

The Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission met on Tuesday, April 18, 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  
Elizabeth Baker  
Michelle Choe  
Sharon Lynch  
Peggy Scott

Members Absent

Robin Cook  
Carmen Zepp

Staff Present

Lawrence Davis – Public Works Director (joined at 5:35pm)  
Gary Johnson – Parks and Recreation Director (joined at 5:35pm)  
Shannan Parrish – Town Clerk

Staff Absent

**Call to Order**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley called the meeting to order at 5:06 pm

**Invocation**

Peggy Scott offered the invocation.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2023**

Elizabeth Baker made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr., to approve the minutes of the March 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**

**Agenda Items**

**Updates**

**Litter Sweep (4/22)**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley reminded everyone about the Town-wide litter sweep to be held on April 22, 2023.

**Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. to Meet with the Garden Club (4/20)**

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he would attend the Trial-and-Error Gardens Club meeting on April 20<sup>th</sup>. He asked for any suggestions in which the Appearance Commission could collaborate with the Club.

Peggy Scott asked if the Garden Club could provide input/suggestions for the Market Street trees in case the European Hornbeams did not live.

Elizabeth Baker informed the members of the Appearance Commission that she was a member of the Down to Earth Garden Club. She stated that garden club would provide plant guidance and offer some project funding. She further informed the members that DSDC Executive Director Sarah Edwards would be speaking to the garden club on the planters that were being installed in the downtown area.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. suggested inviting members of the Trial-and-Error Garden club to attend the Appearance Commission's monthly meetings. Peggy Scott further suggested that one of the garden club members may be interested in serving on the Appearance Commission.

#### **Donate- A-Tree and Ordering Brochures**

Peggy Scott informed the members of the Appearance Commission that several years ago, brochures were placed in various locations. Locations included: funeral homes, the hospital and the Hospice House. She suggested that a member of the Appearance Commission visit these places to determine if more brochures were needed. She explained that when the brochures were last ordered, the Appearance Commission increased the price of the donation from \$50 to \$100. This was due to the increased cost of the tree and the name plate. Tree donations have greatly declined since the pandemic. Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley stated she could develop a list of potential places in which the brochures could be displayed. Once all brochures have been passed out, the commission will reevaluate ordering more.

#### **The passing of Robert (Bob) Worsham**

Town Clerk Shannan Parrish informed the members of the Appearance Commission that long time Appearance Commission member and past chairman, Bob Worsham, had recently passed away. Peggy Scott suggested that the Appearance Commission donate a tree in his memory for his service to the Appearance Commission.

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr., to donate a tree in memory of Bob Worsham. Unanimously approved.

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

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he did not receive any bids for the landscaping for the I-95 signage. Since that has been advertised twice, the commission can reach out to landscape architects for designs and cost estimates.

### **Project Proposals/ Votes**

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

Benches (8), waste receptacles (6), shade structures, trees

#### **Amphitheatre**

Benches, waste receptacles, shade structures, trees  
can vote, but proposed to postpone until they finish (5/6)

#### **Boat ramp**

Benches, waste receptacles (6)  
additional landscaping - potential collab

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley explained the Appearance Commission's funds needed to be spent before the end of the fiscal year and all purchase order had to be submitted to the Finance Department by May 26<sup>th</sup>.

The Parks and Recreation Department had three major projects that were completed or nearing completion: the College Pond/Smith-Collins Park trail, the Eva Ennis Splash Pad expansion and the reconstruction of the Amphitheater. At each of these locations, trash receptacles, benches and shade structures were needed.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley stated that 6 waste receptacles were needed for the amphitheater for its opening, but those receptacles would be moved onto the greenway once more permanent receptacles could be purchased and installed.

Peggy Scott questioned if there were funds budgeted in the Parks and Recreation Department for waste receptacles, benches and shade structures. She stated the Parks and Recreation Department had other funding sources for which they could purchase the needed items.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley stated that she had been told of the other funding sources, but purchasing all of the waste receptacles at one time would be expensive since they cost \$700 each. She further stated the Appearance Commission had the funds to support a portion of the needed for the new park projects if it so chose.

Michelle Choe stated that the Appearance Commission had to spend its funds or it would lose them. She felt it was a quick and easy project for the commission.

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. suggested authorizing the purchase of 6 waste receptacle for the amphitheater.

Peggy Scott questioned the total number of waste receptacles needed for all the project. Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley responded that twelve receptacles were needed.

Peggy Scott further questioned the cost of the benches. Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley responded she believed the cost was also \$700 for each bench. Mrs. Scott said she was opposed to purchasing only waste receptacles with the Appearance Commission's funds. She stated benches/ shade structures also needed to be purchased.

