

Appearance Commission Meeting

February 4, 2012

Minutes

Members Present: Chairwoman Melton, Vice Chairman Guinn, Lee Batson, Fiquet Swain

Members Absent: Sandy Foutch

Staff Present: Zunilda Rodriguez, AICP, Planning Director

Guests: Lynette Pearce

1. Welcome & New Member Introductions – Chair

Chairwoman Melton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Lee Batson was requested to provide a brief introduction to her to the commission. Each member of the commission introduced themselves.

2. Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda

Chairwoman Melton made a motion to make an adjustment to the agenda to move approval of the minutes after discussion and consideration of action items for the group. Vice chairman Guinn noted

3. Public Comments:

Staff member Zunilda Rodriguez noted there were no members of the public present that submitted public comments. However, Lynette Pearce attended the meeting and introduced herself to the group. She noted that she was involved with the Red Hat Group that does charity functions and is geared towards women aged 50 and over. They meet on the third Sunday of each month.

4. Discussion, Consideration, and Action on the Following Items:

A. Downtown Façade Grant Program Update

Staff member Zunilda Rodriguez provided a brief update to the Downtown Façade Grant Program noting that the application for 2 N. Main Street was approved by the Board of Commissioners in January 2013 and the applicant was provided their grant award.

B. Draft 2013 Appearance Commission Work Program

Member Batson noted she had a **three stage bicycle access plan** to connect appearance work with economic development. The first stage would include ordering and installing bike racks in front of business locations within the downtown in strip locations such as the Food Lion shopping area. A bicycle rack she researched online cost \$79 and holds five bicycles. The bicycle racks would encourage more riding to and from these locations by those that had bikes and encourage people to frequent those nearby businesses. Stage two would involve the town purchasing bikes for rentals that would be stationed at the Parks & Recreation Community Center for people to rent out for time duration. An alternate location could also be at Town Hall in the “pit area” located in the rear access area of town hall. Any funds raised through the rentals would be recycled back to appearance commission projects. The

third stage would include researching and applying for bicycle and pedestrian grants for implementation of bike trails. The premise with this project would be to encourage more interaction between the large visitors groups that frequent the Parks and Recreation community center and downtown businesses. Additional coordination and research is needed on this effort to coordinate a plan; however, the Appearance Commission could help with fundraising efforts to help finance the purchase of the bikes to launch the program.

The group also discussed the possible development of a **Hometown Festival** that focused on educating the community on Oliver Wendell Holmes significance to the community and its historical roots. The festival could include vendors from that historical period of time (i.e. candle makers, etc.), poetry reading at town square, bicycle and bed race, mountain music. A poetry or poster contest at the local elementary schools could be initiated with the results shown at the festival. The Red Hats of Wendell could participate as traditionally dressed southern bells with Lynette Pearce serving as an important point of contact. The Commission directed Zunilda to research and relay the birthday of Oliver Wendell Holmes to the commission so they could pursue any future planning efforts.

Fundraising opportunities should be an important focus of the commission in the coming months. A silent auction for example could be done that includes local business participation in an effort to raise at least \$2,000.

Community garden locations could be developed and reserved on a first come, first served basis. The plots could be 10x12. Locations would need to be identified. Perhaps we could consider the location behind the historic post office. We would need to look at water access however for this initiative. The project model could allow for people to replant a row and to donate a portion of the grown items to a local food pantry in Wendell.

Water park similar to the one established in Wilsonville, Oregon could serve as a good model for the town to consider pursuing in the future. It can use recycled and reclaimed water. This could serve as an important economic attraction for the town if located near the downtown.

Farmers market partnership with the Appearance Commission is something the group would like to pursue. The farmer market should be social gathering point for the community. Perhaps incorporating elements such as face painting and contests for families and music can help draw people to attend. It is important to help create a “romantic and very rustic” feel to the Farmers Market. Utilization of more local grown produce would be key as well.

The commission discussed the possibility of **launching a business appearance makeover pilot project** around offering volunteered free interior design work to a business on Main Street. They discussed perhaps the new “Primo Pizza” as a potential pilot project since it is a new business with blank canvas walls. Chairwoman Melton noted she would volunteer her efforts to pitch in on this effort. If the project is successful and others inquire, they would seek to create a formalized competitive application process.

The Appearance Commission would like to revisit the status of an old **dumpster beautification plan** the Planning Board worked on several years ago (perhaps in 2004/2005). Was it approved or not? Could it be revived by this commission? The commission directed Zunilda to find out more information about this matter.

C. Appearance Commission Website Information

The Appearance Commission members noted they would like to see the following information noted on the future redesign webpage for them:

- Mission
- Members (possible photos – no phone numbers)
- Projects (Current status information noted)
- Photo Directory
- Feedback Comment (ability for the public to submit questions or concerns to the commission directed to staff liaison)
- Volunteer Sign up (permit members of the public to volunteer and sign-up)
- Downtown Façade Grant Program (information, application, deadline)

The Appearance Commission members discussed developing a short range and long range plan given the amount and feasibility to accomplish the multiple drafted project ideas. The group discussed and decided on the following:

Short Range Plan:

- Downtown Façade Grant Program Marketing
- Business Appearance Makeover Pilot Project
- Community Garden
- Hometown Festival Planning

The intent of the short range plan is for the group to begin work on within this quarter.

Long Range Plan:

- Fundraising Events
- Community Service Initiatives
- Downtown Murals
- Holiday/Special Events Support Projects
- Partnership Opportunities (Garden Clubs, Tree Board, Local Schools, Farmers Market)
- 3 Stage Bike Plan - “Get Wendell Moving to Business”
- Comprehensive Beautification Plan
- Dumpster Beautification

The long range plan is intended to involve several months of planning and implementation execution.

5. Approval of Minutes

The Appearance Commission members reviewed the December 3, 2012 minutes. Chairwoman Melton requested a correction to the minutes to note that she self nominated herself for the chairwoman role and Kirby Guinn seconded the motion. In addition, she requested that minutes note that she nominated Kirby Guinn to the Vice Chairman position and Sandy Foutch provided a seconded motion for the nomination.

6. Chairman and Board Members' Comments

Chairwoman Melton discussed the need to focus on fundraising soon to accomplish the projects and initiatives desired by the Appearance Commission. She would like for the group to email Zunilda and the group fundraising ideas.

Vice Chairman Guinn had no comments.

Member Fiquet Swain noted that it is important to focus on current and immediate needs to demonstrate that the group is active and can accomplish goals set. Would like to explore the idea of issuing "in memory" of plaques for planters as a possible appearance enhancement to downtown businesses. She would like the group to get involved in holiday projects and start planning early.

Member Lee Batson noted she really liked the water park idea as an attraction point in Wendell.

7. Adjourn

Chairwoman Melton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Guinn seconded that motion. The vote was unanimous and meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.