



BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
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SINKING SPRING
BOSS 2020 REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
SSB COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
SSB BUSINESS & COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 16, 2016

Call to Order

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

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Brian Hoffa (Council-ED), Lisa Gantner (Council-ED), Robert Metzgar (Wilson SD-ED), Joe Eways, II (Property Representative-P) and Sam Loth (CDS).

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

Guests: Scott Guinther, Owner (Berks Computer Solutions-BCA).

Approval of Minutes

Sam Loth presented a set of 'Amended' Minutes for the May 19, 2016 Meeting. He explained that Bob Ludgate had sent the Amendments to him after a meeting with PennDOT on June 1st to discuss the Penn Avenue Betterment Project and the BOSS Phase 2 Intersection Project.

Motion by Brian Hoffa to approve the Meeting Minutes as presented for April 21, 2016 and as amended for May 19, 2016. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion Approved unanimously.

Treasurers Report

Sam Loth presented a Treasurer's Report through May 31, 2016:

- The Fulton Bank general fund balance is \$3,922.88; there are three (3) bills to pay, 1) Chamber of Commerce Luncheon for \$75.00, 2) Kendra Giangiulio for Website Administrator Services in April and May 2016 for under \$100.00 and 3) 40% of proceeds received for the Restaurant Placemat advertising fundraiser to be determined.
- The Chamber of Commerce sent eight (8) general admission tickets to BOSS 2020 for Wednesday, June 22nd to celebrate Annual Chamber Night at the Reading Phillies ballpark. Four tickets were claimed and the remaining four were left on the Council Podium for anyone in the Borough to use.
- Sam held up the completed design layout for the Round 3 Restaurant Placemat and asked the Committee if they would like to place the 4-Phase Infrastructure Map in the center box reserved for BOSS 2020. The Committee agreed that the map would be appropriate.
- Brian Hoffa asked if the center square will also contain contact information for BOSS and the website? Sam Loth answered yes.
- **BOSS 2020 Consensus Approval** of the 4-Phase Infrastructure Map and BOSS/Website contact information for the Placemat.
- Sam reported that Lucille Freeman had attempted to widen the distribution of the Placemat with no success. The following venues were contacted: SSB VF, Circle S Ranch House, Dunkin'

Donuts, Subway, Dairy Queen, McDonalds, Santinos, RR House, Salute Ristorante, B-B-Q Pit, Family Restaurant, Five Guys, Basil Restaurant and Tavern on Penn. All declined. The Liberty Fire Company may agree after review. Papparones Pizza and Tom Cat Cafe will use the placemats.

- Sam said that corporate food businesses more likely than not will opt out of local promotions where locally owned restaurants/cafes will be more likely to agree to using the Placemat.
- Sam asked the Committee for additional suggestions. The Committee responded with the following list of restaurants to ask: 1) Deluxe Diner, 2) Penn Grill, 3) Crave Cafe and 4) Philadelphia Hoagie Shop.
- Sam will contact Lucille Freeman to offer these additional restaurant names and will forward the Restaurant Placemat center box graphics and contact information to be printed this weekend. He also asked the Committee members to suggest the placemat use to other restaurant venues when they are out in the area.
- **Motion by Brian Hoffa** to approve the Treasurer's Report for April and May 2016 and to pay the bills. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion Approved unanimously.

Committee-of-the-Whole

BOSS 2020 Website

- Brian Hoffa said that he has been visiting Lititz, Lancaster County and has been impressed with the community's downtown revitalization. Brian visited the Lititz website and noticed that business owners in downtown Lititz are interviewed on video for the website. He'd like to invite our website Administrator, Kendra Giangiulio to attend an upcoming meeting of the BOSS Committee to discuss how we can improve our website's presence to visitors and how to improve interaction on the site.
- Sam said he will arrange for Kendra to attend a meeting this summer.

2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan

Develop an Action Plan with Goals & Objectives to attract developers to the Project and stimulate CBD economic development.

Partnerships with Regional Organizations

- Sam reported that BOSS has established a contact and conversation with the Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP) and is currently performing research and development on many GREP recommendations.
- BOSS shall arrange to meet with the Chamber of Commerce to establish Dave Meas as our liaison representative. BOSS will request meetings with the Berks County Community Foundation (BCCF) and the Reading/Berks Convention & Visitors Bureau (BCVB) to explore mutual interests.

