

SMITHFIELD APPEARANCE COMMISSION

Minutes

Tuesday, April 18, 2006

- I. Call to Order – Co-Chairman Ragland called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 18, 2006 in the conference of the Smithfield Municipal Building. Members present: Kay Long; Ann Ragland; Regina Sanders; Wallace Ashley, Jr.; Phillip Starr; Bettie Robinson; Harold Tharrington; and Joe Morgan
Staff present: Code Enforcement Officer Mike McKinney
Members absent:
Invocation – Co-Chairman Ragland opened the meeting with prayer

- II. Introduction of New Member, Mr. Harold Tharrington – Co-Chairman Ragland welcomed former Town Councilman Tharrington as the newest member of the Commission. Mr. Tharrington noted that during his ten years of service on Town Council, he was particularly interested in the appearance related matters of the Town. He welcomed an opportunity to continue his service.

It was noted that there remains one vacancy on the Commission.

- III. Approval of Agenda – On motion of Mr. Morgan, seconded by Ms. Robinson and duly carried, the agenda was approved with the additions of a report on the status of removing land-clearing debris from the George C. McLamb property on Brodgen Road and a presentation by Public Works Director Marty Anderson.
- IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes, March 21, 2006 – On motion of Ashley, seconded by Starr, the minutes were approved as presented.

Mr. Ashley noted he was not able to continue with the position of recording secretary. Mr. Starr agreed to serve as recording secretary. Mr. Morgan agreed to send some notes after each meeting by e-mail to Mr. Starr. Mr. Starr will coordinate the submittal to Mr. McKinney after review by the co-chairmen. Mr. McKinney will arrange for draft minutes will be available to the public and accepted for permanent recording following the next subsequent meeting.

V. Financial Report

- 1). Appearance Commission Budget in Public Works – Mr. McKinney noted the current unexpended balance remains at \$4,665.
- 2). J. B. George Fund – Mr. McKinney and Mr. Morgan noted there should be about \$3,500 available for the approved projects in the current fiscal year.
- 3). Details of Fiscal Year 2004-05 Expense – A report on the past year expense was reviewed by the Commission. The report was included in a submission to the North Carolina Arts Council Creating Place Grant application supplemental material.
- 4). Budget Statement – The current year budget and a proposal for the upcoming year

budget was reviewed by the Commission.

VI. Old Business

- 1). Tree Ordinance, "Public Trees" – Co-Chairman Ragland reported the adoption by Town Council on April 3, 2006 of the new ordinance amendment to establish the regulation of public trees. Co-Chairman Long recommended a coordinating committee for review of tree removal requests under the new ordinance. The committee could also initiate planning for further implementation of the public tree regulations. The committee appointed is composed of: Regina Sanders, Kay Long and Bettie Robinson.
- 2). Plan of Work Review, 2005-2006 – Review was made of the current status of the annual plan of work.
- 3). Annual Report – The report was submitted to the Town Manager and Town Council prior to April 15 as noted in the March 21, 2006 Commission minutes. A copy of the report, along with all attachments, is listed at the end of these minutes.
- 4). Approved Projects for J. B. George Fund, 2006 – Referral of the projects, as approved at the March 21 Commission meeting, to the appropriate Town department for implementation is the next step. Mr. Morgan will coordinate the referral. Publicity on completed projects was encouraged.
- 5). George C. McLamb Property Land Clearing Debris Removal Status – Mr. Morgan reported the presence of a continuing disagreement regarding Town participation in the cost of debris removal. However, it was the consensus of the Commission that the matter has received thorough review. Any further consideration of Mr. McLamb's request will require review at a level of authority higher than the Commission.

