



BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
3940 PENN AVENUE
SINKING SPRING, PA 19608
(T) 484-269-4902 (F) 610-678-5802
samloth@comcast.net
www.boss2020.org



SINKING SPRING
BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
SSB COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
SSB BUSINESS & COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 21, 2016

Call to Order

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

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Merlin Weaver (ED), Jim Adams (ED), Brian Hoffa and Lisa Gantner (Borough Council), Joe Eways, II and Nemat Lotfi (Property Representatives), Sam Loth (CDS) and Bob Ludgate (LEC).

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

Guests: Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment Authority).

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Lisa Gantner to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2016. **Second by Brian Hoffa.** Motion Passed.

Treasurers Report

Dave Meas was absent. Sam Loth reported on Dave's behalf. The BOSS 2020 General Fund balance on March 31, 2016 was \$4,306.88. This includes all placemat advertising checks received and deposited. This does not include the sales commissions due to Lucille Freeman (Rieck's Publications) for placemat advertising. Additionally, there are two invoices; one from the Chamber of Commerce for the Transportation Luncheon on April 7th (\$75) and one from BWD for Website Setup Services in April 2016 (\$100).

BOSS Facade Improvement Grant Program

The Borough of Sinking Spring paid out its first two Facade Improvement Program reimbursement checks from Requisition #1 (\$4,480) in April 2016; \$1,280 to Steve Liptock (3705 Penn Avenue) and \$3,200 to Ruth Weber (4306 Penn Avenue). Requisition #2 (\$8,544.88) and #3 (Final \$36,975.12) have been submitted to DCED for the remainder of the \$50,000 in grant funds. These funds are pass-through amounts from DCED, through the Borough, to the facade grant recipients.

Motion by Brian Hoffa to approve the Treasurer's Report to date. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion Passed.

[Committee-of-the-Whole](#)

2016 SSB/BOSS New Town Center Market Study Action Plan

- Two major recommendations of the NTC Market Study are to: 1) Develop an Action Plan with Goals & Objectives to attract developers to the Project and 2) Form a strategic alliance with the Greater Reading Economic Partnership to cement support in marketing the Project to potential developers.

1) Develop an Action Plan with Goals & Objectives to Attract Developers

- Sam Loth presented the Committee with a list of objectives that could be utilized to build a "Developer Attraction Toolbox" in March:
 - > Financing options for construction of infrastructure.
 - > Financing options that developers could use for construction.
 - > Identify traditional and alternative financing providers.
 - > Identify and initiate tax and financing incentives.
 - > Become familiar with Public, Private Partnerships.
 - > Become familiar with Site Selector's Community Assessment checklists.
 - > Develop Economic Impact Analysis, Cost Comparisons & Workforce Analysis.
- Sam also distributed a listing of items that could be included in a developer marketing packet i.e. press kit in March:
 - > New Town Center Market Study
 - > Claritas Demographic Report
 - > BOSS 2020 Annual Report
 - > Borough Map and Contact Information
 - > Other
- Sam directed the Committee's attention to the "**Ideas to Include in the Action Plan**" report distributed to members at the March 17th BOSS 2020 Meeting. He asked the Committee whether or not they should begin research on the **Types of Finance Options** listed in the report. These include different types of loans, venture equity, capitalization and several other options that could ultimately be accessed by a developer to help finance the New Town Center construction.
- Joe Eways responded, saying that the Committee should first identify what part(s) of the project need financing.
- Bob Ludgate added that, at this time, the New Town Center options for project financing are not the priority but rather, the development of the financing structure is, such as the proposed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district.
- Bob said that the BOSS 2020 Committee could be considering the other sections of the central business district (CBD) for financing tools. For example, what kinds of financing support would new business startups locating in the eastern (3400 Block) and western (3800 to 4400 Blocks) of Penn Avenue need? He suggested that a LERTA could be established for these areas of Penn Avenue and that the proposed TIF could be reserved for the New Town Center zone (3800 Block of Penn Avenue).
- Sam Loth suggested that other communities have used revolving loan funds within a 'business incubator' program structure. This has worked with varying degrees of success depending upon the community.
- Joe Eways said that the Committee could develop an 'Equity Fund' that could be enhanced with cash for loan interest write-downs, rent support and other uses that then could attract banks and/or credit unions, insurance companies and other non-traditional financing to the eastern and western revitalization zones.
- Sam Loth asked Mr. Eways if the two of them could meet and work on a proposal for such an Equity Fund. Joe agreed; the two will meet next week to begin work on the project.

