



BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
3940 PENN AVENUE
SINKING SPRING, PA 19608
(T) 610-678-4903 (F) 610-678-5802
rshade@sinkingsspringboro.org
www.boss2020.org



SINKING SPRING BOROUGH
BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION STEERING COMMITTEE
BUSINESS & COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

MEETING MINUTES
MAY 21, 2015

Call to Order

Charles Coleman (President) called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Bernie Campbell (VP-ED), Dave Meas (Secretary/Treasurer-ED), Brian Hoffa (SSB Council), Lisa Gantner (SSB Council), Sam Loth (CDS) and Bob Ludgate (LEC).

Guests: Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment), David Halliday (Village Centre Properties Developer), Pat & Susan Sickafus (CBD Property Owners), Audree Mooney, Richard & Shelley Chelius and William Falter (Residents of Krick Avenue), William Jewell (3866 Penn Avenue) and Scott & Brenda Steinhauer (Residents of Shillington Road).

Note: ED-Economic, D-Design, P-Promotion.

Public Comments

- Chuck Coleman addressed the resident visitors. He explained that those residents whose properties will be affected by the Phase 2 reconstruction of the Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing intersection in 2016 have received notices from the Berks County Redevelopment Authority.
- Bob Ludgate explained why the BOSS 2020 Revitalization Plan has been developed. He said that the two major intersections (Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing) and (Penn/Shillington/Mull) need to be reconstructed in a traditional alignment (squared off at 90 degree angles) and a new through road from Columbia to Shillington Road needs to be built for several reasons:
 - > New intersections will reduce worsening traffic congestion on Penn Avenue and will allow commercial truck traffic to negotiate the intersections with far less delays.
 - > Squaring off the intersections creates new 'rectangular' land parcels which are much more desirable for development. This will attract developers to Sinking Spring's CBD.
 - > The new through street will serve as a "Main Street" in downtown Sinking Spring that will attract new mixed use development including retail/professional, commercial and residential in the CBD.
 - > The Borough will receive fresh new tax revenue from commercial development thereby reducing the pressure to increase residential tax millage rates.
- Mr. William Jewell, resident owner of 3866 Penn Avenue asked about the status of properties along Penn Avenue. Mr. Ludgate said that, at this time there are no plans that would affect south side Penn Avenue properties within the zone (Shillington Road to Columbia Avenue).
- Mrs. Shelley Chelius, resident owner of 25 Krick Avenue stated that they have been residents for 50 years and don't know whether to improve their property because the revitalization project could identify their structure for removal at any time.

- Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment) responded that all property owners within the redevelopment zone can make improvements if they wish. Any increase in value as a result will be reflected in the appraised value of the property in the future should the structure be identified for removal.
- Brian Hoffa said that the Borough Council has been briefed on the Federal Regulations for 'property takings' as a result of new roadways and infrastructure and that he understands that property owners and tenants as well receive significant benefits that would otherwise not be available to owners who sell traditionally on the open market.
- William Faulter, resident owner of 18 Krick Avenue said that he has served on Sinking Spring Borough Council in the past and that his recommendation to current members is that they make an effort to be more forthcoming with information that affects property owners, especially within the revitalization zone. He pointed out that when Borough Council goes into 'Executive Session' during meetings, there is a general inclination among the public that Council is unwilling to be forthright. He also added that the Borough of Sinking Spring has, as far as he knows, the second highest tax millage rate in Berks County only just behind Mt. Penn.
- Bernie Campbell said that if we are able to locate more commercial businesses in the Borough, we have a better opportunity to contain residential tax rates and that this is the main reason for revitalization. Mr. Faulter suggested that the Borough may need to merge with a neighboring municipality because tax rates may become unsustainable. Mr. Campbell suggested that he would expect taxes to rise and services to fall if a merge were to occur.
- Dave Meas said that although we can't predict the future, we can still learn the lessons of inaction by observing the results in the City of Reading. He said that the Spring Market development at Penn & Shillington is a direct result of the Borough's Revitalization Plan.
- No other public comments were made. Chuck Coleman (BOSS President) thanked the guests for their attendance and comments and invited them and others back at any time.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Bernie Campbell to approve the Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2015. **Second by Dave Meas.** Motion passed.

