

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of August 1, 2012

Present

Jim Abicht
Rick Bodson
Lee Duncan

John Edwards
Trey Gwaltney
Mark Hall

Connie Rhodes
Peter Stephenson
Judy Winslow

Admin

Connie reported that Russell Parrish has tendered his resignation as the Chamber's second representative to 2020 and that Lori Leib, incoming Vice Chair of the Chamber Board of Directors, will replace him.

The final \$1,000 due for the Little's Market banners and the \$2,500 façade matching grant to the Chamber of Commerce were paid in July. Current funds balance is \$11,126.

Project and initiative updates

Firehouse of 1939 – Mark reported that September is the current target for the opening of the Firehouse shops. Several prospective tenants are in final lease negotiations.

Wharf Hill - Lee reported that the Elks Building remains structurally stable and no additional work is planned in the near term. It was also noted that a contractor is scheduled to begin work in August to address stabilization of 17 Main Street, the old shoe repair shop.

Hayden's Lane "gatehouse" properties – The disposition of 226 Main (former Ham Shop) was reviewed by the Town Council Public Buildings Committee on July 26 at which Rick presented perspective on maintaining open and suitable-use commercial space. The committee agreed to recommend a lease or buy RFP be issued for the property. Peter noted that the other gatehouse is under lease as The Beanery and that a public hearing has been held for citizen input on the Town's consideration to sell it to the owner of the Gourmet Bakery.

South Church St (Church of Christ and Verizon properties) – Some remediation of the curb area of the Church property has been affected but additional improvements were discussed; Mark will investigate the availability of Gwaltney Beautification Funds for landscaping. At the Verizon building, modest clean up of the front beds was recently completed, but the condition of the façade and door and window trim needs attention. As well, several recommendations from the Carlton Abbott study need to be evaluated for the BSV parking lot / Verizon work area boundary from both aesthetic and public safety perspectives. Connie and Trey will investigate further and will evaluate a possible escalation to the Town Board of Historic and Architectural Review for possible action.

New initiatives

Façade improvement matching grant – A request for improvement of the east façade of 108 Main Street was reviewed. The proposal is to soften the expanse of white wall with two areas of contrasting shades, as recommended by the Carlton Abbott study. Motion to approve a grant of up to \$1585, contingent on BHAR approval, was passed by unanimous consent, with Jim Abicht abstaining.

Hams, History, Hospitality and *Heart*...and economic development – Rick and Judy reviewed recent discussions about the economic impact of tourism, the current resources available to local visitors and tourists, and a few critical challenges that may fall short in delighting all who visit. Smithfield 2020's vision for the Historic District was discussed as were a set of strategies to establish and validate the "as-is", to communicate 2020's and Tourism's plans and to engage stakeholders in improving the economic and cultural vitality of the District. Several creative ideas were offered up and will be incorporated into the strategy document and future team meetings. A first order of business was tasking every 2020 team member to visit in the next month at least five Historic District venues and record impressions of each. The primary objective is for the Smithfield 2020 team to experience Hams, History, Hospitality and *Heart* resources from a visitor's perspective.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 5th, 8:30 am, Arts Center @ 319 classroom.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.