

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission  
Minutes  
January 4, 2018

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

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

Guests: John Aldridge and Jim Clabough

This meeting was called to order by Melissa at 3:08 p.m.

**Approve December 5, 2017 Minutes:** Bo made a motion to approve the minutes, Jennifer Chick seconded, and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

**Village Foundation Laurel Lane Project Phase Two:** John Aldridge gave the background to the Laurel Lane project and discussed how they had been raising money for the second phase of the project. He did state that originally there was a proposed phase three; however, it was abandoned due to having to get DOT involved and the money it would cost. The second phase includes removing the concrete sidewalks, the crosswalks, and the asphalt in front of the median and replacing all of it with pavers. In addition, they would like to add five rock columns with plaques. One would be on the corner of Laurel Lane and Main Street with a plaque that has Mayview Manor on it, and the other four are historic pillars of tourism, Tweetsie Railroad, Appalachian Ski Mountain, The Horse Show, and The Blowing Rock. They are also going to round off the median to try to keep people from hitting it. John estimated that it would take approximately 60 days to complete the project, so they are looking to start March 1<sup>st</sup> and end no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that Laurel Lane will be closed from Main Street to the driveways to the Martin House and Hannah House; however, employees will be able to still access the parking lots. John is going to ask the Town to purchase the four proposed park benches and trash cans since the Foundation is donating the project and they don't have the money to purchase them. On the north side of the road there will be a small rock wall outlining the sidewalk and benches and on the south side they are proposing large boulders in flower beds. He also stated that Blue Ridge Energies is going to move light poles and Bo suggested trying to get them to replace the fiberglass poles with the aluminum poles that are Main Street so that hanging baskets could be hung from them. John estimated the budget of the project to be around \$150,000.

Melissa asked John if the plan was to turn over maintenance to the Town. John answered yes and then Jennifer Chick asked if he knew what that cost would be per year and the kind of impact that would have on the Town as well as would that include maintenance of the pillars and plaques. John said he did not know what that cost would be and asked Ricky if he had any thoughts. Ricky stated that there is not much landscaping so it would be very minimal. Jennifer Brown stated that a stone mason would be starting full-time by the first of March so he can make sure the rock pillars stay in good shape.

Curt asked how long the plaques would be up, a five-year term, a ten-year term, etc. Jim Clabough stated that there was no term limit. Curt then stated that the plaques look like a billboard. He understands that these businesses have been in and around Blowing Rock for years; however, the look of the plaques are nothing more than a billboard. Curt asked if the Foundation considered putting up plaques of the parks that Laurel Lane leads to, Annie Cannon, Glen Burney Trail, Broyhill Park, and

Davant Field. John stated that he did have the idea to add another sign directing people to the parks and that the Historical Society is providing the language for the four businesses plaques which were donors to this project. Bo stated that he remembers how contentious the ski mountain sign was and he believes it would be better if there were no color on the plaques.

Melissa asked John if the plaques were final and he answered no. She then stated that it is hard to vote on this project if there is not a final product of the plaque design. Jim Clabough asked if BRAAC could approve the project without the plaques and then the Foundation could bring the final design of the plaques back once they are finalized because they were running out of time to get the project completed no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.

John added that the Foundation's plan had been previously been approved by Town Council. Curt asked why, if the decision had already been made without advice, was this presentation to BRAAC, a commissioned advisory panel by and for Town Council, even necessary.

Bo made a motion to approve the project with final approval of the plaques when they have complete design later. Curt seconded it and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

**Budget Update/Annual Fundraising Collection/Hanging Basket Collection:** Jennifer Brown stated to date, the midpoint of the year, \$31,285.74 has been collected leaving BRAAC \$3,645.74 over in the General Fund revenue budget and \$2,025 over the Hanging Basket goal for the year. The expenses year to date total \$3,532.71.

**Memorial Park Tree Update:** Jennifer Brown stated that Town Council approved the removal of all twelve trees that the North Carolina Forestry Service recommended taking down. She is hopeful to get started soon but to not do too much damage before Winterfest. Curt asked if we had thought about a Memorial Tree fund for the Town. He stated he had investigated several Towns who have them and thought it was worth looking in to. Ed stated that we were going to be proposing a Memorial Tree fund to Town Council for them to look over at the retreat.

**Glen Burney Trail:** Jennifer Brown stated that the trail is still closed. She and Ed hiked the trail a couple of weeks ago and the only dangerous section is where the bridge is washed away. People had put boards in the creek to step on and it is muddy; however, the rest of the trail is decent. Ed stated that Town Council will be discussing how to pay for the repair at the retreat as well.

**Other Business:** Bo stated that he had been approached by a resident about the swan and ducks in Broyhill lake. She is concerned that the swan and ducks do not have shelter in the winter, that the swan needs a mate, and there needs to be a feeder installed in the park for people to buy food to feed them. Jennifer stated that she has had discussions with Chris and Ricky who are very familiar with birds. They say that when swans have a mate they get very territorial and they will attack anything or anybody. They also say that the duck's wings are not clipped and are free to leave anytime; however, they are happy and that is why they stay. The ducks may not even use a shelter even if there was one built for them. When it comes to installing a feeder, they are in agreement that it is not needed. It is there recommendation to leave everything the way it is currently.

Melissa asked about what the plan was for Annie Cannon because now that the bank was fixed from the flooding rain, she says it is ugly. Ed stated that this was just the first phase of this project and there are two more phases that will help the aesthetics of that bank.

Melissa asked that next meeting BRAAC work on a list of projects that everyone would like to accomplish and then prioritize them so that BRAAC knew what their focus would be for the year. She then asked if we had any cost estimates on the Virginia Tech Plan. Ed stated that Town Council had not approved any money to be spent on engineering for that plan and it would be discussed at retreat. Jennifer Brown stated that until we had an estimate on the section from Broyhill Park to the American Legion, she would not be able to request any funds from the Broyhill Foundation to complete that project. After further discussion, Melissa made a motion to pay up to \$3000 for engineering plans for the bank between the American Legion building and Broyhill Park and if the cost is going to be over \$3000 then Jennifer will email the board for approval. Curt seconded it and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 1, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.