

Parksley Downtown Revitalization: Get On Board!

Parksley Downtown Revitalization Project Management Team Meeting Minutes

January 3, 2019

Town Office, Parksley, VA

Management Team Members Present:

Paul Muhly, Accomack County Supervisor
Frank Russell, Town Council
Letitia Grier, Town of Parksley
Harrison Phillips, Business Owner/Acc. Co.
Supervisor

Other Attendees Present:

Dan Matthews, Town Council
Tom Cardaci, Property Owner
John Bowden
Betty Farley
Curt Smith, A-NPDC
Clara Vaughn, A-NPDC

Management Team Members Absent:

Wayne Marshall Jr., Mayor
Cara Burton, ES Public Library
Tim Valentine, Business Owner
Billy Graham, Business Owner
Mark Bowden, Accomack County
Ellen Johnson, ES Railway Museum
Dana Bundick, Resident
Elaine Meil, A-NPDC
John Aigner, A-NPDC

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

Minutes of December 6, 2018

No edits were suggested to the meeting minutes.

Staff Update

Project Management Committee Update—

No update.

Call for Letters of Support—

Smith and Matthews plan to solicit letters of support in the coming weeks.

Community Improvement Grant Next Steps: Public Hearing #2—

The public hearing is tentatively scheduled for March 11, 2019 during the regular Parksley Town Council meeting. The Town of Parksley must approve the finalized plan and grant application prior to the hearing.

Committee Attendance Record—

The attendance record was presented. No edits were suggested.

Action Items

- Request a Letter of Support from the Eastern Shore of Virginia Master Gardeners stating their willingness to plant and maintain the “Four Seasons” alleyway garden.
- Smith will report to Hill that sewer hookup is not necessary for food trucks; and the location of sewer lines and tanks within the alleyways so moving these can be included in cost estimates.
- Smith will request Hill to mock up designs for an open-back stage; for a mural using the “Parksley’s a Paradise” article from the New York Times; for remodeling the existing farmers market to include a more Victorian façade; and to render a stretch of Dunne Avenue including Club Car Café in the mockup façade improvement rendering, as opposed to rendering two separate businesses.
- Smith will inquire from Hill whether a flat-bed railcar can be used as the foundation for a stage, with the roof constructed around it.
- Smith will discuss with Hill the concept of a “love lock” fence or sign in the “Four Seasons” alleyway.
- Smith will update the conceptual drawing maps to reflect Hill’s drawings and changes, including the addition of Utility Bollards with no sewage hookup.

Economic Restructuring Plan (ERP)

Updates on ERP Project Progress –

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

- Muhly informed the committee that owners of the former ABC building plans to apply for the façade improvement program; however, Smith indicated that the building is not eligible due to issues with structural integrity. DHCD does not wish to spend money on façade improvements if there are underlying structural issues.

Physical Improvement Plan

Downtown Revitalization Projects: Continued Development –

David Hill, of Hill Studio Consultants, visited Downtown Parksley on December 21, 2018. Hill reported the Town has a highly competitive project and Smith delivered a presentation on his behalf demonstrating initial work toward the final grant application. Management Team Members were tasked with considering and refining facets of the project, including:

1. Signature Alleyways

- a. **“Harvest Table Alleyway”** – between Club Car Café and Shake Shop
 - This includes a five-foot-wide brick walkway, courtyard with seating for Club Car Café, a chef’s garden for use by Club Car Café and other local businesses, standalone public barbeques, and Downtown street lighting throughout the corridor.

- Management team members repeated the idea of adding a mural to the wall in the alleyway. Smith suggested using the “Parksley’s a Paradise” article from the New York Times, which management team members were favorable of. Smith will request Hill to devise a mock-up drawing of this mural.
- b. “The Four Seasons Alleyway” – beside Russell’s Formal and Bridal
 - This Includes a wooden gateway and arched entrance, four-foot-wide brick walkway, arched hedge, plantings for each season, a new staircase, façade painting, and Downtown street lighting throughout.
 - Management team members were unanimously favorable of this design. There were questions as to which businessowner/individuals would be responsible for maintenance of alleyways, with the suggestion of asking the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners to formally agree to maintain gardens in this alleyway.

2. **Renovated Town Square**

- a. Bandshell Musicians Area - Hill perceived the Town Commons to be the biggest stumbling block impeding flow within the Downtown area. To better this, he added a stage to this area, which includes a redesigned seating area, dance area, grass terraces, combined police and restrooms building, and a pop-up tent area.
 1. Management team members agreed that an open-back stage design would enhance flow to the town. This could allow for a sculpture, “PARKSLEY” letters, or other aesthetic element(s) to be added to the back of the stage. Smith will request a mock-up of such a stage area from Hill.
 2. Management team members also expressed the desire for a stage with a more Victorian appearance to match the Downtown’s aesthetic. Smith will request a mock-up of such a stage from Hill.
 3. Management team members inquired about the amount of parking that would be lost to the stage area. No outstanding concerns remained.
 4. Russell added that an additional, temporary stage could be added to the farmer’s market pavilion, if the Town required.
- b. Food Truck Rodeo Area – Hill suggested a long-term project resulting in an addition to the farmer’s market area. This would include a parking area for food trucks on weekends, during events, etc. and discrete hookups utilizing five Utility Bollards, which would prevent problems with electric hookups that can trip visitors.

