

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 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
Julia Narron
Mary Foy Ragsdale
Peggy Scott
Carmen Zepp

Members Absent

Councilman David Steven

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 5:02 pm

Invocation

Peggy Scott offered the invocation.

Welcome New Member

Chairperson Stuart Lee welcomed new member, Carmen Zepp, to the Appearance Commission.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 16,2021

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

Financial Report

Chairperson Stuart Lee reviewed the balances of the Appearance Commission accounts. He explained that due to staff changes in the Finance Department, he had not received the monthly financial reports. Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission she spoke with the Public Works Administrative Assistant, Barbara Barefoot, about the Appearance’s Commission’s General Fund account balance. Upon review, it was determined the Appearance Commission’s General Fund account balance was \$43,121. She further stated the Market Street trees that were installed should have been paid out of the JP George and JB George accounts which would deplete much of those account balances.

Boat Ramp and Art Walk Projects

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated the Appearance Commission needed to deduct the amount of the boat ramp project from the general fund balance to determine what other projects could be completed this fiscal year.

Tim Depp responded the cost of the landscaping was \$22,083 and the boulders would cost \$4,900 to \$5,000. The total cost of the project would be approximately \$27,083.

Peggy Scott stated there was some discussion concerning using additional funds for fencing at the boat ramp. Mr. Depp responded the Commission did discuss installing fencing along the backside of the parking spaces and replacement of the chicken wire fencing along the greenway, but a decision was never made. The Appearance Commission did not want to use all its funds on the boat ramp project because funds would be needed for the art walk project.

Chairperson Lee stated approximately \$15,000 would be remaining in the general fund balance for remaining projects after the \$27,083 was paid for the boat ramp project.

Mr. Depp questioned when the Appearance Commission would receive additional funding from the Town. Mrs. Scott responded the Commission would receive funding July 1st. Mr. Depp questioned if any additional projects could be started with the remaining \$15,000. Chairperson Lee responded he had spoken with local artists and it was dependent on the size and location of the first mural when that project could begin.

Chairman Lee expressed concerns about using all the Appearance Commission general funds for the boat ramp project. He stated the Appearance Commission has done what it said it would do on the boat ramp project, but adding the fencing to the area would be another project. Mr. Depp responded the idea was to install black vinyl chain-linked fencing along the backside of the parking spaces to eliminate foot traffic in the newly planted landscape beds. This would ensure that the plants would not be damaged. Mrs. Scott questioned if Mr. Depp had been given an estimated cost for the fencing by Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson. Mr. Depp responded he had received it several months ago and he recalled it was inexpensive.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook questioned if the cost of the fence was the responsibility of the Appearance Commission or that of the Parks and Recreation Department. Chairperson Lee responded he was unsure if the fencing could be considered as beautification. Mr. Depp responded the landscape project completed by the Appearance Commission was creating a liability for the Town. Also, the fencing would protect the Appearance Commission's landscaping investment.

Vice Chairperson Cook stated she believed the fencing along the back-side of the parking spaces was needed, but unsure if the Appearance Commission should consider the additional fencing. She further stated she would like to see the Commission begin the art walk this fiscal year. Chairperson Lee stated the Commission needed to decide if it wanted to move onto the next project or continue adding funds to the boat ramp project.

Carmen Zepp stated the area under the bridge on the greenway was always unsightly and reeked of a foul odor. She inquired if anything could be done in that area. She suggested a French drain be installed so the water from the drain did not wash onto the greenway. Chairman Lee stated the Appearance Commission could inform the Town Manager of their concerns about that area.

Art Walk Project

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission there were some options for the art walk. He explained a small mural could be done on the Guardian Ad Litem building located at 222 East Market Street next to the courthouse. The tenant would like a mural, but Chairperson Lee explained he was trying to coordinate a conversation with the building owner and the person that performs all the work for that building to determine if the building could be used for a mural. Also, Abe Wellons has offered the use of the old Rose's building located at 331 East Market Street. The Ava Gardner Museum was considering doing a mural on the side of their building. There was also an option

for Smithfield Selma High School students to paint murals on the utility boxes throughout Town. The Appearance Commission would need approval from the Town to paint the boxes. He suggested the Appearance Commission could purchase the supplies needed for the students. The old Rose's building mural would be large and expensive so it might be advantageous to focus on doing a smaller project with this year's remaining funds.

Peggy Scott stated she thought in order to make a decision, the Appearance Commission needed prices. Tim Depp responded that in order to get a quote from an artist, the Commission needed to pick a location. He stated there were three options/locations, but only once of which was confirmed for use. Mrs. Scott stated she would like to have a conversation with the muralist to determine how the mural would be preserved and not damaged. Mr. Depp responded he has a friend that paints Walmart buildings and their practice is to clearcoat the paint. It's an expensive process, but worth it.

Chairperson Lee stated he had spoken to some muralists and their prices are based on size, content, and the number of murals they have completed. The more popular a muralist becomes, the more expensive their work becomes.

