

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

Present:

Jim Abicht	John Edwards	Lisa Perry
Judy Begland	Sheila Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson
Rick Bodson	Mark Hall	Judy Winslow
Margaret Carroll	Randy Pack	

Admin items

- Mark nominated Randy Pack as the third Member-at-Large, to serve a one-year term. Motion was made, seconded and carried by unanimous vote.
- The Smithfield Town Council has issued the needed Resolution in support of 2020's application to the Virginia Main Street Affiliate Program and the application is on its way. An overview of the Main Street Four Point Approach program was distributed to all Project Team members present. (*Note: Copyrighted material used by permission; do not photocopy.*)

Project quick updates

- North Church Street properties RFP – Town Council has approved the issuance of Request for Proposal for the sale of the North Church Street properties. The RFP is in final stages of review by the Town Attorney and will be distributed shortly; copies will be made available to 2020 Project Team members. The RFP emphasizes proposed use as the major evaluation criteria to ensure usage that enhances the Historic District's commercial and cultural vitality. Proposals will be reviewed by the Town Council Finance Committee and Smithfield 2020 will request an opportunity to either participate as ad hoc members of the evaluation team or at least address the Finance Committee to communicate the 2020 vision for the North Church Street corridor and the project team's expectations of the evaluation criteria. Rick is on point to address the Finance Committee at its April 26th meeting.
- Arts & Cultural District designation – The Town Finance Committee has approved the request and tasked 2020 to propose specific incentives. Peter, Sheila and Rick have met to identify incentives for current (e.g., A-frame sign fee waiver) and prospective (e.g., license fee waivers) arts businesses. Sheila is also researching best practices and lessons learned from other municipalities who have passed enabling ordinances. The final proposal will be reviewed with the Finance Committee on April 26th with a target of putting an ordinance before the Town Council for ratification at its subsequent May or June meetings.
- Sponsorship by Historic Smithfield – The request for 501(c)(3) sponsorship and fiduciary support was re-introduced by John to the Historic Smithfield board and is now unanimously endorsed. A legal review (at no cost to 2020 or Historic Smithfield) of the Memorandum of Understanding is underway. Expectation: The MoU will be finalized and proposed for ratification by both organizations within 60 days.

Façades improvement project – Carlton Abbott and an associate visited Smithfield last week to present their *bona fides* and walk the Historic District. Mr. Abbott’s firm was recommended by Historic Smithfield to provide a comparative proposal to Frazier Associates’, which is in hand. The objective remains the same: Providing renderings and drawings of façade improvements that can be presented and reviewed with business owners, detailing the work effort to affect the enhancements. Historic Smithfield has indicated a willingness to fund this first phase and Smithfield 2020 will pursue funding – possibly from a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the North Church Street properties – for a matching grant pool to offer to building owners. A 2020 task team will be formed once both proposals are in-hand with an objective of developing the specifics of the project, including processes to identify targeted properties, communication protocols, and matching grant application and evaluation criteria.

The project update prompted a conversation about the maintenance of the current streetscape in light of the over-abundant mulching, lack of thriving greenery and other issues. A 2020 task team was formed to address the issue and make recommendations to the Town Manager. Task team members assigned are John, Connie, Judy Begland, and Peter. Master Gardener Brenda Joyner has volunteered to provide horticultural consultation. John is on point as task team leader.

Chamber of Commerce incentives program – Mark reviewed the Chamber’s small business incentives program. Two major strategies will be funded:

- A \$10,000 allocation for cable TV and print ads that feature Smithfield, Windsor and Carrollton as “shop local” destinations. Included is an allocation for the re-printing of Tourism’s Visitor Guide for placement in the May Home-a-rama at Founders Point and as an insert to Hampton Roads Magazine in 35,000 copies to the greater regional area and beyond.
- A \$10,000 challenge grant to Smithfield, Windsor and the County to subsidize new small business incentives through reduction or waiver of fees typically involved in the business start-up phase. Details are to be finalized with each jurisdiction, but one possible scenario would have the Chamber recompense the locality for the waived fees up to the grant amount.

A robust discussion ensued and feedback was provided, including the need to measure return on invested ad dollars and an evaluation of Web-based advertising. Also, the significant value of providing a mentoring / navigating / ombudsman resource during the new business start-up phase was mentioned as an underwriting opportunity for the Chamber. Several members of the 2020 project team who are also on the Chamber of Commerce Board will take the feedback to the Chamber’s business incentives planning meeting scheduled for later this week.

Next meeting – NOTE CHANGE – Tuesday, May 11th, 8:30 AM, Arts Center @ 319.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.