

Town of Blowing Rock

Request for Council Action

FROM: Jennifer Brown, Director of Parks & Recreation
SUBJECT: Tree & Park Bench Donation Fund
TO: Town Council
DATE: February 13, 2018
REQUESTED BY: Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

Public Hearing Yes No Not required NA
Properly Advertised Yes No Not required NA

BACKGROUND:

During the December Town Council Meeting it was discussed to consider a Memorial Tree Program to help replace the trees that are being taken down in Memorial Park. Parks and Recreation researched and talked to other cities around the nation to determine what worked and did not work for them. Staff created three options and the pros and cons of each option and brought their recommendation to BRAAC for their final recommendation and approval.

After reviewing each option and discussion, it was decided to change the proposal to a Tree and Bench Donation fund. If someone wants to donate to the fund then Town staff will purchase, plant, remove, and maintain trees from that fund. If someone donates \$2000 or more, then their name will be displayed at a Town location. They preferred electronically on the kiosk that the TDA provides, however; they would be good with a central plaque with name plates added. They like electronically because it would be less of a cost to add names when donors needed to be added. Any donor who donates \$100 or more will receive a certificate recognizing their donation and all donors will receive a thank you letter.

They all agreed that if specific trees were allowed to be donated, then the possibility of donors complaining about their tree, whether or not it was being taken care of to their liking, would be prevalent. They felt it would be better for staff to allow them to decide what is needed, where they are needed, and when to plant them.

They also discussed the current park bench donations and they felt that the cost should go from \$1,500 to \$2,000 because currently it costs approximately \$1450 for a bench and plaque. There is no extra money for maintenance of the bench (sanding, staining, etc.) every few years.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Proposed Memorial Tree and Park Bench Policy
2. Town of Blowing Rock Memorial Tree Fund Options
3. Cities and Towns that were contacted
4. BRAAC February Minutes (DRAFT)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the Tree and Park Bench Donation Fund be approved.

Tree and Park Bench Donation Fund

It is the policy of The Town of Blowing Rock to accept donations for planting trees and installing benches within the Town limits to memorialize or honor a family member or friend, or to commemorate a special occasion. All donations shall be in compliance with the following:

- A. Donations for memorials will be accepted for purchasing, planting, removing, and maintenance of trees, and for purchasing and installing park benches approved by Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation.
- B. Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation will choose species, placement, and timing of the planting of the trees.
- C. Memorial/honorarium benches are permitted to memorialize/honor a family member or friend, or at the discretion of the Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation Director, to commemorate a special event.
- D. Memorial/honorarium bench location will be approved by the Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation Director.
- E. Memorial/honorarium donations for trees that exceed \$2000 will be recognized by your name being displayed at a Town location.
- F. Memorial/honorarium donations for trees that exceed \$100 will receive a certificate recognizing their donation.
- G. Memorial/honorarium donations for park benches will be recognized by a plaque, all of which are the same size, type, and mounting, with plaque language approved by the Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation Director. The donor will receive a certificate recognizing their donation.
- H. Blowing Rock Parks & Recreation staff shall maintain record of each donation. The record shall contain all pertinent information such as the donor's name, person's name that is being memorialized/commemorated, and type of donation(tree/bench).

Process for Tree Donation:

1. Complete and return application
2. Payment is due
3. Name will be displayed if donation is over \$2000
4. Can take up to 8 weeks for name to be displayed

Process for Park Bench Donation:

1. Complete and return application
2. Payment is due
3. Park Bench and Plaque is ordered
4. Can take up to 16 weeks (weather permitting) to put out Park bench with plaque once ordered

Cost:

- A. Tree Donation: All donations are accepted. To receive a name recognition, your donation needs to exceed \$2000 and to receive a certificate, your donation needs to exceed \$100.
- B. Park Bench Donation: \$2000 – This is a new bench and a 3"x 5" bronze plaque on the bench.

Town of Blowing Rock Memorial Tree and Park Bench Application

Date of Application: _____ Type of Memorial: (circle one) TREE BENCH

Donor Name: _____

Donor Mailing Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Name of person honored by memorial/commemoration: _____

Address to send recognition of memorial/commemoration:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Tree Donation:

Names for Display (if applicable): _____

Park Bench Donation:

Wordage for 3" x 5" Plaque: _____

Donor Signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Tree Donation Amount: _____ Circle One: Cash Check #: _____

Date Name Recognized: _____ Date Certificate is Mailed: _____

Park Bench Amount: _____ Circle One: Cash Check #: _____

Date Plaque Ordered: _____ Date Certificate is Mailed: _____

Location of Bench: _____

Date Bench and Plaque are Placed in the Park: _____

Memorial Tree Programs

Newton Parks & Recreation –

- In the beginning it was very popular but now it is rare that someone purchases a tree. The policy they have works well as it is. The City takes care of the tree for two years and after that they are no longer responsible for the tree.
- They stay away from just ordering trees because someone wants one. They make sure there is a need for a tree when someone wants to donate.

