

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, March 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

Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson

Julia Narron

Mary Foy Ragsdale

Peggy Scott

Kaitlyn Tarley

Carmen Zepp

Councilman David Steven

Members Absent

Tim Depp

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

Chairperson Stuart Lee offered the invocation.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 15, 2022

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

Financial Report

Appearance Commission General Fund: \$22,083.00

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that \$10,000 had been earmarked for the mural project and \$5,000 had been earmarked for the large rocks at the boat ramp. \$6,000 was remaining for other projects the Commission could complete before the end of the fiscal year.

Donate-A-Tree: \$600.00

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the trees planted on Market Street and at the boat ramp will be earmarked as donated trees because they were chosen by the Appearance Commission. She explained the Public Works Department keeps a record of all the donated trees and when they have been planted. To date, 177 trees have been donated. There was a surplus of trees already planted that will also count towards additional donated trees. She explained the cost of the donation is \$100, but this does not cover the cost of the tree and the name plate for the plaque. The Commission decided it would continue with the project and supplement it with funds from the Appearance Commission's General Fund account.

Mrs. Scott further explained that one of the trees was donated by the Mermaids Swim Team in honor of a member of the team. They asked if they could choose the tree and install it themselves at the Recreation and Aquatics Center near the pool. Although this was not the norm, in this situation, it

seemed fitting. A previous donor asked if she could choose the place for her tree to be planted, Mrs. Scott told her to choose one of the newly planted trees at the boat ramp.

Carmen Zepp asked if donors could choose the location they wished to have their trees planted. Mrs. Scott responded, it would be difficult for the Appearance Commission to allow everyone to decide where they would like their tree planted, but for special circumstances, the request could be accommodated.

Chairperson Stuart Lee reminded the Commission of the “Light of the Community” project. He explained that there may still be a way to do this project in areas where there was already electrical connectivity.

JB George Fund: \$3763.06

JP George Fund: \$435.81

Opening Comments

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated that during the last meeting there was heated discussion concerning the Art Walk Project/mural and the direction of the Appearance Commission. He explained how the Art Walk became an Appearance Commission project. When he was appointed to the board, the Commission was talking about trees for Market Street. This then sparked the “Light of the Community” project where trees would be lighted in a logical path in honor of people who had served the community. When members of the Commission met with Town staff, it was determined the project would be too costly because of the electrical connections needed. Since everyone liked the idea, he began investigating other types of walking paths that would engage the public. The Art Walk was then proposed and approved by the Commission.

Chairperson Stuart Lee stated his goal as the Chairperson was to do everything he could do to keep approved projects moving forward until they were completed. He further stated the Commission has spent about 19% of the time talking about the Art Walk Project and the remaining time talking about landscaping projects. He stated it was never his intension for the Commission members to feel as though he was advocating for one project over another project. He asked for the Commission members to send ideas and topics of discussion; he would place them on the monthly agenda.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook reminded everyone that the Appearance Commission was a volunteer board. The members of the Commission should be respectful and kind to one another.

Election of Officers

Chairperson

Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Peggy Scott, to nominate and appoint Stuart Lee to serve as the Chairperson of the Appearance Commission. Unanimously approved.

Vice Chairperson

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Julia Narron, to nominate and appoint Robin Cook to serve as the Vice Chairperson of the Appearance Commission. Unanimously approved.

Public Works Breakfast

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook informed the members of the Appearance Commission the breakfast was a great event. Staff was very complementary and appreciative.

Mural Update

Chairperson Stuart Lee showed the members of the Appearance Commission several mural ideas provided by the artist. There was general discussion about the provided designs. Members of the Commission would like something that incorporated Smithfield specific items on the building located at Market and Fourth Streets.

Chairperson Stuart Lee indicated the Wellon's building on Market and Second Streets could incorporate the Town seal/logo. He indicated the next step would be to provide the artist with feedback from the Appearance Commission and the Wellons so she could incorporate some Smithfield specific items.

It was suggested that a second location could be done as a vinyl type wrap affixed to the building instead of painted on a building. This might lessen the cost. Vice Chairperson Robin Cook stated she would call Mike Fleming at Magic Mural to obtain a cost estimate to do a vinyl art wrap.

Chairperson Stuart Lee reminded the members of the Appearance Commission that the Art Walk was still a good idea. It would have community involvement and also bring people downtown. This project would happen in stages. The Appearance Commission could partner with the Johnston County Arts Council for this project.

Peggy Scott stated that she had spoken with the Town Manager to ascertain his opinion if the Appearance Commission was becoming an Art Council. In his opinion, it was fine for the Commission to incorporate some art, but it was important for the Commission to stay focused on the original intent of the Appearance Commission. That intent was outlined in the bylaws and the ordinance.

Chairperson Stuart Lee will provide the Art Walk project proposal to Carmen Zepp for review the of the plan and any suggested changes.

There was general discussion about displaying art on electrical boxes throughout Town. Julia Narron stated she thought that incorporating art on those might be a dangerous distraction to drivers. Chairperson Stuart Lee responded he would ask other Towns if they have had an issues. The Town would have to identify those electrical boxes that would not be a distraction to drivers.

Councilman David Stevens informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the Town received a state grant for rehabilitating the amphitheater. There may be opportunities to incorporate art in that area.

Names Plates – Trees

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Donate A Tree name plates have been ordered.

Adjournment

Being no further business, Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Carmen Zepp, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shannan L. Parrish

Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk