

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

Attendees:

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

Guests:

None

I. Call to Order

Vice-Chairperson, Alicia Rayfield, called the meeting to order and welcomed members.

II. Approval of Minutes

The March minutes were reviewed and corrected, followed by approval.

III. Old Business

A. Membership

1. The new member, Bill Sigmon, was not in attendance, but he was welcomed as an invaluable addition to the commission.
2. The commission needs one (1) additional member; nominations were requested.

B. Election of new officers

1. Alicia opened the floor to nominations and discussion.
2. Several members indicated that they were not interested in serving as Chairperson. Collette Touchette indicated that she would be interested in chairing the Appearance Commission
3. Alicia Rayfield was asked to continue in her position as Vice-Chair and Jan Freeman was nominated to serve as Secretary.
4. All members voted to accept these nominations.
5. Collette noted the duties of each officer as written in the Appearance Commission By-Laws.

C. Yard of the Month

1. Alicia reported that selecting an April Yard-of-the-Month was not ideal due to cold weather impacting landscapes and flowers, causing delayed blooming. It was suggested that in lieu of beginning this month, selection and announcement begin the first of May.
2. Collette noted that a decision had been discussed and finalized at the January Planning meeting; after discussion of the matter, it was determined that flexibility due to weather and other extenuating circumstances would be appropriate; the 2013 Yard-of-the-Month recognition will begin in May.
3. Alicia proposed that the yard of Kyle Smith and Julie Ingle, located on South Brady Avenue, be considered for nomination for the May award.
4. Melvin made a motion to approve the nomination. Jan seconded the motion.

D. Streetscapes

1. Alicia presented slides of street planters, landscaping, and signage from select towns and cities across the country, highlighting unique and appealing designs.
2. Sandra distributed the Tree City USA bulletin and noted the pertinent information on placement of business signage, plants, and trees. She also mentioned that the coco liners used in the hanging baskets will be purchased from the Maggie Valley Landscaping Company as soon as they are available.
3. Committee members discussed problems with the current street planters and best practices for selecting replacement pottery/planters for the downtown sidewalks. Jan suggested conferring with or surveying local business owners for their input in order to ensure ownership and pride in the replacement purchase. Alicia agreed to assist Jan with this initiative. Melvin agreed to contact several businesses as well.
4. Alicia asked about the feasibility of business owners purchasing and maintaining store front planters, topiary, baskets, etc. Tom suggested the city purchase and maintain the replacement planters as a means of ensuring consistency and appearance. Jim focused on writing guidelines for businesses to follow. Collette referred back to the Streetscape Master Plan which specifies recommendations. It was determined that both proposals, requesting funding from the city and from businesses, should be considered.
5. Sandra and Tom indicated that most likely this initiative would be listed on next year's budget, but that the commission should move forward with soliciting input from business owners, selecting replacement pottery/planters, writing a line item proposal that can be edited as needed, and submitting the proposal in early 2014 to the Newton City Council budget committee.

E. Adopt-A-Spot

1. Collette presented a draft of the Application packet and Agreement, with an additional Tip Sheet. Edits were made.
2. Location and contact site(s) for application pick up were discussed; Sandra suggested that the Recreation Department serve as the dissemination site.
3. Collette reported that Master Gardeners has agreed to adopt the first spot, pending the commission's selection of the area. Discussion followed about potential locations, culminating in tentative selection of the landscape area on 2nd and South College Avenues. Members agreed to identify other adoption sites for review at the May meeting. It was suggested that Collette contact the Planning Department for their input on potential spots.
4. Collette proposed that the commission submit plans to Streetscape (Max Ziegler, project chair) for landscaping of the two entrance areas (Hwy 16/10 median and the median at Little's). It was indicated that Bill and Doyle could head this initiative due to their expertise in landscape design. Collette stated that the city will determine how the concrete will be removed the concrete from both medians.

F. Budget

1. Sandra distributed and reviewed the Appearance Commission's 2013-14 budget requests.
2. Alicia asked for insight into the holiday decoration improvements line item. Sandra gave a brief overview and history of the commission's budget responsibilities.
3. The budget proposal was deemed satisfactory, pending approval by the City Council.

G. Yard Sale Ordinance

1. Melvin presented and reviewed a draft of the Residential Yard Sale Ordinance.
2. Sandra suggested that the Recreation Department serve as the site for dissemination and return of applications and fees.
3. Members discussed and edited the ordinance as needed; Melvin elaborated on specific regulations and asked Jim to assist him in order to finalize this initiative for approval.
4. Collette suggested that Melvin talk to the Finance department about the best point of permit fee collection.

H. Meeting Adjournment

1. Due to the time and the amount of old and new business remaining on the agenda, Collette recommended adjournment and scheduling of an additional April meeting to complete the commission's business.
2. Sandra proposed moving the meeting time from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Melvin made a motion to do so and the motion was then seconded.
3. The next meeting will be held on April 25, 2013, beginning at 6:00 p.m., in the Recreation Department meeting room.

Notation: Highlighted sections denote an "Action Item," requiring action by one or more commission members.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jan Freeman
Secretary, Appearance Commission
4/12/13