

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met in regular session on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Stuart Lee – Chairperson  
Tim Depp  
Julia Narron  
Mary Foy Ragsdale  
Peggy Scott  
Kaitlyn Tarley

Members Absent

Councilman David Steven  
Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson  
Carmen Zepp

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 5:03 pm

**Invocation**

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis offered the invocation.

**Welcome New Member**

Chairperson Stuart Lee welcomed new member, Kaitlyn Tarley, to the Appearance Commission.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 18, 2022**

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

**Financial Report**

Appearance Commission General Fund: \$43,121

Chairperson Stuart Lee explained that after the boat ramp project expenditures and the \$10,000 held in reserves for the mural project, approximately \$6,134 would remain in the general fund.

Donate-A-Tree: \$400.00

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission that there hasn't been a lot of activity with the Donate-A-Tree project due to Covid-19. She explained that 2 name plates would need to be purchased due to the purchase of 2 trees.

Tim Depp made a motion, seconded by Mary Foy Ragsdale, to purchase the name plates using funds from the Donate-A-Tree account. Unanimously approved.

JB George Fund: \$3,763.06

JP George Fund \$435.81

### **Public Works Breakfast**

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that Vice Chairperson Robin Cook had secured Gotham's to cater the Public Works Breakfast on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 am. Chairperson Lee will follow up with Vice Chairperson Cook on the details of the breakfast.

### **Mural- Art Walk Update**

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he spoke with the leasing agent of the Guardian Ad Litem building, but was still unable to make contact with the building owner. In a previous meeting, the Appearance Commission voted to begin the project with the 4<sup>th</sup> Street side of the old Rose's Building (Wellons property). Chairperson Lee and Peggy Scott met with muralist Ashley Fabrizio. She was from Wilson and had completed several murals in Rocky Mount. She was very knowledgeable about the mural painting process. Art proposals will be received by the Commission at the March meeting.

Tim Depp questioned if the Commission had chosen this artist. Chairperson Lee responded Ms. Fabrizio would submit her proposals and if the Commission did not like them, they could also investigate other artists. He further stated he researched muralists that had received the best reviews and that is how he found Ms. Fabrizio. Mr. Depp stated the Commission should have another option because if the Commission does not like what Ms. Fabrizio proposes; the Commission can move on with the project using another artist. Mr. Depp further stated he has contact information for the artist that painted a mural on the side of the Full Bloom Coffee shop in Garner. He stated that mural was very vibrant and colorful.

### **Greenway Update**

Tim Depp informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the boulders would be installed in a few weeks. He explained that some things had to be moved around because there were a lot of utilities in the ground.

Julia Narron questioned whose responsibility it was to clean the hillside adjacent to her house. She asked Public Works Director Lawrence Davis if he would be willing to meet to discuss clearing of the hillside. Mr. Davis responded he would meet with Mrs. Narron, but he would need to investigate if it was the Town's responsibility to maintain the hillside. Mr. Depp stated this may be a more extensive issue because if trees are removed, it could destabilize the hill. Chairperson Lee responded that someone should contact Greg Walker at the Ag. Center because there are funds available for stream-based stabilizations.

### **New Projects Discussion**

#### **1. Community Clean Up Project Discussion**

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated this item would be tabled due to the absence of Carmen Zepp.

#### **2. JCC to Splash Pad Long Term Plan**

Chairperson Stuart Lee and Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Town was awarded a state grant to expand the splash park and create a walking path from the retention pond at Johnston Community College to the splash park. A meeting will be held on Thursday to discuss the Town's overall pedestrian plan.

Chairperson Stuart Lee explained this item was on the agenda so the Appearance Commission was aware of the project. He suggested the Appearance Commission begin project planning for short-term and long-term projects at its June or July meeting.

**3. Downtown Business Community Sidewalk Chalk Art Event Idea**

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he was approached by 2 business owners about a community sidewalk chalk event similar to those held in Raleigh. The Appearance Commission could assist with chalk supplies for the artist. The Appearance Commission could also use this opportunity to find artists interested in the art walk project. The Commission could collaborate with DSDC on this event.

Peggy Scott suggested this event could be held during the Wine Walk or the River Rat Regatta.

Julia Narron stated downtown business owners would encourage more downtown events.

**Public Comments** – There were no public comments.

**Other Business Item**

Tim Depp expressed his concerns about the direction of the Appearance Commission. It was his opinion that the Appearance Commission was becoming an Arts Commission.

Chairperson Stuart Lee responded that the Appearance Commission has been focused on the Market Street Tree Project and the Boat Ramp Project for the past two years.

Mr. Depp stated the Appearance Commission was about the overall appearance of the Town. He explained the Commission never asks the Public Works Director if he needs holiday lighting or assistance from the Commission. The point of the Commission was to beautify the Town and to work with Town staff. He explained he would need to resign from the Commission if it was going to continue to be an art commission.

Julia Narron asked for Mr. Depp for his opinion on the direction of the Appearance Commission. Mr. Depp responded the Commission should be focusing on plantscapes, landscaping, cleaning up the Town and working with the Public Works Department for holiday decorations. He stated the Commission has spent 6 months discussing a mural that is not completed. He further stated that he likes for projects to be completed.

Chairperson Stuart Lee explained the Art Walk was a project discussed and approved by the Commission once the members discovered it would be unable to do the original tree lighting project. He stated he would not be offended if the Commission chose not to move forward with the mural or art walk project.

Mary Foy Ragsdale stated she was in favor of having a planning meeting to discuss the goals and overall direction of the Appearance Commission.

Mr. Depp questioned when elections for the Appearance Commission are held. Peggy Scott responded they were typically held in January. Mrs. Scott stated that often times, the Appearance Commission has to wait for Public Works staff to complete the Commission's projects. With a limited number of staff, it takes them longer to do a project than if the Commission could hire an outside contractor. She explained the reason the Commission was able to hire a contractor to complete the boat ramp was due to the grant funds received from the Johnston County Visitor's Bureau. She further explained that a lot

of information gathering and research has to be done for all of the Appearance Commission's projects and it should not be the job of the chairperson to do all of that work alone.

Chairperson Lee stated he appreciated all the legwork Mr. Depp has done on the Market Street Trees Project and the Boat Ramp Project.

Chairperson Lee stated the Appearance Commission would begin discussing short-term and long-term plans at the next meeting. Mrs. Scott asked Mr. Davis if he could develop a project list for the Commission.

Tim Depp formally requested that Councilman Stevens be in attendance at the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

Being no further business, Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Peggy Scott, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:27pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Shannan L. Parrish  
Town Clerk