

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, August 18, 2020, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Conference Room located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Peggy Scott – Chairperson
Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson
Connie Barbour
Julia Narron
Jeremy Pearce
MaryFoy Ragsdale

Members Absent

Councilman David Steven
Stuart Lee

Staff Present

Lenny Branch – Public Works Director
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Call to Order

Chairperson Peggy Scott called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm

Invocation

Chairperson Peggy Scott offered the invocation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – July 14, 2020

Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Jeremy Pearce, to approve the July minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

Annual Report

Public Works Director Lenny Branch commended Chairperson Peggy Scott for the presentation of the Annual Report at the August Town Council Meeting.

Financial Report

Appearance Commission General Fund Balance – \$ 15,869.66

Donate-A-Tree Account Balance – \$200.00

J. B. George Fund Balance – \$3,637.34

Chairperson Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the J.B. George and the J.P. George funds were endowments that people can submit an application to request funds for beautification projects. Submitted applications are reviewed and approved by the Appearance Commission. Only the interest earned from the endowments can be used for beautification projects in the Town.

J.P. George Fund Balance – \$708.73

DSDC Report

Jeremy Pearce informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Downtown Wi-Fi should be live by the end of the month. The DSDC will be seeking approval for two series of events at the September Town Council meeting. One series of events would be held on Friday evenings in September and October. These events would include the closure of South Third Street to accommodate outdoor dining and a live entertainer. The other series of events would be held during lunchtime on Tuesdays in September and October. These events would include a musical entertainer at the corner of Market and Third Street. Julia Narron stated this was not popular for those working in the area during lunchtime. Also, there will be a marketing workshop for downtown businesses on August 25th at the library.

Tree Removal Request

Public Works Director Lenny Branch informed the members of the Appearance Commission he received a request from Nancy Barry at 310 South 4th Street to remove two large oak trees in front of her property. Mr. Branch explained the trees are not considered hazardous; therefore, they can only be removed if approved by the Appearance Commission. Vice Chairperson Robin Cook stated since there were no issues with the trees, she felt the Commission would be setting a precedence of removing trees at the request of a property owner.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook made a motion, seconded by Jeremy Pearce, to deny the request to remove the two large oak trees at 310 South 4th Street. Unanimously approved.

Project Updates

Boat Ramp

Flag pole: installed but missing the cross bar (Brackets were left out of shipping)

Flags are ordered

Steps: Passed waiting on 3 bids for pricing

will also get pricing to add another set of steps closer to the drive way down to the boat ramp

Landscaping: Robin

Chairperson Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the fencing and picnic tables have been installed at the picnic area. The crossbar for the flagpole has not been received. Once it is received from the manufacturer, the flags will be hung. Mrs. Scott stated Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson received estimates for the installation of 2 sets of steps on the greenway. The estimate for the large set of steps was \$3,000 and the estimate for the smaller set of steps was \$2,500. These estimates were less than the original estimate. He was going to check that the bids were priced for the specs the Appearance Commission requested.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she met with a landscaper. Due to the size of the area, he suggested focusing on one area at time. He would develop an overall plan for the entire area which would include pricing. Mrs. Cook stated the landscaper had a lot of ideas to incorporate a long-term vision for the area.

Street Trees for Market Street

European Hornbeam

Train thru pruning for the first 2 years then only every 5 years

They do not drop leaves, berries or flowers

Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry

Single stemmed

Maybe harmful to dogs **no** if they eat too many berries can cause issues

Lace Bark Elm

Chairperson Peggy Scott questioned if any of the Paper Bark Maple Trees could be moved to other areas in Town where they would grow. Public Works Director Lenny Branch responded he has not been successful with transplanting trees. Also, the Paper Bark Maple trees have not done well on Market Street. Mrs. Scott stated she was concerned that the European Hornbeam would not accentuate the up lighting. She explained she was considering the Tokyo Tower Fringe Tree because of its size and shape. Although it is the smallest tree suggested by Jennifer Rahls of Urban Forestry, it may be the best option because of the space where they would be planted.

Julia Narron questioned if the Lace Bark Elms could be considered. These are currently planted at First Citizens Bank. Mrs. Narron stated if the small Christmas lights were placed in the trees, she felt the European Hornbeam would be too dense for those types of lights. Mrs. Scott responded she was concerned that the European Hornbeam would not accentuate the up lighting. Mrs. Narron questioned how many trees would need to be replaced. Mr. Branch responded he was unsure, but he would count

the trees tomorrow. Connie Barbour questioned if the Paper Bark Maple trees would all be removed from Market Street. Mrs. Scott responded there was a discussion at the last meeting about that. Mrs. Scott further stated it might be best to remove all the trees at same time so the new trees would grow at the same rate. Mr. Branch stated they would look more uniformed from 5th Street to Brightleaf Boulevard if they were all planted at the same time. MaryFoy Ragsdale stated hollies are hardy trees that can be shaped. There were hollies in downtown Clayton that look very nice. Mr. Branch stated there were foster hollies on north second street. Mrs. Scott questioned if they were difficult to maintain. Mr. Branch responded they were not difficult to maintain if properly pruned. A lot of businesses do not like the holly trees because they block the view of the store fronts. Mrs. Scott stated a decision should be made next month.

Discussion on the next Project: Planning for 2021

Ideas:

- Light in the community – Stuart
Due to the absence of Mr. Lee, this item was not discussed in detail. Chairperson Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission Mr. Lee had done a lot of work on this project and the Smithfield Art Walk project. His vision was focusing on walkways in Smithfield where trees could be lighted. Art could also be incorporated the along the path of lighted trees.
- Smithfield Art Walk – Stuart
Due to the absence of Mr. Lee, this item was not discussed in detail.
- Innovation Academy Projects – Robin
Vice Chairperson Robin Cook informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she spoke with Kelly Johnson, principal of the Innovation Academy. Mrs. Johnson would like to schedule a meeting with some of the Appearance Commission members. Mrs. Johnson was very excited to partner with the Appearance Commission for community projects.

Other Comments/ Ideas

- Connie Barbour questioned if there was something other than trees that could be installed on Market Street that could benefit from the up lighting. Chairperson Peggy Scott suggested Mrs. Barbour do some research on alternatives to the trees.
- Connie Barbour questioned if there were any plans to removing parking from Market Street. Mr. Branch explained NCDOT was not open to changes to parking on Market Street.

Adjournment

Being no further business, Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Connie Barbour, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:58 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk