

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of July 7th, 2010

Present:

Judy Begland

Rick Bodson

Margaret Carroll

John Edwards

Sheila Gwaltney

Trey Gwaltney

Mark Hall

Randy Pack

Russell Parrish

Lisa Perry

Connie Rhodes

Admin items

Smithfield 2020 now has a mailing address: PO Box 38, Smithfield VA 23431. Email address smithfield2020@gmail.org has also been activated.

Project quick updates

Arts and Cultural District – The Town Council approved an ordinance on July 6th designating an Arts and Cultural District overlay to the Historic District boundaries. Qualified arts organizations are defined as commercial and not-for-profit organizations physically located within the District which, as determined by the Town Manager, contribute to the spectrum of arts and cultural activities and venues available to the public. Newly opened arts organizations are exempted from zoning permit fees and business, professional and occupational license taxes and fees on a sliding scale for three years. Arts organizations are also exempted from the annual A frame sign permit fee.

Virginia Main Street workshop, July 22 & 23 – Attending will be Rick, Margaret, Sheila, Russell, Connie and Judy. Attendees are requested to familiarize themselves with “The Main Street Four-Point Approach®” handout distributed at the April project team meeting, as this will be the guiding construct of the workshop. Rick will separately email attendees to coordinate ride-sharing and other logistics details. A briefing on the workshop for the entire project team will be scheduled for the August meeting.

Application for grants – Historic Smithfield’s Board of Directors has passed a resolution authorizing Rick to submit grant applications on behalf of Smithfield 2020 as a program of Historic Smithfield.

Façades and streetscape improvement project – The final draft of the Carlton Abbott and Partners presentation will be reviewed by Mark and Rick this week and a dry-run of the presentation is set for next Tuesday. All identified commercial building owners and tenants have been sent letter invitations to the July 14th presentation at the Smithfield Station.

A hand-out explaining the proposed matching grant program will be available to attendees.

→ **Action item:** Project team members are asked to review the proposed handout and provide feedback to Rick no later than COB Friday.

The agenda and flow of the July 14th evening was reviewed – no-host cocktails at 6 PM, presentation from 6:30 to 7:15. The majority of the Town Council will be in attendance, as will members of the BHAR and Board of Historic Smithfield. All Main Street commercial building owners and non-owner tenants have been invited and early RSVP response has been strong.

→ **Action item:** Project team members are asked to reach out to Main Street building owners and merchants to confirm attendance. Rick will also be walking Main Street for RSVPs.

The issue of invitees was discussed. The objective was re-affirmed: the primary audience for the presentation is the Town Council, since much of the recommended streetscape work will be in the right-of-way, and commercial building owners and tenant merchants, from whom we will seek commitment to participate (invest) in the project. After the presentation, the project team will gauge the need for a broader public briefing.

A remaining open item is the assignment of members to a matching grant task team. It has been suggested the task team include, at a minimum, project team member and BHAR representative Russell Parrish and William Saunders, Town staff assigned to support the BHAR.

America in Bloom program – Connie and Russell reviewed the program fundamentals. AIB is a competitive program for which the Town has to be the applicant of record. The process involves evaluation against eight criteria, several of which can already be identified in Smithfield. The competitive evaluation is done against communities of similar population.

After active dialog, the general consensus of the project team is that AIB is a program worth pursuing, though several details, including 2020's lead role and inclusion of several other community organizations in planning and execution, need to be considered and reconciled.

The AIB initiative has been logged to the 2020 Project List as "Concept Defined".

→ **Action item:** Connie and Russell were requested to develop a first draft project plan that delineates the objectives, decision-to-participate criteria, cost of entry, time line, involved constituencies, identified issues and task team responsibilities. The draft is requested for review prior to the August meeting and will be on the agenda for further discussion at that meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, August 4th, 8:30 AM, Arts Center @ 319.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.