VII. New Business

- 1). Proposed Work Plan, 2006-2007 – The final format of the Plan of Work was presented. The Plan of Work has been submitted to the City Manager and Town Council. A copy is also recorded in the attachments to these minutes.
- 2). SUP-06-07, Ricky Brady – Mr. McKinney explained the request. He noted a Special Use Permit is needed due to the proposed outdoor sales, display and storage. A site plan on the proposed storage is still to be submitted. On motion of Mr. Tharrington, seconded by Ms. Sanders, and duly carried, the request was endorsed with the requirements proposed by Town Planning Department staff, with emphasis on requiring installation of commercial street yard landscaping in compliance with current town standards for new construction, and with no more than one rental truck to be parked in front of the line established by the front of the building, parallel with U.S. 70.
- 3). SUP-06-08, Marcelo Payamps - Mr. McKinney explained the request. He noted a Special Use Permit is needed due to the proposed public or private club providing live entertainment for a fee. On motion of Mr. Morgan, seconded by Ms. Robinson, and duly carried, the request was endorsed, with the recommendations of the Town Planning Department Staff. It was noted the property currently complies with the commercial street yard landscaping requirement. It was also noted the vehicular service area will require additional screening landscaping.

4) Presentation by Public Works Director Marty Anderson –

Near the beginning of the meeting, Co-Chairman Long introduced Mr. Anderson. Mr. Anderson explained the duties of the Public Works Department, noting its service to Smithfield citizens through five divisions: Appearance; Drainage; Street; Equipment Services; and Sanitation.

There are thirty-two employees in the Department. A key staff member with responsibilities closely related to maintaining and improving the Town's appearance is Mr. Lenny Branch, supervising the Appearance and Drainage divisions. Seven of the eleven employees under Mr. Branch's supervision have direct appearance responsibilities. The Appearance Division maintains the sidewalk areas, Town entrance signs, and the Town Hall Garden. The Town parks are maintained by the Recreation Department.

A matter needing attention is updating the Market Street West entrance welcome sign. The sign needs its civic organizations' medallion replaced and / or upgraded. Mr. Anderson requested the assistance of the Appearance Commission members in obtaining new medallions from the current civic organization represented on the welcome sign.

Advised of plan of work items, with note on entryway programs; holiday decorations, use of George funds

The committee offered to provide input to the Public Works Department on Holiday decorations, seasonal decorations and everyday banners displayed on Town utility poles and other public venues. Mr. Anderson welcomed such input, given sufficient advance notice. Input in the summer months would be timely. Decorations are purchased in cycles, usually no more frequent than two-year intervals.

The practicality of maintenance of any new appearance related projects in the future was discussed. In particular, attention to future maintenance was encouraged when the Commission approves J. B. George Fund projects.

The impact of the new tree regulations on the Public Works Department was discussed. It was noted there would need to be sufficient time allowed to implement a working referral schedule for tree removal, as well as input in the eventual street tree plan and approved tree species list.

Ms. Robinson mentioned drainage concerns in the vicinity of Fourth Street, near Bridge and Caswell Streets. She also mentioned sidewalk continuity and maintenance. Mr. Anderson noted the challenge of maintaining the existing sidewalks, as well as the difficulty extending sidewalks. He noted the sidewalk assessment procedure, where neighborhoods want to pursue sidewalk installation. He noted the average \$150,000 annual street resurfacing budget, which significantly less than required to address the ongoing pavement maintenance needs. Much of cost experienced with resurfacing is the need to mill out excess pavement, which adds dramatically to the resurfacing cost. As a rule of thumb, the cost of milling adds \$3 per square yard to a paving project. Sidewalks are being addressed by a new sidewalk survey through the NC Department of Transportation. The survey is a prerequisite to a sidewalk capital improvement program. Sidewalk repair costs \$30,000 per year. The Appearance Division marks sidewalks prior to repair.

The NC Department of Transportation provides some funding for pavement maintenance, but the funding is significantly short of the amount needed to adequately address the need.

Mr. Anderson welcomed comments from the Commission members. He may be contacted at: Guy M. Anderson, P. E., Public Works Director, 230 Hospital Road, P. O. Box 761, Smithfield, NC 27577, 919/934-2545 office, 919/255-8779 mobile, 919/934-1688 fax, 150*20370*15 Nextel, marty.anderson@ci.smithfield.nc.us

VIII. Adjournment – There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission
Annual Report – 2005-2006

The 2005-2006 year focused on planning and organization for the Smithfield Appearance Commission. Details of the Commission activities are included in its monthly meeting minutes. Those minutes are available on the Town website at <http://www.smithfield-nc.com/minutes/minutes.html>

The main emphasis for the year was adoption of an ordinance by the Smithfield Town Council to provide structure and oversight for the Commission activities. The Town Council adopted the final ordinance on September 6, 2005. It provides for an Annual Plan of Work to be prepared by the Commission and submitted for approval by the Town Council prior to April 15 of each year. In future years the submission of the Annual Plan of Work is envisioned to coincide with the annual Town budget preparation, so that the resources to implement the Plan of Work will be available at the beginning of each Town fiscal year on July 1.

