



Graham Appearance Commission Meeting Agenda

April 6th, 2026

6:00pm Graham
City Hall

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation
4. Approval of minutes from the January, 2026 meeting
5. **Items of Discussion**

Arbor Day:

- 5a. Art Contest Submittals
- 5b. Prizes Follow-Up
- 5c. Finalize Planting Ceremony

Future Business:

- 5d. Wayfinding Signage Plan

6. City Council Updates
7. Staff Updates
8. Adjournment



MINUTES

Graham Appearance Commission Meeting

March 2nd, 2026

City Hall Council Chambers

In Attendance:

Chair Zipporah Clark- Baldwin, Vice Chair Cheryl Ray, Bernadette Konzelmann, Clell Britt and Emily O'Dell.

Staff: Jonathan Buckley and Brandy McCandless.

- **Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chair Clark-Baldwin, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence.**
- **Approval of the February, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
 - Vice Chair Ray moved to approve the minutes as presented, Chair Clark-Baldwin seconded. All voted aye.
- **Arbor Day**
 - Chair Clark-Baldwin called Brandy McCandless to the floor.
 - The Commission provided updates on distributing prizes for Arbor Day events and Brandy established March 16th as the deadline for delivering them.
 - Mrs. Konzelmann proposed incorporating a raffle during the Tree Planting Ceremony, which Brandy agreed to provide tickets for.
 - Chair Clark-Baldwin mentioned she had reached out to Derek Thorpe Sr. to lead the Invocation during the Planting Ceremony. Commission members volunteered to lead the other sections.
 - Brandy stated that the final schedule will be needed by the April 6th meeting and Chair Clark-Baldwin stated she would provide a headcount of Peak Resources attendees for seating accommodations by mid-April.
- **Future Plans**
 - Jonathan Buckley outlined steps to bring the Wayfinding Signage idea discussed during the February meeting to City Council.
 - Chair Clark-Baldwin motioned to postpone involvement with the Creek Week Cleanup from April to September. Vice Chair Ray seconded. All in favor.
- **Council**
 - Mayor Dickey reiterated the Commission's responsibility to report to City Council and the Commission agreed to present a report at the April council meeting.

- The Commission also agreed to collaborate with Renee Russell to draft bullet points to discuss during the April 6th meeting and be added to the April City Council Agenda.
- The Commission agreed to invite Renee Russell to the April 6th meeting.
- **Staff**
 - Jonathan Buckley provided an update on the Main Street Banners.
- **Meeting adjourned**
 - Chair Clark-Baldwin motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Vice Chair Ray. All members voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 6:54pm.

Minutes Submitted by Jonathan Buckley

March 3rd, 2026

ARBOR DAY IN GRAHAM ACTIVITIES

**MARCH
1-31**

ARBOR DAY ART CONTEST

Winners Selected: Monday, April 6, 2026

Age Groups: Preschool, Elementary, Middle, High School Students, & Adults • (see website for details)

KINDNESS ROCK HUNT

Dates: April 1 – 30, 2026, or while the 6 prizes last
For All Ages • Location: Downtown Graham
(see website for details)

**APRIL
1-30**

**APRIL
6**

CHILL & THRILL: PARK POP-UP

Theme: Tree-mendous Bingo

Time: 10am – 12noon • For All Ages • Cost: Free

Location: Graham Regional Park

LEAVES, LIGHT & LENSES:

Smartphone Photography in the Parks

Time: 9am – 12pm • Ages: 18 & up • Cost: \$20/person

Location: Bill Cooke Park • **Register Online**

**APRIL
18**

**APRIL
24**

TREE PLANTING CEREMONY

Times: 10am – 11am, Ceremony will begin at 10am

For All Ages • Cost: Free

Location: Bill Cooke Park



TREE CITY USA®

CITY OF
Graham
NORTH CAROLINA



Graham
RECREATION & PARKS



MORE INFO: GRAHAMRECREATIONANDPARKS.COM

Arbor Day in Graham Prizes

2026 Art Contest Prizes: (need by March 16)

Preschool - Admit One to the Graham Cinema (no expiration date listed); Admit One to the Graham Cinema (no expiration date listed); 1 Free Kids Scoop Ice Cream Cone at Graham Soda Shop (no expiration date listed); 1 Free Kid's Scoop at Whit's Frozen Custard (no expiration date listed)

Elementary - \$50 Buffaloe Lanes Mebane gift card (no expiration date listed)

Middle School - \$50 Buffaloe Lanes Mebane gift card (no expiration date listed)

High School - \$25 64 Harvard gift certificate (expires 12/31/2026); \$25 Buffaloe Lanes Mebane gift card (no expiration date listed)

Adult - \$50 64 Harvard gift certificate (expires 12/31/2026)

2026 Rock Hunt Prizes: (need by March 16)

1. \$25 64 Harvard gift certificate (expires 12/31/2026)

2. \$25 Broom Closet gift card (no expiration date listed)

3. \$20 Suttons gift certificate (no expiration date listed)

4. \$40 Sandy & Co. Sustainable Fashion (no expiration date listed)

5. \$20 Off Radiant Glow Spa (no expiration date listed)

6. Book from Things Above: A Life Beyond Amazing by David Jeremiah; Bag of Specialty Tea from SILE Tea Room (expires 12/2027)

Raffle at Tree Planting Ceremony: (need by March 16)

1. \$25 Buffaloe Lanes Mebane gift card (no expiration date listed)

2. \$20 Off Radiant Glow Spa (no expiration date listed)

3. Admit One to the Graham Cinema (no expiration date listed); 1 Free Kids Scoop Ice Cream Cone at Graham Soda Shop (no expiration date listed); 1 Free Kid's Scoop at Whit's Frozen Custard (no expiration date listed)

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Book from Things Above: The Middle School Rules of Skylar Diggins by Sean Jensen, centered on Skylar Diggins-Smith

Book from Things Above: A Life Beyond Amazing by David Jeremiah

Book From Things Above: Stones of Remembrance by Jann Gray

35 Prizes

2026 Arbor Day in Graham Tree Planting Ceremony Schedule - Brandy needs FINAL schedule by April 6, 2026

(reminder: no electricity/generators - rolling wireless speaker, one microphone, & podium provided by GRPD)

- Invocation by (Rev. Dr. Derrick Thorpe Sr.)
- Present the Flag (Pledge of Allegiance) & Welcome Remarks
 - Mayor Chelsea Dickey
- Tree City USA / Arbor Day Proclamation
 - Mayor Chelsea Dickey
 - N.C. Forest Service (N.C. Forest Service Representative: Renee Brown)
- About Arbor Day in Graham (Emily O'Dell)
 - Arbor Day history (Cheryl Ray)
 - Importance of wise stewardship & contribution of trees (Zipporah Clark Baldwin)
- Tree Planting - In Honor & Memory of Sallye Lovelace Morrow
 - Remembering Zipporah Clark Baldwin (& Family Members - tentative)
 - Type of Tree: [Northern Red Oak](#) (Brandy will supply tree summary for Clell Britt to read)
 - **Music** ("Plant Conservation Trees" by John Denver)
 - Planted by City of Graham Public Works (Public Works - plant the tree while the music is playing)
- Recognize the Sponsors (Zipporah Clark Baldwin & Cheryl Ray)
 - Raffle Drawing for Participants (Zipporah Clark Baldwin & Cheryl Ray)
- Retire the Flag & Closing (Zipporah Clark Baldwin)

Hosted by City of Graham Appearance Commission / Tree Board: Zipporah Clark-Baldwin (Chair), Cheryl Ray (Vice-Chair), Bernadette Konzelmann, Clell Britt, Emily O'Dell, Mayor Chelsea Dickey (City Council Liaison), Cameron West & Jonathan Buckley (City Staff Liaisons). In collaboration with the City of Graham Recreation & Parks and Public Works Departments. Special thanks to the Graham City Council and the N.C. Forest Service.

Special thanks to our generous sponsors:

Project Plan: Enhancing Downtown Graham



Project Title: Enhancing Downtown Graham

Project Overview:

The proposed project aims to revitalize downtown Graham by installing decorative signage that enhances aesthetics, improves navigation, promotes local businesses, and fosters economic growth. Through the strategic allocation of resources, this initiative seeks to create a more vibrant and welcoming environment that attracts residents and visitors alike, driving foot traffic and stimulating commerce within the downtown area.

Key Stakeholders:

- City Council: Approval and allocation of funds
- Downtown Graham businesses: Beneficiaries of the project, as the enhanced aesthetics and signage will attract more visitors to the area, leading to increased foot traffic and potential sales for local establishments
- Residents: Increased foot traffic and the promotion of local businesses can create a vibrant downtown environment for residents and visitors alike

Proposed Decorative Street Signs:

The project will introduce new decorative street signs to downtown Graham. These signs will serve a dual purpose: enhancing the area's aesthetic appeal while providing clear navigation for pedestrians and drivers.

Allocation of Grant Funds:

A portion of the grant funds recently awarded to the downtown area will be allocated towards this project. This allocation will ensure the project's implementation and the use of grant resources for the

enhancement of downtown Graham.

Project Risks and Challenges:

- Existing signage may not be sufficient, leading to confusion for pedestrians and visitors trying to navigate the area
- Many downtown businesses struggle to gain visibility and compete with larger commercial centers
- The installation of new decorative street signs may face technical or logistical challenges

Project Opportunities:

- The introduction of decorative street signs will enhance the aesthetics of downtown Graham, creating a more inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors
- Clear and visible signage will facilitate easier navigation, leading to a more enjoyable and stress-free experience for pedestrians and drivers
- By showcasing downtown businesses on the signs, we can attract more visitors to the area, resulting in increased foot traffic and potential sales for local establishments
- The promotional displays on the signs will provide valuable exposure for downtown businesses, helping them gain visibility and attract customers

Community Engagement:

The community will be engaged throughout the project. The installation of the new signs will demonstrate the city's commitment to supporting local businesses and creating a vibrant downtown environment for residents and visitors.

Conclusion:

Downtown Graham has immense potential to be a vibrant and thriving community. By enhancing the area's aesthetics, improving pedestrian navigation, increasing foot traffic, and promoting local businesses, we can create a more inviting and economically prosperous downtown.

Requested Action:

We urge the City Council to support this initiative and allocate funds towards the installation of new street signs, paving the way for a brighter future for downtown Graham.



Estimated Cost/value:

Investing \$75,000 in decorative signage for downtown Graham represents a strategic opportunity to generate revenue and economic growth in several ways:

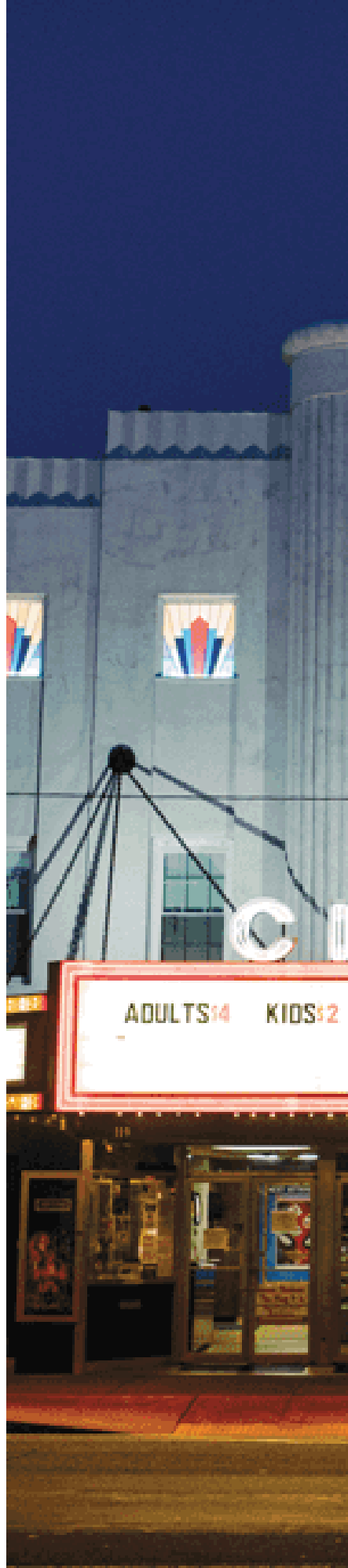
- 1. Increased Foot Traffic:** Eye-catching and informative signage can attract more visitors to the downtown area. As people explore the streets to admire the new signage, they are likely to discover and patronize local businesses, leading to an uptick in foot traffic.
- 2. Promotion of Local Businesses:** The hanging displays on the decorative signage provide valuable advertising space for downtown businesses. Increased visibility can drive customer awareness and engagement, translating into higher sales and revenue for these establishments.
- 3. Enhanced Customer Experience:** Clear and visually appealing signage improves the overall experience for visitors navigating downtown Graham. By facilitating easy navigation and promoting local attractions, businesses, and events, the signage contributes to a positive customer experience that encourages repeat visits and word-of-mouth referrals.
- 4. Community Events and Festivals:** Decorative signage can serve as focal points for community events and festivals held in downtown Graham. These events attract both locals and tourists, further amplifying the exposure and revenue potential for businesses in the area.
- 5. Aesthetic Appeal and Property Values:** Investing in the beautification of downtown Graham through decorative signage can enhance the area's overall aesthetic appeal. This, in turn, can attract new residents, businesses, and investors, thereby driving up property values and stimulating economic development in the long term.
- 6. Tourism and Destination Marketing:** A visually appealing downtown area with distinctive signage can become a draw for tourists and day-trippers. As more people visit Graham to experience its unique

charm, they contribute to the local economy by spending money on dining, shopping, accommodations, and other services.

Overall, the \$75,000 investment in decorative signage is not just an expense but a strategic investment in the economic vitality and long-term prosperity of downtown Graham. By attracting more visitors, promoting local businesses, enhancing the customer experience, and fostering community engagement, this investment has the potential to yield substantial returns and generate revenue for years to come.

Enhancing Downtown Graham

A proposed project to enhance the area's aesthetics, improve pedestrian navigation, increase foot traffic, and support economic growth by promoting downtown businesses.





Opportunities for Improvement

- **CHALLENGES IN DOWNTOWN GRAHAM**

Despite its charm, our downtown area faces challenges in attracting foot traffic and promoting local businesses.

- **NAVIGATION ISSUES**

Existing signage may be insufficient, leading to confusion for pedestrians and visitors trying to navigate the area.

- **SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES**

Many downtown businesses struggle to gain visibility and compete with larger commercial centers, impacting their sustainability and growth potential.

Decorative Street Signs

- **FUNCTIONAL AND AESTHETIC**

New decorative street signs will serve a dual purpose: enhancing the area's aesthetic appeal while providing clear navigation for pedestrians and drivers.

- **PROMOTIONAL DISPLAYS**

These signs will feature hanging displays showcasing downtown businesses, effectively promoting their presence and enticing visitors to explore further.

- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

By investing in these signs, we demonstrate our commitment to supporting local businesses and creating a vibrant downtown environment for residents and visitors alike.



Advantages



ENHANCED AESTHETICS

The introduction of decorative street signs will elevate the visual appeal of downtown Graham, creating a more inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors.

IMPROVED NAVIGATION

Clear and visible signage will facilitate easier navigation, leading to a more enjoyable and stress-free experience for pedestrians and drivers.

INCREASED FOOT TRAFFIC

By showcasing downtown businesses on the signs, we can attract more visitors to the area, resulting in increased foot traffic and potential sales for local establishments.

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

The promotional displays on the signs will provide valuable exposure for downtown businesses, helping them gain visibility and attract customers.

COMMUNITY PRIDE

Investing in downtown enhancement fosters a sense of community pride and ownership, encouraging residents to support local businesses and contribute to the area's growth and prosperity.

Allocation of Grant Funds

- **UTILIZING GRANT RESOURCES**

We propose allocating a portion of the recently awarded Directed Grant funds towards implementing this project in downtown Graham.

- **INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

By investing in the enhancement of downtown infrastructure, we are investing in the economic and social development of our community.

- **MAXIMIZING IMPACT**

This funding allocation will maximize the impact of the grant by directly benefiting downtown businesses, residents, and visitors alike.



Uniting for Downtown Revitalization



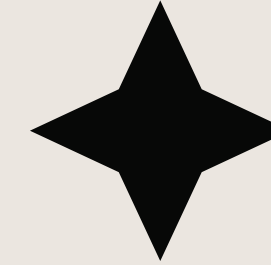
SHARED VISION

Together, we have the opportunity to transform downtown Graham into a vibrant and thriving destination for all.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

By supporting this proposal, we demonstrate our commitment to working together towards a common goal of revitalizing our downtown area.



POSITIVE IMPACT

The implementation of decorative street signs will not only enhance the aesthetic appeal of our city but also support local businesses and promote economic growth.



**WE URGE THE CITY COUNCIL
TO SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE
AND ALLOCATE FUNDS
TOWARDS THE INSTALLATION
OF NEW STREET SIGNS,
PAVING THE WAY FOR A
BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR
DOWNTOWN GRAHAM.**