

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Monday, June 2, 2025 at 5:35 in the Town Hall Conference room located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Kaitlyn Tarley – Chairperson  
Emery Ashley, Jr. – Vice Chair  
Michelle Choe  
Carmen Zepp  
Pam Yelle

Members Absent

Robin Cook  
Sharon Lynch  
Julia Narron

Staff Present

Elaine Andrews – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Lawrence Davis – Public Works Director

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley called the meeting to order at 5:20 pm.

**Bridge Mural**

The board discussed the proposals for the bridge mural project. Kaitlyn Tarley, Board Chair, explained that they had received proposals from two artists: Magen Pike and Max Dowdle. A third artist Kelly Crocker, Tarley mentioned was a filler proposal. Vice Chair Emery Ashley, Jr. stated there was also another artist who was unable to get a bid in. The board focused their discussion on Magen's design concept.

Emery Ashley Jr., Vice Chair, mentioned that he had spoken with Magen and gathered that her design concept was more extensive than what was shown in the idea presented at the meeting. He explained that Magen's design would incorporate different water level rises and local history. However, they also discussed the merits of Max's proposal, which included anti-UV and anti-graffiti coating with a 10-year guarantee.

The board members expressed some concerns about the linear nature of the design concept as presented in the proposal by Magen Pike. Pam Yelle, a Board Member, suggested that the design should blend better with the surrounding nature and incorporate more green elements. Board Member, Carmen Zepp expressed some support for the segmented design concept, suggesting it might look nice with the landscape.

The board discussed the potential for incorporating educational elements into the mural, such as flood levels, a nod to the *Mountains to Sea Trail* or local history. They also considered the possibility of having multiple segments or sections within the mural design.

Regarding the artists, the board initially leaned towards choosing Magen to highlight a variety of local attributes. The board decided to move forward with selecting Magen as the artist but agreed that they needed more clarity on the design. They planned to request a more detailed design proposal and potentially meet with Magen to discuss design elements further.

It was noted that the Town Manager earmarked \$10,000 from Tourism Funds to fund the mural project, and the Appearance Commission would supplement the remaining monies necessary for the project, with perhaps an additional \$10,000, leaving room for negotiations. It was noted that Magen Pike's proposal was \$18,000, and Max Dowdle's proposal was \$12,000, so the Board may only need fund either an additional \$8,000, or \$2,000. Also, that since the Board had no additional plans for their fiscal year funds, they could justify cost to go with either artist. It was noted that Magen's proposal email did include a 5-year maintenance with pressure washing.

There was also discussion regarding the spring along the trail that causes flooding and is getting worse; issues that have been brought to the Town's attention.

*Motion: Carmen moved to select Magen Pike as the artist for the bridge mural project, financing the full amount of her proposal, and reserving the right to request more clarity on the design. Emery Ashley Jr. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Vote on Artist**

This item was addressed as part of the discussion on the Bridge Mural.

### **Record Any Particular Design Ideas**

The board discussed several design ideas and preferences for the mural:

- Incorporating nature themes and blending with the surrounding environment
- Including educational elements about local history and flood levels
- Considering a design that incorporates the "Mountains to Sea Trail" elements across the different sections of the bridge
- Ensuring the design is not too linear and incorporates more organic elements
- Possibly including multiple segments or sections within the overall mural design
- Requesting a mock-up of the design on the actual bridge space
- Incorporating benches
- Assuring measurements for the design takes up the entire space

The board agreed to communicate these ideas to Magen and request more detailed design proposals for further discussion. It was also discussed to obtain clarity from the artist for how any design changes from what was presented would affect cost. Emery Ashley, Jr. stated he would reach out to Magen Pike on behalf of the Board.

There was also discussion to meet in quorum for the June meeting to discuss approval of the mural design. It was discussed to obtain renderings from the artist to select from or to perhaps incorporate a TEAMS virtual meeting to discuss the project with the artist.

### **Discuss and Vote on Remaining Funds**

The board discussed the allocation of remaining funds after the mural project. Kaitlyn Tarley informed the board that they would have approximately \$10,000 remaining in their budget after allocating funds for the mural.

The primary discussion centered around purchasing trash cans for Parks and Recreation. Gary Johnson of Parks and Recreation, had requested funding for 12 trash cans. The estimated cost was around \$8,500 to \$9,000 for all 12 trash cans.

The board members discussed the need for trash cans in various locations, including along the greenway and near benches. They also mentioned the possibility of getting trash cans with lids to prevent issues with squirrels and other animals. It was also discussed to possibly add decorative elements such as plaques for trash cans and benches.

*Carmen Zepp moved to approve funding for 12 trash cans, with an estimated cost of up to \$9,000. The motion was seconded by Pam Yelle. The motion passed unanimously.*

After allocating funds for the trash cans, the board discussed using the remaining funds. It was discussed to add trees along the Greenway by the Town's water plant for shading. It was also discussed to earmark approximately \$2,000, for an alleyway installation project. This project would involve creating an artistic installation in one of the alleyways downtown, such as hanging umbrellas.

*Michelle Choe moved to earmark the remaining funds, approximately \$2,000, for the alleyway installation project. The motion was seconded by Carmen Zepp. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Trash Cans for Parks and Rec**

This item was addressed as part of the discussion on remaining funds.

### **Alleyway Installation**

This item was addressed as part of the discussion on remaining funds.

### **Closing Remarks**

Before adjourning the meeting, the board discussed the following additional items:

- The need to update or redo the "Okie" installation
- The possibility of having Magen present her design proposals at the next meeting
- Emery Ashley Jr. agreed to reach out to Magen about initial designs
- Kaitlyn Tarley agreed to contact Gary about the trash cans and reach out to DSDC about the alleyway installation project

### **Adjourn**

*Emery Ashley moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Michelle Choe and unanimously approved.*

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:26 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Elaine S. Andrews  
Town Clerk

