

Smithfield 2020 Notes from Team meeting of March 2, 2016

Present

Jim Abicht	Andy Cripps	Trey Gwaltney
Mike Adams	John Edwards	Mark Hall
Priscilla Barbour	Jenn Gangemi	Peter Stephenson
Rick Bodson	Sheila Gwaltney	Judy Winslow

Admin

Current funds balance is \$14,951.85; \$386 remains in the project budget for repairs to Magnolia. There are no other outstanding fund commitments.

Project and initiative updates

The replacement head for Magnolia has been received; repairs continue.

The 2-D project team has secured the right to reproduce the Robert Clontz watercolor of the steamboat Smithfield for the initial mural public art initiative. Bids have been received from three muralists and negotiations with the building owner are underway as is a solicitation for project underwriting. A motion to proceed with a submission to BHAR was adopted contingent on securing building owner permission and securing funding for a minimum of 80% of project cost. A motion was adopted to fund a maximum of \$2,500 from the façade improvement matching grant account for costs above committed underwriting funds.

If BHAR pre-requisites and approval are secured, the 2-D team will present for approval the final design and vendor contract at the April Team meeting.

The sculpture garden project is progressing. Dialog with the staff of the Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center identified several best practices; a visit to view their installation techniques is planned for April. Still open are the selection of sculptures and a lighting design discussion with a landscape architect; subsequently, a planning session with Town Public Works staff will be scheduled.

A brief meeting with Town Planning staff confirmed that the process to submit input to the Comp Plan update is through Citizen Comments and/or Public Hearings in scheduled Planning Commission meetings; a written report may also be submitted. Town staff is considering a public work session on Future Land Use, addressing all ten Planning Areas identified in the 2009 revision. The West Main Planning Area, while extending into the Historic District to a Cary Street border, primarily addresses land use west of the Bypass; no other Historic District tracts are addressed in the FLU chapter. The Comp Plan project team's input to the Future Land Use update is being developed and will be presented in a future Team meeting.

A proposal identifying how two or three available parcels on the Wharf Hill waterfront can be put to a highest and best use has been drafted and is under review. Key points: Limited access to Pagan River views was highlighted as an issue in the Sanford-Holshouser report. Since construction in a flood-prone area is not practical, join several parcels into a small waterfront park and parking area. The small park, with a few narrative displays, will afford residents and visitors insights into Smithfield's commercial river port history. The parking capacity will address Smithfield Foods' needs during business hours and be available for resident and visitor parking on evenings and week-ends. The initiative does not contemplate or depend on Town funding. No Team action is planned until dialog with key stakeholders progresses further.

No response has been received from SHS faculty for the student community service day.

Licensing of food trucks in the Historic District is being evaluated for the potential to contribute to economic and cultural vitality. Experience in other localities and insights from a travel writer points to a qualified yes, with several concerns and parameters to be researched further, in particular the competition with or fairness to traditional brick-and-mortar venues, control of the quantity and quality of vendors and collection of meals taxes. Several regional localities are also evaluating the issue; no best practice has been identified. The project team will continue to research the business model and develop an outline for a Town regulation.

New initiatives

A recent incident of vandalism in the Historic District has identified an opportunity for a Neighborhood Watch program guided by SPD's community policing resources. A broader Team initiative of also addressing issues related diligence in maintenance of properties, litter control and others will be put on the agenda of future meetings.

An opportunity for organizing a Historic District horticultural society or garden club was identified. Before exploring further, research into best practices for such an effort is needed.

Organization updates / announcements

Tourism: The Spring Vintage Market will require closing of the 100 block of Main Street until mid-afternoon on Saturday, March 12. Mason Street, north and south, will remain open.

Town: The "land swap" of a parcel near the Smithfield Foods campus for Joyner Field has been concluded; the green space behind 315 Main Street is now Town-owned.

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

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.