Public Stage – Hill altered former conceptual design plans, which utilized the existing farmer’s market space for a stage, to include a public stage within the Town Commons. Management Team Members were overwhelmingly favorable of this design. Smith will request a mockup of this stage including an open back with public art or other aesthetic elements and a Victorian design from Hill.

Authentic Railcar (for small business) – Hill has connections with the Virginia Museum of Transportation, in Roanoke, and has offered to approach the museum to inquire about

the viability of relocating a portion of its rolling stock to Parksley. Matthews will lead the Management Team's efforts to coordinate with the museum on this project.

The "rail mall" concept is to be started as a pilot project proving the viability of a larger venture and eventual expansion. During a brainstorming session, Management Team Members determined the needs and desires to support such a mall, were it to eventually include railcar accommodations:

- **Needs:**

- Somewhere to eat after 8 pm and on Sunday mornings
- Store to purchase toiletries
- Grocery store
- Showers and bathrooms – Need to explore the long-term plan for restrooms in railcar hotels.

- **Wants:**

- Cultural opportunities
- Brewery
- Café
- Jewelry shop

Matthews and Russell plan to approach the Parksley Railway Museum to discuss opportunities for utilizing existing railcars for such business, contingent upon the agreement that railcars would be maintained to a high and authentic standard. Muhly added that Parksley could leverage its relationship with Cape Charles to explore opportunities to promote the Railway Museum.

The Town is awaiting response from Canonic Atlantic Co. regarding whether railcar businesses will be allowed on the existing railroad tracks.

Railcar Kits (for lodging or businesses) – The Management Team is currently exploring options to utilize authentic railcars for businesses.

Informational Kiosk – No update.

Public Outdoor Art – Smith plans to discuss options with Julie Nash. Russell suggested including a "love lock" fence into the Four Seasons Alleyway as a part of Parksley's marketing strategy.

Signature Alleyways – This item is a renamed version of the previous "Upgraded Pedestrian Corridor" and includes two alleyways: one adjacent to Club Car Café and one adjacent to Russell's Formal and Bridal. The "Harvest Table Alleyway" beside Club Car Café includes a five-foot-wide brick walkway, courtyard with seating for Club Car Café, a chef's garden for use by the restaurant and other local businesses, standalone public barbeques, and Downtown street lighting throughout the corridor. Management Team

Members also suggested the addition of a mural to this walkway. The “Four Seasons Alleyway” beside Russell’s Formal and Bridal includes a wooden gateway and arched entrance, four-foot-wide brick path, arched hedges, plantings for each season, a new staircase, façade painting, and Downtown street lighting throughout. Management Team Members plan to contact the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners to inquire about their willingness to maintain the seasonal gardens in this alleyway. Russell suggested incorporating the “love lock” concept into this alleyway.

Build New Sidewalks – Smith is awaiting response from VDOT regarding feasibility of additional sidewalks.

Establish New Crosswalks – Smith will contact VDOT for recommendations.

Wayfinding Signage – The consultant will develop cost estimates based on design examples submitted by the Management Team.

Historic Interpretive Signage – Burton and the Library will work with local experts to develop content. This will be specified in the Library’s Letter of Support.

Upgrade Existing Street Lighting – Management Team Members agreed that the existing lighting style is suited to the Downtown, but expressed the need for stronger poles to capable of supporting signage. Members named upgrades to lighting on both sides of Dunn Avenue as a top priority.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations – A cost estimate is still needed for this item.

Enhance Existing Sidewalks – Smith will discuss costs with VDOT.

New Landscaping – No updates.

Blight Identification & Removal/Remediation Plan Report –

Tom Cardaci’s property, the former Maddox Building on Cook Street, will be added to the list of blighted properties.

Façade Improvement Program –

Eight properties have committed to date to participate in the Façade Improvement Program, including Jaxon’s and Floral Express. Forms have been delivered to the Club Car Café and Eagle’s Nest, and Smith has spoken with Rail and Sail regarding the program.

Several structures on the list of blighted properties include multiple businesses within one building, raising the question of whether these properties are eligible for \$15,000 (one building) or \$30,000 (two buildings), as there should not be two conflicting façade designs on one building. Management Team Members agreed to leave separate

businesses listed as two properties in this case, but combine businesses with vacant upstairs into one property for the purposes of this grant.

Management Team Members selected Club Car Café to be featured in the consultant's mock up façade improvement drawing. Smith will ask if the consultant is willing to draw designs for a stretch of that road, but barring that option, Management Team Members nominated Jaxon's as the second business to be featured in the consultant's mock up façade improvement drawing.

Businesses will be required to commit to participating in the Façade Improvement Program by the end of January.

The consultant will contact each property owner to discuss cost estimates for improvement.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.