

Minutes of Beautification Committee meeting, March 8, 2010

Present: Ken Withrow, chairing, Candace Clark, Gary Cox, Ron Eccleston, Elaine Eisberg, Bob Falco, Tony Gonsalves, John Gordon, Herb Wiebe

Also attending: Commissioner Chuck Keener

Absent (excused): Priscilla Smith

1. Meeting called to order at 4:03 pm. Ken Withrow passed out copies of the town's new General Policies and Procedures for Committees.

2. Previous minutes accepted, with the addition of the word "(excused)" to follow "Absent."

3. Old Business

A. The committee's recommendation to council regarding accepting holiday decorations from the Island of Lights was approved. Lights have been ordered.

B. Sandman Project on hold.

C. Uniform town signs.

There is no money to fund the signs for Atlantic Avenue. Future TDA funds and regular town budget could be tapped.

Tony Gonsalves presented a bid by September Signs for Atlantic Avenue signs based on the RAGS design. Signs would be made of plastic resin (HDU) rather than wood, starboard, etc., as suggested by RAGS. Cost estimate is \$10,661.47. Discussion ensued about whether or not the SS bid included trash bin containers, how to compare products with no sample from SS, etc. Ken Withrow reported that RAGS is working on a new estimate based on new information from the town that was not available for the initial estimate. Consensus was that samples from SS be made available to the committee before we could reach any final recommendation.

Discussion ensued about future town signs. **Committee recommends to council that, starting immediately, all new (Parking, Frisbee Golf, etc.) and all newly replaced town signs be approved by the Beautification Committee, following the design approved by council in 2009.**

D. Atlantic Avenue

Landscaping is beginning and will be completed by April 28, the date of the Street Festival.

E. Intersection of K Avenue and Ft. Fisher. Improvements on hold. Ideas welcome.

F. Tree City. Consensus was that the **committee recommend to Council becoming a Tree City**. Benefits include improved chances for grant money. Town would have to hold an annual “tree event” of some sort, document areas of town land that could support tree plantings, and have a plan for future installation and maintenance.

4. New business: 2010 projects and budgets

Discussion concerned the council’s directive to address issues raised by EDC and previous B-1 “studies.”

In order of priority, the BC recommends:

A. **“Branding” by implementing plan for uniform town signs** (Atlantic Avenue, parking signs, beach signs, frisbee course signs, OFP, street signs, informational signs, town entry signs, town hall signs, etc.). Funding sources: TDA money? OFP grants?

B. Landscaping maintenance

Following the former EDC recommendation, landscaping is important for the town’s beautification. Our maintenance plan is currently ineffectual – and costly, because plants are lost or killed by inappropriate timing and amount of mulching, inattention to watering needs, etc. Maintaining existing landscaping (at Town Hall, entry signs, Town Hall and Police Department signs, trees on E Avenue) and new landscaping (OFP, Atlantic Avenue, K Avenue planters, tree plantings, etc.) will be an ongoing issue. Any improvement to the town’s landscaping will add to the maintenance demand.

Alternatives (not mutually exclusive):

1. Contract with a knowledgeable outside company to take care of town landscaping maintenance, especially heavy maintenance such as mulching. Assess results and costs before proceeding on this course.

2. Ask garden club volunteers to do light maintenance. (Involves someone’s establishing a KB garden club because none exists at present.) Assess results before proceeding on this course.

3. Assign a new Public Works employee or dedicate existing Public Works employees to landscape maintenance for a given number of hours per week or month. Require and pay for these employees to attend landscaping courses at

the New Hanover County Arboretum. Assess results and costs before proceeding on this course.

C. Ocean Front Park

Work with committee & architects toward most aesthetically pleasing design.

D. Become a “tree city.” (See discussion above.)

E. B-1 district (last only because funding is unlikely at this time)

1. Bury power lines.

2. Repave street & sidewalks (with, e.g., cobble stones, stamped concrete, or similar); eliminate parking.

3. Replace existing ugly orange sticks at parking spaces in the middle of K Avenue between Ft. Fisher and 3rd Avenue with trees, as per Ken Withrow’s design.

4. Invite local artists group to exhibit sculptures, paintings, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 5:34 pm.

Next meeting April 12 at 4 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Candace Clark, Co-Chair