

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of August 7, 2013

Present

Jim Abicht	John Edwards	Mark Hall
Priscilla Barbour	Sheila Gwaltney	Randy Pack
Rick Bodson	Trey Gwaltney	Judy Winslow

Admin

Current funds balance of \$24,209.55 reflects a July payment of \$200 from undesignated funds to Historic Smithfield for a pro-rated share of tax prep and filing. The commitment of \$5,200 from undesignated funds for a design proposal for the Riverview Campus is outstanding.

Project and initiative updates

A proposal for a sculpture garden in Hayden's Lane was presented by Sheila and Cil to the Town Council Public Buildings & Welfare Committee on July 23rd. Town Council was generally supportive but requested two action items be addressed before granting approval. One is to conduct an informal survey to gauge public sentiment on the initiative and one is to develop very specific guidelines for the selection of the artistic works. Additionally, the team agreed that the Woman's Club should be briefed on the proposal.

Follow-up: Sheila and Cil will develop the short survey and present it at the September team meeting. A first cut at an implementation plan that addresses funding, selection, installation and the associated timeline will also be presented. The optimal target date to unveil the sculpture garden is Brew & Wine Fest Week-end 2014; Olden Days 2014 is the alternate.

The Riverview Campus working group met on July 24th. Rick reported that a first draft of the group's mission and vision statements was developed and will be presented to the full strategic planning committee (senior staff of the four organizations as well as Town and County leadership) in August.

The status of several Historic District commercial properties was reviewed. Positive news includes the selection of a sub-lessee for 315 Main (former American Attic), the planned late-August same-day opening of the boutique at 224 Main (former Ham Shoppe) and the expanded Gourmet Bakery into 220 Main (Beanery). Judy reported that solid progress on the development of the Wharf Hill waterfront properties continues and the timeline is tracking to a September presentation to Town Council.

On the downside, the demise of Old World Tea Company and Perspectives (buildings for sale), Ye Olden Exposures (available for lease) was noted. As well, one Station Boardwalk space remains available for lease. This led to a discussion of how Smithfield 2020 can best assist candidate businesses succeed in start-up and on-going operation. Several proposals were discussed and evaluated.

Follow-up: Trey and Mark will develop a plan on how best to assist prospective businesses evaluate their potential and the realities of their business plans. A key first step will be to liaise with the Chamber of Commerce to understand its current programs and resources and evaluate if they can be adapted (focused) on the particular needs of the Historic District. A first cut proposal is expected for the September meeting.

New initiatives

A façade improvement matching grant application for 207 Main Street has been submitted by building owner Fulton Jones, calling for a replacement awning of identical design and color. After considerable discussion, it was concluded that the grant request was marginally acceptable under the program guidelines, as the proposed work is more a maintenance than façade improvement effort, but that use of the matching grant funds as an incentive to affect the installation of a new canvas awning was warranted. By a vote of 7 for and 1 against, the team awarded a matching grant of \$1,000.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 4, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.