

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission
Minutes
December 4, 2017

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

Staff Members: Jennifer Brown, Chris Pate, Ricky Hudson, and Ed Evans

Guests: Charlie Sellers, Albert Yount, and Don Hubble

Approve November 2, 2017 Minutes: Bo made a motion to approve, Melissa seconded it and it was a unanimous to approve.

Budget Update/Annual Fundraising Collection/Hanging Basket Collection: Jennifer Brown stated that to date BRAAC has collected \$29,365.74 of the estimated \$30,365 and \$3,332.71 has been spent on the PO Box rental and the fundraising letter.

Memorial Park Trees: Jennifer Brown stated that during the November Town Council meeting, Town Council requested that Parks & Recreation work with Nancy Stairs and come up with a design/plan for taking down and replacing the trees in Memorial Park. Nancy, Chris, and Ricky reviewed the plan that was designed. They have suggested that we build a 2-foot wall behind the front benches and then a curved wall behind that one that would have planter beds throughout. They also stated that electrical outlets would be placed in the wall. Charlie suggested that if we were going to have everything torn up then we need to add irrigation to that area since we would have new trees that would require a lot of water for the first few years. Chris and Ricky agreed and stated that irrigation could be used for other things as well. Nancy also stated that behind the rock wall would be a large mulch bed in which the trees would be planted. This would allow the trees to grow and give them a better chance of not being damaged. Nancy went through the different tree species that would fit the criteria for the park and the design. Her suggestions were:

Tupelo (black gum)
Ginko
Tilia Americana (bee tree)
Tulip Poplar
Ostrya Virginiana
Dawn Redwood
Silver Maple
Florida Maple

Nancy stated that we need to keep all these trees as options because sometimes nurseries sell out of a species or some of the species may not meet our specifications so we need to have options to choose from. She also suggested that we purchase small and larger caliper trees and intermingle them. She said the larger transplanted tree will give an instant impact visually but will get transplant shock and take longer to grow. The smaller caliper tree will not have an instant impact; however, they will grow faster and catch up to the larger caliper trees. Ed stated that staff would look at what the fall color of the trees would look like as well when determining what to plant. Deborah McDowell stated that we need to move forward with taking all the trees down because now that we know the trees are dead and we don't remove them, if someone gets hurt or killed by one of them we will get sued for negligence. Ed stated that we do have insurance; however, we don't want to be negligent. Melissa asked if this plan could be accomplished by Town staff or if it needed to be contracted out. Ed stated that Town Council approved hiring a stone mason this fiscal year and we have offered the

position to someone; however, he cannot start until the end of February first of March. He would be able to build the rock walls. We have talked to a couple of contractors about removing the dead trees, and Chris and Ricky can plant the trees and accomplish the landscaped areas. Melissa asked when the best time to plant trees would be. Nancy stated that late September early October would be ideal; however late February early March would be fine too if they were watered regularly.

Curt and Melissa asked if once we plant the new trees if we would light them like we do now with the dead trees. Nancy stated that putting light strands on the trees won't do a lot of damage if we don't string them tight and we remove the lights every three years and restring them. She also suggested considering other options of lighting the park as well.

Albert mentioned that other municipalities have memorial trees that people can purchase. Nancy suggested not having memorial trees due to the fact they could die and who would be responsible for replacing them. All the BRAAC members agreed that we should stay with memorial park benches and not do memorial trees.

Bo made a motion to approve Chris and Ricky's design/plan for the Memorial Park trees by removing the 10 dead trees in the NC Forestry Service's report and replace them all at the same time. Deborah seconded it and then added that we add Nancy and Chris' accreditations to the report and that the selection of the trees is left to the discretion of Town staff. It was a unanimous vote to approve.

Public Art Update: Jennifer Brown asked if everyone received the Public Art Policy that she emailed. Ed stated that this is the policy that they will follow when requests come to them. Bo asked if BRAHM had to get their future outside art approved as well and he said yes.

Other Business: Bo stated that he preferred having the BRAAC meeting earlier in the day. Ed stated that Town staff would prefer it as well. Bo made a motion to move BRAAC meeting to 3:00 p.m., Melissa seconded it and it was a unanimous vote to approve. So, the plan will be to have the monthly meeting on the first Thursday at 3:00 p.m.

Melissa stated that the Garden Club was applying for a program called America in Bloom that would have people come and make suggestions on our landscaping and give suggestions of best practices etc. for the Town's beautification. She stated they need \$200 and she suggested that BRAAC give them \$200 to go toward their \$1,000 goal since BRAAC raises the funds for all the annuals and flower baskets every year. She made a motion, Curt seconded it, and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 4, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.