

BRAAC Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2014

BRAAC Members Present: Alice Roess, Rita Wiseman, Anne Barnes, Bo Henderson, Melissa Picket, Deborah McDowell, Barbara Wright, Curt Andrews

BRAAC Members Absent: Myra Scoggins

Guest: Susie Green, Ginny Stevens, Bobby Ball, Albert Yount

Staff Members: Chris Pate, Jennifer Brown, and Scott Fogleman.

The meeting was called to order by Alice at 5:30 p.m.

Budget Update – Jennifer stated that to date BRACC has revenue of \$18,160, \$200 from the hanging baskets, \$100 from the cemetery, and a \$2,000 grant that was received.

BRAAC Bylaws/Recommending Removing Secretary Position – Jennifer suggested that BRAAC dismiss the Secretary Position of BRAAC and assign responsibilities of taking minutes for BRAAC meetings, sending out agendas to the Committee, and other related responsibilities to the Parks and Recreation Department of the Town of Blowing Rock. Melissa made a motion to remove the Secretary position from the Bylaws and to establish a sub-committee of three BRAAC members to help with Thank You Notes. Rita seconded it, and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

Spring Clean-up Day Planning – Saturday, April 26, 2014 at 9:30 a.m. Everyone will meet at the American Legion and Jennifer will have maps, bags, gloves, vests, and t-shirts ready for the volunteers. We will serve lunch and work toward having some items donated. Melissa got in contact with Chetola for hotdogs and Hamburgers, Woodlands for sides, and is still in the process of getting in contact with Coke for drinks. Jennifer will make sure that we have condiments, plates, forks, and napkins. Jennifer

also stated that Susie asked how this will be advertised because of declining participation and Jennifer stated that it will be in the newspaper, it is in the Town Calendar, and will be referenced on the Town website. Deborah suggested sending a mass email to Town Council, BRAAC, and Town Residents who can receive emails. Ginny Stevens also suggested having TDA spread the news about Spring Clean-up Day. Alice asked who will be doing all of the marketing and Melissa suggested that there are 400 members in the Chamber and she can email them to help spread the news of the clean-up day and planting day.

Spring Planting Day/Hanging Baskets Planning – Spring Planting Day will be May 17, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. Everyone will meet in front of Town Hall. Town employees are planning on having a service day May 16 and will hopefully be able to help clean and plant some areas on Main Street and get all of the baskets hung. Christ Pate has ordered plants for planting day and the cost is \$2,268. This includes planting material for Town Hall, the Post Office, Broyhill Park, and Memorial Park. The cost of the hanging baskets is \$3,930 which includes Main Street from Edgewood Cottage to Footsloggers and Sunset Drive from Main Street to Ransom Street. Alice asked if BRAAC is paying for all of this. Jennifer stated that BRAAC does pay for this. Anne stated that people donate money and do not receive a memorial plaque for plants, and they do not even get recognition in any town newsletter. Melissa suggested they make that another duty for

the sub-committee to do for BRAAC. Curt asked about annual revenue from donations and sponsors. Because Jennifer has not been a part of BRAAC she does not have the information on long-term revenue from the past. Curt suggested keeping track of donations and sponsors to see long time contributors.

May Meeting/Vote for Board Officers – Our current board members will vote for chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary during the May meeting.

Beautification Project Consideration – Alice explained how she feels strongly about not taking the tree down and states that if we provide the proper care to the tree, it will become full again. Two arborist reports were solicited for an opinion, and the arborists explained that the Tree is in good health. But the tree shows poor growth due to never having been trimmed/shaped, and the lower branches of the tree have sustained damage over the years from lawn care procedures causing stress to the tree. The tree is estimated to be 35 years old and can live to be 100 in its natural environment, but being in an urban environment the tree is used as a wind break and ornamental purposes, and it begins to deteriorate and can become a liability. Scott stated that the maintenance and resources required to keep decorating the tree have been costly. It will be \$800 a day for a crane to take the lights on and off the tree, and if decided to take the lights off every year, our maintenance costs will double. It has also been estimated that each trimming will cost \$1,000. Curt asked what the safety concern is. Scott explained that a wind storm can knock down the tree at any time. Alice asked who proposed the idea. Scott stated that there was not one particular person, but with the tree clean-up project in process, it was an idea that had been mentioned. Alice asked about any plans to replant trees and how much will this cost. Scott stated that there is currently \$5,000 allocated for mulching and planting new trees. Anne asked where all the donation money is going and how much revenue the tree brings in for the Town. Anne stated that if she knew the facts about where the money goes and how much the town spends on the tree and receives from the tree she would be able to make a definite decision. Ginny Stevens presented the idea of not decorating the tree and putting a smaller twelve foot tree somewhere in the park and decorating that one. Bo and Deborah agreed. Bo made a motion keep the tree where it is, address the pruning and fertilization of the tree, and bring it back to good health, remove the grass and give the tree a chance and to assess the tree in a year to see how it is doing. Deborah provided the second. Deborah amended that the Town should opt not to decorate the tree, and will not decorate the tree anymore, but have another tree be decorated in the park, and make sure that the Town's residents are informed about why the tree will not be lit, and let the Town's people voice their opinion. Bo accepted amendment but wants to make a separate motion. It was a unanimous vote to approve. Bo made a motion to let the tree not be abused, by not decorating the tree and the lights that are on the tree to be removed, and celebrate Christmas with another tree. Anne seconded that, and it was a unanimous vote to approve. Bo made a motion to not disturb the sidewalk area, just the hard scape needs to be maintained, and the grass needs to be taken out around tree and replaced with mulch and other materials to help the tree. Melissa second that. Melissa requested Chris bring a new design plan for the front of Town Hall to the next BRAAC meeting. It was a unanimous vote to approve.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held Thursday, May 8, 2014 at Town Hall at 5:30 p.m.