

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, April 19, 2022, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Stuart Lee – Chairperson (left at 5:05pm)
Robin Cook – Vice Chairperson
Tim Depp
Peggy Scott
Kaitlyn Tarley
Carmen Zepp

Members Absent

Julia Narron
Mary Foy Ragsdale
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.

Chairperson Stuart Lee explained to the members of the Appearance Commission that he had a prior engagement and would be leaving the meeting early. Vice Chairperson Robin Cook would preside in his absence.

Mural Discussion

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he and Vice Chairperson Robin Cook met with Mike Fleming about a potential mural on the side of Market and Second Street. She would discuss this in detail later in the meeting.

Chairperson Stuart Lee informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the latest designs by muralist Ashley Fabrizio had been received. He explained he had shared the pig design with over 100 people and received mostly positive feedback. He further explained that Town Manager Michael Scott was present to discuss the proper procedures needed for approval of the project.

Peggy Scott questioned if Ms. Fabrizio had provided any other design ideas. Chairperson Lee responded the pig design was the last one submitted. If the Appearance Commission wanted other design options (other than what she has already provided), they would have to begin paying her for her services.

{At this point in the meeting, Chairperson Stuart Lee departed and Vice Chairperson Robin Cook presided}

Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 15, 2022

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

Project Discussions with Town Manager Michael Scott

Mural Project

Town Manager Michael Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission there were some policies and procedures that had to be followed before approving a project of this magnitude. He explained that any project costing \$5,000 or more would have to be approved by the Town Council. He further explained the Council would like to see three quotes or documentation that bids were solicited from three different vendors/artists. Chairperson Stuart Lee had previously indicated to the Town Manager that he had spoken with eight different people concerning this project, but only one artist responded to his request. The Town Manager stated if the quote was less than \$5,000, the Appearance Commission did not need Council approval. If the quote was higher, the item would be placed on the Town Council agenda for consideration and approval. Someone from the Appearance Commission would need to attend the Council meeting so an explanation of the project could be provided.

Peggy Scott questioned if the Appearance Commission needed to make a recommendation to the Council about their design choice. The Town Manager responded the Appearance Commission would need to make a recommendation to the Council for project funding approval if the overall cost was \$5,000 or greater. He also indicated that it would be helpful to include the names of the other people Chairperson Stuart Lee had contacted for quotes. Staff would work with the Appearance Commission on the documentation needed for the Town Council agenda.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook questioned if a final cost had been submitted by Ms. Fabrizio. Peggy Scott responded that when she and Chairperson Lee met with Ms. Fabrizio, she estimated that a mural of that size would cost approximately \$10,000.

The Town Manager stated the Council would have interest in seeing the design of the mural. Peggy Scott responded she was interested to know the Council's feelings about the design.

Boat Ramp Boulders

Town Manager Michael Scott questioned when the large rocks at the boat ramp would be installed. Tim Depp responded his company was experiencing a staffing shortage and weather had also played a factor in the project being delayed. He further stated he planned on completing this project as soon as possible.

Management and Maintenance of the Boat Ramp Plantings

Town Manager Michael Scott stated he thought it was the intent of the Appearance Commission to pay for additional management and maintenance of the plants at the boat ramp, but that was not part of the contract. He explained if this was something the Appearance Commission wished to do, then a motion, second and a vote was needed. He further explained the Appearance Commission would need to know the price, the length of the maintenance agreement and when maintenance would begin.

Mural Discussion – Continued

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook asked about the maintenance of the mural after installation. Peggy Scott responded that Ms. Fabrizio would include all provided services in the proposal and agreement. She believed Ms. Fabrizio did guarantee her work, but she was unsure of the length of time.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook asked everyone to share their thoughts on the mural. She stated she liked the design.

Peggy Scott stated she had envisioned some sort of Smithfield specific collage. She did not expect the design to be a large pig. She explained this was going to be very visible on Market Street and while it was fun, it may not be the right location.

Carmen Zepp stated this was going to be one of many murals in Smithfield. She felt the Appearance Commission should move ahead with the project and investigate other designs for other locations at a later date.

Kaitlyn Tarley stated she was fine moving ahead with the pig design. She further stated if the members had strong feelings about it, the decision could be tabled for now.

Tim Depp stated the Appearance Commission could not present this to the Town Council without a quote. Kaitlyn Tarley responded she believed staff and the Town Council was waiting for the Appearance Commission to approved the proposed design.

Carmen Zepp made a motion, seconded by Kaitlyn Tarley, to approve the pig design provided by muralist Ashley Fabrizio to be installed on the side of the Wellons Building located on the corner of Market and North Fourth Street (mural would be on the North Fourth Street side of the building) pending the cost estimate. Unanimously approved.

