

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of April 3, 2013

Present

Jim Abicht	Sheila Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson
Priscilla Barbour	Trey Gwaltney	Judy Winslow
Rick Bodson	Mark Hall	Kristi Sutphin - guest
Lee Duncan	Lisa Perry	
John Edwards	Connie Rhodes	

Admin

Current funds balance of \$25,661.55 reflects the \$12 renewal of the shopsmithfield.com domain registration; a transfer of \$272 to Historic Smithfield for Smithfield 2020's pro rated share of the annual premium for Directors and Officers liability insurance is pending; there are no other outstanding commitments of funds.

A request to issue a replacement check for \$100 to Smithfield Music issued by SHDBA but never deposited was approved by general consensus.

Project and initiative updates

The branding initiative is tracking to plan. Lois Tokarz has completed a detailed project plan which officially kicks off with consumer and merchant branding team meetings April 6th and 9th, respectively. Lessons learned from an excellent Webinar attended by Lois, Judy and Rick have been factored into the working sessions.

The March 26th Inside the Merchants Studio, "Lessons learned in managing a business on Main Street" with guests Jim Abicht and Judy Begland, drew 18 attendees and received rave reviews. After a discussion of the program success to date, the general consensus is to continue on and evaluate options to draw attendees from similar communities such as Williamsburg and Suffolk. The next session, featuring Tourism's PR director Lois Tokarz and Smithfield Foods' VP of marketing Will Brunt, is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28th.

The Smithfield in Bloom 2013 / lamp post basket initiative has been endorsed by BHAR and approved by the Town Council. A one-year pilot program will install flower-laden baskets on lamp posts near the Christmas Store and the Arts Center @ 319; a possible third location is the 1939 Firehouse if Dominion Power, owner of that lamp post, agrees. The cost for the pilot project will be borne by the business / building owners, Jim Abicht and Mark Hall. The success of the project will be continuously evaluated over the next year before a proposal to expand it is presented by 2020 to the Town Council.

The plans to remediate the existing large planters and curbside landscaped areas throughout the Historic District are progressing. Connie and Peter have hosted meetings with involved stakeholders and the Town has finalized contractual terms with Southern Shores for the

planting and maintenance of designated areas. The first wave of beautification is planned to be in place by Garden Week.

An introductory conversation by John and Rick with Dr. Carl Sweat, director of the Smithfield campus of Paul D. Camp Community College, has developed into an April 23rd planning session with the leadership of PDCCC, the Luter Family YMCA and the Blackwater Regional Library to explore potential improvements in the facility, grounds and educational programs. This initiative has indirectly brought back to light a proposed development of duplex townhouses on the empty lot at the corner of James and Washington Streets, across from the PDCCC facility. While a special use permit to Habitat for Humanity has been previously granted, Town Council is likely to review the issue. John took for action presenting 2020's concern about the proposed use of the property, especially in light of the nascent dialog with PDCCC, to the appropriate Town Council committee.

Back burner initiatives

After a year of unresponsiveness from the owner of 17 Main Street, the Town's Attorney has been tasked by Town Council to bring legal action under the provisions of demolition by neglect statutes.

New initiatives

John Edwards proposed consideration of a sculpture collection for Hayden's Lane. After an enthusiastic reception from the team, Sheila and Cil took for action developing a first cut plan for the proposal with an objective of presenting it to the appropriate Town Council committee for consideration.

Judy reports that progress has been made in engaging principal parties for the development of a brew pub in the former Elks Building on Wharf Hill. 2020 will likely be called upon to endorse and champion the development effort to Town Council.

Organization updates / announcements

Historic Smithfield: The transfer of the 1750 Isle of Wight Courthouse from Preservation Virginia is progressing; a draft historic easement is now under review. John also reported that Historic Smithfield has purchased Directors and Officers liability insurance for its Board and the members of sponsored programs, including the 2020 project team members.

Arts League: The opening reception for the newest exhibit at the Arts Center @ 319, Watercolors by Ted Leonard, a Smithfield resident, is this Friday, April 5th, 6 to 9 PM.

County: Lisa reported that the announcement of an \$8 Million investment for a commercial enterprise within the Town limits is imminent.

Chamber: The initial Student Leadership Class program is progressing to its May graduation.

SHDBA: Involvement by commercial district merchants in tie-in events or promotions with the Wine & Brew Fest has been disappointing. Beyond the hotels and restaurants, only Imagine Art Gallery has signed on and will be featuring painting demonstrations by a regional artist.

Tourism: The VTC-subsidized LOVE sculpture will not be installed as planned at the intersection of Main Street and the Bypass due to objections by VDOT. An alternative site in Windsor Castle Park will be proposed to Town Council. Local farmer Jake Browder has stepped forward to donate a landscaping plan and the plants for an area around the sculpture.

Town: Peter announced that the Tidewater Bike Association will be donating a bike rack to be located in the 200 block of Main Street, further enhancing Smithfield as a destination for bicyclists. Peter also reported that the construction of the Plaza at 206 Main facilities are progressing and tracking to a May completion. It was also noted that work to replace dead trees in several locations in Windsor Castle Park is underway.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 1st, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.