

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 5:30 pm in the Town Hall Conference room located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Pam Yelle – Vice Chairperson
Julia Narron
Christina Arena
Monica Price

Members Absent

Donovan Radley - Chairperson

Staff Present

Elaine Andrews – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

Lawrence Davis – Public Works Director

Also, Present

Doris Wallace – Councilwoman District 4
Michael Sliger – Public Works Supervisor

Call to Order

Vice Chairperson Pam Yelle called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes

The Board discussed approval of minutes from the meetings of March 10, 2026. Upon review the following motion was made.

Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Pam Yelle to approve the minutes of March 10, 2026. Unanimously approved.

Review of Financials:

The Board discussed having received financial reporting information from the town's new finance director, Tracy Stubblefield. They acknowledged having at least \$8,000 on hand even after the set aside final payment of 3,785 to the mural artist, Magen Pike, upon completion of work.

Appearance Commission Mission Statement

Vice Chairperson Pam Yelle recited the mission statement for the Board. She stated the Appearance Commission works to enhance the town's visual quality and aesthetic character, foster neighborhood pride, and promote an attractive, welcoming community. Its efforts include projects (such as community gardens), beautification around key areas (like the Greytown sign), improvements to entrances and signage, tree planting and landscaping, and supporting clean, well-maintained public spaces through measures (like strategically placed trash cans) and anti-littering initiatives.

Old Business: Flood line Mural:

The first agenda item was the flood line mural. Yelle reported that the artist Magen Pike (Mural artist) had worked on it during her spring break, and that Chairperson Donovan Radley had previously confirmed an April 30 deadline, which Magen had agreed to, despite her work schedule. Pam Yelle noted that both she and Donovan had offered additional help, but Magen preferred to finish it herself, and Yelle asked what recourse the commission would have if it is not completed by April 30. It was noted that Magen would not receive the remaining payment until the work is finished, and that this is a question for Kim Pickett, the Interim Town Manager. It was discussed that an alternative may be to hire someone else with the remaining funds. In response to a question, by Christina Arena, Yelle confirmed that the final completion extension date had been communicated formally by email. It was also noted that there is no formal contract which has been a learning experience in that future projects will be handled with

written contracts. The Board discussed that the next step is to check with Kim Pickett about what happens if the April 30 deadline passes.

Greytown Sign Update:

The Board discussed the Greytown sign. It was noted that the sign now looks nice with the correct spelling. The group then reiterated plans to enhance the area around the sign by adding two shrubs on either side, installing lighting in front to spotlight it and provide some shade, and, if possible, placing one or two benches with a small trellis nearby, depending on what funding and resources are available. It was discussed whether it was confirmed where the Greenway extension route was in relation to the new sign.

The commission next discussed the Greytown area and its relationship to the planned Greenway extension. Yelle noted Public Works Director, Lawrence Davis had previously agreed to check where the new Greenway route would run near the Greytown extension. It was discussed Lawrence would need to follow up with the Planning Department, potentially with the new planning director, Brent Reck for this information.

Members then wondered whether Planning might incorporate improvements to the Greenway into their budget, with Councilwoman Doris Wallace pointing out that each department has its own budget and cannot easily add another department's costs. Improvements would likely need to come from the Appearance Commission's funds. The group observed that benches on the Greenways of sidewalks downtown have often come from town projects paid for by the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation (DSDC), or community donations. Councilwoman Wallace volunteered to ask the Rotary Club about donating a bench.

There was discussion for the Commission to install landscaping, with planting and shrubbery around the Greytown sign area. Councilwoman Wallace agreed to spearhead the effort by identifying suitable shrubs and estimating costs, with the understanding that any proposal would need to be brought back for possible inclusion in the budget. The group emphasized selecting bushes and flowers that are attractive and maintainable, and noted that Donovan has a prepared list and plan for appropriate plantings. Members agreed that once cost related information was obtained, they could formally review and vote on the project.

Town Community Garden Project:

The Commission discussed the 5th Street Community Garden. It was noted by Councilwoman Doris Wallace that WRAL will donate more of the same plants already used there, but not until September. It was reported that on a prior drive-by the garden did not look good there was a pile of trash along the side; more recently, this trash has now been cleaned up, and the site is ready for planting. Water access was clarified: there is a faucet with long hoses on-site, and a volunteer comes in the mornings to water. Some mums appear dead, but it was suggested they may recover with regular watering and pruning. The group asked who picks up trash from the site and was told that the town will collect it on the regular route day for that area (Tuesday), provided it is placed by the road and staff are notified. The group agreed on placing the new rollout near the fence by the garden boxes. Soil for planting is supplied through a request to the Public Works department, and cost is covered by an existing budget. Wallace also noted that she obtains seeds paid for by a grant.

Greenway Signs:

The commission then discussed the deteriorated Greenway signs. Pam Yelle reported that she had spoken with Gary (Parks & Recreation Director), who said the large angled wooden signs could be removed if the commission wished, and noted that they are now so weathered and unreadable that she had seen a mother and child squinting to try to read them. Gary is planning to take them out entirely, leaving no signs there, which prompted discussion about whether new vertical signs might be installed instead. Members observed that the metal frames for new signs would be costly, and although the existing signs have plexiglass covers, they are still badly weathered; it is unclear whether the damage is to the plexiglass or the signs themselves, and cleaning attempts have not helped. The group suggested there might be grant provisions related to Greenway signage, possibly involving DOT or state greenway authorities, but no members or staff were certain who originally funded or produced the signs, nor the information on the signs—now too illegible to reproduce. Yelle shared that she had previously contacted Sound Rivers, a

Development on beautification, likely focusing on plantings and other aesthetic improvements on Third Street since Market Street itself is controlled by DOT. Members also noted that a new bar district has been approved and a cocktail bar is planned, and discussed the need for more continuous sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, and accessibility ramps—some of which have already been added in recent years—to improve walkability and the overall downtown experience.

Signage in Town:

The commission then discussed town signage. It was noted that a new directional sign on Market Street incorrectly points to the boat ramp and that a "Historic North Smithfield" sign near North Second between Bridge and Market is badly deteriorated, though its frame matches other historic markers around town. Public Works agreed to inspect both the incorrect boat-ramp sign and the damaged historic sign and report back on needed action. Michael Sliger also mentioned a historical sign is being newly erected in front of brick apartment buildings near the *Hills of Snow* location in Smithfield. Members also discussed the restored Freedman Schoolhouse on Fourth Street, noting that it is the oldest African American schoolhouse in the area and is being prepared for a June dedication, yet currently has no identifying sign. It was suggested that the Historic Commission (through Todd) likely oversees such markers; staff confirmed they typically install historic signs at his request. Member, Christina Arena agreed to ask Todd whether a sign is planned for the Freedman Schoolhouse.

Annual Litter Sweep:

The final item on the agenda was the town litter sweep scheduled for April 25. Members noted that volunteers from the Appearance Commission plan to help clean up under the bridge across the river, where conditions are currently very bad. It was explained that participants will meet first at Parks and Rec, which will coordinate locations (including Wallace Park and other sites), provide bags and supplies—some obtained through DOT—and organize smaller community pickup groups, while Parks and Rec may oversee the larger effort.

Before adjournment, it was also reported that plaques for two donated trees (one for former Town Manager, Michael Scott) have been installed, and that two additional trees are expected to be planted on North Street in the coming month, likely replacing trees recently removed near the park.

Adjourn:

There being no further business, Julia Narron made a motion, seconded by Pam Yelle to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:38 pm. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted:


Elaine Andrews, Town Clerk



