

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, at 5:00 in the Fire Station Training Room located at 111 South Fourth Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Leslie Lazarus – Chairperson  
Peggy Scott – Vice Chairperson  
Perry Harris  
Jeremy Pearce

Members Absent

Connie Barbour  
Robin Cook  
Mary Ragsdale  
Councilman David Stevens

Staff Present

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

Staff Absent

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

**Invocation**

Perry Harris offered the invocation.

**Welcome New Member Mary Ragsdale**

Due to the absence of Ms. Ragsdale, this item was not discussed.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 16, 2019**

Perry Harris made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott, to approve the April minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

**Financial Report**

**Appearance Commission General Fund Balance – \$3,616.82**

Vice Chairman Peggy Scott explained that \$14,260 of the general fund had not been spent on projects already approved by the Commission. These funds would need to be encumbered so the projects could be completed in the next fiscal year.

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

**J. B. George Fund Balance – \$992.60**

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

**DSDC Report**

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

1. The Ham and Yam Festival was a successful event.
2. The River Rat Regatta is July 13<sup>th</sup>.
3. The Smithfield Independence Celebration is June 30<sup>th</sup>.
4. New businesses are interested in moving into the downtown corridor.
5. Members of the DSDC were in Raleigh at the General Assembly lobbying for tax credits that will improve downtown.

**Wayfinding**

Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the signs were in production and staff was still trying to obtain the easement agreements for the gateway signs.

## **Projects**

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

- **Stump removal – Follow Up with Public Works**  
Mrs. Lazarus questioned if the stumps had been removed on Johnston Street. Public Works Crew Leader Joey Price responded the stumps had been removed on Johnston Street.

Per the report provided by Public Works Director Lenny Branch to the Town Manager, the following items have been completed:

### **Removal of tree stumps**

- Removed 2 tree stumps beside SoDoSo restaurant on Johnston Street
- Removed large tree stump in front of 310 E Johnston Street
- Removed 2 tree stumps at the intersection of North Third Street and Market Street

### **Concrete Work in the Downtown Area**

- Replaced 60LF of grass area in front of 310 E Johnston Street with concrete

### **Community Garden Donation**

- Donated and delivered a load of compost (from Power Mulch in Smithfield) to the Community Garden for future plantings.

- **Town Hall Park & Parking Lot:** Grind stumps and plant 3 trees. This has not been completed.
- **Police Department and Brogden Road Trees**  
Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission that in February of 2017, the Commission approved planting a tree at the Police Department and a tree on Brogden Road. The tree on Brogden Road (near the I-95 exit) was thought to be needed to complete the project. It was later determined a tree would not be replanted at the Police Department because of its interference with the flag. Mrs. Scott suggested the Appearance Commission consider redoing the landscape bed as a future project.
- **US 70 Business West Landscaping**  
Perry Harris informed the members of the Appearance Commission he noticed the landscape beds from the bridge to McDonald's had recently been cleaned. Mr. Harris also noticed several trees had perished. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott questioned if the area needed to be mulched again. Joey Price responded he would speak with the Public Works Director about replacing the dead trees and mulching the area.
- **Concrete –Update on concrete from Public Works** – 3 places: 2 places at SoDoSoPa and in front Ruffin Johnson Insurance  
Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott questioned if the concrete work had been completed. Joey Price responded the concrete work in front of Ruffin Johnson's office on Johnston Street had been completed, but he was unsure about the other areas.
- **Tree types-Update if trees are ordered from Public Works**  
The Appearance Commission determined it was too late in the season to plant the list of approved trees. This project would have to be completed in the fall. Chairperson Leslie Lazarus suggested the trees be ordered well in advance so the nursery would have them available when it was time to plant the trees.

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

3 Front street: Chinese Elm Trees

6 Johnston street: Chalk Bark Maple

2<sup>nd</sup> Street: Acer x Freemanii (Autumn Blaze Maple)

- **Donate -A-Tree**

- **Plaque**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that during her investigation of other option for the plaque, she determined no other options were cost effective. The current style of plaque manufactured by the same company would cost \$3,568.87 for 100 name plates. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott stated she and Mrs. Lazarus were going to look at the plaque to determine if there were enough spaces left for the remaining name plates. If there were not enough remaining spaces, the Appearance Commission would need to approve the ordering of a new plaque at next month's meeting. If there were enough spaces, the Appearance Commission could wait to order a new plaque.

- **Brochure**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she updated the Donate-A-Tree brochure and would provide it everyone at the June meeting.

- **Neuse Little Theater Maintenance, mulching, and replanting**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission the area around the Neuse Little Theater needed maintenance and additional plantings. Mrs. Lazarus stated she chose perennials of various heights and colors. Suggested plantings are as follows:

- Prairie Winds® 'Desert Plains' Fountain Grass Pennisetum alopecuroides
  - Festival Star™ Hardy Baby's Breath Gypsophila paniculata
  - New Vintage™ Violet Yarrow Achillea millefolium
  - Sunjoy® Citrus Barberry Berberis thunbergii
  - Dahlightful Sultry Scarlet Dahlia Variabilis
  - Double Scoop™ Lemon Cream Coneflower Echinacea hybrid

Perry Harris questioned if the plants would thrive in that area. Mrs. Lazarus responded the suggested plants were zoned for this area, but she was unsure if the plants would survive. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott suggested making an appointment with the Public Works Director or the Planning Director to develop a landscape plan for the area.

