

The Smithfield Planning Commission held its regular meeting on Monday, March 11th, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Members present were Mr. Bill Davidson, Vice Chair; Mr. Michael Swecker, Ms. Julia Hillegass, Mr. Larry Odom, Mr. Randy Pack, and Mr. Charles Bryan. Member Ms. Virginia Smith was absent. Staff members present were Mr. William G. Saunders, IV, Planner/GIS Coordinator; Mr. William T. Hopkins, Director of Planning, Engineering, and Public Works. There were four (4) citizens present.

Vice Chair Davidson - I would like to call the meeting of the March 11th, 2013 Smithfield Planning Commission meeting to order. If you would all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chair Davidson – For those of you that would like to remain standing, Mr. Odom will offer a word of prayer.

Mr. Odom – Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to meet again tonight. We asked that you help us to make decisions using your wisdom and guidance for our community. We ask this prayer through your son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Vice Chair Davidson – The first order of business is the Director of Planning, Engineering and Public Works Activity Report.

Director of Planning, Engineering and Public Works – Thank you. I contacted Smithfield Foods test kitchen today and hopefully in the next couple of months all of the landscaping will be completed. True Value is basically the same thing. Last month, there were four or five items on there so we are scaling down a little bit. Both of these involve temporary Certificate of Occupancy that we are trying to finalize. As far as South Church Street Excel Paving was out there today. I expect they will be out there every day for the next week or week and a half until it is finished. The areas where the poles were removed need to be addressed whether it is asphalt that needs to be placed back in the hole or some curb and gutter issues.

Vice Chair Davidson – Thank you. Next we have Upcoming Meetings and Activities. On March 19th the Board of Zoning Appeals has been cancelled. On March 19th at 7:30 p.m. the Board of Historic and Architectural Review will meet. On March 25th and 26th at 4:00 p.m. the Town Council Committee Meetings will be held. On April 2nd

there will be a Town Council meeting at 7:30 p.m. The Planning Commission will meet on April 9th at 7:30 p.m. Next is Public Comments. The public is invited to speak on anything that is not on the agenda tonight. No one signed up. Public comments are closed. Next is Planning Commission Comments. Does anyone on the Commission have anything to say? Next is a Public Hearing - Capital Improvement Plan Review & Recommendation – Town of Smithfield. We need a staff report.

Italicized items have been added to the minutes for clarification.

Director of Planning, Engineering and Public Works – It will be very brief. In your package is a list of all of the items in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)). It starts with FY 2013/2014 through FY 2017/2018 a total of five years. At the last Planning Commission meeting I went over each item. Tonight I would like to point out the amended items to the CIP. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions. The first item is in the General Fund is 1L – Pinewood Heights- Stormwater Management which is a new item. Pinewood Heights has difficulty with the storm water. There are no ditches off the side of the road so we need to create ditches and areas for the storm water to drain to. We call them BMP's. That is actually in the Highway Fund – Item 3G – Pinewood Heights – Stormwater Drainage. That is the right-of-way dealing with the ditches and that is how we will carry the storm water to the retention ponds. That is the only new item in the General Fund. Next we have the General Fund: Public Park Improvements. Item 2C is the Playground Area but there was not an amount there. I discussed it with other staff members and we decided in FY 2014/2015 to add the amount of \$350,000.00. The next item is Item 2D – Maintenance –Outbuildings at Windsor Castle. In the first FY 2013/2014 it is \$100,000.00. We estimated to get the white tenant house closed in with a roof and painted will be a minimum of \$50,000.00. Then on top of that two of the barns would be addressed that year that would be another \$50,000.00. Then in FY 2014/2015 two more barns would be done at \$50,000.00 and each year following. There are eight barns at Windsor Castle that need drastic attention. The last item is Item 2G – Community Garden. That was shifted over three years to FY 2015/2016 at \$25,000.00. I received that estimate from Mr. Lawrence Pitt. The next section is the Highway Fund. Item 3F is Great Springs Road – Sidewalk from Main Street to Quail Street for \$100,000.00 in FY 2014/2015. There are no

