

Smithfield 2020 Notes from Team meeting of February 7th, 2018

Present

Jim Abicht	Lee Duncan	Mark Hall
Rick Bodson	John Edwards	Kim Pugh
Christi Chatham	Tom Elder	Judy Winslow
Andy Cripps	Sheila Gwaltney	

Admin

Current funds balance is \$12,679.85. There are no outstanding commitments of funds.

The Historic District business representatives nominated Jim Abicht and Mark Hall to serve terms expiring February 2021. A motion to re-appoint Jim and Mark to the Team was adopted. (Note: January meeting notes misidentified the reps whose terms expire this month.)

Project and initiative updates

Parking in the core of the Historic District was discussed, prompted in part by the Special Use Permit granted by the Town on February 6th for an event venue on the 300 block. The problem set is defined as a typical warm season, business hours (10-5), mid-week day; explicitly excluded are event and Farmers Market days and the current utilities work.

Initial comments: There are few complaints made to the Visitor Center or businesses about parking. However, informal observations and anecdotal perception point to:

- * Many merchants or employees consistently park on the street 10 to 5;
- * Local residents drive on if parking is limited, particularly in the 100 and 200 blocks (visitors are more “motivated” to find a space since this is the destination);
- * North Church Street is becoming problematic with short-term stops at Cure;
- * Locals will avoid the Post Office in favor of outlying counters, e.g., True Value;
- * Off-street parking is difficult for visitors to identify because of lack of consistent signage;
- * The 300 block’s recent surge of new businesses is a positive development, but an event venue will consume the limited availability and will impact residents as well as visitors.

A 2020 effort will collect and analyze two sets of data – actual count of available on- and off-street parking, and the number of on-street capacity consistently used by residents and business owners and employees. Data for the noted areas will be collected by Team members:

- * N. Church Street from Main to Luter Dr, and Wharf Hill – Lee and a recruited volunteer
- * 100 block, including Inn, BSV and TUMC lots – Jim and recruited volunteer
- * 200 block, including Taste, lots behind businesses and across from PO – Judy and Trey
- * 300 block down to Underwood – Christi and Sheila

Target to collect the data and submit to Rick is February 28th for review at the March 7th Team meeting.

Town Council will be briefed on 2020's data collection and analysis plan at the February 27 Public Buildings & Welfare committee meeting. An initial recommendation will be a joint Town staff / 2020 working team to develop a signage plan. The result of the data analysis and specific recommendations will be presented at the March PB&W committee meeting.

Team members will also research through whatever means practices in other localities, from 2-hour parking to resident stickers to ... and share results at the March Team meeting.

The follow-up with Town and County staff to January's lessons learned briefing by Joseph McCain, co-owner of Fleur de Fou, is in progress; no meeting dates with staff have yet been set but Tom will advise of an opportunity to observe a pre-application meeting with County staff. Rick took for action inviting Town Planning, Engineering and Public Works Director William Saunders to a Team meeting to brief relevant ordinances and planning considerations.

New initiatives

A motion to subscribe to the Roger Brooks Destination Development Association for one year and pay the \$395 fee from Economic Vitality Initiatives funds was adopted. (The Roger Brooks Webinars offer common sense and best practices advice on business district revitalization efforts.)

Organization updates

Historic Smithfield: The 1750 Courthouse reported a best-ever financial performance in 2017, due in large measure to the Christmas in Smithfield fundraising programs. The fiscal health of the Courthouse is sound.

County: James River Christian Academy is under new ownership and the County has secured a \$30,000 Community Development Block Grant for a feasibility study of possible re-use of the property.

Tourism: Restaurant Week was a success. Farmers Markets will re-open in April. A new event, an art show hosted on the Smithfield Station Boardwalk, is being developed in partnership with the Arts League.

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 7, 8:45 am, Arts Center @ 319 classroom.

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.