

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

Minutes

May 4, 2021

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

Staff Present: Jennifer Brown & Cory Cathcart

Begin: 9:02 a.m.

End: 10:49 a.m.

**April Minutes Approval** – Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the April minutes. Mr. Andrews seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve.

**Budget Update** – Mrs. Brown reported that she had not yet received updated financials so she would email them as soon as the Finance Director delivered them to her. She reminded everyone that collections had exceeded the forecasted amount and that the only currently outstanding expenditures were for the hanging baskets and flowers.

**Hanging Baskets/Flowers** – Mrs. Brown stated that Mr. Cathcart and his staff had visited the nursery and had concluded that while the hanging baskets looked good, he decided to leave them at the nursery for at least one more week so they could continue to grow in that protected setting. She said that all the baskets and planters would be in place before Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Cathcart's staff will begin planting in beds before that. Mrs. Pickett offered the help from skilled Blowing Rock Rotarians if volunteers were needed.

**Arbor Day April 30, 2021 Event** – Mrs. Brown stated that the Arbor Day celebration went well. Two trees were planted between the new playground and the 1888 museum. Attendance was limited to approximately twenty in light of extremely high winds and the processional for two fallen criminal justice officers. Mr. Henderson asked if we had to plant trees on actual Arbor Day every year. Mrs. Pickett confirmed that the celebration need not occur on the actual Arbor Day and could be moved to the month of May where weather might be more conducive to an outdoor event. Mrs. Brown stated that she would have more time next year to talk to teachers at the Blowing Rock Elementary School about making it an educational event for students about the environment in general and about trees in particular.

**Tree Report from Arborist** – Mrs. Brown reported that a certified arborist had evaluated selected trees in Memorial Park. The arborist reported that the two maple trees in tree wells are alive and that years of life remain. He recommended that they be pruned and limbed to remove dead branches and that a canopy be installed to support these trees. He also recommended that one dead maple tree near Memory Lane be removed.

Mr. Andrews asked what the trees would look like when they were trimmed. Mr. Cathcart replied that there was sufficient life in these trees to ensure safe and attractive displays. Mr. Wetmore asked if the dead maple tree would be removed completely. He noted that the Valle Crucis Park had carved tasteful pieces of wildlife art from the remaining stumps of dead trees. Mrs. Brown committed to contacting the Valle Crucis Park director to begin studying the matter.

Mr. Henderson made a motion to remove the dead maple tree, to prune the two maple trees in the tree wells, and to install the canopy support for the two trees. Mrs. Pickett seconded the motion, and there was unanimous support to approve.

**South Main Street & Valley Boulevard Landscaping** – Mr. Cathcart stated that he and Tyler Simes from Diversified Landscaping had met with principals from 4Forty Four and Jenkins Reality. Plans for the landscape project for the entrance to Sunset at Valley Boulevard that had previously been approved by Town Council were shared and questions were answered to everyone's satisfaction.

**BRAAC Meeting Dates** – Mrs. Pickett asked if there was a preference of the Commission to continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00 AM as has been the case to meet COVID19 accommodations or to return to the first Thursday of the month that had been the case prior to COVID necessities. Mrs. Brown reported that the Tuesday schedule allowed her to submit finished meeting minutes to Mr. Fox for him to process prior to monthly Tuesday Town Council meetings. After further discussion, Mr. Henderson made a motion to move BRAAC's meetings to the first Tuesday of each month at 9:00 AM. Mr. Andrews seconded, and there was a unanimous vote to approve.