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### **Smithfield Town Council designates Arts & Cultural District**

Smithfield, VA – The Town Council adopted at its July 6 meeting an amendment to the Town Code creating an arts and cultural district overlay to the existing Historic District boundaries. The resolution and enabling ordinance provides for incentives to attract arts businesses to the downtown commercial district.

The initiative was proposed by Smithfield 2020, a project team that identifies and champions ideas, initiatives and project that attempt to improve the economic and cultural vitality of the Historic District. Transforming Smithfield as an arts destination is tied to the proven economic benefits that accrue from attracting tourists seeking arts venues.

New arts based businesses will receive waivers of business license taxes and fees on a sliding scale of 100% for the first year, 50% in the second year, and 25% in the third year. Zoning permit fees will also be waived. Additionally, the recently enacted \$25 annual fee for a-frame or sandwich board signs will be waived for arts businesses.

The ability for municipalities to designate arts and cultural districts and to waive certain taxes and fees for qualifying businesses was recently enacted by the General Assembly. Other communities who have or are considering similar action include Manassas, Harrisonburg, Blacksburg and Williamsburg.

To learn more about the local downtown economic and cultural vitality efforts, go to [www.smithfield2020.org](http://www.smithfield2020.org).

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