

Smithfield 2020 Notes from project team meeting of April 2nd, 2014

Present

Jim Abicht	John Edwards	Russell Parrish
Priscilla Barbour	Sheila Gwaltney	Lisa Perry
Rick Bodson	Trey Gwaltney	Peter Stephenson
Andy Cripps	Mark Hall	Judy Winslow
Lee Duncan	Randy Pack	

Admin / updates

Current funds balance of \$19,855 is unchanged from last month. A commitment from unrestricted funds of \$5,200 for a Riverview Campus master plan is outstanding.

Project and initiative updates

Judy presented the key features of the lamppost banner proposal – banners featuring scenes or representations of Smithfield; headers and footers incorporating the new Genuine brand / logo; 50 banners incorporating 5 designs (each design repeated 10 times); content will vary in art style (paintings to photography; entries will be juried; cash prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 will be awarded to the top three juried entries; entries will be due May 12th; selected and announced May 16th. The banner initiative was presented to Town Council’s Public Buildings & Welfare Committee on March 25th and received positive feedback and an unofficial nod to proceed. (BHAR review and approval is the next step.)

Motion to budget \$8,000 from the economic vitality (former SHDBA) funds was approved by unanimous consent.

Trey previously identified several sources to replenish the façade improvement matching grant fund and secured his first target. On March 19th, a commitment from Historic Smithfield for \$5,000 was made. Trey will now focus on other sources and will also review the Carlton Abbott study to identify building owners to be approached about the grant opportunity.

New initiatives

Rick noted that a redesign of Smitfield2020.org based on the new GenuineSmithfieldVA.com site has been published in test mode; feedback on content was requested. A conversation ensued about a 2020 Facebook presence and highlighted its use to “push” messages as a complement to the static content of the Website.

Randy took for action a first cut design of a Smithfield 2020 Facebook page and the recruiting of a handful of administrators who will have the ability to post content. Randy will advise when the FB page is live for review and announcement.

The development of Wharf Hill was discussed. Conversations with the new owner of 17 Main have focused on the need to stabilize and rehabilitate the building; the owner has stated an intent repair and rent the building and reiterated that he has no interest in selling it.

A broader conversation ensued about the entire area which will be anchored by the brew pub. Lisa and others have had substantive dialog with an urban planning consulting firm and preliminary dialog with Smithfield Foods on development of currently vacant lots. After an iteration of the multiple open issues, an action plan was proposed.

Lisa, Lee and Judy will assemble an inventory of discussions, discoveries and proposals to date. A working group of the 2020 team will meet before the May meeting to assess the as-is and evaluate and inventory the open issues. That first cut vision of the development of Wharf Hill and 2020's specific role in its realization will be discussed at the May meeting.

Team member volunteers for the working group will be confirmed by end of week.

Organization updates / announcements

Chamber: Andy Cripps shared some observations after a few months as the Chamber's CEO, noting 2020's project focus and the inherent value; a need for discussions of long range issues should also factor into our agenda. Andy's primary focus has been to reach out to his current and prior membership to evaluate the Chamber's relevance and value-add services across the County. Russell added that the Chamber has recently launched the Isle of Wight Community Foundation, a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3), organization in support of community programs, education and economic development. (The Chamber is a 501(c)(4) entity.)

Historic Smithfield: John noted that while the \$5000 grant for the façade improvement fund was released with full Board of Directors support, the primary financial challenge for HS remains the capital needs of the 1750 Isle of Wight Courthouse.

County: The recent focus of activities has been on opportunities beyond the Historic District, but Lisa shared some optimism for a significant business opportunity locating in the County.

Historic District businesses: The "basket case" trial of lamppost flowers will be extended for one more year in its limited scope of installations to fully quantify the support costs. Mark will arrange for administrative approval from the Town to extend the trial beyond a year.

Town: Peter reported that the build-out of 117 N. Church Street (Smithfield Winery) is moving forward. Recently approved – with matching funding from Historic Smithfield's Church Street fund – is the construction of a brick path linking the S. Church Street sidewalk with the Station entrance / bridge to Windsor Castle Park. Also on the Town's priority list is working with the County for a resolution to the funding challenge facing operation of the Museum.

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

These meeting notes submitted by Rick Bodson.