

Parksley Downtown Revitalization Project Management Team Meeting Minutes  
December 11, 2017, 2017  
Town Office, Parksley

**Management Team Members Present:**

Cara Burton, ES Public Library  
Dana Bundick, Town Resident  
Ellen Johnson, ES Railway Museum  
Hon. Harris Phillips, Business Owner/Accomack  
County Supervisor  
Hon. Paul Muhly, Accomack County Supervisor  
Tim Valentine, Business Owner  
Wayne Marshall Jr., Interim Mayor

**Other Attendees Present:**

Curt Smith, A-NPDC  
Shannon Alexander, A-NPDC  
Betty Farley, Town Resident  
Donna Phillips, Business Owner  
Dan Matthews, Town Resident  
John C. Parks, Town Council Member  
Kathi McCorkle, Town Resident  
Kerry Allison, ESVA Tourism Commission  
Kay Lewis, Town Resident  
Shirley Johnson, Town Resident

Curt Smith called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. Introductions were made by each attendee. Curt Smith provided a brief summary of the project to date.

**Marketing Strategies: Unique Taglines**

Previously discussed options:

- *More than a Whistle Stop*: There was little enthusiasm from the meeting participants about this option, particularly as it may not be understood by younger people (“millennials”) and the tagline is currently used by another community.
- *Where Victorian Charm Meets Southern Hospitality*: This option was criticized as too long & similar to other Towns/Counties.
- *The Junction of Victorian Charm & Southern Hospitality*: This option was criticized as too long.

None of the previously discussed tagline options were thought to be preferable.

New options discussed:

- Parksley: There’s Only One
- Parksley: The Only One
- Parksley: The One and Only
- Life is better in Parksley
- Livin’ Like You Like it in Parksley
- Close to Everything

Of the six new options discussed, the first one listed (“There’s Only One”) was the most preferable.

**ACTION ITEM (for all participants):** *Pick ONE existing asset that Parksley has that sets it apart from other communities and craft taglines to that specific asset as to bring forward next meeting. Example: create a tagline around historic/cultural assets or tagline focused on the railroad.*

Kerry Allison brought up the untapped resource: Genealogy, particularly as ESVA is the oldest place in the nation. The new library is planning expanding archive for the library cultural center. The Tourism website is being overhauled and each Town (submarket) will have its own landing page. Individual Town taglines will be de-emphasized. Advice to pick the Town's niche, focus, rather than trying to emphasize everything. One example was Louden County tagline of "DC's Wine Country."

Kerry Allison further reported that History, Outdoors, Culinary, Shopping, Arts & Culture are the top 5 things tourist visiting the Eastern Shore are looking for, and Parksley has assets that address all of these tourist desires. Additionally, the Town is safe, another key feature desired by visitors.

To emphasize the historic nature of the Town, discussions were held about compiling historic information about each building/storefront; to have in a brochure, website, and plaques on each building in Town.

### **Community Vision Statement Discussion**

The following is the draft vision statement presented during the meeting:

*Parksley is a historic railroad town conveniently located to water-access and regional attractions on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The walkable town square is lined with unique locally owned shops and restaurants, Victorian homes dot the town's tree-lined streets, and a year-round farmers market and state-of-the-art library and cultural center provide modern conveniences. Parksley's charm and Southern hospitality make it a great place to live, work and play.*

Based on feedback to include reference to the memorials, and improve the order and flow of the statement, staff developed the following options to bring to the next meeting. Participants are encouraged to work on this and bring a version (with the same content, only rearranged appropriately), to the next meeting.

#### *Alternative 1 -*

*Parksley is a historic railroad town conveniently located to water-access and regional attractions on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The walkable town square offers unique locally owned shops and restaurants, memorials, and a year-round farmers market. Victorian homes dot the town's tree-lined streets and a state-of-the art library and cultural center provide modern conveniences and genealogy research activities. Parksley's charm and southern hospitality make it a great place to live, work, and play.*

#### *Alternative 2 -*

*Victorian homes dot the tree-lined streets of this historic railroad town. Parksley is conveniently located to water-access and regional attractions on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The walkable town square offers unique locally owned shops and restaurants, memorials, and a year-round farmers market. The regional state-of-the art library and cultural center provide modern conveniences and genealogy research activities. Parksley's charm and southern hospitality make it a great place to live, work, and play.*

### **Economic Restructuring Plan**

Curt Smith provided a review of economic revitalization outcomes developed during initial planning exercises conducted by the Management Team during spring 2017. It was noted that four priority needs were identified by the Management Team for downtown revitalization:

- Public Safety
- Accessibility
- Aesthetic Qualities (Beautification; Blight removal)
- Natural Hazard Mitigation (stormwater flood reduction)

Town staff provided an update about improvements in public safety that are underway. A Town surveillance system will be installed around memorials, police station and Dunn Ave. businesses, and Town Hall; linked to mobile apps, etc. for Police officers.

Regarding stormwater flooding, it was noted that Accomack County is developing a master plan for for stormwater maintenance.

Curt Smith provided examples of economic restructuring goals developed by similar communities. The group discussed the examples and attempted to identify 3-6 goals for Parksley.

1. Improve & Enhance Infrastructure & Staffing Capacity - could include specific strategies addressing the following:
  - Lodging & Community Gathering Place
  - Historic Preservation & Promotion
  - Stormwater Drainage Repair
  - Aesthetic Qualities (Beautification)
2. Enhance Public Safety & Accessibility (Could be called “Basic Needs”)
3. Develop a Branding and Marketing Strategy (focusing on outward selling of the Town)
4. Business Development (focusing on business inside the Town)

### **Other Matters**

#### *Virginia Main Street Program Update*

Curt reported that the Main Street staff recommended having Town business owners review existing program documents explaining the program prior to a representative visiting the Town for a presentation. Additionally, it was recommended that Parksley meet with the ESVA’s first Virginia Main Street Affiliate, Cape Charles. Curt was looking into organizing a regional presentation, however, Kerry Allison announced that the **Annual Tourism Summit will host the Virginia Main Street representative as keynote speaker**. Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. This needs to be shared with all local business owners.

#### *Town Brochure Updates*

Shirley Johnson and Kay Lewis provided an update and drafts of the brochure that they have been working diligently to compile. The brochure focuses on historic assets and the memorials and at the end lists the 21 merchants in Town and information about buying a brick for the War Memorial.

Cara Burton presented that she has been working with Alan Burns and that the walking tour brochure almost complete.

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm. The next meeting will be held on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm.**