

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of June 1, 2011

Present:

Rick Bodson	Sheila Gwaltney	Lisa Perry
Margaret Carroll	Trey Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson
Bill Davidson	Mark Hall	Judy Winslow
John Edwards	Randy Pack	William Saunders - guest

Admin / updates

Project team members will be receiving an invitation to a June 15th reception at the County Museum hosted by the Isle of Wight Arts League for the Virginia Commission for the Arts. The VCA is meeting at the Arts Center @ 319 for its annual two-day grant review process.

Project team members were reminded that it's incumbent on them to keep their respective organizations current on 2020 initiatives and the progress of in-flight projects.

The SHDBA introduced last month an "Any Day but Monday" initiative to motivate merchants and historic attractions to be open on Monday. Data collected on guest counts at the Visitor Center and Arts Center and retail sales at the Arts Center suggest that Mondays are very viable days commercially and that if shops must have closed days, that consideration should be given to Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

Information session

Town Planner William Saunders reviewed current ordinances and plans for bicycle access in the Historic District. A Bike and Ped Committee, chaired by Leah Dempsey, has a vision of a continuous pedestrian and bike-friendly path from Nike Park to the Historic District and Windsor Castle Park. The project has three roughly chronological phases defined. Phase I addresses Battery Park Road, phase II links Nike Park to Battery Park Road, and phase III, the most challenging financially and technically, runs along Church Street (or alternatively, John Rolfe Road and others) to downtown. The primary consideration for the project is to develop a community resource that targets recreational and family usage; it does not contemplate being configured for long distance bicyclists.

As a result of the discussion, Judy Winslow agreed to consider developing a complementary initiative to target the long distance cyclists. Anecdotal evidence points to credible economic impact from these folks, if not on the initial ride-through, then on follow up visits. The initiative will focus on the designation and marking of routes over rural and less traveled County roads. Concept definition will be presented at a future team meeting.

Project updates

Smithfield license plate (In Devt) – After four months, 101 applications have been submitted, far short of the 350 minimum required by DMV. By general consensus, it was agreed that the

project be tabled for now and that it be considered for re-introduction at the completion of the Church Street beautification project when a broader “celebrate Smithfield” initiative will be deployed by Tourism. Rick Bodson took for action notifying all applicants, informing them of the decision and offering them the option of having their applications held securely in anticipation of a re-introduction of the initiative, being shredded or being returned. The checks will be shredded.

Façades improvement (In Devt) – Nothing to report.

Golf cart initiative – The Police Committee has agreed to submit to the full Town Council an ordinance permitting golf cart access to streets in five neighborhoods / sub-divisions – Waterford Oaks, Grimesland, Cypress Creek, Wellington Estates and Smithfield Forest / Moone Plantation. Specifically, the trial will not extend to the Historic District. This is intended to be a trial to validate the ordinance provisions and to evaluate safety issues. Consideration and a vote by the Town Council is expected at its June meeting.

Public art / porcine statuary – Nothing to report.

New initiatives

Demolition by neglect of 17 East Main Street – Mark Hall reviewed the continuing deterioration of the old shoe repair shop at the bottom of Wharf Hill and the lack of responsiveness by the building owner to either stabilize or sell the property. Avoiding what may ultimately be demolition by neglect was noted to be particularly critical now that the Elks property is about to be renovated and be put to productive commercial use, first steps to reinvigorating the historically significant Wharf Hill area. Motion was made and passed by unanimous consent that a resolution be presented to the Town Council stating “The property at 17 East Main Street is a listed building in the Historic District and is undergoing *de facto* demolition by neglect. Smithfield 2020 formally requests that the Town take assertive action, up to and including legal action, to preserve the building.” The resolution will be sent to the Town Manager with a request that 2020 be included on the June meeting agenda of the Public Building and Welfare Committee.

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 6th, 8:30 AM, Arts Center @ 319 classroom

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.