

## City of Darlington Beautification Board

Minutes for September 16, 2020

The meeting of the Beautification Board was called to order at 5:06 p.m. by Ms. Rock. Attending were Board members, Ms. Burns, Mrs. Ishman, Mrs. Martin, Ms. Rock, and Mrs. Sprott; Codes Enforcement Officer, Ms. Sheila Jones; and guests, City Council Member Sheila Baccus and Darlington Garden Club President Linda Beckham, all in person; and Board member Ms. Brown by telephone.

Mrs. Martin gave the opening prayer.

Mrs. Ishman made a motion to accept the minutes of the February 26, 2020, meeting as written. Ms. Burns made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Ms. Rock expressed her appreciation for City Council, specifically recognizing Ms. Baccus, for its support and providing \$17,163 for the FY2020-2021. The donation fund has \$9,579.95 remaining with \$2,000 of that allocated for the smaller entrance sign on North Main Street in front of SPC Credit Union that had been previously approved by the Board.

**Administrator's Report:** In Mr. Garland's absence, Ms. Rock introduced the new Codes Enforcement Officer / Building Inspector Ms. Sheila Jones. She also noted that the Planning Department had two part-time individuals working 7 a.m. to 12 noon Monday through Thursday, Mr. Blake Hayes and Mr. Brandon Johnson.

**Pride of Darlington Awards & Certificates:** Ms. Rock asked the Board about presenting the awards given the COVID-19 restrictions. She suggested featuring the winner with the sign with their family only, instead of with the Board to limit exposure risk. The Board agreed. The next Business Pride Award previously voted on was Mr. Chapman's building on Pearl Street next to Jin Jin Restaurant that has been refaced. Ms. Burns nominated Charles Stewart and the Darlington County Courthouse grounds for a Certificate of Recognition. Mrs. Ishman made the second. The motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Ishman nominated Ms. Martin's home on Jordan Street for the Residential Pride Award for her work, painting the house, building a "She" shed and fixing up her fishpond in the yard. Ms. Burns made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

**Clean Up Day:** Given the limitations on social gatherings during this pandemic, the Board decided not to hold the fall Clean Up Day. Ms. Burns said the main project in is the pots on the Square. Mrs. Beckham suggested asking clubs, churches, etc. to pick a project and get people to work on them in small groups to minimize risk. Mrs. Sprott said several of the trees in the pots need to be removed before they break the pots. Mrs. Ishman and Mrs. Sprott will flag the ones to be removed, and Ms. Rock with have city and recreation staff take them out and replant at the new ballfield to serve as a screen to a neighboring residence. The Board approved removing around 20 trees this time and adding kale, cabbage, and other plants to the pansies typically put in the pots for the fall season. This would leave 48 of the 70 pots without trees. The Board will consider an Adopt A Pot program, so individuals, businesses, and churches can sponsor and plant whatever they choose in a pot this spring at their own expense instead of the City's expense. Mrs. Sprott insisted on guidelines and a list of suggested plants to help. Mrs. Ishman said we can work through the guidelines through the winter. Mrs. Ishman made a motion to spend up to \$2,500 to redo the pots, including removing the trees, replacing plants, and clear coating the pots. Mrs. Sprott made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

**Fall Décor Project:** In the past few years, the Board has decorated the utility poles in the Public Square with donated corn stalks and farm products as well as scare crows. The Board discussed the possibility of

doing a scarecrow contest. The Board decided there was not enough time to publicize such a contest for this year, but members would notify businesses of the intention to do one next fall throughout town to give residents and visitors a chance to ride around and see different ones. Duke Energy has given permission to allow tying the stalks and scare crows to the utility poles under the City's banner agreement. The project is similar to one Ms. Burns saw successfully done in Thompson, Ga., where various groups and businesses would dress up scarecrows, e.g. like nurses in front of the hospital, etc. Ms. Brown made a motion to spend up to \$300 for the scarecrow project, to include the scarecrows, ribbon, wire, and other miscellaneous items to secure them to 15-20 poles around the Square. Mrs. Ishman made the second. The motion carried unanimously. The Board will meet at 5 p.m. Wednesday, October 7, to put up the decorations.

**Fall Display:** The Board discussed alternate locations for the large haybale fall display as has been erected in the last two years. If mums are in the display, it needs to be near the Square to be watered daily. Mrs. Ishman said the flowers needed to be 10 or 12" pots. Mrs. Martin made a motion to install the display in front of the Carnegie Library Building on North Main Street. Ms. Burns made the second. The motion carried unanimously. Ms. Rock said the Beautification folks can assist in watering. Ms. Brown said the display should be increased since everyone has been cooped up with the pandemic. Mrs. Sprott made a motion to spend up to \$600 on the display and no more. Mrs. Martin made the second. The motion carried unanimously.

**Garden Club Project Updates:** Mrs. Beckham said the club's big project for the year would be a Pollinator Garden, not a formal garden, at the trail head behind City Lane and Voter Registration. They have secured donated cardboard to kill the grass and wood chips. The focus will be on native plants to draw butterflies and bees to help balance the ecosystem of the City. The Club also wants to do pocket pollinator garden throughout the City. Mrs. Ishman expressed concerns about maintaining these areas.

**Unfinished Business:** Ms. Rock did not have an update on the repainting of the fire hydrants. Ms. Burns asked what could be done about the awnings in disrepair around the Square and town in general. Previously the Garden Club had decorated the vacant storefronts and really spruced up the Square. Ms. Rock referred that to Codes Enforcement Office. There was no update on the potential entrance on SC151 near Manheim. Mrs. Ishman asked about putting something to screen the utilities from the main entrance to town in front of Verizon. Ms. Rock said she will get some prices on lattice and check with the sanitation department about placement.

The next meeting will be at 5 p.m. Wednesday, October 21, at the Harmon Baldwin Recreation Center to allow for social distancing.

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.