Sevierville Parks & Recreation –

- They mainly plant on their greenways, schools, hospital, and other public spaces (no private property).
- They are a member of Tree City USA and have been since 1984. Highly recommends being a member.
- Make sure you have a one person in charge of the program.
- They have a link on their website that people can find their tree, click on it, and it shows a picture of their tree, the size, etc.
- They put a granite plaque (head stone) in the ground with in Memory of or in Honor of.
- They recognize each new tree each year during Arbor Day.
- They guarantee livability and replacement of the tree if necessary.

Columbia, Missouri Parks & Recreation –

- It is beneficial because there is community buy in and it is good PR for Parks & Recreation.
- It is a lot of work trying to keep up with all of it. (They have had over 800 donated trees)
- They guarantee the trees forever. It is a huge expense to their budget because the donor only pays \$250 for the tree, plaque, and maintenance. It doesn't matter what the reason is or how old it is, if a tree dies then they must replace it.
- The donor had too much leeway on what type of tree and where they want it planted.
- They have to fix the plaques a lot that are put on 6 x 6 posts in front of the tree.

City of Bowling Green, Kentucky –

- They have a successful program with their Memorial tree donations.
- They have approximately 8-12 donated per year.
- They need to increase the cost of \$250 because it doesn't cover the tree expense.
- There are a few parks that tree donations aren't allowed.
- They have made a policy that trinkets can no longer be left at the trees because it is causing maintenance issues.

City of Albuquerque –

- They had to change some things. They used to take money ahead of time but realized the City Forrester needed to approve the species, location, and verbiage on the plaque before they took payment. So, they take payment after he approves everything.
- They put plaque in a cement base but are concerned that the parks will look like a cemetery. They would like to remove them and centralize.
- They only plant from September to May and if a tree doesn't survive they will replace it once.
- Short warranty but if a mower damages it then they replace them anyways to help keep peace. Revised to not mention a warranty.
- Fees charged go into a fund that they can buy a tree but also have money left over can use for replacement or new trees.

Northglenn, Colorado –

- They run the program through a non-profit through the Town.
- They have a 1 year guarantee no matter what and then it is 3-5-year guarantee depending on the situation.
- City looks at as a benefit because it helps the beautification.

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission
Minutes
February 1, 2018

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

Staff Members: Jennifer Brown and Chris Pate

This meeting was called to order by Melissa at 3:06 p.m.

Approve January 4, 2018 Minutes: Bo made a motion to approve the minutes, Jennifer Chick seconded, and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

Budget Update/Annual Fundraising Collection/Hanging Basket Collection: Jennifer Brown stated that she was unable to get the financials but will update as soon as she can get them.

Memorial Tree & Park Bench Update: Jennifer Brown stated that Town Council asked Town staff to research and propose a Memorial Tree program to help replace the trees in Memorial Park that need to be replaced. She went through twelve different memorial tree programs and talked with six of them to find out what worked well and, if anything, what they would change. Along with Town Staff, she created three options and the pros and cons of each option. After reviewing each option and discussion from BRAAC members, it was decided to change the proposal to a Tree and Bench Donation fund. If someone wants to donate to the fund then Town staff will purchase, plant, remove, and maintain trees from that fund. If someone donates \$2000 or more, then their name will be displayed at a Town location. They preferred electronically on the kiosk that the TDA provides, however; they would be good with a central plaque with name plates added. They like electronically because it would be less of a cost to add names when donors needed to be added. Any donor who donates \$100 or more will receive a certificate recognizing their donation and all donors will receive a thank you letter.

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Bo made a motion to accept the revised Tree and Park Bench Fund proposal. Melissa seconded it and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

Project Lists: Jennifer Brown stated that during the last month's meeting Melissa asked everyone to create a list of projects that they would like to see accomplished this year and bring it to this month's meeting. After discussion it was determined that they would like the following projects at least started in 2018:

- Broyhill/American Legion Bank that Virginia Tech designed
- Annie Cannon Park Improvements

- The bridge that goes between Broyhill and Annie Cannon

Other Business: Curt wanted to discuss Clean-up Day and how the past few years have not had a lot of volunteers and wanted to try a different approach. Jennifer stated that she had talked to Mike Wilcox, the Public Works Director, and the Town's clean-up week is May 14th this year. She suggested that instead of having a Clean-up Day on a Saturday, that BRAAC coordinate it with the Town's clean-up week and allow volunteers the flexibility of what day during that week to pick up trash. Curt and Jennifer had the same idea to contact civic organizations to have them help with clean-up week as well as churches, and HOA's throughout town. Curt stated that he would submit articles for the news outlets to advertise and they all divided up the list of organizations to contact about clean-up week.

Chris gave an update on the picnic paver project and landscaping. He stated that he ordered 3 very large planters to plant trees in and place them strategically on the pavers. He stated that while he was looking for the planters he came across self-watering planters and he would like to try a couple on the American Legion deck. It holds 35 gallons of water which would water the plants for approximately three weeks. They cost approximately \$250 per planter. Bo made a motion to have BRAAC pay for two planters. Curt seconded it and it was a unanimous vote to approve.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday March 1, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.