Kaitlyn Tarley made a motion, seconded by Carmen Zepp, to approve sending the design, proposal and contract to the Town Council for approval once a cost estimate has been obtained if the cost estimate is greater than \$5,000 but less than the \$10,000 budgeted by the Appearance Commission for this project. Unanimously approved.

Brainstorming

Kaitlyn Tarley suggested the Appearance Commission hold a project brainstorming session one Saturday in May. The Appearance Commission could develop a list of projects and then prioritize those projects. Peggy Scott responded that since the Appearance Commission meetings were open to the public, any extra meeting would have to be properly noticed to the public.

Signage Building on the Corner of Second and Market Streets

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she and Chairperson Stuart Lee met with Mike Fleming of Magic Murals regarding the possibility of doing a vinyl mural on the Wellons Law Office building. She explained this item would be discussed in detail at the next meeting. Mr. Fleming did indicate that the vinyl mural could last three to five years. He further stated a vinyl mural at that location would endure some weathering due to sun exposure.

New landscape project ideas

Below is a list of idea provided by Tim Depp

1) *power washing of all downtown business district sidewalks and curbs. From what I gather this hasn't been done in quite some time. There is gum, old locating paint and general dirt and grime that need to be removed.*

1a) *also, it would do wonders to have our sidewalks blown free of debris and trash each morning. Several other small towns have this service and I believe it would really help with cleanliness.*

- 2) *painting of curbs (yellow) in handicap areas as well as fire hydrant areas. Also has not been completed in a very long time.*
- 3) *removal of stickers from light poles in the downtown business district.*
- 4) *painting of light poles in the downtown area. Several have faded and look terrible.*
- 5) *communicating with the fire department about painting fire hydrants around town. They have a budget for this. Maybe they need a nudge. They would look really nice all shiny and new.*
- 6) *obtaining black trash cans for downtown. The metal surrounds are black and the cans are blue. They should match.*
- 7) *proper weed treatments to all trees within downtown area that are located in metal grates. There should be no vegetation visible.*
- 8) *communicating with parks and rec to ensure the entrance to the town park near the SRAC is maintained to a higher standard. (This is the same as a neighborhood entrance and we should set the bar high)*
- 9) *communicate with parks and rec or the police chief about towing cars which are left on town property and advertised as "for sale".*
- 10) *there is a plant bed near the Neuse River bridge that has been half mulched for over 6 months. This should be completed asap.*
- 11) *there was some juniper that was removed in the median leaving town (headed north on 70). It was then replaced but the damage from the machinery was not repaired and the holes left behind are now collecting water. Also, there are several other areas where replacements are needed, is this scheduled?*
- 12) *the appearance commission project of enhancing the landscape under the railroad bridge is advertised on our town page. This area now looks very bad, we should either redo this area or at the very least have it removed from our webpage.*
- 13) *NCSU is donating up to 6 trees for every Bradford pear tree that is removed. It is their Bradford pear "bounty" program. This town is littered with Bradford pear trees. I'd like to see a program to remove them and obtain these free trees from the university.*
- 14) *the fencing along the greenway near the town commons park was discussed and has recently been left off the agenda. I'd like to see this discussed again until we can come to a conclusion. The current temporary fence does not reflect the quality of the park we promote to visitors.*
- 15) *since we are not only responsible for the downtown area of our town but rather the entire town, I'd like to see a program implemented for "property of the month". If we wish to promote community pride, we should reward our residents who work hard to create beautiful places with public recognition. – This has been done, but it didn't go well.*
- 16) *flower pots along market street and 3rd street were also discussed in our meeting and have now been left off the agenda. Could we please bring this back up again? I have spoken to several*

business owners who would like to see them. Perhaps we could work with business owners to maintain/water them?

- 17) since we are going to expand our town to incorporate the Amazon and newly approved neighborhood area across the highway, I believe we should begin discussing a plan to beautify the median to that limit. The landscaped areas stop well short of there. Again, the beautification of our town should begin at the outer bands and work its way into the downtown corridor.*
- 18) have we run a public campaign for the donate a tree program? We should ask the town of Smithfield to promote this through their social media platforms. We still have numerous places for trees within our parks and roadsides.*
- 19) has the appearance commission discussed starting social media accounts? It would give our board a way to promote our ideas, poll our residents and advocate for the overall improvement in the appearance of our town.*

Number 13: Kaitlyn Tarley will investigate this program or any other similar programs.

