



BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
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BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION STEERING COMMITTEE
SSB COUNCIL ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
SSB BUSINESS & COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 18, 2016

Call to Order

Charles Coleman (President) called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Merlin Weaver (ED), Jim Adams (ED), Brian Hoffa (Borough Council), Lisa Gantner (Borough Council) and Sam Loth (CDS).

Guests: Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment Authority), John Nelka (SSB Library), Joe Eways (Sickafus Representative), Brian Covey (Ritas Water Ice), Bob Metzgar (Wilson SD) and Nemat Lotfi (Penn HVAC).

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

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Brian Hoffa to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2016. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion Passed.

Treasurers Report

Dave Meas was absent. Chuck Coleman read from the January 2016 bank statement. After a monthly service charge of \$2.00, the General Fund balance was \$2,385.46 on January 31, 2016.

Chuck reported that BOSS 2020 received an invoice from BCTV totaling \$200.00 for broadcast services. Chuck said that he heard the interview with WEEU Host Mike Faust and BOSS 2020 representative Sam Loth on the topic of the SSB Market Study and the public meeting of January 27th. He said that the interview was wide-ranging and that WEEU added clips of the interview into frequently repeated station promotions over the week following the interview. Sam Loth added that he had completed a follow-up on-air phone call with Mike Faust following the January 27th meeting. Overall, the Committee agreed that the radio coverage was significant. Additional publicity included two Reading Eagle newspaper stories and BCTV pre-meeting on-air promotions and web site coverage plus a follow-up 1/2 hour TV show on the Revitalization Program that included Brian Hoffa (Borough Council). Finally, WFMZ-TV 69 aired a pre-meeting on-air interview and post-meeting on-air coverage. As a result of the publicity, the public meeting attracted nearly 30 residents and business owners to the Market Study presentation at the Council Workshop meeting.

Motion by Brian Hoffa to pay the WEEU invoice for \$200.00. **Second by Jim Adams.** Motion passed.

Motion by Jim Adams to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. **Second by Brian Hoffa.** Motion passed.

Committee-of-the-Whole

Reappoint Executive Committee

- Sam Loth said that he asked Chuck Coleman (President), Bernie Campbell (VP) and Dave Meas (Secretary/Treasurer) to remain in their posts through December 31, 2016 and all agreed to do so.

Motion by Lisa Gantner to reappoint the BOSS 2020 Executive Committee through December 31, 2016. **Second by Jim Adams.** Motion passed.

Market Study Recommendations

- Sam Loth said that the Conclusions of the Market Study included several recommendations for the BOSS 2020 Committee to initiate. Two of those are:

> Begin contacts and relationships with Master Developers on the New Town Center revitalization project. Use the Market Study and other information as a 'tool kit' to begin introductory meetings.
> Forge a working relationship with the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) to work jointly on moving the New Town Center project forward.

Motion by Brian Hoffa authorizing Sam Loth to make contact with GREP and schedule a meeting at GREP's office and/or invite Jon Scott and/or Pam Shupp to meet with BOSS 2020 representatives on Sinking Spring's long-term goals. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion passed. Jim Adams asked to be included in this initiative.

- The Committee agreed to make contacting Master Developers part of the 2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan.

Revitalization Plan - Phase 4: TIP (Transportation Improvement Plan) RATS Committee

- Brian Hoffa reported that he participated in a teleconference call between PennDOT District Executive Mike Rebert, other PennDOT staff, County Transportation Planner Alan Piper, Bob Ludgate of Ludgate Engineering, other LEC staff and Mike Hart, SS Borough Representative on February 18th. The purpose of the conference call was to review Sinking Spring's Phase 4 preliminary listing recommendation on the RATS Transportation Improvement Plan and any engineering work that would need to be accomplished if the project were to receive official listing.
- Brian said that several topics were discussed: 1) The draft TIP currently lists SSB for preliminary engineering and funding starting in the fall of 2018. This would take approximately 18 months to complete. 2) Final Design would follow and could be expected to take between 12 and 18 months to complete. 3) This would be followed by funding and construction envisioned to be completed in a two-year construction window. Therefore, if the Phase 4 project is voted onto the RATS TIP later this spring or early summer, the Borough could expect the project to be completed approximately 5 years from the start date of fall 2018. (*Completion by 2023-2024*).
- The Committee had a thorough discussion following this report. The general consensus of the Committee is to develop and implement a 2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan that would promote the Borough project and enlist support for an earlier start date (*Preliminary Engineering in the fall of 2017*) that would benefit the economic development goals of the Borough.
- The BOSS Committee, Council Economic Committee and other stakeholders shall begin immediately to develop the 2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan.

