

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 5:00 in the Town Hall Council Chambers located at 350 East Market Street, Smithfield, North Carolina.

Members Present

Kaitlyn Tarley – Chairperson  
Emery Ashley, Jr. – Vice Chairperson  
Michelle Choe  
Robin Cook  
Sharon Lynch  
Peggy Scott

Members Absent

Elizabeth Baker  
Carmen Zepp

Staff Present

Michael Scott – Town Manager  
Lawrence Davis – Public Works Director  
Gary Johnson – Parks and Recreation Director  
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley called the meeting to order at 5:08 pm

**Invocation**

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis offered the invocation.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2023 & February 21, 2023**

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr., to approve the minutes of the January and February meetings as submitted. Unanimously approved.

**Financial Report**

**Appearance Commission General Fund: \$27,671.82**

**Donate-A-Tree: \$ 717.99**

**JB George Fund: \$ - 130.41**

**JP George Fund: \$ 566.52**

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission there was a \$210 charge for mulch purchased on January 4, 2023 taken from the JB George Fund. She asked Public Works Director Lawrence Davis to investigate this charge because she could not recall the Commission approving this expenditure from the JB George Fund.

Emery Ashley, Jr. questioned the mulch expense. Mr. Davis stated he would investigate the matter further because it could have simply been an invoice coding error. Mr. Ashley questioned if this happened often. Mr. Davis responded this was a rare occurrence.

**Agenda Items**

**Welcome Sharon Lynch**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley welcomed Sharon Lynch to the Appearance Commission.

### **Other Business**

Town Manager Michael Scott expressed his appreciation to the members of the Appearance Commission for their dedication to beautifying Smithfield. He explained that budget discussions were beginning and the Commission has been carrying over funds for several years. Currently, there was over \$27,000 in the Commission's General Account and the Commission was due to receive another \$15,000 on July 1<sup>st</sup> (the start of the new fiscal year). He encouraged the Commission to develop a project or projects that could be completed in six-months so current funding could be expended.

### **Updates**

#### **Plantings Around 95 Signage**

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed the members of the Appearance Commission the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a landscaping architect had been advertised. Those RFQ's were due by March 30<sup>th</sup>. As of the meeting, Mr. Davis had not received any responses to the RFQ.

Peggy Scott suggested allowing Mr. Davis to move forward with soliciting a landscape architect in the event that no one responded to the RFQ.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. made a motion, seconded by Peggy Scott, to allow Public Works Director Lawrence Davis to solicit landscape architects for the 95 Signs landscaping project if no bids/RFQs were received by the March 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Unanimously approved.

#### **Maintenance for Appearance Commission Projects**

Peggy Scott questioned if the Appearance Commission wanted to consider being financially responsible for the maintaining the Commission's completed projects. Specifically, if the projects needed mulch replacement. She questioned if the Commission wanted to be responsible for that ongoing expense.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. responded he felt the Appearance Commission would be opening the door to ongoing expenses. He stated he was not opposed to assisting the Public Works Department if they needed mulch when the budget for mulch was depleted. Mrs. Scott agreed.

#### **Boat Ramp**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley informed the members of the Appearance Commission she spoke with Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson about the expired plants. He informed her that all of the plants that needed to be replaced had been replaced. She also informed the Commission that Mr. Johnson would be attending this meeting a little later.

Peggy Scott stated some of the plants have been replaced by bushes. She questioned if the Commission was in favor of those substitutions or if the Commission would like to plant some additional flowers in the area.

Robin Cook stated she was not opposed to planting flowers at the boat ramp, but would like the Appearance Commission to focus on maintaining or paying for someone to maintain the plants at the boat ramp since the Commission spent so much on the overall project.

### **Trial and Error Garden Club**

President Mary Nell Ferguson introduced herself and Allison Elsee, two members of the Trial and Error Garden Club. She explained their garden club had been in existence since 1963 and they were trying to find ways to beautify Smithfield. The club wanted to collaborate their efforts with the Appearance Commission since the goal of both organizations was to make Smithfield more beautiful. Mr. Elsee would be hosting a meeting at her home on April 20<sup>th</sup> and asked if anyone from the Appearance Commission would be willing to attend. Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. agreed to attend the Trial and Error Garden Club's meeting.

