

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of December 5, 2012

Present

Rick Bodson	Trey Gwaltney	Judy Winslow
Lee Duncan	Mark Hall	Graham Brock – guest
John Edwards	Lori Leib	
Sheila Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson	

Admin

The bank balance of \$11,820.39 is unchanged from November; there are no outstanding commitments of funds.

Team membership for 2013 was reviewed. SHDBA will be represented by Jim Abicht and Mark Hall. Priscilla Barbour, Resident Artist of the Arts Center @ 319, will be invited to join as Isle of Wight Arts League representative. Lee Duncan has confirmed that he will stand for re-appointment as a Member at Large at the January meeting.

Project and initiative updates

The new plaques requesting that the porcine statues be respected as works of art and not climbed on are in hand and will be installed within a few weeks.

The proposed revisions to the façade improvement matching grant program guidelines were reviewed. Key improvements will be clarification that maintenance is not eligible, that funding will be dependent on BHAR approval and that two 2020 team members will be involved in briefing applicants, and reviewing and evaluating grant requests before the request is presented for 2020 team approval. The proposed revisions will be incorporated into a new guidelines document and distributed for a final review prior to being presented for ratification at the January team meeting. Judy and Rick took for action the development of a hardcopy summary of the Carlton Abbott report; it will be made available to applicants to provide examples of façade improvements targeted for matching grants.

A report on parking capacity in the Historic District was deferred to the January meeting. A more specific statement of the problem needs to be developed as a pre-requisite to further effort on this initiative.

Planned next steps in the proposal for period lamp posts extending across the Cypress Creek bridge involve developing PhotoShop images of the proposed installation and discussing it with the owners of Smithfield Station; Mark is on point for that effort. Based on that checkpoint, next steps will be presented and evaluated by the team.

A plan to raise concerns to VDOT about over-marking by “Miss Utility” crews in historic areas is being developed by Trey and will be presented at a later meeting.

The first cut plans for the Historic District branding initiative were reviewed. Mark shared a quote explaining that “a brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer’s decision to choose one product or service over another.” The 2020 branding initiative intends to develop a compelling and differentiating message to draw to downtown visitors and, more importantly, local residents for shopping and dining. A target of mid-year, specifically, Olden Days 2013, has been set for project completion and announcement of the brand.

The project plan calls for two sets of monthly events executed in alternating months. In January, March and May, “Merchants Studios” (patterned after the PBS “Actors Studios”) will be hosted by Judy at the Smithfield Little Theatre with local merchants to discuss relevant business topics such as e-marketing and branding. On the alternate months of February, April and June, two focus groups – merchants and local residents – will be asked for input and validation on critical must-have / must-keep features of the Historic District, on must-improve / need-to-get features, and finally, on reaction to the proposed branding developed as a result of the input gathered from the first two meetings.

Action item for all 2020 team members: Identification of Historic District merchants and County residents for the two focus groups. County residents should represent varying age groups and the “from here”, “come here” and “return here” demographics. Send candidate names to Judy.

Mark and Trey took for action securing access to the Smithfield Little Theatre for 9:00 to 10:30 AM on the last Tuesday of January, March and May.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 2nd, 8:30 am, Arts Center @ 319 classroom.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.