

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission
Minutes
August 5, 2016

BRAAC Members Attending: Curt Andrews, Bo Henderson, Melissa Pickett, Anne Barnes, and Jennifer Chick

BRAAC Members Absent: Deborah Mc Dowell

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

Guests: Stella Matta, Susan Sweet, and Jean Baskins

This meeting was called to order by Curt at 5:30 p.m.

Garden Club: Curt welcomed the Garden Club to the meeting. Anne stated she was the liaison between BRAAC and the Garden Club and the Garden Club had expressed concern about the changes which were proposed to the Memorial Gardens that the Garden Club took care of. The Garden Club did not want any radical changes and they put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into the garden. They have paid for all of the flowers, mulch, and maintenance of the beds. Anne stated the Garden Club is in agreeance that the gardens should be coordinated with Town Hall's garden. Scott stated BRAAC has had many discussions about the Memorial Park gardens. Scott reached out to the president of the Garden Club, Jean Baskins, over e-mail to schedule a meeting with Town staff to open up lines of communication about how Town staff can stage improvements to the garden. There is a meeting scheduled for September 14th and the results of that meeting will be discussed at BRAAC's October meeting. Melissa stated BRAAC's intention was never to take a backhoe to the garden, but to look at better placement of plants and materials. Bo stated that every plant has a life span and the gardens need to be evaluated to determine the needs of the gardens. Anne stated Stella from the Garden Club is responsible for maintaining the gardens and Chris needs to work with her. Susan Sweet from the Garden Club stated the Garden Club organized and created the Memorial Park Garden in 2001 and has taken care of it for 15 years. The Garden Club spends \$700 a year for mulch, plant materials, etc. Curt and Melissa both stated the intention was never to get rid of the Garden Club or do anything without their knowledge. Susan then stated the "Mile of Flowers" was next June and The Garden Club would really like all of the gardens in Town to look good for the event. Bo stated Chris works to make all flower beds look good for all occasions in Town. Bo stated the gardens are on Town property and ultimately the Town needs to do what is best for the gardens. Stella then stated she and Chris need to communicate on the improvements and proceed from there. Curt reiterated that BRAAC wanted to work with the Garden Club, not against them for the betterment of the Memorial Park Gardens.

Approve June 3, 2016 Minutes: Bo made a motion to approve the minutes, Melissa seconded, and minutes were unanimously approved.

Budget Update/Annual Fundraising Collection/Hanging Basket Collection: Jennifer reviewed the FY 2015-2016 budget. She stated that BRAAC collected \$25,030 in revenue and the expenses came in at \$24,966.62 for the year. BRAAC came in \$63.38 under budget for last fiscal year. She then reviewed the FY 2016-2017 and stated as of August 1st, no money has been collected or spent out of the budget.

Parks & Recreation Staff Update: Jennifer stated the Town Council approved the hiring of a full-time landscape assistant for this fiscal year and Ricky Hudson will fill that position. She then stated Ricky has twenty plus years of landscaping experience which includes acting as the main landscaper at Chetola for thirteen years and owning his own company for several years. She stated he will begin working August 29th.

Donation Letter Revision: Curt stated he took suggestions from the last BRAAC meeting to provide a first draft of the annual donation letter. After further discussion it was recommended to add the option to donate a planter along with the hanging baskets and add pictures to the letter as well. Curt asked when the letter would be sent out and Jennifer stated once the addresses were received and the letter was finalized the goal would be to send it out no later than the end of August.

2017 Dates: Jennifer stated BRAAC needed to determine a date for Clean-up Day next year so that it could be put on the Town calendar. After further discussion it was decided BRAAC would have Clean-up Day May 20, 2017.

Member Duties/Responsibilities: Curt followed up from June's meeting with everyone's responsibilities since some members were absent last month. Deborah is going to handle advertisements, Melissa and Curt are going to work on grant opportunities and proposals, Anne is going to help with volunteer recruitment from local groups, and Bo is going to talk to businesses about donations to BRAAC.

Other Business: Anne thanked everyone who volunteered to help maintain the school gardens in August. She reminded them that Renee Carter, a teacher at the school, is watering the gardens when needed so they did not need to be watered; however volunteers needed to pick up litter, weed the beds, and dead head any flowers that needed it. She also stated that was very grateful to Rob Dyer who not only donated mulch but also picks up all the litter at the school gardens every Saturday morning. Anne then stated Danielle from the Mustard Seed has offered to help Renee cut the gardens back in the fall. Bo asked if they were supposed to work on the gardens in front of the auditorium as well. Anne stated it was not necessary to do so.

Bo asked what the next steps were with the tree report the Town received two months ago. Scott stated Town staff reviewed it with Town Council and Council would like Town staff to price what it would cost to replace all of the deteriorated trees at one time in Memorial Park to determine the best, most cost effective, approach to take.

Scott mentioned that Virginia VanStory approached him about the possibility of her planting Phlox plants and seeds in Legacy Gardens because there were none in the garden. After discussion with Chris, she was told yes; however, something came up and she was unable to plant them but brought them to Town Hall for Chris to plant. Chris does not have the time to plant them and asked if any of them would be able. Bo and Curt volunteered to plant them next week.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 1, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.