

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission
Minutes
September 1, 2016

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

BRAAC Members Absent: Deborah McDowell

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

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

Curt began the meeting thanking Anne Barnes for many years of service and time she put in to BRAAC. He also thanked all the BRAAC members for their time spent weeding the school gardens last month and he has spoken with a business owner on Sunset and they are going to pay their landscaper to help maintain the school gardens on Sunset.

Approve August 4, 2016 Minutes: Bo made a motion to approve the minutes, Melissa seconded, and minutes were unanimously approved. Bo wanted to reiterate that Chris works for the Town and the gardens in front of Memorial Park are Town property. He feels the Garden Club needs to work with Chris on the gardens. Curt stated he welcomes the Garden Club's contributions and input on the Memorial Park Gardens. Scott mentioned that a meeting is scheduled for September 9th with the Garden Club, Chris, Ricky, Jennifer Brown, and himself and the outcome of that meeting would be shared at the next BRAAC meeting.

Parks & Recreation Staff Update: Jennifer Brown introduced Ricky Hudson. She then stated Ricky has twenty plus years of landscaping experience which includes being the supervisor over landscaping at Chetola for and owning his own company for several years. Everyone is very excited to have him join the Town team!

Board Membership Update: Scott suggested to wait until January for Town Council to make their annual decision on filling the vacant spots on BRAAC. Currently there are five active members, there are supposed to be seven and a quorum consists of four. Everyone was in agreeance that it would be best to wait until January for Council to fill the vacancy through the normal process to ensure maximum exposure of the opportunity for people to volunteer. Melissa also suggested that Town Council keep Barbara Wright as an honorary member; however they need to have seven active members on the board for a total of eight since Barbara is not currently able to attend the meetings.

Budget Update/Annual Fundraising Collection/Hanging Basket Collection: Jennifer Brown reviewed the FY 2016-2017 data so far and as of September 1st \$325 has been collected in the general revenue account and \$1,050 has been collected for hanging baskets for a total of \$1,375. The only expenses that have occurred is BRAAC's post office box rental of \$110 and \$43.75 for some flowers for a total of \$153.75. Bo then asked if \$100 for the cemetery was enough to cover expenses there. Jennifer Brown stated that typically we receive around \$250 each year for the cemetery and that covers the entrance in to the cemetery and Public Works takes care of the maintenance in the cemetery. Bo suggested reaching out to the family who donates specifically to the cemetery for more money if \$250 is not enough to cover expenses.

Donation Letter Update: Jennifer Brown stated that the letter is complete and that we are waiting on the County Tax Office to send the addresses of Blowing Rock taxpayers and those in the Blowing Rock fire district. Once we receive the addresses we will make sure we have all the addresses requested and then we will send them to South Data who will then mail them all out. The goal is to have them out by the end of next week.

Other Business: Scott informed the board that BRAAC has \$15,831 in fund balance. He recommended \$5,831 remain in fund balance in case they run short in revenue collection in their budget. He suggested the board would then have \$10,000 available for special projects. Curt asked if it could be used at Annie Cannon and if Chris had a plan or design for it yet. Chris stated that he is working on a plan and is in the process of putting together costs for it; however he would also like to get Ricky's input and have them work on it together. Chris' vision is a quaint formal English garden that would be used frequently for small weddings. Curt said that once Chris had a design that he could work on a proposal to take to the family of Annie Cannon and see if they would contribute to the renovation. Scott mentioned that the fund balance is flexible as long as it is a one-time expense and not a commitment for ongoing expenses. Melissa asked Chris if he could pick where he would spend the money where would it be. Chris stated that since he has worked for the Town his goal has been to start at Main Street and work his way back towards Davant Field because Main Street is the focal point and people then work their way back to Davant. He said the Police Department sign flower bed is in need of renovating as well as the flower beds around the Memorial Park restrooms. Jennifer Chick asked if they were under a time constraint to spend the fund balance money and Scott replied no. Scott mentioned that Parks and Recreation was in the process of applying for a grant to develop a plan to renovate the two sets of stairs going from Broyhill Park to the American Legion and the fund balance could be used in the renovation of those stairs. Melissa then suggested that the fund balance could be used to replace the deteriorating trees in Memorial Park or once the Valley Boulevard project was complete, BRAAC could purchase banners to put on the new light poles. Chris asked if there was funding to landscape the signs along Valley Boulevard and Scott stated that it should be covered by the capital budget. Scott suggested after Chris and Ricky finalize plans for Annie Cannon and we see what comes from the grant for the American Legion stair renovation grant, then BRAAC can decide if they want to fund one of those or if they have enough to fund other projects.

Jennifer Brown then mentioned that it was time to apply for the Community Foundation Grant and suggested that we try to fund the renovation of the Memorial Park Gardens depending on how the meeting with the Garden Club goes. Scott suggested we bring that idea back to BRAAC at October's meeting after the meeting with the Garden Club.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 6, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.