

# **Parksley Downtown Revitalization: Get On Board!**

Parksley Downtown Revitalization Project Management Team Meeting Minutes  
August 2, 2018  
Town Office, Parksley

## **Management Team Members Present:**

Wayne Marshall Jr., Mayor  
Frank Russell, Town Council  
Ellen Johnson, ES Railway Museum  
Paul Muhly, Accomack County Supervisor  
Dana Bundick, Resident

## **Management Team Members Absent:**

Cara Burton, ES Public Library  
Elaine Meil, A-NPDC  
John Aigner, A-NPDC  
Mark Bowden, Accomack County  
Harris Phillips, Business Owner/Acc. Co.  
Supervisor  
Tim Valentine, Business Owner  
Billy Graham, Business Owner

## **Other Attendees Present:**

Letitia Greer, Town of Parksley  
Deborah Russell, Business Owner  
Marilynn Wohlrab, Business Owner  
Dan Matthews, Town Council  
Kathi McKorkle, Resident  
Kellee Blake, Resident  
Mike Shreves, Resident  
Curt Smith, A-NPDC  
Clara Vaughn, A-NPDC

## **The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.**

Curt Smith initiated introductions and followed with a review of the agenda.

## **Minutes of May 8, 2018**

No edits were suggested to the meeting minutes.

## **Staff Update**

### ***Committee Attendance Record –***

The attendance record was presented.

### ***CDBG Planning Grant Schedule Review -***

Curt indicated that the project is on schedule but with much less time available to accommodate any further delays. Emphasis will be placed on completing the following activities before the grant application is completed:

- Finalizing the Façade Improvement Program guidelines and soliciting commitments from as many downtown property owners as possible;
- Finalizing the selection of downtown revitalization projects in order to be able to begin the process of hiring an engineer to conduct preliminary engineering design;
- Develop draft logos for “Parksley: There’s Only One” and “Parksley Downtown Revitalization: Get On Board!”;

- Identify sources of local match and solicit commitments;
- Prepare to hold two public hearings once an engineer is selected and prior to Town Council approving the final projects and budget for inclusion in the grant application; and
- Exploring additional projects and opportunities for inclusion in the grant application that will directly drive business vitality (e.g. establishing converted railcars for small business or overnight lodging use, etc.)

***CDBG Planning Grant Budget Update -***

Parksley and A-NPDC met several weeks ago, at which time they discussed available budget for preliminary design. Design will be capped at \$5,000, with any overages incurred by the Town. Ellen Johnson raised the possibility of university intern aiding in low- or no-cost design, if necessary.

Curt reported that he was assisting the Town to submit a request to Accomack County for permission to offer their contribution to the ES Public Library to count for local match on the CDBG application.

**Economic Restructuring Plan (ERP)**

***Draft Marketing Strategy Report –***

Two draft logos were developed by an anonymous graphic designer willing to support Parksley at no cost. One logo focused on the Town’s “There’s Only One!” tagline and the other was designed for the downtown revitalization project itself and featured the “Get On Board!” tagline. Discussion ensued and response to the logos was generally favorable. It was determined that the emphasis should be placed on creating a downtown revitalization project logo and that the design for the Town logo be altered to feature the “Get On Board!” tagline. It was agreed this and other minor suggestions related to color, etc. be proposed to the graphic designer. Curt will solicit the edits and email the updated logos to the Committee for vote prior to the September meeting.

***Updates on ERP Project Progress –***

The following activities were reported as progress towards implementation of the ERP. These activities will be reported to DHCD to demonstrate that the group is working diligently to implement the ERP:

- Historic Coca Cola street art completed
- Jaxon’s façade painted
- Railroad tracks cleaned and maintained
- Bridal shop named Best Bridal Shop by Virginia Living Magazine
- Town entrance sign re-landscaped
- Art gallery and second façade improvement project in progress
- Blight removal at former grocery store

Furthermore, this Fall:

- Rail car improvements anticipated
- Parksley Festival returns Oct. 6

## Physical Improvement Plan

### ***ESRM Desired Projects Report –***

Following the visioning session during Committee meeting, the following projects were identified:

- Railroad Walkway: Extend brick walkway along the rail tracks to improve walkability through downtown.\*
- Exterior Façade Improvements: ESRM would be eligible to participate in the Façade Improvement Program, although not identified as a blighted property.\*
- Exterior Lighting: Would add new Victorian era-style lighting near ESRM. ESRM was favorable of this idea.\*
- Create Public Gathering Area for Events/Activities: ESRM was not favorable of this idea, which would be eligible under grant program.\*
- Other Pedestrian Improvements at ESRM Grounds\*
- Additional Interpretive Signage\*
- ESRM Website Upgrade\*
- Upgrade tracks
- Upgrade Dining Car for Expanded Use
- Procure authentic locomotive
- Construct Railcar Kits to Expand Business Activity
- Enhancing General Landscaping

**\*Denotes DHCD grant-eligible activities**

ESRM identified its grant-eligible priority projects as:

1. Exterior Façade Improvements
2. Railroad Walkway and General Pedestrian Improvements to Grounds
3. Additional Exterior Lighting

ESRM's priorities for grant-ineligible projects were:

1. Authentic Locomotive
2. Enhance General Landscaping

Paul Muhly said discussions have initiated with Canonic Atlantic regarding acquiring a locomotive for relocation from Cape Charles to Parksley. This would not be eligible under the grant, but associated expenses could be considered match. It was discussed that the locomotive could go to the Railway Museum or to the Town for use in another downtown area. Team members will explore this further.

Ellen Johnson raised the issue of environmental risks associated with leaking of hazardous materials from a locomotive. The potential of draining this material needs to be explored further.

Frank Russell reported that there was a developer with interest in purchasing and constructing a railcar kit(s) in the downtown area for business or lodging use. Discussion ensued and it was decided to revisit the railcar construction and authentic locomotive site design plans during the September Committee meeting.

### ***Façade Improvement Program Discussion-***

Given the grant prioritizes reducing blight, attendees favored trying to get as many properties as possible to move forward with committing to improvements. DHCD recommended that at least roughly 1/3 of town properties (57 total) should participate to be competitive. This could utilize a large amount of available grant funds and may dictate other project aspects.

Curt discussed the option of creating more tiers of “blighted” vs. “non-blighted” properties to create more flexibility in funding options. The Committee determined that the current two-tier classification was sufficient.

Committee Members Frank Russell and Paul Muhly volunteered to support the solicitation of participants into the FIP. Curt indicated that he would work with Frank, Paul, Wayne and Letitia to launch the program with the first step being to finalize blight determinations before reaching out to the blighted property owners to solicit their participation.

**The meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm.**

### **Post-Meeting Action Items**

- Present logo suggestions to graphic designer and present updated alternatives to the Committee for vote via email prior to September meeting.
- Solicit authentic locomotive from Cape Charles
- Finalize Façade Improvement Program guidelines and solicit commitments from as many downtown property owners as possible.
- Management team members visit town businesses door-to-door to encourage support and ensure all are informed of the project.
- Finalize selection of downtown revitalization projects to initiate process of hiring engineer to conduct preliminary engineering design.
- Publish Request for Proposal for preliminary engineering design.
- Arrange and prepare for two public hearings following selection of engineer, prior to Town Council approval of final project and budgets.
- Explore additional projects and opportunities for inclusion in grant application to drive business vitality (eg: converted railcars for small businesses or overnight lodging).
- Identify sources of local match.