sidewalks on either side of the road in that section. You will notice that it is listed in bold text. The description on page two explains that it is for a Virginia Department of Transportation revenue sharing project. That means that it will be \$50,000.00 from the town and \$50,000.00 from VDOT. This is very similar to how we handled the turn lane on John Rolfe Drive. Are there any questions? The next section is under the Water Fund which is Item 4H – Water Treatment Plant – Concentrate Pump for \$80,000.00 in FY 2014/2015. It is a pump that is needed at the Reverse Osmosis Plant. There are two existing ones but if they both fail there will not be any water available to public. We want to make sure that there is a pump on standby if needed.

Vice Chair Davidson - This is a back-up pump?

Director of Planning, Engineering and Public Works – Yes, Sir. It will actually be made of stainless steel. That is all of the changes that we have made.

Vice Chair Davidson – Are there any questions? Next is a Public Hearing. I will open the public hearing. We have four people signed up to speak. We will start with Mayor Carter Williams.

Mayor Williams – Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I am going to give you a map handout. The county owns eighty acres on Great Springs Road that they plan to put the Rescue Squad facility on. Hope Presbyterian Church owns eight acres which they are going to build a church there. There was a person in town that I was dealing with on another matter and he said that he wanted to do something for the Town of Smithfield only and not the county. He said that the town needed some soccer fields. I told him that we had plenty of soccer fields at Nike Park. What we need is ball fields. We have Beale Park that is full of children and too many in there to begin with. He asked if we had anywhere to put it. I was thinking about Windsor Castle Park. If you remember, about two or three years ago, Mr. Joe Luter III came to us and said that he would like to build some ball fields at Windsor Castle Park. We were bombarded by citizens that said that they did not want ball fields at Windsor Castle. They felt it is a passive park. The citizens felt it is too close in proximity to everything else around town and a lot of other reasons. Mr. Luter got the word that we did not really want the ball fields at Windsor Castle Park so he backed away. When this person came to me and wanted to do something I immediately thought about that again and decided not to

handle this by myself. I had Mr. Andrew Gregory go to work creating a drawing of a ball field that would go close to the kayak launch. It was really a smaller version of this drawing. In the meantime, we came up with the bright idea of putting it behind the new Rescue Squad building and asked Isle of Wight County to let the town annex this piece of property. They would give us this piece of property for the ball field and it would be a win, win situation for everyone. I went back to the person to explain it to him. He asked us to bring him a picture of it. Mr. Gregory, Mr. Saunders, and Mr. Russell Parrish, who is the architect, walked over the whole piece of property. We wanted to put it over here in this field but the County did not want us to do that. Mr. Gregory and I went to the Isle of Wight Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting and told them that we wanted that field but they were not privy to us having it. The County decided they would give the town the wooded area over here. When Mr. Gregory, Mr. Saunders, and Mr. Parrish walked the wooded area they found it was a better fit for the ball field. We have woods around it. There is a walking trail around it so when the boys and girls are playing ball then the other family members can walk on the trails. These are batting cages over here. There are picnic shelters over here. This is a handicapped field over here. Over here is a T-Ball field. You will see two of them that are white. We figured that we only had enough money to do all of them except those two. We are going to hold off on that and I will get to that a little bit later. You see right here that the architect drew in a statue. Mr. Gregory and I were thinking 1.2 million when we started with all of this except these two fields here. I went back to the person and showed it to him. I did not hear anything for a couple of weeks then Mr. Maynard Gwaltney got involved. Mr. Larry Pope, CEO of Smithfield Foods and Smithfield Foods are going to donate \$800,000.00 for the ball field. Mr. Pope said that you are leaving these two fields out and I want to see the whole complex done at one time. I told him that we just did not have that much money. He suggested, after two or three different conversations he said you get the Town of Smithfield to put up \$200,000.00, the County to put up \$200,000.00, and the Smithfield Recreation Association to sell Beale Park and put the money towards the new park and I will give you \$800,000.00. I ask about the two fields and he said to make it a million. We have a million coming from him if it all goes through. Our next step is to put this in our CIP. Of course, Town Council will have to have a public hearing. We are

going to be annexing a piece of property. We have to have everyone on board for this.