Dave Halliday, Developer - Village Centre Properties

- Mr. Halliday said he has 35 years experience in commercial construction and has spent the past 15 years as a developer of historic renovations in traditional downtowns. He added that his wife is an architect who specializes in historic properties. He has completed signature projects in Souderton and Quakertown. He said that his analysis of Sinking Spring revealed that its position geographically is excellent and that the demographics and traffic counts indicate a high profile for destination businesses. He said that the analysis also shows that there is a large gap (deficiency) in the Borough for full-service restaurant services and gaps in other goods and services.
- Mr. Halliday said that he is not a big enough developer to take on the entire project alone and that he could probably 'adopt' a two-block stretch of the project as proposed. He said that there are a few other developers that he works in cooperation with that might be interested in the Sinking Spring project and that he intends to meet with about the project.
- Mr. Halliday believes that in order to successfully complete the project as proposed by BOSS 2020, there will be a need for a consortium of several developers and existing property owners. He said that he would want to access the State's RCAP Program in order to guarantee the funding required in addition to other loans, grants and cooperation. He mentioned the LERTA and TIF Programs and that a 'loan to value' of at least 62% for financing would be needed by his company. He suggested that commercial loans would likely be available at 4-5% interest with a term of 25 years.
- Mr. Halliday asked about the historic aspect of properties within the CBD. Mr. Campbell said that we will put Paul Miller (Resident Historian) in contact with him.
- Pat Garrett (Sickafus) said that he will be very interested in meeting with Mr. Halliday and any other developers/planners that he can cooperate with. Mr. Garrett owns almost 50% of the 20+ acres within the revitalization zone.
- Finally, Mr. Halliday said that four things are required for successful development of this nature:

> A Consumer Market > A Demand for Products and Services > Local Municipal Support > Infrastructure with the Capacity for Development.

Approval of Treasurer's Report

- Dave Meas said that as of April 30, 2015 there is a balance of \$2,851.07 in the General Fund.
- There are four outstanding invoices for Restaurant Placemat Advertising. He has received a check not yet deposited for \$90. He will speak with Lucille about the final amounts due.
- Sam Loth reminded the Committee to reimburse Lisa Gantner for her costs to handle the Borough's two large planters. Lisa will provide invoices.
- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to approve the Treasurer's Report through April 30th. **Second by Brian Hoffa.** Motion passed.

Revitalization Plan - Phase 2: Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing Intersection Realignment

- Bob Ludgate reported that PennDOT still needs to approve final engineering plans for the Phase 2 construction project. He said that all planning and agreements with PennDOT remain intact. The Berks Redevelopment Authority is proceeding with land acquisition and Borough Council is proceeding with the final financing plans. PennDOT has not officially announced project dates for their Penn Avenue "Betterment" Project.
- A Field View meeting with PennDOT personnel and local project representatives is scheduled for Friday, June 12th at 1:30 PM in Sinking Spring Borough Hall.

Revitalization Plan - Phase 3: New Retail Street

- Sam Loth reported that Borough Council has approved Ludgate Engineering's developing a preliminary budget to complete Phase 3. The Borough approved the budget work at its April 22nd Workshop Meeting. LEC has completed the initial preliminary budget cost of approximately \$9.5 Million Dollars. Sam needs accurate numbers in order to apply for the 2015 Round of the Multimodal Transportation Fund (MTF) Grant Program. The application window is from April 1, 2015 through July 31, 2015.
- Mr. Loth asked the BOSS Committee for a Motion to request permission from Borough Council to begin working on a MTF Grant application. He said that we will need a formal Resolution from Council no later than its July 2, 2015 Meeting. This Resolution must include a formal grant amount request. The Borough must acknowledge in the Resolution that they will fund the 30% of the total project cost 'match' required in the application.
- Bernie Campbell asked what Sam thought the grant amount will be. Sam responded that it will be about \$1.5 Million and that the local match for the \$3.5 Million project would be around \$1 Million Dollars.
- Sam said he is not asking for a Resolution at this time but a simple Motion from Council to proceed with the application. In any event, Council always has the right to reject any grant award at any time leading up to actually signing a contract with the State.
- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to have BOSS 2020 request a Motion from Borough Council approving beginning an application on behalf of the Borough to the 2015 DCED-CFA Round of funding for the Multimodal Transportation Fund Grant Program. **Second by Dave Meas.** Motion Passed. *Sam Loth will draw up a draft Memorandum to Borough Council to be introduced by Brian Hoffa at the May 27, 2015 Council Workshop Meeting.*