*{5:37: Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson and Public Works Director Lawrence Davis joined the meeting.}*

Parks and Recreation Director Gary Johnson explained the biggest need was for waste receptacles at the amphitheater since its grand opening was scheduled for May 5<sup>th</sup>. He stated he requested funds for waste receptacles at the amphitheater.

Michelle Choe questioned if the waste receptacles would be in by the time of the grand opening. Gary Johnson responded they would be installed before the grand opening if the order was placed this week.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley questioned the need for benches at the amphitheater. Gary Johnson responded there wasn't a need for benches at the amphitheater because it already had

seating, but handicapped accessible benches could be installed along the greenway. The current greenway benches are off the greenway which renders it difficult for someone in a wheelchair to access the bench.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley questioned if the Appearance Commission was in agreement with purchasing the 12 waste receptacles for the amphitheater/ greenway and the college pond trail. The cost to purchase 12 waste receptacles would be \$8,400. It was further suggested that 6 benches be purchased for the college pond trail. Peggy Scott suggested installing 2 benches at the splash pad expansion. Mr. Johnson responded that 2 benches could be installed at the splash pad and the other 4 could be installed around the pond. The benches cost \$700 a piece and a total for the 6 benches would be \$4,200.

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley also stated there had been some discussion about creating a play area with structures for children to play on near the pond trail. Michelle Choe questioned if a children's playground would be the best idea for that area. She suggested a picnic table may be needed for the area.

Elizabeth Baker stated there wasn't enough outdoor seating at the college, so a picnic table or two might be a good idea. Gary Johnson informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the cost of a picnic table was \$900. And if picnic tables were installed then they would be to be ADA compliant. Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. questioned if there was a need for picnic tables at the amphitheater. Mr. Johnson responded it was not a need at this time.

Elizabeth Baker made a motion, seconded by Michelle Choe, to approve the purchase of 12 waste receptacles and 6 benches in the amount of \$12,600 for the Parks and Recreation Department to be installed at the amphitheater/greenway, the Eva Ennis Splash pad and the College/Smith Collins Park Trail. Unanimously approved.

### **Spring Cleaning – Emery**

Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. informed the members of the Appearance Commission that he was working on an idea on how the commission could assist business owners or other agencies in town to tidy up their properties. The commission could develop a program for businesses to enter and possibly given a gift card for its efforts. The commission could utilize the Town's social media to advertise the campaign and the winners.

### **Water plant**

Landscaping

Peggy Scott suggested adding additional landscaping to the berm that was installed due to the expansion of the water plant. Public Works Director Lawrence Davis questioned who would be responsible for the additional landscaping.

### **2nd street tree removal/replacement**

Removing/replacing Bradford pears

Public Works Director Lawrence Davis informed the members of the Appearance Commission that Councilman Stevens would like to have some of the Bradford Pear Trees in the downtown removed because they are dying and unsightly. Replacing those trees could be a future project

for the Appearance Commission. Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley reminded everyone that there was a state program to remove and replace Bradford Pear trees. She would further investigate that program.

### **Others?**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley asked if there were other ideas on how the remaining funds could be spent since there was still approximately \$15,000.

Gary Johnson stated that shade structures could be installed with some of the benches or a shade structure could be installed over a picnic table at the College Pond. He estimated a total cost of \$6,000 for a concrete pad, picnic table and shade structure.

Michelle Choe stated that while a picnic table would be nice at the pond, the benches with the shade structures would be used more.

Michelle Choe made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Baker, to approve the purchase of three shade structures for two benches at the College Pond and one at the Splash Pad for a total of \$12,000. The actual placement of the benches and shade structures will be at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Director. Unanimously approved.

Peggy Scott made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. to allocate the remaining \$3,000 for the planters at Town Hall. Unanimously approved.

### **T-Shirts to sell at Ham and Yam**

Chairperson Kaitlyn Tarley suggested the Appearance Commission sell Smithfield T-Shirts at the Ham and Yam Festival. Gary Johnson informed the members of the Appearance Commission that the Parks and Recreation Department has the ability to print shirts. He stated he would be willing to print the shirts for the Commission for the cost of the actual shirt and to print them.

Peggy Scott suggested selling Smithfield flags since every time they were hung at the boat ramp, they were stolen.

Upon further discussion, Michelle Choe made a motion, seconded by Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr., to rescind the motion allocating \$3,000 for the planters at Town Hall. Unanimously approved.

Elizabeth Baker made a motion, seconded by Michelle Choe, to allocate \$2,000 for the planters at Town Hall. Unanimously approved.

Sharon Lynch made a motion, seconded Elizabeth Baker, to allocate \$1,000 for t-shirts to sell at the Ham and Yam. Unanimously approved.

### **Adjourn**

Having no further business, Vice Chairperson Emery Ashley, Jr. made a motion, seconded by Elizabeth Baker, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Shannan L. Parrish*

Shannan L. Parrish  
Town Clerk