Mr. Gregory and I next step on the 21st, is to get representatives from the Smithfield Recreation Association and the county on board with the idea. We are doing some homework on that but we have to present it to them. They will have to help us with \$200,000.00 plus give us this land and let us annex it. We get this on the CIP and have the Planning Commission to bless it.

Mr. Gregory – A couple of years ago Council did a Strategic Planning Session and outlined several goals of what we wanted to accomplish whether it was this Council's term or whether it would be council that came after us. One of those was to enhance the recreational opportunities within the town limits. Obviously, I think everyone would agree, for a million dollars to appear essentially out of nowhere to basically jump start that effort is amazing. As most of us are well aware, the county and the town by ourselves are not in a financial position to be able put 1.2 or 1.5 million or even \$600,000.00 towards a project like that. Once the idea of getting a piece of property donated to the town, a million dollars of construction money, and all the dirt donated that we need in order to help construct the facility those are huge items that people are already supporting. We have a couple of representatives from the Smithfield Recreation Association that will come up and talk about the state's needs that are out there, how many kids they service, and the difference that this would not only make for them but also for the town and county. There is an economic impact piece to this. If any of you have ever travelled around to any of these types of facilities on weekends you can bring in twelve and sometimes as many as twenty four teams for tournaments along with all the parents and grandparents that come with them. You can have as many as three to four hundred people at a time coming to Smithfield eating and spending Saturday and Sunday nights for the tournaments. There is an economic impact to this as well that we really have not gotten into. The next speaker is Mr. Kris Kennedy, who is the current President of the Smithfield Recreation Association. We also have Mr. Danny Hughes, who is the outgoing President and knows a lot of the history. Over the last decade Mr. Hughes has been trying to make something like this happen they just did not have the financial resources to be able to make it happen.

Mr. Danny Hughes – Good evening. I am Danny Hughes. I live at 20648 River's Bend, Smithfield, over in Gatling Point. I appreciate you allowing us to come and speak to you tonight. As Mr. Gregory mentioned, I am the past President of Smithfield Recreation and I am still involved in the role of President Emeritus. I have a vested interest in this baseball field, our organization, and more importantly the kids in this community. I have been a baseball coach for over fifteen years. I have coached Pop Warner football. The kids in this community are very important to me. This is a dream and a vision that I have had for a number of years. I was part of the process involving the Windsor Castle project that unfortunately did not come to fruition. These opportunities come along once in a lifetime. We are fortunate that it came twice in a lifetime. This may very well be our last go at it. It is not too often in a small town or anywhere that somebody is willing to donate a million dollars for the benefit of our community and more importantly our kids. I will share with you some of the facts about Beale Park. Currently we have registered roughly three hundred and thirty boys and girls to play baseball and softball. In prior years, we have had as many as four hundred. We have also had as little as two hundred and fifty. The numbers have fluctuated through the years for a number of reasons a lot of them due to cost, deterioration of the facilities, and maybe because families feel that there are better opportunities for their children with nicer or safer fields. We are happy to say through our efforts over the last five or six years we have put a lot of time and effort into bringing Beale Park up to par to the best of our ability by cleaning, painting and fixing it up. Our numbers have been on the rise. Even this year in these economic times our numbers are up over ten percent this year. There is a great need and a great desire for people to have their kids participate in baseball and softball. Our facility is approaching fifty years old. The Beale family was kind enough to donate it to us many, many years ago. It has been used in the past for little league football and today it is used for baseball. We have had fences blown down in storms that had to be rebuilt. We have had severe drainage issues that we continue to deal with even today. Any money that we are able to raise through our own efforts is poured back into the facility. It is becoming difficult and nearly impossible to keep our fee structure where it is. It is already at the high end when you look at other facilities that do not have the problems that we have. We do not want to pass the cost