Progress on the 2005-06 Appearance Commission Plan of Work is detailed in the **attached** status report.

Also during the year, the Commission reviewed numerous Special Use Permit applications for appearance related impact, reported apparent violation of appearance related regulations and codes to Town Staff for compliance review, and continued to encourage the NC Department of Transportation and CSX Corporation to attend to the declining appearance of the railroad underpass on East Market Street.

A significant resource for the Town of Smithfield overall appearance is the Josephine B. George Beautification Fund. As of March 1, the balance in the Josephine B. George Fund was \$89,157. Of that amount, \$1,686.81 was interest earned in 2005-06 and available for use. An additional interest payment is expected by June 2006, for an estimated available amount in 2005-06 of \$3,500. **Attached** are the approved projects for funding from the George Fund for 2006.

Attached is the proposed 2006-2007 Appearance Commission Plan of Work.

2005-2006 TOWN OF SMITHFIELD APPEARANCE COMMISSION PLAN OF
WORK
as of April 15, 2006

CURRENT STATUS IS LISTED IN ITALICIZED ALL CAPS

The Following Lists Plan Of Work Components For Each Of The Points In The Appearance Commission Mission:

- Fostering neighborhood pride:
 - Assist neighborhood groups, churches and civic clubs desiring to hold clean-up and appearance related activities, by coordinating use of Town forces and

equipment, as well as public announcements of such events.

ALL COMMISSION MEMBERS AND TOWN STAFF ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP WITH CLEAN UP ARRANGEMENTS.

- Encourage neighborhood, church and community groups to apply for funding from the Josephine B. George Beautification Fund for neighborhood projects.

THE GEORGE FUND AGREEMENT WAS UPDATED BY TOWN COUNCIL IN DECEMBER AND NEW PROJECTS WERE FUNDED BY THE COMMISSION IN APRIL.

- Promoting and disseminating “best management practices”; that are good examples of enhancing community appearance for residential, commercial and public sites:
 - Focus on the Entryway Beautification Program as the primary means in 2005-06 to set good examples.

AN ENTRYWAY COMMITTEE (COMPOSED OF WALLACE ASHLEY, BETTIE ROBINSON, WALLACE ASHLEY AND JOE MORGAN) WAS ESTABLISHED AND IS DEVELOPING PILOT PLANS FOR THE BROGDEN ROAD ENTRANCE.

- Encourage use of Crepe Myrtle tree planting in all new commercial and recreational landscaping.

TOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED TO PROMOTE WIDESPREAD USE OF CREPE MYRTLES.

- Coordinate a “how to literature” search emphasis in cooperation with the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield and the North Carolina Extension Service.

THE NEW LIBRARY WEB PAGE ALLOWS ONLINE ACCESS TO BEAUTIFICATION TECHNIQUES, PARTICULARLY LANDSCAPING.

- Acknowledging achievement and excellence of citizens in fulfilling the purposes of the Appearance Commission:
 - Partner with the Greater Smithfield – Selma Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation in recognizing excellence in property appearance.

A COMMISSION LIAISON MEETS REGULARLY WITH THE CHAMBER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND COORDINATES RECOGNITION FOR CHAMBER MEMBER PROPERTIES.

- Sponsor an appearance recognition celebration, possibly in cooperation with the Johnston County Heritage Center, with invitation to all the current and past volunteers and officials that have contributed to the ongoing beautification efforts within Smithfield.

CO-CHAIRMEN LONG AND RAGLAND ARE PLANNING A CELEBRATION EVENT FOR SUMMER 2006.

- Showcasing natural and architectural beauty:
 - Participate in planning for recognizing and preserving historical structures, as is currently under consideration in the proposed Historical Properties Ordinance.