Chairperson Lee explained the original concept of the art walk. Julia Narron stated the first mural should be done well because if it was not done well, the whole town would react. It was her opinion that someone should be paid to properly do the first mural. The artist should be properly vetted and the design should be agreed upon by the Appearance Commission

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed the members of the Appearance Commission he met with Downtown Smithfield Development Director Sarah Edwards about the proposed Ava Gardner mural. In order to have a mural on the side of the Ava Gardner Museum, the large Crepe Myrtle tree would need to be removed. Once the tree and the plantings were removed, the empty lot, a large transformer, garbage bin and trash would be visible from Market Street. The trees and plantings currently obstruct the view of all those things.

Chairperson Lee agreed that if the mural was in a very visible place, a muralist needed to be hired. He asked the members of the Commission if they wanted to focus their attention on doing a large mural, a small mural, or supplies for the utility box murals.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook proposed the Appearance the following: obtain quotes from a professional muralist for the 4th Street side of the old Rose's building and at the same time, obtain art ideas from the Smithfield Selma High School students for the utility boxes.

Chairperson Lee responded that due to the size of the 4th Street side of the old Rose's building, getting an artist to paint a mural would probably be expensive. The Commission would have to find out what a muralist would propose for that space. He stated the Appearance Commission needed to make a decision of what it wanted to do about the art walk. He asked if the Appearance Commission wanted to use its remaining funds for the boat ramp/ greenway area or begin the art walk project. It was his opinion, if additional funds were used for the boat ramp, then future funds should not be used for any additional greenway/boat ramp projects because other areas of Town need beautification. Mrs. Scott responded it would not cost a large amount of money to install the fencing at the boat ramp/green way.

Mrs. Scott stressed the importance of the Appearance Commission using all of its funds. She stated that by the time the Appearance Commission chose a muralist and the muralist developed a plan, it could likely be close to the end of this fiscal year before any funds were used for the project. Chairperson Lee

suggested obtaining quotes for the boat ramp/greenway fencing so that project could be completed. Mr. Depp stated he would speak to the Parks and Recreation Director about obtaining quotes for the fencing.

Mrs. Scott questioned if there were any cost estimates for a mural. Chairperson Lee responded that prices were based on size and content. A quart wall could cost \$5,000. A half wall could cost \$10,000 and a full wall could cost \$20,000. A smaller one on the Guardian Ad Litem building would cost between \$2,000 and \$4,000.

Mr. Depp indicated he wasn't going to consider that building until the Appearance Commission received approval from the building over. He explained the Appearance Commission had received approval from Mr. Wellons on the use of the old Rose's building on the corner of Market and North 4th Street. He suggested that Mr. Wellons be contacted to ascertain his thoughts on the size of the mural. The Appearance Commission could choose a size and a muralist. The chosen muralist could provide ideas and pricing.

Mrs. Scott suggested reserving \$10,000 of the Appearance Commission's general funds to begin the art walk project.

Chairperson Lee stated he would know by the end of the week if the Guardian Ad Litem building could be used. He was certain a mural on that building would cost less than \$10,000

Tim Depp made a motion, seconded by Mary Foy Ragsdale, to earmark \$10,000 to hold in reserves for the art walk mural. Approved by consensus

Litter

Carmen Zepp expressed concerns about the litter problem in Smithfield. She wondered if there was something the Town or the Appearance Commission could do. The Town or the Appearance Commission could purchase buckets and trash grabbers and recruit citizens to routinely remove litter throughout the Town. The Town does participate in NCDOT's litter sweep campaigns in the spring and the fall, but most volunteers are Town staff. The Appearance Commission could partner with other organizations to help during the litter sweep.

Public Works Breakfast

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission that every other year, the Appearance Commission purchases and serves breakfast to the Public Works Employees. This is done to show appreciation to the staff for all they do for the Appearance Commission and the Town. Typically, the Commission provides Bojangles biscuits, juice and milk. She questioned if the Commission would like to provide breakfast to the staff this year. It was the consensus of the Appearance Commission to provide breakfast to the Public Works employees.

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated he would like the Appearance Commission to use a local business for the breakfast. Vice Chairperson Robin Cook volunteered to coordinate the food and drinks for 27 employees. Public Works Director Lawrence Davis will provide possible dates for the breakfast to Vice Chairperson Cook.

Embankment across from the Boat ramp/Greenway

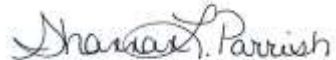
Julia Narron informed the members of the Appearance Commission her property is adjacent to the boat ramp/greenway. She stated that every year, she has the embankment cleared of weeds and overgrowth.

She was concerned that with all this new beautiful landscaping at the boat ramp/greenway that it would be overshadowed by the unsightly embankment. She questioned if some of the J.B George funds could be used to clean the area. Peggy Scott responded she was unsure if funds could be used for this type of project, but a copy of the JB George agreement could be provided. Mrs. Scott further stated 5 new trees would be planted along that side of the street.

Adjournment

Being no further business, Julian Narron made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Robin Cook, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannan L. Parrish".

Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk