

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of February 2, 2011

Present:

Jim Abicht	Sheila Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson
Rick Bodson	Mark Hall	Judy Winslow
Margaret Carroll	Randy Pack	
John Edwards	Russell Parrish	

Admin items

By general consensus, it was agreed that Smithfield 2020 will join the Smithfield Historic District Business Association. Rick Bodson is 2020's designated representative.

The communications plan for South Church Street has rolled out with a Website (link to it on Smithfield2020.org) and is complemented with Town and SHDBA "shop local" ad campaigns in the Smithfield Times. The January 31 Monday Morning briefing was attended by four representatives from Excel Paving and was very well received.

Murfreesboro, NC, has requested a delegation from 2020 visit the town and share best practices on efforts for community revitalization programs. Judy Winslow will finalize a date for a road trip to NC. Judy, Margaret Carroll and Rick have volunteered for the visit.

Project updates

Facades improvement – A 50% progress payment on matching funds was delivered to the Ice Cream Parlor in January. Work at the Old World Tea Company is expected to begin in March. No other applications have been submitted.

Golf cart initiative – The report from Police Chief Marshall is expected at the Town Council's Public Safety Committee on February 22nd.

America in Bloom – Leadership Isle of Wight's 2011 class has been formed with 17 participants who have been briefed on the initiative and have been parsed into four work teams. The initial effort is an assessment of the as-is. The project timeline concludes with the class' graduation in October, at which time the Town should submit its application to AIB.

Public art initiative – A task team has been pulled together by Judy to evaluate and develop a project plan for porcine statuary and signage that could be installed throughout the Town. The project plan will be reviewed by the 2020 project team at the March meeting prior to presentation to the Town Council.

Smithfield license plate – Town Council at its February 1st meeting endorsed the initiative to petition DMV for a Smithfield license plate. Judy has issued a 2020 press release, the 2020 Website has an informational page, the Visitor Center is ready to accept applications and payment, and Historic Smithfield's Treasurer has been briefed on the custody of the fees.

2011 priorities

Organization – No fundamental changes in organization or approach. There are no currently identified projects that will require fundraising; the current matching grant funding from the Town should be sufficient for the year.

Promotion – Tourism will complement its external promotion activities with an inward community pride and Town branding strategy. A sub-text is a focus on pushing to the end of the Church Street beautification project with “Open for business” messaging to locals and visitors. A new strategy for the external promotion targets the young family demographic who, research indicates, are spending discretionary income more freely than older demographics.

Design – A re-visit to the recommendations highlighted in the Carlton Abbott study will guide efforts in Design in 2011. In particular, individual property owners and public right-of-way areas highlighted in the study will get attention early in the year. The Design efforts will also dovetail with the Promotion public art / porcine statuary initiative.

Economic Restructuring – Strategies by necessity and reality are longer term, but 2011 focus will be on capitalizing on the transformational impact of 217 Main Street (the “new” Ben Franklin building), the North Church Street properties (old firehouse and laundry), the Main Street gateway at Little’s Market and the Wharf Hill properties, an area in desperate need of preservation and revitalization. For the longer term, a strategy to encourage development of mixed use commercial with live-above properties needs to be formulated. Dialog with the leadership of Paul D. Camp Community College on the plans for the Smithfield campus has been initiated and may impact 2011 Economic Restructuring priorities.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 2nd, 8:30 AM, Arts Center @ 319 classroom.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.