



“To achieve a cleaner and more beautiful community through the education and involvement of its citizens”

Keep Rome-Floyd Beautiful

Minutes

July 24, 2023, 4:00 P.M.

Floyd County Administration Building

Present: Hannah Bagley, Program Coordinator

Ben Winkelman, ECO Center Director

Chris Jenkins, City Public Works Division Director

Glen Rubin, Senior Code Enforcement Officer

Amy Dawkins, KRFB Board Member

Lucy Burnes, KRFB Board Member

Michael Jones, KRFB Board Member

Pam Roberts, KRFB Board Member

Ginger Rowston, KRFB Board Member

Call to Order:

Mrs. Bagley opened the meeting, and Mrs. Dawkins moved to approve the minutes from May 22nd.

Reports:

Keep Rome-Floyd Beautiful

Mrs. Bagley reported on the KRFB events and programs, year to date KRFB has hosted 12 school programs, 17 litter prevention events, 12 adopt-a-mile events, 1 recycling event, and 7 beautification events, for a total of 49 events and programs overall. Mrs. Bagley reported throughout the year KRFB has had an increase in volunteers and participation at events which is very encouraging to see this shift. Year to Date we have had 2,296 people participating in an

event, they have put in 2,228.5 participation hours through an event or educational program. With the increase in participants, we have removed 5,367 pounds of litter from the local right of way and waterways.

Code Enforcement - City of Rome

Mr. Rubin reported they have been extremely busy with a multitude of code and environmental violations, and they have been working with Floyd County Officer Wade on many litter cases that were also found to be felony and criminal cases. Mr. Rubin was pleased to report they have closed multiple cases, some, at minimal costs to the County. Mr. Rubin explained to the group that it does take a lengthy amount of time to respond and make cases in Rome and Floyd County, within their office they only have 4 Code Enforcement Officers work in their office, and all cases go through the legal system before they can be closed.

Code Enforcement - Floyd County Police

Officer Wade was not able to attend, she will report at the next meeting on her litter cases, which are criminal cases along with environmental violations. Officer Wade has been working with Mr. Rubin and his staff on multiple cases in Floyd County.

Old Business

Mrs. Bagley reported to the Board how effective GreenFest was, the Johnson students and staff enjoyed the partnership between the Rome-Floyd ECO Center and Keep Rome-Floyd Beautiful. Plans are being made now to put on GreenFest again with more incorporation from other City and County Schools. Mrs. Bagley reminded everyone that at the last meeting, Commissioner Rhonda Wallace stated she sees this as less of a risk for the GreenFest to go to the school as opposed to the schools transporting children by bus for field trips, and each student is taught instead of just one grade level.

During the March meeting, it was brought to the attention of the board by Mr. Jenkins that it would be in the best interest to work closely with the Garden Clubs of Rome, as many gardens have fallen into disrepair due to the lack of Garden Club members in Rome. We are looking at pairing students who need service hours with Master Gardeners, which will help students in local FFA and 4H Programs. Mrs. Bagley will meet with the Vice President and President of the Garden Federation to identify gardens that need assistance. Mrs. Bagley has been working to secure a meeting with the Garden Clubs and the Garden Federation Presidents to understand which clubs are still intact and which are no longer operational; hopefully, help with bringing the gardens back into good standing. Keep Rome Floyd Beautiful is working diligently to keep our gardens in good standing, as they are not only aesthetically pleasing but are beneficial to the declining pollinator count.

Mrs. Bagley reported the BRACE Grant funds issues from the Solid Waste Trust Fund, and Keep Georgia Beautiful used to purchase the dump trailer have been very instrumental in the increased amount of litter removed from the right of ways and waterways. Purchasing the dump trailer has allowed KRFB to become self-sufficient, in the past KRFB had to rely on other department's equipment which removed them from their daily tasks, but in 2023, we have not had to call on those departments for debris removal.

New Business

Mrs. Bagley addressed the Board as board members she would like to see more participation in events that are scheduled in the coming months. Darlington Sophomores have requested to partner again this year for a community-wide cleanup, Mrs. Bagley asked Board members to assist if they are available. The event last year was very profitable, enjoyable, and eye-opening for the staff and students. KRFB will also be teaching a leadership class at Pepperell High School, students will conduct a project and build raised beds for gardening activities for the younger children in Pepperell Middle and Elementary. This project was fully funded by a donation from International Paper.

With the school year approaching KRFB and the Rome-Floyd ECO Center are preparing for educational programs; are working to develop a standard environmental and sustainability-targeted curriculum that can be used among all age groups. Mr. Winkelman educated everyone on that the state of Georgia uses Project WET, WILD, and Learning Tree as classroom curriculum, which we will be using as well in the development of our new curriculum. He will be working with Mrs. Bagley, and fellow Board members, Lucy Burnes and Ginger Rowston to develop a standardized curriculum. He informed the group now that the Roman Holiday will no longer be used as a rotation for field trips to the ECO Center, there is a need to fill that void, this will be a great time to roll out the new curriculum.

Mrs. Burnes also added that without education specifically in children, we will not see a change quickly, but as long as we continue with the education, we will see a change in the next 10 years she believes, Mrs. Bagley and Mr. Winkelman agreed with Mrs. Burnes, we have always had enforcement, however we need to have consistent education.

Mrs. Bagley reported she will be applying for the BRACE Grant again in 2024; Mrs. Dawkins suggested that KRFB look at using the funds for neighborhood-enhancing programs, (NEP) however, with so many neighborhoods needing to have extensive work completed, Mrs. Burnes expressed her concern it might not be a wise utilization of the money, as the aesthetics of the projects would not be long term. Another utilization of the grant is to purchase educational materials or equipment, with the success of the dump trailer last grant cycle, equipment may be the best investment.

Mrs. Burnes questioned the group about how we can incorporate more individuals, specifically the homeless community into the litter prevention efforts, maybe even paying citizens for collecting bagged litter and returning it to the city for payment. Mr. Winkelman informed the group that when he was in code enforcement they implemented a program for scrap metal specifically cars, with a monetary value being put on old scrap cars that were rusting and posing threats to local water sources they saw success from that as many of the "hot spots" for abandoned cars were removed, this may be a good way to see a large increase in litter removal. Mr. Jenkins recalled a program within the APWA (American Public Works Association) that paid the homeless community for collecting and properly bagging litter; which can only be compensated by disposing of the litter at a specific location. By participating in this program, the homeless community would no longer be the problem, but be part of the solution, and compensated accordingly. Mr. Jenkins will research more into the program and report back if this is a program that we can participate in.

The board members were reminded of the upcoming events, and the obligation they have as board members to participate in as many events as possible, without their support and involvement the mission could not be accomplished.

Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hannah N. Bagley

Hannah N. Bagley, Program Coordinator