Revitalization Plan - Phase 2: Penn Avenue Betterment Project

- Brian Hoffa said that PennDOT 5-0 plans to begin the process of 'letting' the Penn Avenue Betterment Project on February 25, 2016. The project will be scheduled for construction from Wernersville to Sinking Spring beginning in the spring/summer of 2016.
- Brian said that since the Betterment Project will begin construction on the western end (Wernersville) and move eastward toward Sinking Spring, the likelihood for construction in the Borough will be the spring/summer of 2017.
- Brian suggested that the Borough's portion, Phase 2 Intersection Realignment at Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing, would be scheduled to fit into the PennDOT 'Betterment' Project. Preparing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to be distributed to potential construction companies on behalf of the Borough would be forthcoming.
- The Committee discussed PennDOT's step-by-step increasing support for Sinking Spring's Revitalization Plan and the growing expectation that the remaining Phases 3 and 4 of the Plan will become a reality.
- Joe Eways said that, in his opinion, interest from potential developers for the New Town Center plan will hinge on the infrastructure changes to be completed. He said that a potential developer would not commit to a multi-million dollar project such as the New Town Center until the infrastructure is either completed or at least was funded and scheduled for or under construction.
- Jim Adams asked Ken Pick when 'site control' over the 'created' corner properties would occur. The Official Map Revitalization Plan for realignment of the two major intersections 1) Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing and 2) Penn/Shillington/Mull will create new rectangular corner properties that do not now exist. Jim said these new corners will escalate in value once they are created.
- Ken Pick answered that the new corner properties will continue to contain underground utilities thereby tempering any projected increase in the location values.
- Joe Eways said that planning for a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district should begin soon in order to provide all parties with a better understanding of potential land values and associated tax revenues.
- Sam Loth said that, based on Mr. Eways and Mr. Adams' views, it would be a positive action for BOSS 2020 to win approval and begin construction on the Phase 3 bypass thoroughfare. He said that even though the outside edges of the New Town Center development may take longer to materialize, a completed Columbia Avenue Extension would link the western and eastern sides of the New Town Center land, making the central portion available for development sooner than later.

Revitalization Plan - Phase 3, Segment 1 MTF Grant Application

- Brian Hoffa reported that during the TIP teleconference with PennDOT, the Multimodal Transportation Fund grant program was discussed. He said that Mike Rebert expects an awards announcement for the program in May or June 2016.
- Sam Loth said that, as part of the 2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan, the Committee and Council should continue to meet with Sinking Spring representatives Jim Cox (PA House) and David Argall (PA Senate) and PennDOT Secretary Denise Richards to present the benefit of accelerating the Official Map infrastructure plan for the purposes of the Borough's economic development goals.

PA DCED Municipal Assistance Program

- Sam Loth said that the Berks County Planning Commission met on February 10th and approved a 'Letter of Consistency' for the Sinking Spring grant request from the DCED MAP grant program. Sam produced a copy of the letter and said that it will be forwarded to Fadia Halma, Sinking Spring's DCED representative in Allentown. This will complete the documentation for the grant application submitted in December 2015.

2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan

- Brian Hoffa pointed out that there are five (5) major infrastructure initiatives now underway that are either a direct result of the Borough's Official Map / New Town Center plans or are closely tied to the plans. They are:
 - > PennDOT's Betterment Project from Wernersville to Sinking Spring (funded)
 - > Phase 2 Intersection Realignment Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing (funded)
 - > SS Pedestrian Improvement & Public Improvement projects from Park to Hull (funded)
 - > Phase 3 Segments 1 and 2 of the Columbia Avenue Extension (in progress)
 - > Phase 4 TIP listing for Preliminary Engineering & funding in 2018 (recommended)
- Brian said that as part of the 2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan, the Borough is considering the creation of a part-time Business Corridor Manager that would focus attention on promotion & marketing in the corridor.
- Sam Loth added that the BOSS Committee has been using the four-point approach to revitalization created by the National Main Street Center. These include 1) Organization, 2) Design & Rehabilitation, 3) Economic Development and 4) Promotion & Marketing.
- Brian added that having a part time Business Corridor Manager would help the Borough and BOSS to interest business owners, property owners and other stakeholders in implementing goals of an active Business/Community Alliance (BCA).

BOSS 2020 Penn Avenue Facade Improvement Grant Program

- *2015 Smaller Projects Completed:*

3402 Hall

3437 Koch

3515 Koch

3864 Koch

- *2015 Larger Projects Completed:*

3461 Updegraff

3705 Liptock

4306 Weber

- *2016 Smaller Projects in Development:*

3446 Mauser

4130 Leiby

- *2016 Larger Projects in Development:*

3419-21 Glass

3951-55-57 Dentzer

4052 Walley

4453 Hong

- Sam intends to work with business and property owners over the winter to make several new and larger projects ready for the spring of 2016.
- Approximately \$15,000 of grant funds are ready to be disbursed as reimbursement grants to the property and business owners who have completed their projects but will not be released until the State Budget is completed. Sam will not submit an application for Year-2 Facade funding until at least \$30,000 of Year 1 funding is utilized.

Old Business

Alcon RR Crossing Study & Mountain Home Road Signal Projects

- Bob Ludgate is discussing these two projects with Alan Piper, County Transportation Planner. These two projects may receive RATS TIP attention for 2017.

U.S. Senators/Congressman Meetings

- Sam intends to schedule meetings between BOSS and elected officials this spring.

BOSS 2020 Dining Night Out Fundraiser

- Lisa Gantner suggested that BOSS work with her Recreation Commission this spring on a joint fundraising event.

Alcon Foundation & Wyomissing Foundation Private Grant Programs

- Sam reported that he will investigate offset funding for proposed Landscaping and Painting programs.

2016 Downtown Reinvestment Grant for 3400 Block of Penn Avenue

- This application for a Streetscape Enhancement Program (SEP) is tied to the 2016 Facade program grant and Borough match funding and will be considered in 2016 for the Borough's FY-2017 Capital Improvements Budget

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 17, 2016
Borough Council Chambers**