

**Appearance Commission Minutes
City of Newton, NC
Meeting on Thursday, July 11, 2013**

Attendees:

Melvin Caldwell Tom Rowe
Jan Freeman Collette Touchette
Jim Gargis Sandra Waters
Alicia Rayfield

Guests:

Sheila Iverson
Kelly Groves

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Chairperson Collette Touchette called the meeting to order and welcomed guests.

II. Approval of Minutes

The June 13, 2013 meeting minutes were approved.

III. Old Business

A. Master Gardeners Presentation

1. Kelly Groves, from the NC Cooperative Extension Agency and Master Gardener organization, gave a thorough slideshow presentation of the areas that her organization will adopt for beautification.
2. The three landscape beds are located on the corner of South College Avenue and East 2nd Street.
3. The landscaping will begin in September with removal of several ill-placed specimens and planting of showy, easily maintained flowers, bushes, grasses, and low shrubs.
4. Ms. Groves will submit a drawing of the landscape design.

B. Business Advisory Input

1. Collette submitted input to John Stiver on the City of Newton Master Plan

C. Adopt-a-Spot Update

1. The Adopt-a-Spot information was presented to the City Council on June 18 and well received.
2. Collette reported that the Appearance Commission should continue to list location sites for individuals or organizations to adopt. These should be submitted to her.
3. Sean Hovis has offered to make 30 copies of the Adopt-a-Spot brochure to distribute to interested parties.

D. Yard Sale Ordinance

1. Collette reviewed the ordinance with Assistant Town Manager, Sean Hovis. Only one change was suggested regarding the fines.
2. The ordinance has been sent to the city attorney, John Cilley, for review.
3. Collette suggested that commission members take pictures of any ordinance violations to show at the City Council presentation.

E. Hwy 10 and 16 Little's Median Landscape

1. Bill Sigmon has begun work on a landscape design for the medians.
2. The design will be forthcoming.

F. Yard of the Month

1. Jan reported that the August Yard of the Month has been determined and will be recognized later in the month.
2. The recipient of the award is Pat Kincaid at 1033 Merrywood Dr., in the Walnut Creek development. Alicia and Jan will present the award soon, with Julie Chang photographing and writing the article.
3. Sandra reported that she and her assistant have drafted some potential designs for new yard sale signs. Alicia, Jan, and Ana Christine will review the designs and make proposals for new signage.

G. Review of Downtown Appearance Status

1. Collette reviewed the audit findings with Asst. Town Manager, Sean Hovis. She will meet with Jon Raines to review the status of all findings assigned to the Code Enforcement Officer.
2. Collette read a draft of the letter to be sent to those people assigned to the Appearance Commission/DNDA. The commission approved the letter.
3. The letter will be reviewed by DNDA and Sean Hovis before distribution.

H. Planters/Replacement Planters

1. The downtown concrete planters will be removed, beginning as early as July 12th and replaced with pavers at this time.
2. The trees and plants in the planters will be reused if possible. Doyle will attempt to relocate the crepe myrtles and the smaller plants will be used in new pots.

I. Wayfinding Committee Meeting Update

1. Alicia reported the updates from the Wayfinding committee meeting, noting that some information will be forthcoming.
2. She shared potential concepts presented at the meeting that could make Newton more unique and appealing.

J. Adopt-a-Pot Update

1. Collette reported that 6 pots have been purchased by the DNDA with an additional 4 to be purchased.
2. She asked for volunteers to assist with the planting. Several members agreed to help with the task.
3. Collette presented a draft of an Adopt-a-Pot brochure, developed by the DNDA to hand deliver to downtown businesses. Any merchant interested in adopting a pot will also receive the guidelines.

K. Painting of Downtown poles update

1. Sandra shared the status of preparing and painting of the poles. The paint has been purchased but discussion is underway about the best stripper to use.

2. Weather has been a significant factor in the progress, but importantly, manpower is also creating a delay. Commission members were asked to consider volunteering to prepare and paint the bottom portion of the poles. Discussion ensued, with some members voicing concern about not painting the entire pole.
3. After extensive discussion among commission members, it was determined that additional research is required. Sandra and Collette will inspect the poles and the stripping compound directions.

L. Appearance Commission Facebook

1. Melvin shared updates on the commission's Facebook page. As of the 11th, the page has received 100 Likes, with hundreds of people reviewing the information.
2. A picture of the Commission members will be posted soon,
3. Collette suggested the commission periodically select a business with exceptional landscaping or aesthetics to highlight and congratulate.
4. Alicia recommended broadening this idea into a "Looking Good" recognition. The commission members liked the idea, with Melvin making a motion to institute this initiative. Jan seconded the motion.
5. Melvin was selected to head this initiative. Members may send him pictures to review at each monthly meeting.

M. Parks/Cemeteries Review

1. Collette recommended that the commission begin evaluations of Newton's parks and cemeteries.
2. Jan suggested the commission members caravan to several sites at the August and/or September meetings.
3. Collette will develop a list and map of the locations.

N. Spring Banners

1. Due to various city initiatives in discussion, it was determined that purchasing additional banners might be premature. Potential themes, designs, and symbols might better reflect and create a cohesive look for the city.
2. The members voted to wait on Wayfinding committee decisions for banner design ideas. Jim made a motion not to purchase banners at this time. Jan seconded the motion.

IV. New Business

A. Appearance Commission Report to the City Council

1. Collette reported that Sean Hovis requested updates on the Appearance Commission's plans, goals, and projects.
2. She shared a beginning draft with commission members. The completed powerpoint will be presented at a future City Council meeting.

B. Meeting Adjournment

1. Collette adjourned the meeting.

2. The next meeting will be held on August 8, 2013 at 7:00 P.M., in the downstairs Recreation Department conference room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jan Freeman
Secretary, Appearance Commission
7/12/2013