CO-CHAIRMAN LONG IS COORDINATING RECOGNITION WITH DOWNTOWN SMITHFIELD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

- Submit an application to the Creating Place Grant Program of the North

Carolina Arts Council, for a planning grant to support implementation of the Commission Plan of Work for both 2005-06 and 2006-07.

THE SUBMITTED APPLICATION WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR AWARD TO BE ANNOUNCED IN SUMMER 2006.

- Encouraging appealing: community entrances; seasonal or holiday decorations; and signage:

- Implement Entryway Beautification Program, focusing on Brogden Road as the first emphasis area for the program.

THE ENTRYWAY COMMITTEE IS FOCUSING FIRST ON BROGDEN ROAD.

- Request input in the planning of seasonal decorations displayed on Town streetscapes.

CO-CHAIRMEN LONG AND RAGLAND TO INVITE PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR MARTY ANDERSON TO REVIEW DECORATION PLANS

- Request authority to plan for erection of Town welcome signage at those entryways lacking such signage, focusing on use of existing publicly owed property for potential welcome sign sites.

THE ENTRYWAY COMMITTEE HAS PHOTOGRAPHED ALL TOWN ENTRANCES AND IS REVIEWING POTENTIAL WELCOME SIGN LOCATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

- Encouraging well planned, coordinated tree planting, preservation and maintenance throughout the Town:

- Promote use of Crepe Myrtle planting, to the greatest extent feasible, in all new landscaping within the Town zoning limits, toward the end of Crepe Myrtle becoming the official “Town Tree”.

TOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED TO PROMOTE WIDESPREAD USE OF CREPE MYRTLES.

- Request authority to develop, implement, and annually update a written plan for the care, preservation, growth, planting, protection, and removal of trees within street rights-of-way, public parks, and other municipal properties. Upon acceptance and approval by the Town Council, the plan shall constitute the official tree plan for the Town of Smithfield.

ON APRIL 4, TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTED AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A PUBLIC TREE CARE REGULATION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMISSION.

- Reviewing and advising the Town Council, or the Town Department designated by the Council, as to the appearance of publicly owned or maintained property and spaces:

- Request involvement in the landscaping and appearance related construction related to:
 - The new Spring Branch artificial wetlands;
 - Town Commons to Community Park trail along Buffalo Creek;
 - The proposed Smithfield to Wake County greenway; and
 - The new entry highway crossing of the Neuse River connecting U. S. 70 East with Booker Dairy Road.

CO-CHAIRMAN LONG AND RAGLAND ARE TO INVITE RECREATION

DIRECTOR JOHNSON AND PLANNING DIRECTOR EMBLER TO BRIEF COMMISSION ON STATUS. DOWNTOWN SMITHFIELD DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR JOHNSON PRESENTED AN UPDATE TO THE COMMISSION

- Reviewing and advising the Planning Department as to compliance with the Town's ordinances regarding sanitation, public works, housing, and other regulations affecting the community appearance:
 - Continue to hold monthly review of Special Use Permits and other appearance related review requests from the Town Management and Staff.

THE COMMISSION REVIEWED NUMEROUS PERMITS AS REFERRED BY TOWN STAFF.

- Discouraging littering and blight:
 - Partner with Keep Johnston County Beautiful in public education and clean-up efforts.

FOLLOW UP ON PARTNERING IS NEEDED.

- Submit requests to Town Staff for review of compliance with appearance related ordinances and regulations.

ALL COMMISSIONERS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO REFER POTENTIAL VIOLATIONS TO TOWN STAFF FOR CODE COMPLIANCE. APPROVED PROJECTS FOR J. B. GEORGE FUND FOR 2006

The following projects were approved for funding by the J. B. George Fund at the March 21, 2006 meeting of the Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission:

The projects are listed in order of priority. Should funding not be sufficient to cover all projects, award of funding will be made in order of priority.

1. Johnston County Library Garden Bench and Recognition Plaques: \$1,000
2. Replacement of Landscaping at Brodgen Road / Brightleaf Boulevard Northeast Corner: \$1,000
3. Rework of Spring Branch Second Street Culvert Banks: \$500
4. Town Commons River-Walk Riverview Enhancement: \$500
5. Brodgen Road Streetscape Landscaping at Developing Properties: \$500 or remaining balance of available funds.

