

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Kaitlyn Tarley – Chairperson
Emery Ashley, Jr. – Vice Chairperson
Michelle Choe
Sharon Lynch

Members Absent

Robin Cook
Carmen Zepp
Elizabeth Baker

Staff Present

Lawrence Davis – Public Works Director
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Call to Order

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm

Invocation

Michelle Choe offered the invocation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2023 and May 16, 2023

Michelle Choe made a motion, seconded by Sharon Lynch, to approve the April 18, 2023 minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

Michelle Choe made a motion, seconded by Sharon Lynch, to approve the May 16, 2023 minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Appearance Commission General Fund: \$ 19,161.06

Donate-A-Tree: \$ 1,017.99

JB George Fund: \$ 170.87

JP George Fund: \$ 566.52

Agenda Items

Updates

Plantings Around I-95 Signage

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he contacted Clayton Narron, but Mr. Narron is out of Town until the 25th. Mr. Davis will follow up with him when Mr. Narron returns from vacation.

Letter from the Trial-and-Error Garden Club

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the Trial-and-Error Garden Club submitted a letter on some items that may be of interest to the Commission.

Mary Nell Ferguson, President of the Trial-and-Error Garden Club, explained that the Garden Club gives a \$25 gift card to Lowes for all of its speakers. She thought it would be a good idea for the club to use those funds to purchase a tree, but the club cannot spend \$100 for each speaker. It was suggested that the Appearance Commission might want to consider accepting smaller donations.

Also, there are historical markers in Smithfield that are damaged. One such sign is located in front of the Bingham House next to the Fire Station. These signs should be checked for accuracy and then replaced. Since the Bingham House has been renovated, it was no longer considered a historic house and that sign should be removed. Also, some of the historical signs have references to minorities that was considered offensive. Those signs should be replaced with more inclusive and appropriate wording.

{Attached hereto and made a part of these official minutes is the Letter submitted by the Trial-and-Error Garden Club}

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley explained that the Appearance Commission had been discussing how the Donate-A-Tree Project could be revamped to include lesser donations. The current process for the Donate-A-Tree Program was that once a donation is received, the Town Clerk sends a thank you to card to the donor. This card was designed by previous members of the Appearance Commission. If a tree was donated in honor or memory of someone, the Town Clerk sends a handwritten card to the recipient.

All donations to the Donate-A-Tree Program are accounted for in that budget line item. If a lesser amount was donated, the Appearance Commission could have a monthly accounting of those funds.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. stated it would be beneficial to the Appearance Commission to explore the tiered donations options for the program.

Michelle Choe stated that if the program is changed then the brochures would need to be updated.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. suggested that the members of the Appearance Commission and members of the Town Council could sign the donation thank you cards.

It was suggested that the Appearance Commission meet with the Finance Director to determine the best way to structure the tiered donations since ultimately the Finance Department would be responsible for collecting the funds.

College Pond Trail Additions

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the waste receptacles have been installed and the benches have been received. They are awaiting the shade structures. The benches and shade structures will be installed simultaneously.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley suggested collaborating with the Community College for projects around the pond and trail. These could be plantings, maintenance, art work, and/or educational material.

Updates/Action Items

Polo Shirts for the Appearance Commission Members

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley asked for everyone's shirt size so the order can be placed. She also would like another photo taken of the Appearance Commission for the webpage.

Downtown Planters

Sharon Lynch suggested the Commission contact the Downtown Development Corporation concerning the placement of the planters in the downtown district.

Adjourn

Having no further business, Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. made a motion, seconded by Michelle Choe to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk

June 14, 2023.

Dear Emory Ashley Jr.,

Allison Elsee and I are planning to attend next Tuesday's Appearance Commission. We would like for you to know of two items that may involve the Commission.

1. At your last meeting there was discussion about the Plant a Tree effort. I wish there was a way to donate a smaller amount such as \$25.00 as both a memorial and/or an honorarium. As you know we give our Garden Club Speakers a \$25.00 gift certificate to Lowe's as a thank you. I think it would be great to give that amount in honor of our speakers and support the beautification of Smithfield.
2. Please see the pictures below. One is near the fire station and the other in front of the Bingham house. These wooden signs have been wonderful for a long time, but they need to be replaced, probably all over town. This may be a job for the Historic Properties Commission, but if I were a visitor, it does not look like we are keeping up with repairs. Here are my suggestions:
 - All signs need to be assessed for accuracy and correctness of words used. Example: According to Todd Johnson, the Bingham house is no longer historic – at least on the outside and sign simply needs to be removed. Again according to Todd, the Charlie Hodge sign still needs to honor this person in our history, but in my opinion the word negro needs to be changed to today's standard of use. There may be other signs around with the word negro.
 - The signs should be of metal and should be placed on the dwelling when possible. I am sure mowing around the signs is extra work.



Thank you for letting us have an input into our town we are so proud of. If there is anything Allison and I can do to help with either suggestion, let us know.

Mary Nell Ferguson *Mary Nell*
President of the Trial and Error Garden Club of Smithfield
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