Mr. Harris questioned if improvements to the boat ramp area had been included in the budget. It was uncertain if improvements to the boat ramp area were still included in the proposed budget.

- **Miracle Park**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Miracle Park needed maintenance and additional plantings. She explained a lot of plants have either died or appeared to have been damaged. Suggested plantings are as follows:

- Show Off® Forsythia x intermedia
  - White Forsythia Abeliophyllum Distichum
  - Scentara® Double Blue Lilac Syringa hyacinthiflora
  - Twist of Lime™ Abelia

- Double Take Pink™ Quince Chaenomeles speciose
- Fluffy® Western Arborvitae Thuja plicata

Perry Harris suggested installing hardier plants for the area. Mrs. Lazarus suggested using rubber mulch in landscape beds because of its longevity. Mr. Harris suggested using AstroTurf for some of the areas around the Inclusion Playground. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott suggested meeting with the Parks and Recreation Director and the Executive Director of Partnership for Children to offer some ideas and get their feedback on how to improve the landscape at the Miracle Park and the Inclusion Playground.

- **Ironwork downtown**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus informed the members of the Appearance Commission that all the ironwork downtown needed to be refinished/painted. If the Public Works Department was unable to do this, the Appearance Commission could determine if Cast Iron Elegance could complete the project. Joey Price responded that he and his crew painted the ironwork at Sunset Memorial Gardens Cemetery, but it was not an easy task. Mr. Price explained the best time to paint ironwork was in the winter months. Perry Harris stated the ironwork needed to be refreshed periodically and a maintenance program should be established.

- **Town Hall Park- Fountain – Checking with DeWayne’s**

Chairperson Leslie Lazarus provided an update on the fountain for the Town Hall Park. Dewayne’s would offer a 20% discount off the purchase price. Approximate measurements would be 100 inches tall and 100 inches in diameter. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott explained the Appearance Commission was considering more hardscape projects instead of planting projects. This would allow the Public Works Department the opportunity to catch up on other outstanding projects. Perry Harris explained he would be happy to work on this project as he may be able to shop direct for one. Jeremy Pearce questioned the reoccurring costs associated with a fountain. Mr. Harris responded that in addition to utilities (water and electric), it would have to be routinely maintained.

## **New Business**

- **Group Photo**

It was the consensus of the Appearance Commission to inform all members that the group photo would be taken at the June meeting.

- **Improve Old Well Cover**

During the April meeting, this project was introduced to the Appearance Commission by new members Robin Cook. The well located on the corner of South Fourth Street and East Woodall was in need of repairs. Perry Harris stated he and some friends may be able to repair it free of charge. Jeremy Pearce suggested increasing the size of the plaque currently on the well.

- **Other Ideas**

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish questioned if the Appearance Commission could revisit the children’s area at the Library. Some of the plans included painting hopscotch on the sidewalk, installing a bench, installing a picnic table and installing a stone caterpillar. Vice Chairperson Peggy Scott asked if Public Works could remove the vines from the Dogwood Tree at the Library so the tree does not die. Joey Price responded he would see if the vines could be cut and removed. Mrs. Scott also questioned if the Hosta planted around the library needed to be replaced or additional mulch needed to be added. Mr. Price responded his crew would be working in that area on Thursday and he will check on the Hosta and the mulch.

Perry Harris explained that on a recent trip to Edenton, North Carolina, he noticed how that Town was addressing tree roots that were encroaching on the sidewalk. He explained that rather than cut the tree roots, the Town of Edenton removed the section of sidewalk and built a wooden rise. This allowed the tree roots to remain undisturbed but also eliminated trip hazards on the Town's sidewalks. Joey Price responded this would be something interesting to investigate and the decks could also be constructed of composite decking which would last longer.

## **Adjournment**

Being no further business, Jeremy Pearce made a motion, seconded by Perry Harris, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:57 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannan L. Parrish  
Town Clerk

## **Appearance Commission Items to be completed:**

### **Town Hall Parking lot and Park**

- Removal of tree stumps in parking area
- Planting of 3 Crepe Myrtle Trees (1 in the park and 2 in the parking Lot)

### **Concrete Work in the Downtown Area**

- Stamped concrete at SoDoSoPa restaurant on Johnston Street
- ~~Regular concrete near Ruffin Johnson's Office on Johnston Street~~ This has been completed
- Regular concrete on North Third Street near the Heritage Center (there was some discussion tonight that the AC may want to plant a tree there)

### **Planting of Downtown Trees**

- 3 Chinese Elms on Front Street
- 6 Chalk Bark Maples on Johnston Street
- 3 Autumn Blaze Maples on South Third Street