

Joint Appearance Commission

2017 Annual Report for the Fayetteville City Council

(To Be Presented to City Council on May 14, 2018)

Introduction

This report provides background on the Joint Appearance Commission (JAC), it explains the relationship of the JAC to the Fayetteville Tree Board, it provides information on the Community Appearance Awards Program, it provides a summary of activities during calendar year 2017, and it provides a list of initiatives for calendar year 2018.

Background

What Is the Purpose of the Joint Appearance Commission? The purpose is promote the enhancement of the appearance of the community. The commission pursues this purpose by reviewing the appearance of public buildings, by recommending ordinances, by directing local officials toward needed enforcement actions, and by sponsoring programs, such as the Community Appearance Awards Program.

Why Is There a Joint Appearance Commission? Prior to 2004, the City of Fayetteville had its own Appearance Commission. Around 2003, the members of the Fayetteville Appearance Commission recognized a need to create a joint commission. This need was based on the fact that many community gateways leading in and out of Fayetteville straddle the Fayetteville city limits; this meant that responsibility for regulation, improvements and maintenance was split between the City and the County. The members of the Fayetteville Appearance Commission felt the commission could be more effective in improving the appearance of gateways if the commission included members appointed by the county and the small towns in the county. The members also felt that appearance was an important issue that needed to be promoted county-wide. The City asked the County and the small towns to consider forming a joint commission in 2003-2004.

Establishment-The Joint Appearance Commission was established in 2004 when the various jurisdictions adopted an interlocal agreement. The interlocal agreement was based on enabling legislation enacted by the NC General Assembly. After members were appointed, they adopted their own Bylaws.

Membership-The Joint Appearance Commission is made up of members appointed by Cumberland County and the nine towns in Cumberland County. The City of Fayetteville appoints 4 members, the Board of County Commissioners appoints 4 members, and the governing boards of the other eight towns appoint one member each. Currently, all towns are represented on the commission, except for the Towns of Falcon, Godwin, and Stedman. (Falcon originally participated in the program but is no longer participating. The Godwin and Stedman seats are currently vacant.)

Qualifications for Membership-Members are supposed to be a resident of the jurisdiction making the appointment. Where possible, appointments are to be made in order to maintain a majority of members who have had special training or experience in a design field, such as architecture, landscape design, horticulture, city planning, or a closely related field.

Meetings and Staff Support-The commission normally meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the Fayetteville City Hall. The staff of the City Development Services Department provides primary staff support to the commission. A member of the Cumberland County Planning Department also provides staff support.

Relationship to the Fayetteville Tree Board

The Joint Appearance Commission members appointed by the Fayetteville City Council also serve as the Fayetteville Tree Board. The Tree Board promotes public tree protection measures within the City of Fayetteville, and it helps the City maintain its designation as a Tree City USA.

Community Appearance Awards Program

In 2008-2009, the commission began sponsoring a Community Appearance Awards Program. The purpose of this program is to recognize properties in Cumberland County that are improving the appearance of the community. The attached chart shows how the program has grown since 2009.

Summary of Activities During 2017

- Met a total of 11 times in 2017 (9 Regular Meetings and 2 Special Meetings. Note: 4 Regular Meetings were cancelled.)
- Heard reports on City of Fayetteville actions regarding sign code revisions, retroactive landscaping, gateway corridor overlay districts, and placement of new gateway signs (Feb 6).
- Voted to amend Bylaws regarding meeting dates (changed from first Monday to third Tuesday) (Feb 6).
- Elected officers for the Fayetteville Tree Board (Feb 21 and April 18).
- Received reports on the Phase 3 Tree Inventory (Feb. 21, April 18, May 16, July 18). Final report from consultant was sent via email to JAC members on July 14, 2017.
- Partnered with the Cumberland County Schools in holding an Arbor Day ceremony at J.W. Coon Elementary School. (This helped the City maintain its designation as a Tree City USA.) (March 17).
- Sponsored the ninth annual Community Appearance Awards Program (April-August). (Awards Ceremony was held at Highland Country Club on August 10, 2017. Ceremony was co-hosted by Fayetteville Area Apartment Association.)
- JAC and Fayetteville Tree Board considered Tree Replacement Report for Downtown Fayetteville (Sept 19).
- JAC and Fayetteville Tree Board considered request to remove a large tree near 433 Franklin St in Downtown Fayetteville (Sept 19).
- Received info on City's Tree City USA recertification process.
- After-action review of appearance awards program (Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 21).

Initiatives for 2018

Monitor the Work of and Assist the City Council's Gateway Committee- The JAC realizes that the Gateway Committee has taken the lead on developing ideas for gateways. In 2018, the JAC will monitor these efforts and it stands ready to help in any way possible.

Fayetteville Tree Board Activities-In its function as the Fayetteville Tree Board, the commission has already partnered in 2018 with the Cumberland County Schools, Cumberland County, and the Cooperative Extension Service in sponsoring an annual Arbor Day celebration as part of the Tree City USA program. The Arbor Day Ceremony was held on Thursday, March 15, 2018, at E. E. Miller Elementary School on Rim Road. Other objectives include: encouraging the planting of more public trees, drawing attention to the economic value of trees by placing a sign on selected trees, showing their value, and promoting the Tree City USA designation for other towns in the County.

Continue the Community Appearance Awards Program-The JAC is now receiving nominations for the tenth annual Community Appearance Awards Program. The nomination period will end on June 1, 2018. As in the past, winners will be announced at a ceremony in the summer of 2018.

Strengthen Relationships with Other Organizations-The JAC will work closer with other organizations, such as Fayetteville Beautiful, this coming year.

Conduct a Survey of Community Appearance- The JAC has considered various ways of conducting a survey of community appearance. The JAC became interested in conducting a survey, after learning that the City of Raleigh's Appearance Commission had done such a survey. (In Raleigh, one survey was based on telephone calls to randomly-selected participants. The second was based on focus groups.) The JAC does not believe it has the resources to do a telephone survey or a focus group survey. However, the JAC hopes to conduct an online survey, using the Survey Monkey tool. Although no progress was made on this in 2017, the JAC will hopefully be able to make some progress on this in 2018.

Fill Several Vacancies on the JAC-Several seats on the JAC have been vacant for some time. The JAC will encourage the governing boards of these jurisdictions to appoint members for these vacant seats.

Attract Members from the Various Design Fields-The commission reminds the jurisdictions who have the authority to appoint members that, when possible, a majority of the members of the commission should have special training or experience in a design field (such as architecture, landscape design, horticulture, city planning, or closely related fields). This is suggested in the interlocal agreement which created the commission.

Review of Public Buildings-The commission reminds the various jurisdictions in the County that it is authorized to review plans for public buildings from the standpoint of appearance.

Summary Data for the Community Appearance Awards Program 2009-2017

