

Beersheba Springs Historical Society
Membership Meeting
Minutes
June 22, 2019
4:00pm
Grace Chapel

- I. Sam Baggett presided over the meeting in John Adams' absence. He began the meeting by asking for introductions of all in attendance (see attendance list at end of this document).
- II. Sam then passed out a schedule of events in Beersheba Springs for the 4th of July weekend, including a new Art Sale on July 5 to benefit the Clinic.
- III. Sam also passed out a detailed five-page narrative regarding plans for the Stone Door Annex (formerly the Shady Valley Nursery). The State of Tennessee has a new State Park Commissioner, a new head of TDEC, and new legislators so the park Annex plans have been delayed. The Tennessee legislature did not allocate money this year for the Annex but unallocated funds are available if the Commissioners decide to focus on this project. Additionally, it was noted that the Park has not yet acquired the Fults Tract.

Links to the documents distributed by Sam:

<http://BeershebaSpringsHistoricalSociety.org/files/2019/stonedooraddition-phaseoneconcept-narrative-june2019.pdf>

<http://BeershebaSpringsHistoricalSociety.org/files/2019/stonedooraddition-phaseoneconcept-plan-june2019.pdf>

- IV. Dylan Rivera, a University of Tennessee Chattanooga student and intern with the Southeast Tennessee Development District state agency (<http://www.sedev.org>), was then introduced. He began by asking attendees to write down on sticky notes the "Attributes" of Beersheba Springs, and any "Defining Words" that the group associates with the town (see list at the end of this document). He then presented slides on the "Placemaking" process which is an initiative of the Urban Land Institute. Placemaking is a holistic approach that involves listening to the needs of residents to create a shared vision for the future of the community. Placemaking evaluates 1) Access & Linkages, 2) Comfort & Image, 3) Uses & Activities, and 4) Sociability (connection between residents, and between residents and tourists).

Dylan then shared pictures of Copperhill, TN, where the University of Georgia has been working on improvements/placemaking. Copperhill updated its welcome sign and added plantings. Dylan also showed pictures of Caysville, GA, with additional flower planters and an enormous painted map to direct visitors to the best attractions in Caysville. Next, the attendees reviewed pictures of Chattanooga, TN, after improvements which included smaller commercial signs, larger sidewalks, pressure washing, new paint on buildings, consistent facades on commercial buildings, and a uniform feel.

Dylan is currently working with Tracy City, TN, on a vision statement and future plans for improvements and design changes. Tracy City received grants from the State of Tennessee for downtown revitalization and beautification due to the Mountain Goat Trail and Fiery Gizzard tourism. Dylan suggested that the state likes to give grants to Grundy County.

Next, Dylan presented information about the “Pennsylvania Wilds,” thirteen counties in northern rural Pennsylvania, who were first to create a placemaking strategy, and which has experienced significant increased economic growth due to the program.

Link to additional material on “Pennsylvania Wilds” (PAWS):

http://BeershebaSpringsHistoricalSociety.org/files/2019/PAWS_email_20190602.htm

Additional featured cities during the program were: 1). Idaho Springs, CO (old gold rush town, mining community) off I-70 which didn't attract many I-70 travelers initially. 2). Pittman Center, TN (outside Gatlinburg, TN) which wanted to encourage quality development different than Gatlinburg, and focused on family-friendly outdoor activities. Dylan suggested that Beersheba Springs is similar to Pittman Center. 3). Copper Basin, TN (historic mining town).

Steps for a Placemaking Process:

- 1). Vision Statement creation
- 2). Development of Branding (logo, taglines, images, collateral items with images offered for sale)
- 3). Creation of a Design Guide (see the Pennsylvania Wilds design guide on the Internet for reference)

Dylan encouraged Beersheba to begin by using the Attributes and Defining Words that were generated at the meeting to create a Vision Statement. It was suggested at the meeting that Glenn Jennings, Mayor of Beersheba, and the Beersheba City Council, could lead this process. The good news was shared that Beersheba Springs just received a \$25,000 grant to redo the basketball court at the Community Center.

Dylan explained that the Southeast Tennessee Development District could lead the community meetings to write the grants, and create the scope of the peacemaking project, etc.

Attendees then discussed some immediate improvements they would like to see made including 1) better town entrance signs, 2) Stone Door State Park signage on the road to McMinnville, 3) improvements to the small park on Hwy 56 at Stone Door Road (possibly including a map of key locations to visit in Beersheba), 4) trash cleanup projects for the roads, and 5) access to dining establishments.

Anthony mentioned that Beersheba might want to solidify its identity before the Stone Door Park Annex construction happens so that the look/feel won't be dictated by the state and perhaps become generic state signage.

Dylan announced that Chattanooga is hosting the National Placemaking Conference in October, 2019.

V. The meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm.

List of Attributes compiled by meeting attendees:

South Cumberland State Park
Savage Gulf
Stone Door
The Clinic
Native American history
Wildlife
History
The Community Center

List of Defining Words compiled by meeting attendees:

History
Local Activities/Tourist Assets
Community
Friendly

Meeting Attendance:

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Prepared by Elizabeth Gerken, secretary.
Links to online material added by John Adams.