onto the parents to keep up with the drainage and overhead at Beale Park. We have three fields right now and a practice field that is at max usage. In the past we have used the library field next to the YMCA which we do utilize but that is limited to the younger kids T-Ball players. There is no lights out there so our use out there is very limited. We have depended heavily on the use of the fields at Nike Park. They have been very generous in the past but we are getting squeezed out because adult softball, Frisbee football, and kickball. The need has never been greater than now. I am really imploring you to really give this the consideration that it deserves. We really need your support. I thank you for your time. I will let Mr. Kennedy say a few words.

Mr. Kris Kennedy – My name is Kris Kennedy. I live at 11061 Whitehouse Road in Smithfield. I am the current President of Smithfield Recreation. I have five children that have played at Smithfield Recreation Association. There are a lot of people that have played there at some point. It is costing a significant amount of money every year just to maintain it. There is a significant drainage and erosion issues there. Just that alone to fix is going to cost in the neighborhood of \$500,000.00. We haul dirt in every year to the tune of \$10,000.00 to \$15,000.00 to replace dirt that has washed away at the facility. We currently have three hundred and thirty five children signed up. We had to tell folks that we do not have the room to hold anymore games. In the past we have always held a fourteen game schedule. This year we are only going to be able to find time for a thirteen game schedule just because of field time with the number of teams that we have. We do have more time on the bigger fields. A lot of real small kids are coming back into the organization. It is really sad to have to tell a five, six, or seven year old that they cannot play baseball this year because we do not have room or they signed up late. The kids of Smithfield deserve to play in a state of the art facility that is being proposed right here. The kids put in a lot of time and effort into baseball. It is the feeder program for the high school system. All of the high school kids played baseball over at SRA. We are losing some of the better talent at SRA just because of the conditions of the field. They are going off and playing travel ball which impacts the experience for the children that are not travel ball baseball players. The better the competition is on the field the more you learn as a child playing with better players on the field. There is a dire need for this. We are hoping there is something that can be

done to make this happen. We are all on board and willing to do whatever is necessary.

Thank you very much.

Vice Chair Davidson – Thank you.

Mr. Gregory – I want to draw special attention to the challenger field which is the smaller field towards the front of the property that Mayor Williams mentioned. This is one of a kind field I believe in the Hampton Roads area. There is only one other one like it. It is completely Astroturf which makes it completely accessible for kids with disabilities whether they use walkers, wheel chairs, or canes. There are no tripping hazards because it is a flat surface. It would make Smithfield a destination for champion league or a challenger league for kids with disabilities. We put it at the front of the property so it will be the first thing you see when you come in. It is the highlight. We did not hide it in the back. We want to celebrate that and I know that Smithfield Recreation is also excited about that opportunity. We are requesting the Planning Commission to recommend approval to Council to add a line item to the CIP for the \$200,000.00 commitment starting in FY 2013/2014. We would spread the commitment out over eight years so the Town of Smithfield commitment would be \$25,000.00 per year. This is very similar to what we have done with other organizations like the YMCA or other items that we have contributed to. We are going to continue to work with the Ms. Minga, Town Treasurer to make sure that we are approaching that in the best way possible. The Town Council will visit that at a later date as well after your consideration. I appreciate your time tonight. Thanks for hearing everyone out. Are there any questions? Thank you.

Vice Chair Davidson – I also coached all the way from T-ball to the majors. I also did some traveling teams. We never had facilities this nice. For a town the size of Smithfield to get a million dollars dropped into their laps is sort of a no brainer to turn that down. Are there any questions?

Ms. Hillegass – I played ball for twenty five years. This is just incredible. I was wondering what the time frame would be in terms of getting property agreements? When would you break ground for the base ball field?