Since all projects are to be implemented by the Town of Smithfield, authorization is given for the Town of Smithfield Finance Director to make payment for the approved projects to the Town of Smithfield General Fund prior to June 30, 2006.

2006-2007 TOWN OF SMITHFIELD APPEARANCE COMMISSION PROPOSED PLAN OF WORK

The Following Lists Plan Of Work Components For Each Of The Points In The Appearance Commission Mission:

- Fostering neighborhood pride:
 - Assist neighborhood groups, churches and civic clubs desiring to hold clean-

up and appearance related activities, by coordinating use of Town forces and equipment, as well as public announcements of such events. Emphasis will be on determining organizations interested in participating in the North Carolina Department of Transportation Litter Sweep events.

- Encourage neighborhood, church and community groups to apply for funding from the Josephine B. George Beautification Fund for neighborhood projects.
- Promoting and disseminating “best management practices”; that are good examples of enhancing community appearance for residential, commercial and public sites:
 - Focus on the Entryway Beautification Program as the primary means in 2006-07 to set good examples.
 - Encourage use of Crepe Myrtle tree planting in all new commercial and recreational landscaping.
 - Continue to sponsor a “how to literature” search emphasis in cooperation with the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield and the North Carolina Extension Service.
 - Review the adequacy of pedestrian access connectivity within the Town, with particular emphasis on completing sidewalks within the historic “sidewalk grid” neighborhoods for both appearance and full access to citizens of diverse mobility.
- Acknowledging achievement and excellence of citizens in fulfilling the purposes of the Appearance Commission:
 - Partner with the Greater Smithfield – Selma Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation in recognizing excellence in property appearance.
 - Sponsor an appearance recognition celebration of the pilot entryway program on Brodgen Road.
- Showcasing natural and architectural beauty:
 - Participate in planning for recognizing and preserving historical structures, as is currently under consideration in the proposed Historical Properties Ordinance.
 - If awarded a Creating Place Grant by the North Carolina Arts Council, sponsor an art in public spaces visioning process during 2006-07.
 - Review the status of Town public cemeteries appearance, evaluating the need for buffers with adjacent properties in order to preserve the intended cemetery setting, with particular emphasis on the Oakland Cemetery.
- Encouraging appealing: community entrances; seasonal or holiday decorations; and signage:
 - Implement Entryway Beautification Program, focusing on Brodgen Road as the first emphasis area for the program.
 - Request input in the planning of seasonal decorations displayed on Town streetscapes.
 - Request authority to plan for erection of Town welcome signage at those entryways lacking such signage, focusing on use of existing publicly owed property for potential welcome sign sites.
- Encouraging well planned, coordinated tree planting, preservation and maintenance throughout the Town:

- Promote use of Crepe Myrtle planting, to the greatest extent feasible, in all new landscaping within the Town zoning limits, toward the end of Crepe Myrtle becoming the official “Town Tree”.
- Implement the new Public Tree Care Regulation, by:
 - Informing Town Staff of the procedure for review by the Commission of all regulated trees in public spaces prior to the removal of any trees covered by the regulation;
 - Conducting tree removal reviews in a timely manner; and
 - Updating the inventory of public street trees and other public trees in Smithfield;
 - Initiate preparation of the official street tree species list.
- Reviewing and advising the Town Council, or the Town Department designated by the Council, as to the appearance of publicly owned or maintained property and spaces:
 - Request involvement in the landscaping and appearance related construction related to:
 - The new Spring Branch artificial wetlands; and
 - Town Commons to Community Park trail along Buffalo Creek;
- Reviewing and advising the Planning Department as to compliance with the Town’s ordinances regarding sanitation, public works, housing, and other regulations affecting the community appearance:
 - Continue to hold monthly review of Special Use Plans and other appearance related review requests from the Town Management and Staff.
- Discouraging littering and blight:
 - Partner with Keep Johnston County Beautiful in public education and clean-up efforts.
 - Submit requests to Town Staff for review of compliance with appearance related ordinances and regulations.