2) Form a strategic alliance with the Greater Reading Economic Partnership to cement support in marketing the Project to potential developers.

- Pam Shupp of GREP suggested that there are proven actions that BOSS 2020 and the Borough can take to make the Borough ready to interact with potential developers for the New Town Center project and more:
 - > Designate an initial *Point of Contact* for business and entrepreneurial inquiries.
 - > Develop a friendly and accommodating process for permits, licenses and regulatory controls.
 - > Identify buildings and sites in advance that are mutually desirable for redevelopment.
 - > Prepare a clear & concise document outlining the community vision for development.
 - > Make community demographics and other statistics available to investors and entrepreneurs.
 - > Determine community zones that offer tax abatements and other incentives to developers.
 - > Consider the LERTA and Tax Increment Financing tools to attract developers and investors.
- Lisa Gantner asked about this recommendation and whether any progress has been made in this regard.
- Brian Hoffa would like to work cooperatively with Borough staff and BOSS on this project.
- Sam Loth suggested that Lisa, Brian, Mike Hart, himself and perhaps others meet to begin work on creating this 'entrepreneur friendly' process.

Revitalization Plan - Phase 4 (Penn/Shillington/Mull Intersection + New Town Center)

- Ken Pick said that he is scheduled to make a TIF presentation to SSB Council at their May 25th Workshop Meeting.
- Ken said that in keeping with the goal of attracting a Master Developer to the New Town Center project, the first step would be for the Borough to establish a TIF District (3800 Block of Penn Avenue south side).
- Brian Hoffa suggested that the 'momentum' is good at this time among members of Borough Council for adoption of a TIF.
- Bob Ludgate added that, at this time, everyone agrees that the Revitalization 'Infrastructure' Project is certain to be built. The questions remaining are When and How!

BOSS 2020 Current Strategy to Build the Phases 3 & 4 Infrastructure

- Grants: Phase 3, Segment 1 (New Columbia Avenue Extension) from Columbia Avenue eastward approximately 200 yards. BOSS has submitted a grant request to the Multimodal Transportation Fund program for \$1.2 Million to build this section of the new roadway. The Borough's match obligation for this grant is \$540,000.
- P3 (Private-Public Partnership): Phase 3, Segment 2 of Columbia Avenue Extension. BOSS is discussing the current P3 Legislation that exists in Pennsylvania for projects. Some amending of the language would be required in order to accommodate BOSS' version; deeding land to a developer as value to offset the developer's investment in infrastructure construction.
- RATS MPO 2017-2022 (5-Year TIP) Transportation Improvement Plan: The local PennDOT MPO (RATS) has recommended the Phase 4 Revitalization construction within Sinking Spring be placed on the FFY-2017-2022 TIP with preliminary engineering funding of \$448,000 for October 2018.

New USDOT FASTLANE Grant Program Funding to Build the BOSS Phase 4 Infrastructure

- Bob Ludgate and Sam Loth have been looking into a new Federal source of funding for the Sinking Spring infrastructure construction. The new program is: "Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies" (FASTLANE) grant program. <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/usdot-requests-applications-800-million-new-fastlane-grant-program#.VtSmUfT5amk.gmail>.
- The FASTLANE Program is funded with \$4.5 Billion through FFY-2020 with \$80 Million funded for smaller projects (under \$100 Million) in FFY-2016. This year's deadline for applications has passed. The FFY 2017 Applications will be processed through mid-April 2017. The minimum application request is \$5 Million for smaller projects.

- The program specifically establishes eligibilities for **freight infrastructure, including intermodal projects**. FASTLANE Grants will address many challenges including increased congestion on the nation's highways and the need for a strong multimodal transportation system to support the expected growth in freight movement both by ton and value. It is also in line with the Department's draft [National Freight Strategic Plan](#) released in October 2015.
- Bob has established that Mr. Larry Shifflet (717.787.2862) at the PennDOT Central Office in Harrisburg is the contact person for this new FASTLANE Program.
- According to Mr. Shifflet, all applications for this new program should be submitted through PennDOT for State approval and support to the USDOT.
- For FFY-2016 PennDOT shall submit two large (\$100 Million) and one small (less than \$100 Million) projects for Federal consideration. Also, the Lehigh MPO is going to submit a project of their own directly to the USDOT.
- Larry believes that each of these 4 projects have their engineering work completed so the applications are seeking construction funds.
- Since the BOSS 2020 Project is only hoping to start its Federally compliant engineering next year, it would be premature for us to apply for funding at this time.
- If our MPO (RATS) were to approve the BOSS project engineering to begin earlier than currently scheduled and if PennDOT would provide a priority rating for our project, we could consider submitting an application for FASTLANE funding in FFY-2017/2018.

