

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Stuart Lee – Chairperson
Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson
Tim Depp
Mary Foy Ragsdale
Peggy Scott

Members Absent

Councilman David Steven
Connie Barbour
Julia Narron

Staff Present

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

Staff Absent

Call to Order

Chairperson Stuart Lee called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm

Invocation

Peggy Scott offered the invocation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2021

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Robin Cook, to approve the minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

Financial Report

Chairperson Stuart Lee explained to the members of the Appearance Commission that there had been some confusion about the financial report. He explained once updated, he would provide it to the members. There was approximately \$23,121.07 remaining in the budget since the grant amount of \$15,000 from the Johnston County Visitor's Bureau had been received and would be placed back in the Appearance Commission's budget.

Existing Project Updates

Art Walk

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission he met with the Downtown Smithfield Develop Corporation's Design Committee and they were in favor of the Art Walk concept. He further explained he met with the full DSDC board and they were supportive of the Art Walk concept and design. Mr. Lee stated the next step was to meet with building owners to determine if their buildings could be used for the project.

Market Street Trees

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that upon further investigation of the Zhuzhou Fuchsia Fringe Loropetalum, it would take 20 years before it matured into an acceptable size tree. He explained that new member Tim Depp worked in the landscaping industry and he suggested installing the European Hornbeam trees along Market Street. Since they would grow much faster than the Loropetalum. Mr. Depp explained he has a supplier that may be willing to donate the European Hornbeam trees, the issue would be storing them until they could be planted in the fall. Peggy Scott stated she had reservations about the European Hornbeam and how

the density of the tree would affect the uplighting. Mr. Depp explained that the tree would be limbed and lifted to accommodate both the uplighting and it being planted on the sidewalk.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook made a motion, seconded by Tim Depp, to rescind the motion to purchase the Zhuzhou Fuchsia Fringe Loropetalum at the March 13, 2021 meeting. Unanimously approved.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook made a motion, seconded by Tim Depp, to choose the European Hornbeam tree for planting along Market Street. Unanimously approved.

Chairperson Stuart Lee explained the next step would be to determine what type of nutrients the soil needed. Mr. Depp responded he would provide the soil sample results to one of his associates for an economical treatment plan. Mr. Depp stated that since storage of the trees was an issue, he would contact the supplier and determine if the supplier would store the trees until they could be planted in the fall. Mr. Depp further stated the supplier responded and he has reservations about holding the trees for such a long period of time.

Mr. Lee questioned if the Appearance Commission's budget could pay for storage of the trees. He asked Mr. Depp to contact the supplier to determine a cost for 12-15 trees and the storage of those trees until they could be planted in the fall. Mr. Depp stated if the Town could not regularly water the trees, it was best to plant them in the fall.

Mrs. Scott stated the 12 Paper Bark Maple trees from Town Hall to Highway 301 would be replaced with the European Hornbeam trees. She suggested using single stem Crepe Myrtle trees as a replacements for the 3 trees west of Town Hall. Mr. Lee responded that the Commission should focus on the 12 European Hornbeam trees first and decide on the remaining three trees at a later date.

Boat Ramp Plans: Where do we go from here

Chairperson Stuart Lee reminded the members of the Appearance Commission that they previously approved the first phase of the Boat Ramp landscaping plan. Peggy Scott explained she spoke with Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson about when staff would begin installing the first phase of the landscaping. Mr. Johnson had hoped to have it completed in the spring, but due to staffing issues, it would be completed in the fall. Mrs. Scott suggested using the Visitor's Bureau grant funds (\$15,000) for the boat ramp landscaping. She stated there was an issue getting people to do landscaping work. She suggested using some funds to hire a landscaping firm to do the work at the boat ramp and installing the trees on Market Street. Mr. Depp responded it was unlikely that a landscaping company would do these jobs right now because the industry is extremely busy. Also, they do not have the necessary workforce. Mr. Depp stated that if these jobs were to be completed in the fall, then it may be possible that his company or another company could complete the projects. Mrs. Scott further stated that if the Appearance Commission used a landscape contractor, it would be possible to complete the entire project instead of just the first phase of the project. Mr. Lee asked Mr. Depp to develop a cost estimate for completion of the boat ramp project and the Market Street trees project/

Urban Ag/ Living Art Grant

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that his office announced agreements for \$45,000 - \$90,000 to be used by municipalities for a community composting program. On the 27th, they will be announcing their Urban Ag grants. There are grants for planning and for implementation. Mr. Lee explained the grants to the member of the Commission

stating the purpose of the grant was to create a program to provide fresh food to economically distressed communities. At the last meeting, Mr. Depp suggested a living art wall with art walk. Mr. Lee suggested incorporating that idea into a vertical garden. This idea could be provided to the Town Manager so that he could submit an Urban Ag grant application. Mr. Lee stated if the Appearance Commission was in favor of a project like this, he would speak with the Town Manager about it.

June Meeting

Mary Foy Ragsdale made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Robin Cooke, to reschedule the June Appearance Commission meeting until July 20, 2021. Unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Being no further business, Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Robin Cook, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5: 59 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannan L. Parrish". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully Submitted,".

Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk