

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

Minutes

April 24, 2020

Members Present: Melissa Pickett, Curt Andrews, Bo Henderson, Carol Knapp, & Chris Wetmore

Staff Present: Chris Pate & Jennifer Brown

Begin: 9:00 a.m.

End: 9:45 a.m.

Minutes Approval – Melissa made a motion to approve the March minutes with an addition to the last paragraph discussing Mayview Plaza. Melissa recommended that the Town review the agreement it had made with the Village Foundation regarding ongoing maintenance of Mayview Plaza. Carol seconded, and there was a unanimous vote to approve.

Budget Update – Jennifer stated that she will send the latest updated budget that she received last week. She explained that nothing new has been purchased; however, the final payment for the hanging baskets and flowers will need to be paid. She also stated that BRAAC's revenue has exceeded the budgeted amount so overall they are in good shape.

Melissa suggested that BRAAC not spend any of their fund balance during this uncertain time due to concerns that contributions from this year's upcoming campaign may or may not sufficiently support next year's expenses. She noted that flowers which fill hanging baskets, flowerpots, and traditional gardens contribute to the overall atmosphere and quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors. Curt and Bo agreed and stated that with all that is happening in the world and about Town, it is uplifting to travel Main Street and witness the beautiful spring flowers in bloom and when the hanging baskets and annuals are planted it will be even better!

BRAHM Proposed Art Sculpture – Jennifer explained that BRAHM is requesting to replace the Rosen Art Sculpture with a new sculpture as part of their annual cultural programming. Bo asked to recuse himself due to being on the BRAHM board. Melissa made a motion to approve, Chris seconded, and there was a unanimous vote to approve.

Broyhill Presentation Update – Melissa shared that Curt, Jennifer, and she had been working on preparing a status-update to the Broyhill Family Foundation. However, from discussions with Curt and Jennifer she had concluded that BRAAC should delay presenting to them so as to avoid appearing to be asking the Foundation for contributions in light of the COVID-19 situation and its impact on the economy. She did advise that BRAAC send an update demonstrating the progress that has been made thanks to the Foundation's generosity.

Bo stated that while it was certainly important to report to them progress of the improvements, he felt we should share with them our vision, plans, and costs of and for continued improvements. He said it should be left up to the Foundation when and if to contribute to the cause. Curt stated that Bo had raised an important point that he had not considered. Carol agreed with Bo and said that given the Foundation's historical strong support for Broyhill Park, it was important to keep them informed and involved.

Bo suggested that Curt work on modifying the presentation, emphasizing BRAAC's and the Town's sincere gratitude to the Broyhill Family Foundation for its support while sharing flexible plans for improvements. Curt expressed his hope that Kent Graham and/or Thomas Steele might help develop digital renderings of what we wish to accomplish. Jennifer committed to communicate with Thomas and Kent to seek their help.

Memorial Park Playground – Jennifer told the group that staff had removed the old playground this week. She noted that when Chris Pate dismantled the swing set, he observed that its posts were so rusted that they snapped, leaving the concrete slab in the ground. Similarly, when the plastic playground was removed, no concrete was attached because it was not adhered to the posts. Furthermore, the climbing wall was cracked at the bottom. It has turned out to be good timing with everything being closed right now to replace the playground with all the deteriorating equipment.

She added that the playground company would be arriving to begin grading and prepping for footers in early May and that the equipment itself will arrive the day after Memorial Day, at which point installation will begin. As of right now the project is on target but warned that weather and the COVID-19 could interfere.

Other – Melissa asked if the Sunset "Entrance Project" was on hold due to COVID-19. Jennifer stated that the contractor had already begun gathering boulders for the project but has since been put on hold until more is known about what affect the COVID-19 will have on budgets. She said that the commitment remains to complete the project, but it will have to wait until the new normal is known. She added that the Bass Lake sidewalk project and the paving of Town roads will proceed as originally planned.

Other – Jennifer updated BRAAC with the Clubhouse project regarding the landscaping improvements that Chris and his staff accomplished. She explained that storm water had flowed towards the building which, in turn, contributed to the disintegration of its foundation. This was compounded by the fact that natural springs run under the building. She stated that the springs are now piped, and storm water is directed away from the building. Furthermore, Chris and his staff have built up the flower beds, planted shrubs and trees, and have laid sod. It looks beautiful!