Marketing Packet (Press Kit)

- Sam said that, as part of the packet of information, BOSS should complete an updated Economic Impact Analysis for the proposed New Town Center development. We could use the Analysis prepared by Bernie Campbell and Jim Adams from 2010 as a basis for the report.
- The Packet shall contain a Borough Map. The last known map was published several years ago. BOSS will look into whether a new updated map is warranted.

Portfolio of Incentives

- *USDA Grant & Loan Programs*; Joe Eways and Sam are researching whether the Borough is geographically eligible for loan & grant programs offered by USDA.
- *Tax Increment Financing*: The Committee discussed what is happening in Philadelphia with developers receiving TIF districts from the City for one single project (lot) and then having the lenders ask for more loan guarantees. Developers are now asking local government to designate a single lot project as a "Neighborhood Improvement District" NID in order to satisfy lenders requirement for additional "insurance" on funding.

- Joe Eways feels this is a bad precedent and in the long term actually does not benefit the lenders (banks) but instead drives up the cost to tenants who could be priced out of the marketplace.
- Sam reminded the Committee that if this new wrinkle in financing is occurring in Philadelphia (only 65 miles away) it is bound to show up in Berks County sooner than later.
- *PA Housing Finance Authority (PHFA)*: The PHFA is contracted by the State to handle all housing programs including 'age restricted' and 'veterans' programs. The agency can help with financing for multi-family projects when a small percentage of units are designated.
- *RCAP (Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program)*: This State program is overseen by the Executive Branch and generally supports innovation in development. The "Steel Stax" project in Bethlehem is one example. Ken Pick is researching this program for the BOSS Committee.

Penn Avenue Facade Improvement Grant Program

Improve properties facing Penn Avenue with repairs, fresh paint, improvements to business signage and overall visual presence of properties.

Small Projects for 2016

- 3864 Penn - Koch (Facade painting, repair dormer, improve porch, replace doors) Completed
- 4902 Penn - Saunders (Phase 1 concrete cheek walls, front steps, downspout underground piping) Completed (Phase 2 front porch and front doorway improvements and enclosed front porch repairs) Scheduled.
- 4130-32 Penn - Leiby (Retaining walls connected with front steps and rails) Under Development
- 4056 Penn - Guinther (Business Signage and Lettering/Lighting) Under Development

Larger Projects for 2016

- 3419-21 Penn - Glass (Full rehabilitation) Scheduled for September
- 4052 Penn - Walley (Full rehabilitation) Scheduled for July/August
- 3856 Penn - Meas (Facade and Signage Improvements) Under Development

PennDOT Betterment & BOSS Phase 2 Progress

Public Improvements Grant Funding (Alternative Use)

Construct new sidewalks where none exist in the 4400 Block of Penn Avenue (south side) and improve, widen and construct sidewalks & storm water facilities in the 3800 Block of Penn Avenue (south side).

- Bob Ludgate reported that the two projects noted above awarded \$225,000 through the PA DCED Keystone Communities Program have been changed by PennDOT because of the agency's Penn Avenue 'Betterment' Project scheduled for Sinking Spring Borough in 2017.
- The 4400 Block of Penn Avenue sidewalk and curb installation project may proceed utilizing funds allocated by DCED.
- The 3800 Block sidewalk and curb widening and the improvements to the storm water system may NOT proceed. The project is in conflict with PennDOT's grading and resurfacing plan.
- Sam asked the Committee about a change of use for the \$75,000 awarded by DCED. There are several suggestions: 1) request removal of the utility pole blocking the sidewalk in the 3800 Block and using partial funding for this purpose, 2) redirecting the funding toward the demolition of the former Borough Hall and/or 3) redirecting the funding to construct new ADA compliant sidewalks and curbs in the new intersection at Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing.

Change use of Funding and Move PPL Utility Pole

- Committee consensus is to initiate a conversation with PPL about removing the obstructing pole based on ADA requirements but not offering Borough funding since it is the State DOT and the PPL Utility who have caused the non-compliance.
- Joe Eways recommended that the Borough contact its Solicitor to request a "Hold Harmless" letter from PennDOT for any actions that may occur based on the non-compliant and unsafe conditions.

