

**Appearance Commission Meeting
March 4, 2013
Minutes**

Members Present: Chairwoman Melton, Lee Batson, Fiquet Swain, Sandy Foutch

Members Absent: Kirby Guinn

Staff Present: Zunilda Rodriguez, AICP, Planning Director

Guests: Commissioner Virginia Gray

1. Meeting Called to Order & Welcome

Chairwoman Melton called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Zunilda Rodriguez noted that Vice Chairman would be absent and is sick. Chairwoman Melton welcomed a guest to the meeting - Town of Wendell Board of Commissioner Virginia Gray.

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 to before board members comments on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Lee Batson.

3. Public Comments:

Staff member Zunilda Rodriguez noted there were no members of the public present that submitted public comments.

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

A. Wayfinding Signage Guidebook

Commissioner Melton asked if the historic banners would be removed from the downtown as part of this effort and expressed concerns given that the banners were privately purchased. Zunilda Rodriguez noted that the banners would be replaced over a phased period of time as the wayfinding signage program was implemented.

B. 2013 Short & Long Range Plan – Appearance Commission

The Appearance Commission members discussed and approved the following short range and long range work plan for 2013:

Short Range Plan:

- Downtown Façade Grant Program Marketing
- Business Appearance Makeover Pilot Project
- Community Gardens / Plantings
- Fundraising Events

Long Range Plan:

- Community Service Initiatives
- Downtown Murals (Fall 2013)
- Holiday/Special Events Support Projects
- Partnership Opportunities (Garden Clubs, Tree Board, Local Schools, Farmers Market)
- Comprehensive Beautification Plan
- Dumpster Beautification

Commissioners Swain and Melton agreed to serve as point of contacts on the Business Appearance Makeover Pilot Project and will follow-up with Primo Pizza. Sandy Foutch will contact the Art of Giving to see if they are willing to provide pictures for sale in exchange for free marketing with this project. Photos could be placed in either Primo Pizza or the Agave Restaurant. The group requested that staff provide a brief presentation at an upcoming Coffee Break hosted by the Wendell Chamber of Commerce.

The commission discussed doing work on downtown murals in the early Fall of 2013. Fiquet Swain volunteered to reach out to the NC State Art program and Jerry-Art-A-Rama art supplies and design store in Raleigh regarding volunteering supplies or providing connections to artists who would be interested in painting a mural in the downtown.

The commission noted that the cleanup efforts along Old Tarboro & Old Battle Bridge Road could be a horse trail opportunity in the future, which should possibly be explored.

A graffiti strewn building in the downtown would also be a good location for a future downtown mural painted. Other downtown mural locations also discussed were the East Wake Education Foundation and School of Dance building in the downtown. The Commission could explore a partnership opportunity through Jerry Art-A-Rama, which is located in Raleigh. They are very supportive of these types of community projects. We could connect with them regarding possible interested artists or donated materials. Fiquet Swain agreed to contact the NC School of Design for potential artist contacts and check on whether Habitat for Humanity has cheap plants that could be donated to us for future community plantings.

Zunilda Rodriguez agreed to reach out the property owners of these businesses (including Shelton Bridgers) over the summer to gauge their interest in having a downtown mural painted on the side of their property. She would report back to the Commission on the matter.

C. Appearance Commission Website Information

The Appearance Commission approved the staff recommendation for their webpage content. However, they would like to modify the current and completed projects photo section to showcase before and after photos of their projects or initiatives. Staff liaison Zunilda Rodriguez noted she would make that modification and include it in the future

webpage as requested.

D. Downtown Façade Grant Program Marketing Outreach

Staff member Zunilda Rodriguez presented a draft outline for marketing outreach for the downtown façade grant program. There were no requested adjustments by the commissioners. The outreach plan would occur over the coming weeks to help market the program and obtain interested applicants with the goal to have a competitive application round.

E. Fundraising Efforts

The Commission discussed and requested staff to place fundraising efforts on the short range planning program for the group. The commission discussed beginning fundraising efforts very soon and indicated a preference to hold a silent auction event at Agave Restaurant once they obtained their liquor license.

F. Business Appearance Makeover Pilot Project

Staff liaison Zunilda Rodriguez agreed to develop a letter that could be provided to prospective business owners noting more details, intent and goals of the Business Appearance Makeover Pilot as the commission solicited for donated items for the effort.

G. Community Plantings

The Commission agreed to explore the Timberlake Drive dam area for possible future beautification area efforts given the high community use and visibility of this informal meeting neighborhood area. The commission noted this would be a central project for them. In addition, the commission discussed placing plantings along 3rd Street near Perry's Gun Shop. They would need to identify if those plantings would be maintained over time.

Lee Batson noted that the commission should research how much hanging baskets along downtown business would cost to implement.

Zunilda Rodriguez also spoke with the Commission regarding possible partnership opportunities with the Tree Board. She noted that she spoke with a staff liaison to the Tree Board who noted that they would welcome participation from the Appearance Commission for an upcoming Arbor Day event. She noted the dates and times provided for Arbor Day to the commission and requested that the commission appoint or have someone volunteer for this effort. She noted that she would follow-up with members to identify a participant from the commission to attend and this would be a good opportunity to get involved, recruit volunteers and establish a presence in the community.

5. Approval of Minutes

The Appearance Commission members reviewed the February 4, 2013 minutes. It was noted that page 2 was missing from the minutes. Staff liaison Zunilda Rodriguez apologized for the error and noted that updated minutes would be provided to the board members after the meeting. There were no comments for revisions. Chairwoman Melton provided a motion to approve the February 2013 minutes. Lee Batson seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimous by the commission.

6. Chairman and Board Members' Comments

Chairwoman Melton noted that she had no comments. She requested any comments from the other Appearance Commission members present.

Sandy Foutch, Fiquet Swain and Lee Batson stated they had no comments at this time.

7. Adjourn

Chairwoman Melton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fiquet Swain seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.