

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 5:30 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
Carmen Zepp
Pam Yelle
Julia Narron

Members Absent

Elizabeth Baker
Sharon Lynch
Luke Stancil
Michelle Choe

Staff Present

Elaine Andrews - Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Lawrence Davis - Public Works Director

Also Present

Heidi Gilmond, DSDC
Mary Nell Ferguson

Call to Order

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm.

III: Idates:

Progress on Bridge Mural - Vandalism and Concerns

Board Chair Kaitlyn Tarley opened the meeting with updates on the bridge mural's progress and addressed minor incidents of vandalism reported by the artist. Tarley suggested installing a security camera. She asked the Board if there were any ideas that may help limit these occurrences. Pam Yelle recommended adding signage to disguise the cameras. The issue of clogged weeping holes contributing to dirt and leaking on the mural was also mentioned. A suggestion was made to reach out to the Town's Public Works Department, who may be able to check. Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation Director Heidi Gilmond stated that the issue of security may fall under Parks and Recreation, and suggested the Board start with that department for inquiries.

Board Vacancies:

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley announced Michelle Choe's departure from the Board and discussed advertising commission vacancies. Kaitlyn encouraged interested individuals to apply, suggesting social media outreach.

Budget Updates

Trash cans for Parks & Rec

There was discussion regarding planter installations, and whether the fall installation was paid as reflected from the budget. It was also discussed to install more perennials to help trim the budget for planters.

Mural Project Invoicing and Payment

Vice Chair Emery Ashley observed that although the artist (Megan) had prepared and was ready to buy materials for the mural, payment to her was delayed because she had to wait for additional requests or documentation from the town before funds were released. Emery felt this created some awkwardness and asked for clarification so similar delays could be avoided in the future. Board Chair Kaitlyn Tarley admitted she was also unfamiliar with the proper process. The Board was in general agreement on the need to clarify

invoicing and advance payment procedures to prevent similar delays in payment and payment remittance confusion in future projects.

Board Chair Kaitlyn Tarley mentioned that there was \$8,000 earmarked for the purchase of trash cans in the current fiscal budget. It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with no change with that amount.

Tarley also stated money allocated this year will go towards the fall plantings, trash cans and the alleyway project. She noted funds could be reallocated if the Board chose to fund projects like "Donated by the Smithfield Appearance Commission" signage or a mural aspect.

Action Items:

Projects for upcoming fiscal year

- *Alley Installation*

Ms. Mary Nell Ferguson introduced plans for the 3rd Street alleyway improvement. She described design concepts including lighting, art, plants, and engaging local property owners. Ferguson also elaborated on landscaping, adding benches, and the benefits for the community. Some Board members asked that the location be specified, and requested clarity for current use of the space. Ferguson stated this was the alley as you walk up from the Howell Theatre towards 3rd Street in Downtown Smithfield. Heidi Gilmond stated to start, the area would have to be cleaned up, landscaped and sidewalks done. She further affirmed opportunities for broader collaboration, and talking with the Hobbs and other property owners for possibly installing a mural or decorative umbrellas. She stated the Downtown Development Corporation will support this project, with the ulterior motive being to activate 3rd Street. Gilmond also discussed various future proposed projects and businesses proposed for downtown both retail and eateries.

Vice Chair Emory Ashley asked Gilmond where the Town of Smithfield ranked with regards to ease of startup for new businesses. He compared the Town's growth to that of Wendell, asking if Gilmond felt that Town development takes longer with perhaps more red tape, and if this issue was exclusive to Smithfield. Gilmond stated she did not think this was exclusive to Smithfield, and invited members to be part of the *Economic Vitality Committee*, who are exploring these questions for possible improvements.

Chairperson Tarley thanked Gilmond and Ferguson for attending the meeting, and their input regarding the beautification of Downtown Smithfield.

- *Donate-A-Tree*

The Board discussed possible locations for Donate-A-Tree plantings. There was input for suitable locations near Town Hall, the Library Corner, and along the Greenway. Tarley indicated the need to confirm tree-planting specifics with Lawrence and coordinate further opportunities for planting and signage improvement. It was also mentioned that a tree could perhaps be installed at the new Library pocket park.

Board member Pam Yelle made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman Emory Ashley, Jr. to install one Donate-A-Tree purchase outside Town Hall, and to incorporate any additional trees into the library pocket park design. Unanimously approved.

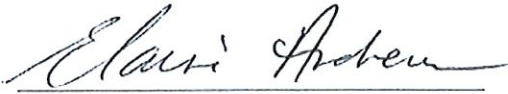
Tarley stated she would email town staff regarding these installations. Further discussion was held regarding the potential installation of additional trees and signage along the Greenway near the Town's Water Plant. The Board reached a consensus to keep this area under consideration for future improvements, noting that it is currently not visually appealing.

Adjourn:

Pam Yelle made a motion, seconded by Emery Ashley to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:15pm. Unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:



Elaine Andrews, Town Clerk

