

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of March 6, 2013

Present

Jim Abicht	Sheila Gwaltney	Connie Rhodes
Priscilla Barbour	Trey Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson
Rick Bodson	Mark Hall	Kristi Sutphin
Lee Duncan	Lori Leib	Judy Winslow
John Edwards	Randy Pack	Aston Tynes, guest

Admin

Current funds balance of \$25,673.55 is unchanged from last month. There are no outstanding commitments of funds.

Project and initiative updates

The branding initiative is tracking to plan. Judy reported that participants in both focus groups are confirmed and that the agenda for the meetings are being tweaked based on research on best practices to develop a community brand. Lois Tokarz, who is now on point for the project, is developing a detailed plan, from preparing for the focus groups to the public announcement of the brand.

Rick proposed that expenses related to the roll-out of the brand be paid for by the SHDBA funds since this is an economic vitality initiative. A motion will be presented when a detailed budget is prepared.

The next Inside the Merchants Studio is set for March 26th; topic is “Lessons learned in managing a business on Main Street” with guests Jim Abicht and Judy Begland. 2020 team members are requested to reach out and recruit attendees.

Specifics for a Smithfield in Bloom 2013 initiative were reviewed. Mark proposes a proof-of-concept project of installing hanging flower pots on period lamp posts and / or “straw baskets” of seasonal flowers at their base. The impact of colorful annuals has a commensurate higher maintenance challenge; the project will validate installation and on-going maintenance costs, feasibility of properly maintaining the plants and capture best practices. Installing a limited number of plants before the Beer & Wine Fest and Garden Tour, both in April, is a near term objective. Mark took for action validating required permitting and approval from the Town and Dominion (owners of Church Street lamp posts) and will report out at the April meeting. Mark requested and received by general consensus the endorsement of the Smithfield 2020 team to proceed with the project.

A meeting to review the state of the existing large planters placed throughout the Historic District with Town staff was hosted by Connie as part of a broader Chamber of Commerce beautification initiative. It was acknowledged that several current planters fall short of being

aesthetically delightful and Peter confirmed that the Town will review the maintenance contract specifications and will have staff develop a remediation plan.

New initiatives

John proposed that 2020 open a dialog with the leadership of the Smithfield campus of Paul D. Camp Community College as part of a broader economic vitality initiative. Validating the College's long term strategy and commitment to a presence in Smithfield, identifying modest improvements to the physical site, possibly expanding course offerings and discussing how to fully realize the potential of a local community college resource were listed as discussion topics. Kristi and Lee volunteered to participate in initiatives that may be identified by the initial dialog. John is on point to set an initial meeting Dr. Carl Sweat, leader of the PDCCC Smithfield Campus.

Organization updates / announcements

Historic Smithfield: John reported that the critical path for the transfer of the 1750 Isle of Wight Courthouse remains the issuance of an historic easement by Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Arts League: Sheila reported on plans for a Downton Abbey-themed fundraiser to be hosted May 18th at the Cherry Grove Plantation.

County: Kristi reported that the update to the County Economic Development strategic plan is complete and she will forward a copy for distribution to the 2020 team after it has been accepted by the Board of Supervisors.

Chamber: Connie reported that the Student Leadership Program and the Leadership Class are both underway and focusing on a creative green initiative. Also in the Chamber's 2013 plans is establishing a Young Professionals Organization in Isle of Wight County.

SHDBA: Jim requested that the www.shopsmithfield.com domain name be renewed (a nominal \$12 annual fee). The URL will be re-configured to forward to Tourism's "Shop Here" page and the SHDBA Website will be removed. Jim will present a proposal for a creative program associated with a shopsmithfield.com Website at a later date.

Tourism: Judy reported Restaurant Week was very successful and will be expanded to a twice a year event. Judy also reviewed plans for two mega-events in April, the Beer & Wine Fest (12th to 14th) and Garden Week tour (20th). Merchants (with prompting by 2020 team members) will be encouraged to have complementary events or promotions; details from merchants need to be provided to Tourism to pass on to the event teams for inclusion in promotion and communications plans.

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 3rd, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.