Special Note: Larry Shifflet serves as the PennDOT Central Office Representative on the *Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA MPO) for Tioga, Bradford, Susquehanna, Sullivan and Wyoming Counties*.

2016 Business-Community Alliance (BCA) Work Plan

- Brian Hoffa voiced his concern on how to raise the public interest in the BOSS Revitalization Plan. He specifically would like to populate the BCA's Design & Rehabilitation Team and the Promotion & Marketing Team with business and property owners plus Borough residents.
- Lisa Gantner suggested that the Borough/BOSS could erect a sign on the old Borough Hall at Penn & Columbia Avenues expressing the immanent intersection construction in 2017.
- Bob Ludgate said that Phase 2 demolition of the former Borough Hall will need to be completed in the fall of 2016 in order to begin approach road construction for cooperation with PennDOT in early 2017.
- Joe Eways suggested that the Borough's Economic/Community Development Committee make a Motion to Borough Council that recommends SSB Council to authorize Ludgate Engineering to complete specifications and bids for demolition of the old Borough Hall this fall.
- Brian Hoffa said that he would follow up on this BOSS 2020 Committee recommendation.
- Ken Pick said that the Motion should include all properties listed for removal during Phase 2 construction.
- Joe Eways said that Pat Garrett, owner of the Sickafus portion of the CBD (10+ acres) might be interested in accepting the demolition waste from the razing of the old Borough Hall to fill the large quarry hole on his property in the 3800 Block of Penn Avenue near the railroad ROW.
- Bob Ludgate and Ken Pick responded that the concept may have merit and is worth further discussion.
- Joe also said that Mr. Garrett might be willing to 'deed' the land area needed within his property where the New Columbia Avenue Extension road would be built.
- Bob Ludgate said that the Borough's 'Official Map' process already provides for this eventuality and the offer, although a positive gesture, doesn't appear to be necessary at this time.
- Brian Hoffa said that even though Mr. Garrett's gesture wouldn't be necessary, it is nevertheless a good idea and would benefit PennDOT and any eventual developer plus the P3 process.

BOSS 2020 Penn Avenue Facade Improvement Grant Program

Sam Loth reported that DCED is willing to extend the Contract end date of this Keystone Communities Public Improvements & Facade Improvements Grant totaling \$275,000 from June 30, 2016 for one year until June 30, 2017. Borough Council submitted a letter requesting the extension of the grant and Sam provided DCED with the necessary documentation to draw down the entire balance of the Public Improvements portion (\$225,000) and the remainder of the Facade Improvements balance (\$36,975.12). DCED will review the documentation and take the necessary action prior to June 30, 2016.

Facade Program in 2016

- *2016 Smaller Projects in Development:*

3864 Penn - Koch

4902 Penn - Saunders

- *2016 Larger Projects in Development:*

3419-21 Penn - Glass

4052 Penn - Walley

4453 Penn - Hong

Motion to approve developing estimates for Saunders and to allow the BOSS Executive Committee to approve project construction by Brian Hoffa. Second by Lisa Gantner.

Motion Passed.

Motion to approve construction for the Koch project by Jim Adams. Second by Brian Hoffa. Motion Passed.

Old Business

- None.

New Business

PHS Tree Tender Training

- Sam requested that the Committee approve basic 'Tree Tender' training for himself and Brian Hoffa at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society headquarters in Philadelphia on Monday, May 9th. Cost = \$25 each.

Motion to approve training by Jim Adams. Second by Merlin Weaver. Motion Passed.

Yard Buildup Complaint

- Jim Kremp, owner of "All About You Salon" at 4206 Penn Avenue has contacted BOSS by e-mail with a concern for the yard buildup at 4141 Penn Avenue.
- Sam has visited the property and has photographed the yard and rear alley areas of concern.
- Brian Hoffa directed Sam to take the information to Mike Hart (Borough Codes) because this is not a function of the Revitalization Committee.

Municipal Assistance Program Grant

- DCED has contacted Sam Loth with information on a PA DCED MAP Grant Award of \$24,000 for the New Town Center Market Study project.
- Borough Council will need to execute the Grant Contract and return it to DCED no later than May 2nd in order to claim the grant funding.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 19, 2016
Borough Council Chambers**