

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, November 16, 2021, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Stuart Lee – Chairperson
Tim Depp
Julia Narron
Mary Foy Ragsdale
Peggy Scott

Members Absent

Councilman David Steven
Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson
Connie Barbour

Staff Present

Joey Price – Public Works Crew Leader
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Call to Order

Chairperson Stuart Lee called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm

Invocation

Peggy Scott offered the invocation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – October 19, 2021

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Tim Depp, to approve the minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Chairperson Stuart Lee reviewed the balances of the following accounts:

Appearance Commission General Fund: \$38,642
J B George Fund: \$3,763.06
J P George Fund: \$435.81

Agenda Items

Outreach New Members

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish informed the members of the Appearance Commission she contacted the Council to assist with board recruitment efforts. Staff has updated the board appointment form on the Town website thus making the application process easier for those wishing to volunteer. Staff also has a social media recruitment campaign that will begin this week and continue into next week.

Chairperson Stuart Lee questioned if there was an age requirement for serving on Town Board. The Town Clerk replied she was unsure of an age requirement, but would investigate it.

Update Website

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the Appearance Commission's webpage needed to be update. The current photo should be removed and a new one taken.

Art Walk Letter to Town Building Owners Updates

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that a meeting was held at Town Hall to discuss the art walk concept with property owners. At that meeting, property owner, Abe Wellons, offered the use of any of his/ his father's buildings in the downtown area for a mural. He specifically offered the old Rose's Building on the corner of Market and 4th Streets. Mr. Wellons did not want the board/committee to constrain an artist's ability to be really creative. Chairman Lee stated the main focus for knowing the context of the mural was to ensure the art was not offensive, political or racist. The art should be something Instagrammable and brings attention.

Tim Depp stated if the artist was vetted properly, the board/ committee would know what the artist will paint.

Chairperson Lee also mentioned the building on Market and Second Street and Mr. Wellons stated his father was in favor of allowing that building to also be used for a mural.

Chairman Lee was informed by DSDC Executive Director Sarah Edwards that the building owner of the old Big Mike's Bail Bonds (South Third Street near the courthouse entrance) may be willing to allow a mural to be painted on the side of that building. Another potential area would be the Guardian Ad Litem program building on Market Street adjacent to the courthouse.

Immediate Art Walk Projects or Other Areas to Start

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated the next step in the process would determining how to solicit artists, developing a proposal, and then working with the Town to draft a contract between the Town, artist and building owner.

Julia Narron suggested someone speak with the Johnston County Arts Council since they already have a network of artists and they may have contact information for various artists willing to do a mural project.

Tim Depp made a motion, seconded by Mary Foy Ragsdale, to begin the art walk project with the Wellons Building (old Roses Building) on the corner of Market and Fourth Street in downtown. Unanimously approved.

Curbside Planters

Tim Depp informed the members of the Appearance Commission that in Fuquay Varina in the downtown Fuquay area, they have large 40-inch concrete planters on the sidewalks near the curbs. The Town has a contract with a landscape company that maintains all the planters. He stated the planters are beautiful and add a lot of color to the area. The planters are situated between the street trees. Mr. Depp stated that while Smithfield may not have the funds to hire a landscape contractor to maintain planters, the Town of Zebulon's Women's Club maintains their downtown planters. There was some concern about the planters being installed on Market Street since cars park on the curb.

Julia Narron stated the planters could be installed on Third Street because parking on the curb was not an issue.

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated he would contact the Town of Fuquay Varina to get information about its downtown planter program. Tim Depp volunteered to investigate the cost of the planter.

Julia Narron questioned if there was any resolution with the issues the Town was having with its landscape contractor. Mr. Depp responded it was his understanding that staff was monitoring the services performed by Lane Landscaping. Joey Price informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he was tasked with monitoring work performed by Land Landscaping. Mrs. Narron responded the Town should not have to supervise the work being performed by a contractor.

It was suggested that the Appearance Commission draft a formal letter to the members of the Town Council voicing their concerns about the work being performed by Lane Landscaping. Chairperson Stuart Lee will email the members of the Appearance Commission to get their input for the letter to the Council. After receiving Commission members' input, he will draft the letter. Once drafted, it will be sent to Commission members for approval

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the development of the upcoming budget begins in January. Any requests or concerns from the Appearance Commission should be submitted to the Town Manager in January.

Mural Under Bridge on Greenway

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she reached out to the local Girl Scout Troop concerning the greenway mural. Her email was forwarded to the Girl Scout leader of the Troop that originally completed the mural. No response was received. Chairman Lee will discuss these developments with DSDC Executive Director Sarah Edwards since she brought it to the attention of the Appearance Commission.

Update tree plantings

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission that prior to the meeting, Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed them that five trees have been installed and the additional ten trees will be delivered tomorrow morning.

Joey Price informed the members of the Appearance Commission that during the installation of the trees, staff is also unearthing some of the uplighting that has been hidden.

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated the trees costs \$3,000 and the mulch cost approximately \$300. Funds for this project will come from the JB George Funds.

It was suggested that monies from the JP George Fund be used first for this project since that endowment specified its use for the purchase of street streets. Chairperson Lee stated funds will be used from the JP George Fund and JB George Fund before using funds from the Appearance Commission's general fund.

Update on Greenway bid for Boat Ramp Landscaping

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission the bid for the landscaping project was approved by the Council at its November meeting. The bid was approved in the amount of \$22,083. Peggy Scott stated the cost did not include the purchase of the rocks. Tim Depp responded he met with Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson about the project. Mr. Depp will obtain estimates for the large rocks needed for the project. The cost of the boulders should not exceed \$10,000.

Mr. Depp informed the members of the Appearance Commission that during his discussion with Mr. Johnson about the boat ramp, it was decided that the section of hill between the parking lot and the greenway would not be mulched. With the slope of the hill being as it is, the mulch would wash onto the greenway during every rain event. Instead, pine straw will be used because it doesn't wash away as badly. However, pine straw is slippery when wet which creates a liability issue. Mr. Depp and Mr. Johnson discussed obtaining funding for a fence to be installed along the backside of the parking spaces. The fence would eliminate people walking through and damaging the plantings. Near the middle of the project, instead of installing three large boulders, Mr. Depp suggested installing three step tread boulders to make a natural staircase with handrails on the rock steps. The fencing from the parking spaces would tie into the rock steps. Mr. Depp and Mr. Johnson also discussed replacing the chicken wire fence on the greenway to match the fencing at the parking spaces.

Julia Narron questioned the type of fencing. Mr. Depp responded the fencing is would be black vinyl chain link fence. This type of fencing was already installed in other areas of the boat ramp.

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated that with the cost of the landscaping contract, the boulders and possibly the fencing; there may not be funds to begin the art walk project.

Chairperson Lee questioned when the landscaping project would be complete. Mr. Depp responded that Parks and Recreation staff was going to remove the existing vegetation withing the next 30 days. He estimated the project would take 10 days to complete once the existing vegetation was removed and dependent on the weather.

Chairperson Lee stated he would like the old section of bridge near the greenway cleaned up. Mr. Depp responded his plan for that included cleaning it up, sterilizing the ground around it and then plant wild flowers from it to the existing bridge. Mrs. Narron asked if cleaning the bridge was something that could be done while Mr. Depp and his crews were doing the boat ramp landscaping. Mr. Depp responded the issue would be how he would be compensated for doing the work. He could donate his services, but he was already donating his services to the Town by cleaning up the Town Hall Park. Since Santa's workshop will be in Town Hall this year, Mr. Depp really wanted to make sure the park looked nice.

Adjournment

Being no further business, Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Peggy Scott, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk