



Graham Appearance Commission Meeting Agenda

July 20th, 2026

6:00pm Graham
City Hall

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

Elections:

- 5a. Chair.
- 5b. Vice Chair.

Calendar:

- 5c. Future Items Discussion

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



MINUTES

Graham Appearance Commission Meeting

June 22nd, 2026

City Hall Council Chambers

In Attendance:

Vice Chair Cheryl Ray, Clell Britt, Emily O'Dell, Molly Whitlatch & Jeannine Weekes.

Staff: Jonathan Buckley.

- **Meeting was called to order at 6:04pm by Vice Chair Cheryl Ray, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, and a moment of silence.**
- **Approval of the June, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
 - Mrs. O'Dell motioned to approve the minutes as presented, Mr. Britt seconded. All voted aye.
- **Residential Appearance Award**
 - Jonathan Buckley gave a rundown on the Appearance Award program.
 - After deliberation, Mrs. O'Dell motioned to select 210 Stillhouse Farm Drive for the Summer 2026 Appearance Award. Mrs. Whitlatch seconded. All in favor.
- **Council**
 - Mayor Chelsea Dickey was not present to provide any updates.
- **Staff**
 - Mr. Buckley introduced the two new members of the Appearance Commission and gave them the opportunity to speak as new members.
 - Mr. Buckley informed the Commission of the need to vote for a new chair.
 - Mr. Britt made a motion to schedule a Special Meeting for July 20th to hold votes on the Chair and Vice Chair, discuss upcoming projects for the 2026 year and the Commission's role going forward. Mrs. O'Dell seconded. All in favor.
 - Mr. Buckley offered clarification on making updates to the website.
- **Meeting adjourned**
 - Vice Chair Ray motioned for the meeting to be adjourned. Seconded by Mrs. Whitlatch. All members voted aye. Meeting adjourned at 6:24pm.

Minutes Submitted by Jonathan Buckley

June 23rd, 2026

Appearance Commission
2026 Elections for Chair and Vice Chair

Cheryl Ray

Clell Britt

Emily O'Dell

Molly Whitlatch

Jeannine Weekes

Sec. 2-56. - Appearance commission.

Under authority granted by the North Carolina General Assembly through §160A-451, there is hereby created a City of Graham Appearance Commission.

- (1) *Duties.* The purpose of the Appearance Commission shall be to serve as an advisor to City Council by identifying and making recommendations for ways to improve the appearance of the City of Graham.

The duties of the Appearance Commission will be to:

- a. serve as an advisory board to the mayor and city council and shall have no administrative duties;
- b. partner with citizens, private organizations, businesses, and government agencies for the purpose of bringing attention to the City of Graham through visual appeal;
- c. promote programs designed to encourage private investment in the revitalization and rehabilitation of existing properties within the corporate limits of Graham;
- d. encourage community involvement by initiating and planning events that will contribute to the City's aesthetic appeal;
- e. The appearance commission may accept gifts or bequests with the approval of city council.

- (2) *Membership; appointments.* The Appearance Commission shall be limited to a total membership of five (5) residents of the City of Graham at the time of appointment, with up to two (2) members residing in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Graham. Members shall be appointed by the Graham City Council upon receipt of a completed application submitted to the city clerk's office. Appearance Commission members shall serve a three-year term and may be appointed to subsequent three-year terms.

- (3) *Meetings; removal.* The Graham Appearance Commission shall hold regularly scheduled meetings on a day and time agreed upon by a majority of the members. A member may be removed for cause by the city council for reasons including, but not limited to, repeated unexcused absences. If a member is absent or expects to be absent for reasons of health or time out-of-town, that member may request that the absence(s) be excused. Before a member is removed for cause, they shall receive notification from the city council describing the proposed action and grant said member an opportunity to state why the action should or should not be taken.

- (4) *Voting.* For any meeting of the appearance commission, a quorum consists of a majority of its members. Votes taken by the commission shall "pass" when majority of those members present vote in favor of a motion. If a conflict of interest, as defined under section 10.2, should arise for a member, they will be required to bring it to the attention of the commission and abstain

from discourse and voting regarding such matters.

- (5) *Officers*. The appearance commission shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and secretary by a majority vote of the commission members present. Officers will serve for a period of one year or until he/she is re-elected or his/her successor is elected.

(Ord. of 11-6-2018, § 1; Ord. of 04-09-2024(1), § 1)

Sec. 2-58. - Tree board.