Peggy Scott stated the members of the Garden Club may have some beautification ideas that they would be willing to share with the Appearance Commission. Also, the club has a wealth of knowledge they could also share with the commission

### **Action Items**

#### **Project Planning**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley suggested the Appearance Commission have a goal setting meeting whereby specific projects could be identified. Projects that could be completed within six months.

Sharon Lynch suggested reaching out to the High School or to Johnston Community College to ascertain if the Appearance Commission could work with some of the clubs that could assist with plantings or help with the maintenance of some of the Appearance Commissions completed projects.

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis suggested that someone should reach out to Doris Wallace since she oversaw the Community Garden. There may be a way for the Appearance Commission to collaborate with the volunteers at the Community Garden.

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed the Commission that there was a Councilmember that would really like to have the Bradford Pear trees removed from Second Street. Replacing those trees may be a potential project for the Commission.

#### **Town Hall Planter**

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation (DSDC) would be installing 30 planters in the downtown area. They also included three planters for Town Hall. The DSDC will hire a landscaping company to plant and maintain all of the planters except for the Town Hall planters. Staff will be responsible for maintaining those.

#### **College Pond Trail Additions**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley discussed with Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson on his vision for the trail and the amphitheater. She questioned how the Appearance Commission could supplement his vision and efforts.

Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson informed the members of the Appearance Commission the 1.2-mile trail was a two-part trail system which circled around Smith Collins Park to a crosswalk, over to the splash pad and then circled around the pond across from the

Community College. He stated there were opportunities for beautification projects in the area. The biggest needs were benches, trash receptacles, and trees. Trash receptable and benches typically cost \$600 a piece. He estimated needing eight benches and six trash receptacles. He further suggested planting trees to line parts of the trail. He stated there were plans for benches and a shade structure once the splash pad expansion project was completed.

Peggy Scott questioned if there were any plans for a picnic area near the pond. Mr. Johnson responded there were plans for a shelter behind the splash pad, but there was currently no funding for that project.

Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the Amphitheater was scheduled to be completed by May 6<sup>th</sup> for the Ham and Yam Festival. He stated there was a landscape plan for the area and he felt that was sufficient.

Peggy Scott questioned if there was a water source in the area for a nice flowerbed or some plantings. Mr. Johnson responded there was not a water source.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley stated the pond trail and the amphitheater appeared to be good potential projects for the Commission. She questioned if adding trees would need to be completed in a certain period of time. Mr. Johnson responded he felt it would be best to wait until the amphitheater project was completed. Once completed, then additional trees and landscaping could be discussed.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley stated there had been some discussion about the potential for some public art behind the amphitheater along the greenway. Mr. Johnson responded that area would be a perfect location for public art. The Commission could collaborate with the Arts Council, the Community College or area schools.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. questioned if there were any plans for benches on Front Street at the top of the hill facing the amphitheater. Mr. Johnson responded any benches installed in that area would have to face the road because of the slope of the bank.

#### **Water Plant Berm**

Peggy Scott suggested the Appearance Commission consider additional planting on the berm since there were only trees planted at the top of the berm. She further suggested planting larger evergreens staggered along the hill side of the berm.

#### **Spring Clean Up**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley reminded the members of the Appearance Commission of the Spring Clean Up event on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> from 9 am until 12 pm. Participants will begin at the boat ramp and branch out from there. Also, there will be a Town wide litter sweep on April 22<sup>nd</sup> beginning at each of the Town Parks.

#### **JB George Advertisement**

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish reminded the members of the Appearance Commission the advertisement for the JB George Fund would be advertised in the Johnstonian News in April.

#### **Adjourn**

Having no further business, Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. made a motion, seconded by Michelle Choe, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:12 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannan L. Parrish". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Shannan L. Parrish  
Town Clerk