

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

Minutes

April 4, 2023

Members Present: Bo Henderson, Curt Andrews, & Chris Wetmore

Staff Present: Jennifer Brown & Shane Fox

Town Council Member: Melissa Pickett

Begin: 9:15 AM

End: 11:20 AM

February 7, 2023, Minutes – Mr. Andrews made a motion to approve as written. Mr. Wetmore seconded, and there was a unanimous vote to approve.

Budget Update – Mrs. Brown stated that \$38,955 has been collected through March with \$39,900 expected to be collected for the fiscal year. She also explained that hanging basket/planter donation reminders will be included as part of the newsletter that is distributed with the water bills. Year to date only \$10,993.48 has been spent and that more will be spent once all the flowers and hanging baskets are delivered. Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve. Mr. Andrews seconded, and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

Broyhill Park (Broyhill Family Foundation) – Mrs. Brown reported that she and Mr. Andrews have been working on a grant request to the Broyhill Family Foundation. They are making final touches and expect to submit that request this month. It envisions the completion of the rock work around Broyhill Lake and upgrading Broyhill Park sidewalks.

Mrs. Pickett (BRAAC Questions) – Mr. Wetmore explained that during last year's summer retreat Town Council directed that guidelines be created to address proposals from nongovernmental parties for projects on public property. These drafted guidelines were to be presented to BRAAC for comment before being shared with Town Council. To date BRAAC hasn't seen any progress. Mr. Andrews expressed that it appears that the meeting has yet to resolve the issues that were raised by BRAAC to the Mayor and Town Council specifically regarding its function and protocol and that BRAAC remains without meaningful direction. Mr. Henderson agreed, adding that there is a need for BRAAC's validation and for consideration of BRAAC members' time.

Mr. Wetmore noted that certain identified people and organizations have historically circumvented BRAAC's processes that had been modeled after Planning Commission procedures by a previous Town Manager. By avoiding BRAAC's review, concepts have been presented to Town Council for approval without specific work plans that would have been reviewed by BRAAC for positive or negative or modified recommendations from that board which had been commissioned by Council. More than one of these approved so-called private/public projects have cost unbudgeted taxpayer dollars as the result of incomplete planning and no formal review other than concepts. Mr. Wetmore opined that processes directed to Town Commissions should be expected to be followed by everyone. Mr. Henderson requested clarification from Town Council regarding BRAAC, its future, its charge, and its processes.

Mr. Fox stated that the time to report back to Town Council Summer 2022 Retreat has long since passed. Mrs. Pickett agreed to work with Mrs. Brown to develop the requested guidelines. Mr. Andrews endorsed these observations and intentions, but given the apparent lack of urgency, he suggested that Council first determine if it even sees a need for BRAAC. Mr. Fox and Mrs. Pickett proposed that BRAAC be added to the next Town Council agenda where BRAAC's history would be presented to solicit a decision from Council regarding its future. If appropriate, proposed formal policies and procedures would be presented for modification, approval, or rejection.