

## Smithfield 2020 Notes from Team meeting of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Present

Jim Abicht	Tom Elder	Peter Stephenson
Rick Bodson	Mark Hall	Judy Winslow
Christi Chatham	Randy Pack	
Andy Cripps	Kim Pugh	

### Admin

Current funds balance is \$13,134.85. There are no outstanding commitment of funds.

### Project and initiative updates

Street piano project – Task team of Mark, Judy and Trey have investigated a program that places artistically painted pianos in public places. (Details at [www.streetpianos.com](http://www.streetpianos.com)) A piano has been donated, painted and tuned; it is intended to be secured in place but mounted on a stable wheeled base to facilitate its relocation. It's anticipated that the piano will have a life expectancy of weeks to months (there is a backlog of piano donations for replacements); Mark is on point for removal at end-of-life. The pianos are currently planned to be located on private property and negotiations with a local business are underway. A motion to proceed with the initiative as a 2020-sponsored program was adopted.

Economic vitality initiatives – Task team of Christi, Judy and Mark reviewed several initiatives to improve economic vitality. Identification of available public parking is a key need; consistent design of signage is a quick-implementation solution. Judy took for action a first cut design to be reviewed by the Team and then taken to Town Public Works Committee for review and consideration. An awareness campaign will be re-launched to sensitize merchants to taking up prime on-street parking. Rick took for action visiting with the new BofA manager to re-secure access to the excess capacity in the bank's parking lot.

A complementary initiative is the development of case study of Fleur de Fou's navigation through the permitting process for the new flower shop at 338 Main Street. (A special use permit was approved by Town Council September 5<sup>th</sup>; the final step will be BHAR's approval of signage.) When the case study is compiled, it will be reviewed with Peter and Town Planning to investigate a "fast track" permitting process for small start-up businesses.

A discussion of better leverage of the Summer Concert Series for Friday evening retail activity generated several suggestions that will be reviewed by Kim and Jim with the Arts League board. [A Webinar attended by several Team members after the meeting identified several suggestions that mesh with this initiative; the discussions will continue.]

Retail Alliance program – A "walk-about survey" was conducted in early August to solicit feedback and interest in this regional customer loyalty program. Seven Main Street businesses were contacted and none expressed significant enthusiasm for the program. (A few businesses

currently have loyalty programs through point-of-sale system vendors.) 2020 will not pursue endorsing the program to Historic District businesses.

Andy reported that he is monitoring the uptake in Virginia of a Chamber of Commerce “KloseBuy”, a loyalty program app. Status checks will be provided at future meetings.

Main Street utilities project – Smithfield 2020 will again be providing weekly updates via the Team’s mailing list next winter when the Columbia Gas supply lines are replaced in the 100 to 300 block (up to Cocke’s Lane). Resurfacing of the 100 and 200 blocks will be done when the project wraps up.

Main Street lamppost banners – By general consensus, it was agreed that the lamppost banners have reached end-of-life. Public Works will be requested to remove them when the holiday garland and bows are installed in November.

### **Organization updates / announcements**

Arts League: A retrospective of Jack Dashiell’s wood carvings is planned for November and December. Loans from private collections and for suitable secure displays are underway.

County: A Community Development Block Grant has been secured for planning efforts for the former James River Christian Academy on Benn’s Grant Blvd. One option under investigation is adapting part of the facility as a business incubator.

A workshop to introduce eVA, the state’s electronic procurement portal, is scheduled for 9 AM September 19, PDCCC Smithfield center.

Chamber: A cyber security for small businesses workshop is scheduled for 9 AM, September 13.

Tourism: Connie Chapman has been appointed Tourism’s Activities Director and will be aboard September 18<sup>th</sup>. Connie replaces Terry Rhinier, who retired August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Town: Public Works and VDOT are in planning discussions for an overdue repaving of Grace Street from its intersection with Main Street down to Mason Street. Target is summer 2018.

Repair / replacement work for the Cypress Creek Bridge is on VDOT’s plans for late 2020. A traffic-signal controlled alternating one-way traffic option is being finalized; a public briefing will be scheduled in the near future.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319 classroom.

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*These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.*