- Sam agreed to present the request to DCED only AFTER as much of the cost can be estimated and PennDOT issues a written declaration that they have disallowed the awarded use because of their Betterment project.

Finalize Betterment/Phase 2 Cooperative Plans

- PennDOT's Engineer, Larsen, and the Borough's Engineer, STV, will meet to insure that both the Betterment and Phase 2 project plans are compatible. PennDOT will then approve this component.
- PennDOT, the Borough and the Redevelopment Authority shall meet to determine the budget line items for the Phase 2 intersection. Final approval will then occur.

Phase 2 Demolition BIDS

- One BID was received by the Borough. The BID was under budget and the company offering the BID is reputable and capable of performing the work.
- The Borough Solicitor is now reviewing the BID and will make a recommendation to Council whether to award the contract.

Architectural Salvage of Condemned Properties

- Members of Borough Council have indicated their concern for items of value that are part of the properties that the Borough will take possession of during the demolition process.
- The BOSS Committee consensus is that Borough Council needs an established process to take possession of any valuable items immediately upon settlement of condemned properties.
- Sam Loth will research how other communities handle this and will see if there are private companies that can complete this task on behalf of the Borough.

2016 SSB/BOSS BCA Work Plan

The Borough and BOSS shall support the Business & Community Alliance volunteers in carrying out the G&O of the Design & Rehabilitation Committee and the Promotion & Marketing Committee.

Borough/BOSS/Council ED Meeting

- Mike Hart (Borough Manager), Lisa Gantner (Borough Council) and Sam Loth (BOSS Coordinator) met on Tuesday, June 14th to review the Design & Rehabilitation Committee Goals & Objectives. Brian Hoffa was absent.
- The group agreed to use both the Borough and the BOSS websites and newsletters to call for volunteer recruits for the BCA.
- The Borough will develop first drafts of two financial reports; 1) Existing Borough Financial Loans & Grants Report, 2) Borough 2017 Operating/Capital Budget. BOSS will develop a first draft of a Strategic Five Year Project & Grant Application Report. These three documents will be used to provide an overview of the Borough's financial standing and can serve as a blueprint for decisions on finances.
- The group agrees that PPL should be asked to remove the utility pole in the 3800 Block of Penn Avenue near South Hull Street that is causing a blockage and creates an unsafe and ADA non-compliant status at that location.
- BOSS will research community design standards in other towns and bring forth 'Best Ideas' to help Sinking Spring review options for our community ordinances.

Alternative Truck Routes

- A proposal for a truck route from Mountain Home Road through to Shillington Road on the south side of the RR tracks was proposed several years ago. The group agreed to renew research into this possible alternative truck route as another way to divert traffic from the CBD.
- The group agreed to look into an alternative truck route from the refineries westward via Mountain Home Road and Krick Road to Penn Avenue as a way to divert truck traffic from Penn Avenue to Woodward Avenue, Columbia Avenue and Mountain Home Road.
- The BOSS Committee discussed both proposals and the consensus is to activate research on these two proposals.
- The Committee will request that Senator Argall's office revive a proposed meeting between the Borough, the BOSS Committee and Senior Executive of the various energy companies that are in business and are expanding along Mountain Home Road.

- Joe Eways said that the Borough would eventually need a cooperation agreement with South Heidelberg Township to effect the changes along Mountain Home Road.

Phase 4 Transportation Improvement Plan - RATS Committee Update

- The RATS Committee has released its final version of the TIP Plan for publication. The TIP runs from 2017-2028.
- The Borough of Sinking Spring Phase 4 Intersection Realignment Project at Penn/Shillington/Mull Avenues is officially listed with funding totaling \$448,000 for Preliminary Engineering in 2017-2019.
- Construction of the project is also approved however no funding has been assigned as yet. Construction could occur anytime between 2020 and 2028.

Old & New Business

- Sam Loth reported that the Goodyear Tire & Repair Center in the 4400 Block of Penn Avenue has closed for business. The BOSS Committee will not become involved in this issue at this time. There may be recruitment activities that BOSS can initiate in the future.

Adjourn

Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, July 21, 2016
Borough Council Chambers**