- (a) *Created; composition; qualifications.* There is hereby created a tree board for the city, which shall consist of a total membership of five (5) residents of the City of Graham at the time of appointment, with up to two members residing in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Graham. The members of the tree board shall be members of the appearance commission. A member of the city council shall serve on the tree board concurrent with their term of office on the city council. As liaison to the tree board, the council member shall not have a vote. The city horticulturist shall be the staff liaison and serve as an ex-officio member of the board.
- (b) *Compensation.* Members of the tree board shall serve without compensation.
- (c) *Operation.* The tree board shall adopt rules for transaction of its business and shall keep a record of its members' attendance and of its resolutions, discussions, findings and recommendations, which record shall be a public record. The tree board shall set a regular schedule for meetings, and the chairman may call a special meeting upon request of a majority of members of the board. A majority of the members shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.
- (d) *Duties.*
- (1) It shall be the responsibility of the tree board to study, investigate, counsel, develop, update annually and administer a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets and in other public areas. The plan will be presented annually to the city council and upon its acceptance and approval shall constitute the official comprehensive tree plan for the city.
 - (2) The tree board, when requested by the city council, shall consider, investigate, make findings, report and recommend upon any special matter or question coming within the scope of its work.
 - (3) The tree board shall furthermore serve as an advisory board to the city council with the following duties and responsibilities:
 - a. To facilitate the planting, growth and protection of trees within the city.
 - b. To foster the communication among the citizens of Graham that would provide the needed protection of trees and to coordinate active measures to support their health and growth within the city.
 - c. To conduct a tree survey of existing trees along streets and on public property within the city.
 - d. To investigate available grants, loans or contributions from other governmental agencies, public or private corporations or individuals; and to recommend the expenditure of any proceeds toward the accomplishment of the board's purpose.
 - e. To conduct continuing research, planning and feasibility studies required to support the purpose stated herein.

- (4) The tree board shall also be responsible for developing an official street tree species list comprised of three groups of trees: Small trees, medium trees and large trees. No trees other than those included in the list may be planted as street trees without permission of the city tree board.
 - (5) The tree board shall be responsible for establishing guidelines for the spacing of city trees in accordance with the three species size classes in the official street tree species list. These guidelines will cover spacing between street trees, the distance street trees may be planted from curbs or curblines and sidewalks, the distance street trees may be planted from any street corner, the location of the street trees relative to overhead and underground water lines, sewer lines, transmission lines or other utility, and any other areas involving the spacing of street trees, park trees or city-owned trees.
 - (6) The tree board shall submit an annual report of its activities and recommendations to the city council and shall submit copies of its minutes and proceedings of its regular and special meetings.
- (e) *Public tree care.* The city shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees, plants and shrubs within the lines of all streets, alleys, avenues, lanes, squares and public grounds as may be necessary to ensure public safety or to preserve or enhance the symmetry and beauty of such public grounds. The tree board may remove, or cause to be removed, any publicly owned tree or part thereof which is in an unsafe condition or which by reason of its nature is injurious to sewers, electrical power lines, gas lines, water lines or other public improvements, or is affected with any disease, insect or other pest. This section does not prohibit the planting of street trees by adjacent property owners, providing that the selection and location of said trees is in accordance with the guidelines for planting and spacing developed by the tree board. The tree board may reserve the right to approve plantings in rights-of-way.
 - (f) *Review by council.* The city council shall have the right to review the conduct, acts and decisions of the city tree board. Any person may appeal from any ruling or order of the tree board to the city council, which may hear the matter and make final decision.
 - (g) *Term; vacancies.* The terms of the appointed members of the tree board shall coincide with the terms of the appearance commission. In the event that a vacancy occurs during a member's term, his successor shall be appointed for the unexpired portion of the term.
 - (h) *Interference with board.* It shall be unlawful for any person to prevent, delay or interfere with the city tree board or any of its agents while engaging in planting, cultivation, mulching, pruning, spraying or removing of any street trees, park trees or trees on public grounds, as authorized in this article.
 - (i) *Tree topping.* It shall be unlawful as a normal practice, except as described in this section, for any person, firm or city department to top any street tree, park tree or other tree on public property. Topping is defined as the severe cutting back of limbs to stubs larger than three inches in diameter within the tree's crown to such a degree as to remove the normal canopy and to disfigure the tree.

Trees severely damaged by storms or other causes, or certain trees that interfere with or are an imminent threat to utility wires or other obstructions where other pruning practices are impractical, may be exempted from this article at the determination of the city tree board.

(Ord. of 11-6-2018, § 1; Ord. of 12-3-2019, § 2; Ord. of 2-8-2022, § 1; Ord. of 04-09-2024(1), § 1)

Appearance/Tree board Commission Calendar

July

Ideas/goals for 2026

August

- Banner Design Submittals
- Fall Downtown Decorations Plan

September

- Planting Projects?
- Downtown Decorations Scheduling & Action

October

- Litter Cleanup?

November

- Business Beautification Grants

December

- Downtown Window Decoration Contest?
 - Winter 2026 Residential Appearance Award
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Spring 2027

- Arbor Day – January - April

Regular Meeting Dates 2026-27

*August 3rd
September 7th
October 5th
November 2nd
December 7th
January 4th
February 1st
March 1st
April 5th
May 3rd
June 7th*