

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Stuart Lee – Chairperson  
Connie Barbour  
Tim Depp  
Julia Narron  
Mary Foy Ragsdale  
Peggy Scott

Members Absent

Councilman David Steven  
Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson

Staff Present

Lawrence Davis – Public Works Director  
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Stuart Lee called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm

**Invocation**

Peggy Scott offered the invocation.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2021**

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Tim Depp, to approve the minutes as submitted. Unanimously approved.

**Financial Report**

Chairperson Stuart Lee reviewed the balances of the following accounts:

Appearance Commission General Fund: \$43,121

J B George Fund: 3,708

J P George Fund: \$544

**Agenda Items**

**Art Walk Letter to Town Building Owners/ Special Meeting for Art Walk Phase One**

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that a meeting was scheduled for Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 pm in Town Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to provide information to downtown business owners about the art walk.

Tim Depp informed the members of the Appearance Commission that on Glenwood South in Raleigh, artists are allowed to paint murals on small corners of buildings. He thought this was great idea to incorporate into the art walk especially if the larger murals could not be done.

Peggy Scott reminded the members that there had been some discussions about painting some crosswalks and incorporate some freestanding art using metal utility boxes or garbage receptacles.

### **Mural Under Bridge on Greenway**

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he was contacted by DSDC Executive Director Sarah Edwards concerning the Mountains to Sea Trail mural on the Neuse River Greenway bridge. He stated the mural had been vandalized and it needed to be refreshed. Shannan Parrish responded that she would contact the local Girl Scout Troop to ascertain if they would be willing to repaint/ refresh the mural as a service project. Since the Greenway is frequented by so many people, it would be nice if the mural was redone. It was suggested that the Appearance Commission could purchase some of the supplies if the Girl Scouts chose to do this project. It was the consensus of the members that this location was not an ideal location for a mural.

### **Update on Greenway/Boat Ramp Landscaping Project**

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Town has not received any bids for this project. One company has indicated that it would submit a bid so hopefully by the next Appearance Commission meeting, the bid will be approved by Council. Peggy Scott stated that she spoke with Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson and he indicated that Parks and Recreation staff would remove all the plantings and prepare the area for the new landscaping. Parks and Recreation would also be responsible for the purchase and placement of the large rocks. Funds from the Appearance Commission would be used for the purchase of the rocks.

### **Planting of Trees Schedule**

Public Works Director Lawrence informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the tree sites were prepped. Tim Depp questioned if all 15 trees needed to be delivered at the same time. Mr. Davis responded he would like to install 5 trees on a Wednesday when he had additional personnel. After the initial installation of those trees, his staff may be able to install the remaining 10 trees on another Wednesday. Peggy Scott questioned if Public Works staff was going to clean out the entire area around each of the trees including the area beyond the uplighting. Mr. Davis responded the area would be cleaned and prepped for the new trees, but grass would be planted around the trees. Mrs. Scott questioned if staff could put down landscape fabric and mulch instead of planting grass. Mr. Davis responded that if there was only dirt and mulch around the trees, rain water would wash away both the dirt and the mulch. The mulch collecting in storm drains also posed another problem. Mrs. Scott questioned how staff would make sure that grass didn't grow over the uplighting. Mr. Davis responded the grass around the trees and uplighting would be maintained by the landscaping contractor, but he would make sure the contractor knew exactly what was expected for maintenance around the trees and uplighting. Mr. Davis would monitor these areas. Mrs. Scott questioned if something else could be planted around the base of the trees instead of grass. Mr. Depp responded that ornamental grass could be planted around the trees, but this idea created a maintenance issue with weed control. Mr. Davis questioned who would be responsible for ordering the trees. Mr. Depp responded he would be responsible for ordering the trees. The trees should take two to three weeks for delivery. Mr. Lee stated that funds from the JP George Street Tree Fund should be used first for this project. Mrs. Scott questioned if all 15 trees would be planted. Mr. Davis responded there was one tree across from the courthouse where a tree was removed and had never been replaced. Mrs. Scott questioned if that tree would be replaced with a European Hornbeam of a different type of tree. Mr. Depp responded that if the overall goal was to replace all the trees on Market Street with the European Hornbeam, then that tree across from the courthouse should be a European Hornbeam. It was suggested that the Appearance Commission consider removing the Crepe Myrtle trees on Market Street.

Tim Depp made a motion, seconded by Mary Foy Ragsdale, that all trees on Market Street will be replaced with European Hornbeams. Unanimously approved.

Julia Narron stated there were trees throughout Town that needed to be replaced. Mrs. Scott reminded everyone that there was a variety of single-stemmed Crepe Myrtle trees that could be used in other areas.

#### **Landscaping Contractor**

Connie Barbour questioned if the issue with Lane Landscaping had been resolved. Mr. Davis responded staff is reviewing the work performed by the contractor. If something has not been completed, staff brings it to the contractor's attention. The Town Manager is requiring staff to prepare a monthly report of the contractor's work. Mr. Depp stated that when landscaping bids are submitted, typically a municipality will choose the lowest bid which Lane Landscaping normally submits. Mr. Lee explained that at the Federal level, the highest and the lowest bids are removed before a selection is made.

Mrs. Barbour stated that it was not the function of the Appearance Commission to micromanage a Town contractor. Mr. Depp responded he was in agreement, but the Appearance Commission wants some assurances that the projects it funds are being properly maintained.

#### **Recruitment of Members**

Chairperson Lee expressed some concerns about board recruitment efforts. He stated he would like to see the Council more involved with recruiting members for all the Town Board. Shannan Parrish stated that since recruitment was a function of the Clerk's Office, she would seek assistance from the Town Council for recruitment efforts.

#### **DSDC Report**

Tim Depp explained there was a lot of things happening with the DSDC. The main topic of conversation was evaluating the Ham and Yam Festival. The DSDC board felt it was time to revitalize the festival. Julia Narron stated she felt the DSDC should get the Arts Council more involved by showcasing local artists and their work.

#### **Adjournment**

Being no further business, Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Connie Barbour, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shannan L. Parrish  
Town Clerk