Revitalization Plan - Phase 3: Outside Funding

- In recent months some commercial property owners located in the Columbia Avenue/Mountain Home Road area have signaled their interest in working with the Borough and BOSS 2020 to support and aide the new retail street's construction. This is very encouraging however there is much to be determined at this juncture.
- The BOSS 2020 Committee agrees unanimously that the retail street should be constructed over one continuous period, perhaps in segments but NOT in phases that would leave the new street disconnected and unusable.
- Borough Council has tasked BOSS with assembling the funding for Phase 3. Therefore, the BOSS Committee has been working with the office of Senator David Argall who has said that

he will organize a meeting between Mountain Home Road business/property owners (especially the oil and gas refineries) along with BOSS Committee and Council Economic Development Committee members to review and discuss ways for the parties to cooperate.

- Linda Fetter, the Senator's Administrative staff member has spoken with Mr. Loth and has asked for a 'draft' letter to be drawn up that the Senator can use to communicate with the Oil & Gas Companies and others. He has also asked BOSS to provide several dates and times for the proposed meeting. Sam requests permission to draft the letter and propose dates for the meeting.
- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to approve Sam Loth's drafting a letter to Oil & Gas Companies on behalf of Senator David Argall. **Second by Dave Meas.** Motion Passed.

Borough Council/BOSS 2020 Market/Development Study/Report

- The Gulotta Group will visit Sinking Spring on Thursday, May 28th to meet with BOSS members and Council Economic Committee members then tour the revitalization site area. A question was raised by Regina Shade about funding the cost of the proposed study/report.
- Sam Loth requests approval to contact DCED about the Keystone Community Program's "Planning Grant" program which could yield up to \$25,000 for the study/report. There is a dollar for dollar match required by the Borough.
- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to approve Sam's contacting DCED about the grant program. **Second by Dave Meas.** Motion Passed.

BOSS Facade Improvement Program

- Ruth Weber, property owner at 4306 Penn Avenue has applied for reimbursement funding to paint her home at Penn & Ralph Avenues. Two estimates have been received. One is for \$6,000 and the other is for \$6,500. Sam requests approval to proceed with either vendor for Mrs. Weber.
- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to approve the Facade application for either of the two vendors to repaint Mrs. Ruth Weber's home at 4306 Penn Avenue. The property is located on a corner which allows for two grants totaling approximately \$3,000. **Second by Brian Hoffa.** Motion Passed.

Berks Area Realtors Association 'Smart Growth Grant' Application

- Merlin Weaver and Sam Loth have met with the Association regarding the application for funding to create Community Gateways at Penn & Park Avenues and Penn at Trendz Salon. The grant totals \$15,000. Sam requests approval to proceed.
- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to proceed with approvals from the Berks Area Realtors Association to apply for a Smart Growth Grant totaling 15,000. **Second by Brian Hoffa.** Motion Passed.

BOSS Fundraising Activities

- Scheduling a Restaurant Dining Night Out with local restaurants.
- The Boss Committee has directed Mr. Loth to proceed with organizing these activities.
- **Motion by Lisa Gantner** to direct Sam Loth to organize a fundraising Dining Night Out for the Recreation Commission at the Chipotle Restaurant. **Second by Dave Meas.** Motion Passed.

Old & New Business

- **Motion by Bernie Campbell** to formally "Thank" Bob Ludgate for bringing the developer Dave Halliday to Sinking Spring. **Second by Chuck Coleman.** Motion Passed.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 18, 2015