

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

Minutes

August 5, 2020

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

Staff Present: Jennifer Brown

Begin: 2:00 p.m.

End: 4:00 p.m.

Minutes Approval – Bo made a motion to approve the June minutes. Curt seconded, and there was a unanimous vote to approve.

Budget Update – Jennifer stated that BRAAC began a new budget year July 1st and as of the end of July nothing has been spent and \$560 has been collected for the cemetery.

Legacy Trail – Jennifer stated that Blowing Rock resident Kathy Connelly had reached out to the Town and requested that improvements be made to Legacy Gardens below the trail. Ms. Connelly reported that it is overgrown, and weeds need to be removed. Jennifer shared that currently the Town spends \$8,000 to have the trail maintained, including weeding, four times a year. Chris Pate is concerned that vegetation density contributes to the preservation of the bank, particularly with regard to heavy precipitation.

Bo responded that the Town is already spending significant monies for the maintenance of what is private property and noted that no incremental donations had been earmarked for Legacy Gardens. Curt expressed concerns that taxpayer dollars are maintaining private, albeit prominently visible, property in the first place and could not recommend spending more on it. He asked Jennifer to discuss with the contractor how the allocated budget might be better spent to satisfy Ms. Connelly's request. Chris Wetmore said this is the worse time to be requesting more funds considering COVID19 challenges and that if any extra funding were to be available it should be on the unsightly bank at the north end of Main Street at 321. BRAAC's consensus was to not recommend additional funding for Legacy Gardens and to work with the contractor to reexamine the work plan in light of the current budget.

Tree City USA Follow-up – Jennifer informed the Commission that the Town cannot apply to become a Tree City USA town until September. She will work on the application in September.

Tree Health & Tree Reserve Studies Recommendation – Chris Wetmore reported that the company where he works has used this company and feels that they could potentially help when trees at the end of their lifecycles need to be removed and replaced in Memorial Park. Jennifer stated that she will research the company and analyze their pricing for services. She also shared that once the playground is installed, the next step will be to complete the master plan for Memorial Park, including where trees need to be planted, sidewalks installed, and potential new or improved restrooms built or ungraded.

Broyhill Lake Dredging – Chris Wetmore asked if anyone had been to Broyhill Lake lately. He shared that the upper pond and the lower pond near the storm water drainage pipe are filling back up to where you can almost walk well into the lake. He stated after a heavy rain it looks like chocolate milk, that this should not be the case, and feels that developers are likely causing this and that it needs to be stopped.

Jennifer committed to discussing this with Town staff. She further acknowledged that the lake will need to be dredged again sooner than later.

Memorial Park Playground – The contractor of the new playground, Chris Yang, walked the Commission through the new playground area and shared the rationale for specific pieces in specific locations. He emphasized the safety features that were part of planning, manufacturing, and installation and will be a critical element of on-going maintenance. Jennifer stated that the final grading of the outside of the play area was being completed with topsoil and sod. The entire project is scheduled to be completed by next week, weather permitting.