

## Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

### Minutes

September 14, 2021

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

Staff Present: Jennifer Brown & Cory Cathcart

Guest Present: Jim Walters

Begin: 9:00 a.m.

End: 11:20a.m.

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

**Budget Update** – Mrs. Brown reported that \$650 has been collected and \$3,500 has been spent on mailing our donation letters since July 1, 2021.

**Donation Letter 2020-2021** – Mrs. Brown explained that she had found a new company to print and mail the BRAAC donation letters. She noted that in the past she spent many hours to review names and addresses to delete duplicate entries. The new company utilizes a program that does this automatically. She said the new letters had been mailed and people should be receiving them this week. If the returned letter count is no better than what had been the case in the past, she has found another company that she could try next year. Mr. Andrews was very complimentary on how the letter and donor page looked.

**Glen Burney Trail** – Mrs. Brown introduced Mr. Walters who is an avid hiker and has homes in Blowing Rock and Charlotte. He is wanting to help improve the Glen Burney Trail with trail upgrades and signage, including a sign memorializing a schoolteacher/Girl Scout leader who lost her life trying to save a Girl Scout from going over the falls in 1930. He shared examples of logos that would provide identity continuity on signs, maps, social media, and medallions.

He stated that he wanted to fund new signs that would provide clearer, updated direction and safety information. Mr. Henderson agreed that new signs are needed; adding that Cobb Milner and the Blue Ridge Conservancy needed to be contacted before the existing signs were replaced since they donated the current signs. Mrs. Brown said that she would reach out to Mr. Milner before we moved forward with replacing signs.

Mr. Wetmore asked if we have discussed the signage and improvements with our contractor Blue Ridge Trailworks. He stated that they have helped Blue Ridge Mountain Club with signs on their trails and know the standards and recommended language for trail signs. Mr. Walters stated that he has met with Mr. Sulik from Blue Ridge Trailworks to get his opinion on the trail. Mrs. Brown stated that she stays in contact with him about areas that are in need of repairs. Mr. Henderson likes the warnings on the proposed new signs and the logos. He expressed concern for the cost of the maintenance to the signs in the future when they need to be repaired or replaced. Mrs. Brown reported that even if Mr. Walters did not offer to donate the signs, the current signs would have to be replaced or maintained.

Mr. Walters explained that his original idea of placing a bronze plaque at the trailhead memorializing the schoolteacher/Girl Scout Leader had changed to placing a bronze plaque on a rock along the trail. His intention is to inform people of her bravery and to keep people from getting too close to the top of the waterfalls. Mr. Andrews believes Mr. Walters intentions are clearly honorable. The proposed plaque honors the victim and warns about the difficulty of the trail; however, he feels the plaque should be kept simple. If warning signs will be installed along the trail, they won't be necessary on a memorial plaque as messages may be lost. Mr. Walters asked Mr. Andrews if he could help him with the verbiage on the memorial plaque and Mr. Andrews agreed.

Mr. Andrews asked if we should wait on Roger Brooks' report of the Town of Blowing Rock and his recommendations before we change the signage on the trail. Mrs. Pickett and Mrs. Brown stated that the signs on the trail are completely different than downtown way-finding signs. Mr. Henderson likes having all the signs the same with the same logo. Mr. Wetmore also suggested updating the All-Trails website by changing Glen Burney Trail tags that say that it is kid friendly as this is not the case for significant parts of the trail.

Mrs. Pickett stated that she would like to separate Mr. Walters requests. She would like to keep recommendations for the memorial plaque with BRAAC and she would like to take the signs and logo to the Parks Strategy committee for their approval. Mr. Wetmore asked Mr. Walters if the logo gets approved would he give the copyright to the Town and Mr. Walters answered yes.

Mrs. Pickett stated that if Mr. Andrews would work with Mr. Walters on the final verbiage of the plaque and then Mr. Walters could bring it back to BRAAC during October's meeting and then the recommendation could be sent to Town Council during their October meeting for their final approval. She reported that the logo and signage would be presented to the Parks Strategy committee during their next meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Valley Boulevard Landscaping** – Mr. Cathcart stated that the rockwork is completed and that he and his staff are completing the installation of the plants. He explained that they are also working to create an annual bed on each side for next year. Mr. Cathcart was asked how the businesses have responded to the completed project and he stated that he has received very positive feedback from all the businesses.

**Other Business** – Mr. Cathcart stated that he has met with Clemmons Welding to design and make new hangers for the light poles on Sunset and Morris Streets to be able to put bigger hanging baskets on the poles next year. He stated that the cost of the hanging basket shouldn't cost more than the 2 pots that are currently on each pole. He explained that most of the expense would be the new hangers.

**Other Business** – Mrs. Brown stated that a patron has approached her wanting to purchase a clock for Memorial Park in memory of her husband. Mrs. Brown showed examples of what it would like. Mr. Andrews recommended that this go to the Parks Strategy committee first to determine if this is needed in the park.