

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission  
Minutes  
January 5, 2017

BRAAC Members Attending: Curt Andrews, Bo Henderson, Melissa Pickett, Jennifer Chick, Deborah McDowell

Staff Members: Jennifer Brown, Chris Pate and Ricky Hudson

Guests: John Aldridge, Jim Pitts, and Bob Oelberg

This meeting was called to order by Curt at 5:31 p.m.

**Approve December 1, 2016 Minutes:** Jennifer Chick made a motion to approve the minutes, Bo seconded, and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

**Laurel Lane Median Project Review:** Bob Oelberg presented conceptual design plans for the Laurel Lane Median Project. He discussed in great detail the specific elements to be included, their function and location. During this discussion, Bob made the recommendation to remove certain unhealthy plants from the area and to relocate the hydrangeas currently planted in the median to other Town gardens and properties. Curt inquired about the density of the garden after planting. Bob stated it would take 3 to 5 years for the plants to reach maturity, at which point the density would be very thick. Chris noted that until the plants mature, maintenance would be needed for upkeep in the form of mulching, weeding, watering and applying pre-emergent, all of which would be the responsibility of the Town. Chris continued to note there is currently no power for the up-lighting available but Scott has been in contact with BREMCO about removing existing poles, installing additional coach lights and providing power for the up-lighting.

Curt asked Jim what the overall project consisted of and Jim explained the project is to create a pedestrian plaza with an art-history walk with new pavers in the intersection. Jim also described the addition of seat walls and benches across from Kilwins in hopes of generating more visitation to the downtown area while allowing for the same opportunity at the Wallingford intersection on the opposite end of the median.

John Aldridge then explained that funding was the determining factor for the sequencing for this portion of project. He stated the overall project was estimated to cost \$200,000 while the landscaping in the median is estimated at only \$16,000, which has already been collected by the Village Foundation. Curt asked John about the other Gateways into downtown such as Sunset Drive and the north and south ends of Main Street. John also addressed the current conditions of Sunset Dr. and its elevation challenges which led to the evolution of the downtown Gateway. Scott stated conceptual plans are being created for Sunset Drive including low rock walls and columns. Curt asked if the Gateway project was no longer a priority for the Village Foundation. John stated that all Town projects are priorities for the Village Foundation but there are not enough funds in the foundation to support all improvement projects for the Town.

Curt asked if this project was specifically meant to be an entrance to the Mayview community rather than an entrance to the Town's parks. John stated this space is the historical entrance to the old

Mayview Manor. Bo asked Chris if the concept design could continue or if he wanted it to continue into Broyhill Park, Annie Cannon, Koerschner, Glen Burney trail entrance, and throughout Town. Chris stated it would be possible to continue elements of the design into the parks to create continuity. Ricky stated that Chris and himself would have the ability to add annuals to the design plan until the plants reached maturity and by doing this would allow them to create fluid designs and themes through all Town gardens and parks.

After further discussion, Bo moved to approve this plan to present to council, Melissa seconded and it was a unanimous decision to approve.

**Broyhill Park Wall Project Update:** Jennifer Brown stated the permit from the State for the wall has been processed and the project's funding and contractor have been approved by Town Council. Chris and Ricky stated they have been in touch with the contractor and the project is weather dependent at this point and that there is not currently a true deadline on the wall construction. Bo asked how frequently Broyhill Lake would need to be dredged. Jennifer Brown stated this will be the first time it has been dredged since she has been here which is over 12 years. Bo recommended the use of a pump method over traditional dredging in the future to decrease cost and environmental impact. Scott stated that this process is what the Town is looking at doing to Broyhill Lake.

**Budget Update/Annual Fundraising Collection/Hanging Basket Collection:** Jennifer Brown stated to date, the midpoint of the year, \$25,485 has been collected leaving BRAAC \$1,945 short of General Fund revenue budget and \$2,550 over the Hanging Basket goal for the year. The expenses year to date total \$4,744.67. Bo inquired of the ability to accept PayPal payments for donations online. Scott stated there is not currently a method of accepting electronic payments for this purpose but is hopeful that the launching of the new Town website will provide that opportunity in the future.

**Annie Cannon Project Update:** Chris stated Mary Bost Gray said she would love to come and talk about the park and the opportunity for improvement but she has not had the opportunity due to weather.

**Meeting Dates:** Jennifer Brown discussed the bylaws and highlighted that the commission has the ability to decide meeting dates, times and changes to both. Jennifer also discussed the bylaws of the planning board for comparison. The frequency of BRAAC meetings was discussed in detail and it was a unanimous decision to continue monthly meetings due to numerous ongoing projects overseen by BRAAC.

**Other Business:** Scott suggested all commission members read over the bylaws and make recommendations for potential updates to be considered in the near future.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 2, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.