Mr. Gregory – That is a great question. Mayor Williams and I have had two meetings with the Isle of Wight County Building and Grounds Committee. We have

spoken with every single member of the Board of Supervisors either collectively or individually on at least the boundary line adjustment that would be required to have this in the Town of Smithfield. Mr. Pope was very adamant that he wants the ball field to be in the town limits. He knows that even if it is in the town that it will benefit the county as a whole that was a very minor issue and so far there has not been any disagreement on accomplishing that task so far. We have been down this path two or three times before and Smithfield Recreation can attest to this. We are going to be deliberate. We are going to be patient. We are not going to count any chickens before they are hatched. We are going to do what is in the best interest for the town, the organization, and the kids. Are there any other questions?

Mr. Swecker - If you go by Beale Park in the summer time during the week or weekends you can tell that the park has outgrown the kids. Those gentlemen volunteer their time. They should be commended for all the hours that they put into this. Mayor Williams and Mr. Gregory should be commended also for their time and the drawing that they brought to us today. This is not only going to benefit us today but also benefit generations to come. The revenue that is going to come into the town on the weekends with tournament ball and with someone giving us a million dollars, that is hard to turn down. There is just no way. It is a good asset for the county too. The county will benefit from it.

Mr. Gregory – Safety is always first and foremost. Beale Park barely has any room to park so you worry about kids crossing the street and balls going in the road. There are a number of hazards there but fortunately they have dealt with it very well. We have not had any incidents but it only takes one time then it becomes a major issue. The location of the new ball field there will be no concerns about foul balls hitting the road or parking issues. You will hear jokes from people about Beale Park fields being so close together that anytime somebody hits a foul ball the whole crowd yells “heads up”. You have to be on alert all the time because a ball could hit you. You have to be very careful. We are trying to address all of those concerns. Thank you very much.

Vice Chair Davidson – Are there any other questions?

Mr. Bryan – The \$350,000.00 in FY 2014/2015 for the play area is just a place holder or does this involve funding from this one million dollar donation?

Director of Planning, Engineering and Public Works – No sir. This is a totally separate item.

Ms. Hillegass – That is for a play area at Windsor Castle Park. It is an integrated landscape play area from what I understand.

Mr. Pack – At Council level we have discussed this a little but nothing official. The feeling amongst Council is in support of this. We have not done any resolutions or motions to pass this yet but we are talking about it in committee. The feeling of Council is unanimous support of this project.

Vice Chair Davidson – What do we have to do to add this as a line item? We are just making a recommendation to council anyway as I understand it.

Ms. Hillegass – Mr. Chairman, I will make a motion to recommend to Council to add this as a line item as requested for \$25,000.00 per year for eight years to get this project done.

Mr. Odom – Second

Vice Chair Davidson – A motion has been made a properly seconded that we recommend to Council to add line item 2-H under the General Fund – Public Park Improvements. All in favor signify by saying aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, six members were present. Mr. Bryan voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Odom voted aye, Mr. Pack voted aye, Vice Chair Davidson voted aye and Mr. Swecker voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Davidson – I will close the public hearing at this time. We will consider the CIP as it has been amended. I would entertain a motion to recommend to Town Council to approve the amended CIP.

Ms. Hillegass – So moved.

Mr. Pack – Second.

Vice Chair Davidson – A motion has been made and properly seconded that we recommend to Town Council to approve the amended CIP. All in favor signify by saying aye, opposed say nay.

On call for the vote, six members were present. Mr. Bryan voted aye, Ms. Hillegass voted aye, Mr. Odom voted aye, Mr. Pack voted aye, Vice Chair Davidson

voted aye and Mr. Swecker voted aye. There were no votes against the motion. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Davidson – The Town Attorney is not here so we can not approve the minutes.

Director of Planning, Engineering and Public Works – That is correct.

Vice Chair Davidson – Is there any further business? The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Bill Davidson
Vice Chair

William T. Hopkins, III
Director of Planning, Engineering, and
Public Works