

**AMHERST COUNTY
ROUTE 29 BUSINESS BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019
MINUTES**

VIRGINIA

A public meeting for the Route 29 Business Beautification Committee was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2019 in the County Administration Meeting Room located in the Administration Building at 153 Washington Street, Amherst, VA.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Jones, Chairwoman
Lori Saunders
Benita Unrue
Dottie Rucker
Teresa Brooks
John Ruff
Ruth Martineau
Calvin Kennon, Vice Chairman
Jeremy Bryant

STAFF PRESENT: Stacey Stinnett, Administrative Assistant

STAFF ABSENT: Tyler Creasy, Assistant Zoning Administrator/Planner

Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes for September 25, 2019
4. Citizen Comments
5. Update on Mowing Grass
6. Crosswalks at Hardees & Subway in Madison Heights
(Dottie Rucker)
7. Route 29 Business Beautification Mini-Grant Program
8. Old/New Business
9. Adjournment

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Jones called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Action:

Motion: Brooks

Motion to approve the agenda as submitted.

Second: Unrue

The motion carried by 9-0 vote.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 25, 2019

One change was made to the minutes.

Action:

Motion: Ruff

Motion to approve the September 25, 2019 meeting minutes with the one change.

Second: Brooks

The motion carried by 9-0 vote.

4. CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were none.

5. UPDATE ON MOWING GRASS

Mr. Bryant updated the committee on a meeting that he had today with David Proffitt (Purchasing Officer/Assistant County Administrator), three landscapers that were used for the County and Virginia Department of Transportation. Mr. Bryant explained that according to Virginia Department of Transportation they stated that they are aware that mowing the County's corridor is a priority and they will get to this. Mr. Bryant gave the committee four options to consider by the next meeting:

1. Do nothing – wait until VDOT takes care of this – does not include tax payer's dollars, VDOT states this will be a priority by next spring.
2. Ask Board of Supervisors for more money to pay for hired contractors to take care of the mowing. Use tax payer's dollars for this project.
3. Check with local companies and see if they will sponsor a sign (\$7500).
4. Have local landscapers sponsor a sign and tend to the maintenance.

There was a consensus to wait until the next Route 29 Business Beautification meeting on November 20th to see what the landscape contractor's bids were to make a better decision.

Ms. Brooks asked staff to look into the Virginia Department of Transportation's Wildflower Program about planting wildflowers. Ms. Brooks stated that it would be less maintenance to mow and the wildflowers would certainly enhance the corridor.

Ms. Jones suggested bringing this mowing issue that Virginia Department of Transportation is neglecting to lawmaker's attention and perhaps having the county ask the mowing contractors that are used for the schools to mow throughout the corridor.

6. CROSSWALKS AT HARDEES & SUBWAY IN MADISON HEIGHTS (DOTTIE RUCKER)

Ms. Rucker requested staff to look into speaking with Virginia Department of Transportation about crosswalks due to safety concerns near these locations.

7. ROUTE 29 BUSINESS BEAUTIFICATION MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

Mr. Bryant briefly discussed and reviewed the following regulations of the Mini-Grant Program.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of the Route 29 Business Beautification Mini-Grant program is to assist businesses along the corridor to make improvements to the overall appearance of their property. The purpose of the grant is to enhance the sense of community and environment wellness of our corridor through the accomplishment of sustainable community planning.

Project Description:

Each community has unique needs. The purpose of this grant is to encourage community members to take pride in and responsibility for their property that fronts on Route 29 Business. Examples of qualifying improvements could be: sign replacement and restoration, landscaping, removal of blight, façade improvement, landscaping and tree planting, fresh paint on a building.

Guidelines:

In order to compete for grant funds, the applicant must complete a Route 29 Business Beautification Mini-Grant Program application. It should be submitted to the Community Development Department. Once complete, the item will be presented at the monthly meeting on the Route 29 Business Beautification Committee. The applicant must match dollar for dollar of the grant amount, up to \$500 from the County if the grant is approved.

There was a consensus to change the County's match limit from \$500 to \$1000.

Mr. Bryant stated that once this was approved then he would make sure it received advertisement on the County's website, County's Facebook page and in the local newspaper.

Mr. Kennon stated that he would like to see Route 29 Business Beautification Mini-Grant signs located in areas that took advantage of this program and enhanced their property.

8. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Jones requested staff to give her a contact number to the owner of the Hooper Shopping Center so that she may contact them regarding their mailboxes.

Mr. Bryant updated the committee on the recent commercial projects within the County such as Biscuitville, WaffleHouse and the Carwash.

There was also a discussion about the issues the County is having with the Scottish Inn.

Ms. Brooks asked staff to reach out to Appalachian Power about tying power lines together to avoid so many power lines and installing lights from Smiles Gas to the John Lynch Bridge.

Mr. Ruff asked for an update regarding the Food Truck Ordinance. Mr. Bryant replied that this request would be admitted to the code changes and brought before the Planning Commission soon.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no more business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.

Action:

Motion: Saunders

Motion to adjourn.

Second: Kennon

The motion carried by 9-0 vote.

Chairman



/SS/10.29.19