REIMAGINE CHATHAM CELEBRATES 2024 MILESTONES AND OUTLINES ITS EXCITING PATH FOR 2025

For Immediate Release

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Chatham, VA – January 14, 2025: Reimagine Chatham, a local group created to identify opportunities and address challenges in the area, is proud to celebrate a year of progress and collaboration as the group moves into the next phase of growth and renewal for the community. Since completing the Growth and Renewal Strategic Plan in October, efforts have turned toward Phase 2: implementing the outstanding, forward-thinking recommendations from this community-driven process.

Leading this phase is River District Consulting Group (RDCG), a Chatham-based firm, with John Harris serving as project manager. As a member of the RDCG team, John brings both professional expertise and a deep personal connection to the area. A long-time resident, John is actively involved in civic initiatives and community volunteer work, making him uniquely qualified to guide this effort.

2024 Accomplishments
This year marked several significant achievements for Reimagine Chatham:

- **Completing the Strategic Plan**: The Growth and Renewal Strategic Plan reflects input from over 450 survey respondents, focus groups, and stakeholders, creating a shared vision for Chatham and the surrounding areas.
- **Securing Grant Funding**: A $146,450 grant from a local Trust was awarded in November, enabling the launch of several high-priority projects. These projects include:

- **Feasibility Study for a Walking Trail**: This study will explore options for a designated walking trail, promoting outdoor recreation and connectivity across the region.
- **Town Branding Initiative**: Work has begun to develop a cohesive and recognizable “brand” for the area to enhance marketing and public relations efforts, fostering economic growth and community pride.
- **Beautification and Infrastructure Improvements:** Projects include enhancements at Silas Moore Park and Harris Field, cleanup and beautification of the Highway 57 West entry point, and landscaping improvements. At the January 13, 2025 Town Council meeting, Council approved Reimagine Chatham moving forward with Construction of a Pickleball Court at Harris Field. The project will be funded entirely through the grant at no cost to the Town.
- **Historic District Revisions:** Pending the results of a feasibility study, plans are underway to revise and expand Chatham’s historic district, providing additional opportunities for preservation and economic incentives. At their January meeting, Town Council approved sponsoring the application for preliminary consideration to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to explore the expansion of the Town’s Historic District. This initial exploration phase comes at no cost to the Town.

Meet the Steering Committee
The implementation phase is being guided by a talented and dedicated team of local leaders:

- **Consultant Project Manager**: John Harris, River District Consulting Project Manager.
- **Members**:
  - Janet Bishop, Town of Chatham
  - Nick Morris, Town Manager, Town of Chatham
  - Phil Mauger, Chatham Rotary Club and local business owner
  - Richard Camp, Chatham Rotary Foundation
  - Joe Rogers, Chatham Rotary Foundation
  - Kathy Ramsey, Chatham First and NAACP
  - Frank Fox, Chatham First
  - Delilah White, Executive Director of Off Season and Owner/Manager of Ry's Pies
  - Eric Peterson, President, Hargrave Military Academy
  - Sara Stephenson, Rector, Chatham Hall
  - David Mitchell, Bridge Web Solutions

The Chatham Rotary Foundation serves as the grant recipient and has fiduciary responsibility for the awarded funding.

Looking Ahead to 2025
Residents across Chatham and the surrounding areas can expect to see tangible progress on these initiatives starting early in 2025. The projects funded by the recent grant are slated for completion by September 2025, with work focused on enhancing the region's infrastructure, amenities, and overall appeal.

Reimagine Chatham remains committed to transparency and community involvement. To stay informed about ongoing progress, residents can visit ReimagineChatham.org to sign up for updates and explore detailed project information, including the project history and evolution. Together, we are creating a stronger, more vibrant community.

About Reimagine Chatham
Reimagine Chatham focuses on the Town of Chatham and the surrounding area, spanning from the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex to the Tightsqueeze community. This initiative brings together civic groups, local businesses, service organizations, and representatives from the Town to identify opportunities and address challenges across this vibrant region.

Contact the Reimagine Chatham Steering Committee
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ReimagineChatham.org