

Mr. Caspar: Mr. Wes Anderson resigned, so let's wait to take action about cleanup when new person is hired. On February 11, 2012, Community Tree Day will begin at the Moyewood Cultural and Recreation Center at 1710 West Third Street from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m.

Mr. Abboud: There will be a meeting on Friday at 2:30 p.m. in the in conference room of Public Works. I usually do the mulch with a group. We plant trees, put out mulch and water trees. Ninety percent of trees planted last year have lived.

Mr. Caspar: There are two vacancies on the Community Appearance Commission. If you know someone who is interested, please have them fill out a talent bank form with the City Clerk's office.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NEW BUSINESS

January Community Appearance Commission Awards and New Nominations

Mr. Jones: Jeffrey Scott Johnson e-mailed in the nomination of the Brown and Wood renovation.

Mr. Abboud: I nominate the Carolina Ale House.

Mr. Caspar: The Commission will vote for these two in March. Awards are valued by those who receive them.

Neighborhood Improvement Grant Project Presentations

The Gates HOA (Fall 2011)

Ms. Joy Nethercutt: There are 49 households in the Gates Neighborhood, and the homes were built from 1986 – 1994. The association asked for a grant to renovate sign, light sign and plant shrubbery. Phase I refurbished and relocated entrance sign by centering in island and moving further back from the street. Phase II will be worked on next and will consist of landscaping around the sign and lighting the sign.

How did this project improve your neighborhood? The refurbished entrance sign is in like new condition, letting visitors know that we care about how our neighborhood looks.

How were neighborhood residents involved in this project? HOA's five board members wrote the specifications for the project, reviewed bids, and chose the repair company that did the work. HOA president met with the bidders on-site to explain. Other

residents were sought out for opinions on where the sign should be placed when reinstalling it and for help in choosing the red paint color for sign.

Lessons learned: taking photographs of the existing sign was key in showing the city staff the state of disrepair; meeting repairmen on-site and talking with them about the specifics of how we wanted the sign to be repaired and finished; and breaking the project into phases, since refurbishing the Gates entrance island is a large and expensive project.

How can the Community Appearance Commission improve its grant program? Keep the applicants informed of the status of their application after submission. Post the grant recipients and amounts on the City's website.

The Oaks Neighborhood Association (Spring 2011)

Ms. Brenda Diggs: The Oaks Neighborhood replaced an entrance sign which was destroyed by a storm a number of years ago and added solar lighting.

How did this project improve your neighborhood? The sign served as a welcoming gateway to our community; provided. Provides an identity and distinguishes our neighborhood from the well-known community around us. Gives residents a sense of belonging. Discourages neglect. Is a visible indicator of a unified and caring group of neighbors, which is one of the objectives of The Oaks Neighborhood Association.

How were neighborhood residents involved in this project? A core group of neighbors volunteered to work with the city's Neighborhood Liaison/Ombudsman to form The Oaks Association. One resident, an engineer, found the irons, which marked the location of the sign easement and maintained communication with the city engineer and the sign administrator. One resident installed the solar panels which powers the light source to illuminate the sign and secured it against theft. Another resident will help with landscaping in Spring 2012.

Unique Elements:

The Oaks considered filing an encroachment application for better sign visibility. The CAC recognized that fees for this service would present a hardship to new associations and recommended a change to the city's Manual of Fees; as a result, neighborhood associations receiving improvement grants will not be charged an application fee for encroachment agreements. The Oaks was the catalyst for this change.

How can the Community Appearance Commission improve its grant program? More publicity so that communities know that resources are available for neighborhood improvements. An increase in the amount grantees receive to aid in completing projects faster (since neighborhood associations cannot assess dues and must rely on donations).

Mr. McLawhorn: What sign company did you use?

Ms. Diggs: Sign Smith on Evans Street was hired.

Mr. McLawhorn: Supporting Greenville sign businesses to build the signs is a plus.

Mr. Abboud: Congratulations Brenda for working so hard to take care of this.

Cherry Oaks North HOA (Fall 2011)

Mr. Bill Whisnant: Our main goal is to have a sustainable community by adding value through appearance. Our subdivision has 60 lots. Our voluntary dues are \$150.00 with 75% paying the fee. Canopy trees provide acoustic buffer and enhance and sustain property values.

Mr. McLawhorn: Would Cherry Oaks North be interested in a landscaped median?

Mr. Whisnant: Yes, a landscaped median would be preferred. The City of Greenville needs a fence ordinance. Fences built to the right-of-way are disruptive to appearance.

Mr. Whisnant: Cherry Oaks North purchased and planted twelve 3-inch Willow Oaks on the north side of East Firetower Road.

How did this project improve your neighborhood? The planted trees mitigated the negative effects (visual and sound) of increased traffic on the neighborhood. Improved the existing subdivision landscaping to project a higher level of quality which in turn enhances property values. Provided an improved level of community appearance along East Firetower Road, one of the City's principle gateway streets, to create a more positive impression of the City in general.

How were neighborhood residents involved in this project? Discussion and approval of the project at the Annual HOA Membership Meeting; inclusion of the project by the HOA Board of Directors as part of its Annual HOA Work Program; and continuing contact by the HOA President with city staff and other agencies concerning the project.

Unique Elements

Timeliness: the project was conceived and implemented before the effects of additional traffic noise and visual distractions were experienced by the neighborhood.

Partnerships: the project combined several funding and management resources.
Purposeful and collaborative process: the process originated with broad based support from the HOA membership and Board of Directors, after which the Association President contacted the City Arborist to determine if the general concept of using a canopy tree project to mitigate problems made sense.

Lessons learned: Timely, thorough and completed communications among all of the partners; a clear concept for the project and the availability of people who can manage its implementation within a multi-agency environment; and experienced unified HOA leadership.

How can the Community Appearance Commission improve its grant program? Identifying coaches or advisors who might, as needed, be available to supplement individual HOA resources. Amend the City Code to require HOAs for all new subdivisions, thereby forming entities with the governance and fiscal capability to undertake projects that would benefit and support their neighborhoods.

The Commission thanked the presenters for their presentations.

Mr. Caspar: How many applications have been received?

Ms. Searfoss: None, the applications are due in April 2012.

Mr. Caspar: How much grant money is remaining?

Ms. Searfoss: \$4,500.00

Ms. Diggs: The landscaped median on Firetower looks terrible.

Ms. Searfoss: Call Public Works.

Mr. McLawhorn: The landscaped median on Charles Boulevard looks good.

Mr. Jones: Try to give the Firetower Road median a Charles Boulevard look.

Tree Preservation Forum Update

Mr. Caspar: On January 10, 2012, a Tree Preservation Forum was held at the library with standing room only. At the meeting, input was collected from interested folks and those comments are going back to the Tree Preservation Committee. Ordinance is on the way to the City Council in the Spring.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no subcommittee reports.

UPDATES BY STAFF

There were no updates.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Albi McLawhorn and seconded by Ms. Joanne Robertson to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Niki S. Jones
Planner