this project to the new members. Mrs. Scott stated that a few years ago, Public Works staff informed the Appearance Commission there were several streets in Town that needed beautifying. The Appearance Commission agreed to beautify Johnston Street first since so many of the Dogwood Trees had perished. She and other members of the Appearance Commission walked Johnston Street and marked all the dead trees that needed to be removed. After several votes on which trees to plant, it was agreed that 3 Chinese Elm trees would be planted on Front Street, 6 Kanzan Cherry trees would be planted on Johnston Street and 3 Autumn Blaze Maple trees would be planted on South Second Street. However, there were still some concerns about the Kanzan Cherry trees being

planted on Johnston Street because of the debris created when they lose their flowers. Mrs. Scott suggested the Appearance Commission go back to the original idea of planting Chalk Bark Maples on Johnston Street instead of the Kanzan Cherry trees.

Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Brandie Davis, to plant the following trees in the following locations:

3 Chinese Elm trees on Front Street

3 Autumn Blaze Maple trees on South Second Street

6 Chalk Bark Maple trees on Johnston street

Unanimously approved.

Mrs. Scott also questioned if trees should be planted on North Third Street near the Heritage Center. She explained those trees were removed and the Appearance Commission had first thought it best to remove the tree stumps and install concrete in the area. No decision was made on the North Third Street trees.

- Donate A Tree in Honor of Anita Liverman

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that former Appearance Commission member, Anita Liverman, would be honored at the May 7<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting. She encouraged the Commission to attend the meeting. She asked the Commission to consider donating a tree in honor of Mrs. Liverman. It was suggested that someone from the Commission inquire about Mrs. Liverman's favorite type of tree.

Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Connie Barbour, to donate a tree in honor of Anita Liverman's service on the Appearance Commission. Unanimously approved.

- New Brochure for the Donate a Tree Project

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that this project still needed to be completed. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott explained that Commission decided to change the scope of the Donate-A-Tree project because of the cost of trees and the abundance of Crepe Myrtle trees. She explained the donation amount had increased from \$50.00 to \$100.00. She further explained that Anita Liverman did a lot of research on acceptable trees and she consulted an arborists which confirmed the Town had too many Crepe Myrtle trees. One of the issues pointed out by the arborist was if one type of tree became infected with a disease, they would all be susceptible to the same disease. The Commission previously decided it would choose a type of tree for a specific location instead of planting Crepe Myrtle trees.

- Donate A Tree- Ordering name plates for the plaque

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus explained the current plaque would be completed with the additional name plates that needed to be ordered. She stated she had been investigating other plaque companies and is waiting for additional information. At a previous meeting, the Appearance Commission discussed investigating other plaque companies due to the increased cost of the current plaque design. Also, Mrs. Lazarus explained the new plaque could be placed anywhere in Town, but that would be something the Commission could decide at a later date.

## New Business

- **Community Garden - Update from Brandie**

Requesting Funds for Fertilizer (5lbs Plant Magic Plant Food 100% Organic Fertilizer \$149),( ECOM Garden Organic Fertilizer 1QT \$29.99),( EarthPods Best Herb & Vegetable Plant Food - Easy Organic Fertilizer Spikes -100 Capsules \$29.99), and New Sign: See if sign can be made in a similar style to other park signs. Use JB George funds for those items. Also Requesting funds for GREEN MOUNT Watering Wand \$23 and Dewitt Black 4-Foot by 100-Foot Weed Barrier Fabric \$38.65 need to double check these can be covered by JB George Fund

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that Brandie Davis had made a request for funding for the Community Garden. While some of these items could be paid for with JB George Endowment Funds, Ms. Davis would have to complete an application requesting those funds to be disbursed after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Davis responded she was unable to wait until July 1<sup>st</sup> for the materials needed. Ms. Davis explained that in addition to the fertilizers, watering wand and 100 ft. weed barrier fabric; she needed an additional 100 ft. of weed barrier, 3 yards of mulch, 3 yard of compost and 5 yards of gravel. The gravel was requested to assist with the standing water issue. Ms. Davis explained some of the donations she received for the community garden. Estimated total for all requested materials was \$724.80

Connie Barbour made a motion, second by Robin Cook, to approve \$800.00 for all the requested Community Garden materials. Unanimously approved.

- **Plan of Action for Next Year-** Submit Budget for next year's projects to Town Manager

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she and Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott would meet with the Town Manager concerning the Appearance Commission's budget request.

- **Boat Ramp:** Supplement plantings for the area, possible benches  
Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott explained the plan for the boat ramp to the new members. She believed a shelter, picnic tables and flag pole were included in the proposed budget.
- **Neuse Little Theatre:** Maintenance, mulching, and replanting
- **Miracle Park:** Needs replanting a lot of the plants died from being stepped on need to pick larger shrubs or trees
- **Ironwork downtown:** Needs painting
- **Dog Park:** Gary Johnson Requested 2 covered Benches estimated cost \$8000  
Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson was requesting funding for two covered benches at the Dog Park. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott stated the Appearance Commission agreed to donate two benches when they agreed to donate the trees, but she did not believe the Appearance Commission paid for those

benches. Mrs. Lazarus stated Mr. Johnson included the covered benches in his proposed budget, but if they were removed from the budget, he would be seeking funding from the Appearance Commission

○ **Town Hall Park Updates:** new plantings and/or a possible fountain.

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission she had been investigating types of fountains for the Town Hall Park. She found one that was 104" in diameter, 86" in height and 3,429 lbs. at a cost of \$8,859.99. The cost did not include shipping or installation. It was suggested that the Appearance Commission meet with a local vendor to determine if they could order the same type of fountain.

○ **Other Ideas**

Other ideas included more public art and additional improvements to the Sarah yard Community Center.

## **Adjournment**

Being no further business, Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Brandie Davis, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannan L. Parrish  
Town Clerk