Number 14: Peggy Scott stated she talked with Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson concerning the fencing at the boat ramp project. Unfortunately, Parks and Recreation does not have sufficient funds to complete this project. The top section of fencing adjacent to the parking lot would cost approximately \$3,800. The other two sections at the bottom of the hill would cost approximately \$8,000. Tim Depp explained the fencing he was referencing in this item, was the fencing along the riverbank. It needed to be replaced to match the existing fencing.

Peggy Scott explained when the Appearance Commission originally discussed the Boat Ramp Project, she thought the Commission also wanted the contractor to maintain the plants. She did not understand what the maintenance plan would entail or how much it would cost. Tim Depp explained crews would go to the site weekly and spray for weeds and water the plants. He further stated he would have to develop an estimate for maintenance of the landscaping. Peggy Scott asked if the plants would be guaranteed for a year. Tim Depp responded they were only guaranteed if his company maintained them, but that was never approved in the original contract. Peggy Scott stated Parks and Recreation crews would clean up the area.

Carmen Zepp questioned why Parks and Recreation was not maintaining this area. Peggy Scott responded this project was a joint effort among Parks and Recreation, the Appearance Commission and the Johnston County Visitor's Bureau. The Appearance Commission agreed to assist with this project because it was a beautification project and the Commission had funds that could be used for it. Peggy Scott also stated that Parks and Recreation, like Public Works, has a limited number of employees and a lot of areas around Town to maintain. Kaitlyn Tarley questioned if the Appearance Commission should prioritize paying for the plant maintenance at the Boat Ramp.

Vice Chairperson Robin Cook made a motion, seconded by Peggy Scott, to request a quote from Grounds One Landscaping for the maintenance of the plant material associated with the Boat Ramp Project. Unanimously approved.

Carmen Zepp questioned if the maintenance plan begin on the date of the planting or the date of the contract approval. Tim Depp responded the maintenance period would be from the date the

contract was approved. He further explained that any plant that has perished will have to be replaced at a cost. He would provide a list of all plantings that need to be replaced.

Number 16 – Peggy Scott stated the Appearance Commission has talked about this idea. She questioned if there was a way to have the business owners purchase the planters and materials and the Appearance Commission reimburse them. Tim Depp responded this was a successful program in other communities, but it only works if all the planters and material are purchased at the same time and the planters are maintained by a landscaping contractor. He further stated that he would like to see these kinds of projects priced out. Not necessarily approved or funded, but it was important to know the cost of the overall project. If the project was not funded by the Appearance Commission, it could possibly be included in the Town's annual budget. Vice Chairperson Robin Cook stated she would investigate this project.

Number 19 – Carmen Zepp with contact Marketing and Communications Specialist Brian Eaves about the Appearance Commission having their own social media account. Kaitlyn Tarley agreed there needed to be more marketing efforts.

Number 18 – Shannan Parrish will speak with Marketing and Communications Specialist Brian Eaves about this project.

Numbers 1,2,3 and 6 – Lawrence Davis stated he would work with Town staff on these ideas.

Number 7 – Lawrence Davis stated he would speak to the Town's landscaping contractor about this issue.

Number 17 – Kaitlyn Tarley stated she would work on this project. Tim Depp stated the area in question look terrible. Staff informed the Appearance Commission that there were two separate accidents in that area which damaged the landscaping. Staff was working with the insurance companies to have the landscaping replaced.

Lawrence Davis suggested the Appearance Commission consider replacing the remaining Crepe Myrtle Trees on Market Street with European Hornbeams.

Tim Depp questioned if the Town's landscaping contractor had provided the Town with a plant material audit. Lawrence Davis responded he would ask for the contractor for that information.

Tim Depp explained the entrance to the Community Park looks terrible. A lot of the plant material is dead and the weeds need to be treated. He further stated there were ball fields that also needed some attention. It was suggested that a list of Appearance related issues be made for the Parks and Recreation Department. Tim Depp stated the Appearance Commission should be responsible for the appearance of the Town. If something needs attention, the Appearance Commission should be able to contact the appropriate department. Vice Chairperson Robin Cook stated the Appearance Commission needed to prioritize any issues because there was a limited number of staff that could perform the work. Tim Depp responded if the Appearance Commission noticed items that needed to be addressed, they could possibly be provided to the Town for inclusion in the budget.

Peggy Scott stated that two item that needed to be discussed at the next meeting was the boat ramp fencing and the maintenance agreement for the boat ramp plantings

Donate – A – Tree Nameplates

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Donate A Tree name plates are now \$40 each.

Adjournment

Being no further business, Kaitlyn Tarley made a motion, seconded by Carmen Zepp, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannan L. Parrish". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Shannan L. Parrish
Town Clerk