

Smithfield 2020 Notes from Team meeting of April 1, 2015

Present

Mike Adams	John Edwards	Peter Stephenson
Rick Bodson	Sheila Gwaltney	
Andy Cripps	Mark Hall	

Admin

Current funds balance of \$16,513.79 is unchanged from last month. There is one outstanding commitment of funds of \$500 for the directional signage project.

Project and initiative updates

The directional signs are scheduled for review at the April 21 BHAR meeting. If approved, production and installation will be expedited for installation by May 1st. The signage color scheme and font will match the street name signs; the latter are planned to be refurbished this spring.

Town Planner William Saunders has evaluated the excessive property lighting situation at Bank of America and is addressing the issue with the local branch management. Updates will be shared with the Team as the situation is resolved.

Mark, Lee and Rick met with representatives of Hearndon Construction in March for an open exchange of plans, perspectives and concerns on the proposed development of Pierceville. In presenting the current master plan, the Hearndon team expressed a willingness to do more to bring it into harmony with the characteristics of the Historic District. The 2020 team echoed some concerns expressed by residents, emphasized the historic significance of the farmstead and explained that the potential economic and cultural vitality potential of a properly developed Pierceville could be given careful and pragmatic evaluation and appropriate advocacy by 2020.

2020 extended an invitation for the Hearndon team to meet with Historic Board members; the invitation was accepted and the meeting has been scheduled.

New initiatives

The Gang of 5 (the business owner representatives) have met to begin the identification of merchant-focused initiatives. Several are in early planning stages. Drafting off the opening of Wharf Hill Brewing Co., a networking effort to focus on ensuring first-time visitors become repeat visitors is an identified initiative as is a social media strategy of cross-sharing page content. The Gang will continue discussions and report out at the May meeting.

Organization updates / announcements

Arts League: The Arts Center launched a Smithfield Third Saturday event in March with the regional Beekeepers group's competition of painted bee boxes. The plans call for visible outside activity in the warm months around the Arts Center / When Pigs Fly / Victoria's Rose properties to draw shoppers to the 300 block.

Chamber: The post-Mardi Gras survey of Main Street merchants on the issue of street closure was presented. Anchoring the two ends of the spectrum, one merchant reported strong support (and pull-through sales) while another was adamantly opposed; the consensus was to support street-closure events during the off-peak shopping season (e.g., the Mardi Gras in February, evening market in December) but that peak shopper season closures should be carefully managed, e.g., limit to Olden Days and Town & Country Days.

A networking luncheon for non-profits is being hosted April 15th; it will be followed by a workshop on on-line marketing led Damien Smith, Farmers Bank Marketing Director and facilitator of several social media best practices sessions.

The Chamber is hosting "Flavors of Isle of Wight" Wednesday, April 29th at the Smithfield Center as a networking event and a fundraiser for its college scholarship fund.

The Chamber's Board has revised in a strategy to make the Chamber's value more explicitly relevant and affordable. The membership model is now defined by levels of available benefits.

Town: Several changes have been or are rolling out to add some capacity to lower Main Street and N. Church Street. Wharf Hill now has two-hour parking; the west side of N. Church Street is a designated two-hour zone; the east side is being evaluated for two-hour; the north side of Luter Drive, previously a no-parking zone, is now available for all-day parking, increasing capacity on that block by as much as 12 spaces. The Town has plans to improve its recently acquired lot east of Booth Cleaners with a graveled parking area.

Plans for Joyner Field are to retain it as a green area and as-needed overflow parking during large events. Some remediation of the sod is in the plans to repair damage from recent parking.

A modest landscaping plan is under development for several parcels at the Riverview Campus. A proposal is expected from the Town's landscape contractor in April.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 6th, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319 classroom.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.