

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of September 4th, 2013

Present

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

Admin

Current funds balance of \$24,209.55 is unchanged from last month. The commitment of \$5,200 from undesignated funds for a design proposal for the Riverview Campus and \$1,000 from the façade grant fund for 207 Main Street (Fulton Jones building) are outstanding.

Project and initiative updates

Wharf Hill development – Lisa provided an update on the activities investigating development of several parcels at the bottom of Wharf Hill for commercial and residential uses. HL Development Group and Clark Nexen have been brought into the discussions and a fee proposal for a master plan design concept is in hand. Lisa, Judy and Lee will evaluate further and possibly bring to the team in October a funding request to underwrite the design study.

Hayden's Lane sculpture garden – A review draft of a public survey to gauge support and solicit suggestions for the proposed public art initiative was distributed. Sheila will gather feedback on the questions and Judy volunteered to host the online survey on the Windsor Castle Park Website. Publicity about the survey will be broadcast through various organizations' email lists, Facebook pages and mention in the Smithfield Times.

New business support initiative – A working session with Mark, Trey and Kristi to inventory resources available to start-up businesses was scheduled for the conclusion of the 2020 team meeting. An update on the initiative will be provided at the October meeting.

Branding initiative – The creative work is nearly complete and will be ready for a team-only review within ten days. A first public unveiling is targeted for Town & Country Day on October 12th. A funding request from SHDBA funds to launch the brand was deferred until the team has an opportunity to review the proposed design; a special meeting will be called for the team's review next week.

New initiatives

Historic District vacant commercial properties – Lisa discussed the recent surge in vacant store fronts and shared that for one building, she has engaged on a pro bono basis consulting from an architect with historic district revitalization experience to evaluate one specific property.

Façade improvement grants – Three submissions were reviewed:

- Home Sweet Home Care / 346 Main Street – Rejected; proposed work was to repair a flag stone walk-way and characterized as non-façade and maintenance.

- Main Street Baptist Church – This is a landscaping project to add a visual buffer of holly bushes between the public sidewalk and the church’s new family life center parking lot. The match amount request for \$1,010 was approved.
- 207 Main Street – The building owner has been informed of the \$1,000 grant award but no work has yet begun. Connie will follow up with the owner.

Peter took for action investigating whether Town ordinances can compel maintenance of awnings that extend over the public right of way.

Horticultural organization – Mark presented an outline for an organization tasked with enhancing the aesthetics of the Historic District (and potentially beyond). The initiative is prompted by the initial very successful launch of the lamppost planters, though the key lesson learned is the absolute necessity for daily care and watering. The initiative is in early planning and will be presented for further evaluation by the team in early 2014.

Organization updates / announcements

Arts League: The Arts League is the recipient of the Dominion Art Star Award for 2013 and will be presented with the award on Friday evening, September 27th, during the opening reception of the next exhibit at the Arts Center @ 319.

County: A key priority in the next several months is developing implementation plans for the recently completed update to the Economic Development long range strategic plan.

Chamber: The “Farm-to-Table” event will be hosted this week at Hayden’s Lane. The Isle of Wight Community Foundation, which will address community needs beyond the Chamber’s mission, is wrapping up its launch as a stand-alone tax-exempt organization.

Tourism: A comprehensive calendar of events is rolling out for the fall months as the Farmers Market continues a very successful season. Improvements to the BSV parking lot have ensured a continued Farmers Market presence at that venue for several more years. Judy will be distributing this week the latest report from the Virginia Tourism Corporation attesting the continued economic impact of tourism on state and local economies.

Town: Peter reported that Court-ordered corrective action for 17 Main Street is not yet evident and that by mid-September, the owner may be judged in contempt of court. The Town Attorney will be petitioning the Court for action. 315 Main Street (the Joyner Ham shop) has been sub-leased to Nansi Strickland. “When Pigs Fly, Magic Happens”, a gallery featuring local artists, will open in late September. Smithfield Winery is scheduled to submit for review and approval its proposed improvement to 117 N. Church Street at the next BHAR meeting. The plans for a natural playground for Windsor Castle Park will be unveiled to the WCP Foundation Board at its September 5th meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 2nd, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.