



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
JULY 21, 2016

Call to Order

Charles Coleman (President) called the meeting to order at 7:00 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), Robert Hughes (McDonalds Restaurant-ED), Jim Adams (Berks IDA-ED), Kendra Giangilio (BOSS Website & Facebook Administrator), Bob Ludgate, Ludgate Engineering Corporation (LEC) and Sam Loth, Community Development Services (CDS).

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

Guests: Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment), Lee May (McDonalds Corp.), Nemat Lotfi (Owner-3836 Penn), Shyam Patel (Owner-3818 Penn), Scott & Brenda Steinhauer (SSB Residents) and Ken Peffley (SSB Resident).

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Lisa Gantner to approve the Meeting Minutes as presented for June 16, 2016.

Second by Brian Hoffa. Motion Approved unanimously.

Treasurers Report

- The Treasurer's Report for June 2016 is tabled until the August 18, 2016 BOSS 2020 Committee Meeting.
- *Note: Chuck Coleman noted that the Fulton Bank paper reconciliation for June 2016 lists a balance of \$3,918.38.*

Committee-of-the-Whole

BOSS 2020 Website

- Brian Hoffa had requested that Website Administrator, Kendra Giangilio attend an upcoming meeting of the BOSS Committee to discuss improvements for the boss2020.org site. Ms. Giangilio is in attendance.
- Committee members and Ms. Giangilio generally discussed ideas to improve the website. Several suggestions followed:
 - > Add previously published stories and videos to the "BOSS News" page.
 - > Create a new business page to benefit visitors searching for products/services.
 - > Enlist Ms. Giangilio to build the business page data base.
 - > Research an 'Events & Activities' page for BOSS/SSB and other public groups.
 - > Once completed, post the BOSS Action Plan & the BCA Work Plan.
 - > When the Borough has their website control, create links between the sites.
- Sam Loth, Brian Hoffa and Ms. Giangilio will work together to enhance the website.

PennDOT Betterment Project Progress

- Bob Ludgate (LEC) reported that American Water, Inc. and UGI Utilities Gas, Inc. are presently relocating water and gas lines that are under Penn Avenue between Columbia Avenue and Shillington Road in anticipation of the \$15 Million dollar PennDOT Betterment project that is now being constructed from Womelsdorf to Sinking Spring.
- PennDOT will arrive in Sinking Spring proper in the 2017 calendar year. The total resurfacing of Penn Avenue is occurring and where identified, upgrades and repairs to the curbs, sidewalks and intersections are being completed.
- PennDOT and the Borough are cooperating in order to redesign and rebuild the major intersection of Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing Avenues. PennDOT will relocate the new intersection and will install all new signalization. The Borough will acquire, remove and ready five properties for the road reconstruction right-of-way.

BOSS Phase 2 and Phase 3-1 Project Progress

- Sam Loth (CDS) reported that on July 1st, the PA Commonwealth Finance Authority (CFA) awarded the Borough a \$1.1 Million dollar grant to build Phase 3 Segment 1 of the new retail street 'Columbia Avenue Extension'.
- Bob Ludgate added that the award has caused the Borough and BOSS 2020 to take another look at the schedule for construction of Phase 2 and Phase 3-1. Bob explained:

* The original grant award in 2014 of \$783,805 from the PennDOT MTF Fund allowed the Borough to schedule construction of **Phase 2** (the Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing Intersection) for 2016. The Borough-BOSS and the Berks County Redevelopment Authority began working on property acquisition and final engineering and secured PennDOT's agreement to relocate the main Penn Avenue intersection and signalization in conjunction with their "Betterment Project" scheduled from Sinking Spring to Womelsdorf beginning in 2016.

* The Borough & BCRA have 'let' the contract to raze structures on five properties in October 2016 in anticipation of constructing new approach roads to the realigned intersection.

* PennDOT has chosen to start construction on their Betterment Project in 2016 but has decided to begin at Womelsdorf meaning that construction in Sinking Spring will be delayed until 2017.

* **Phase 3-1** is the initial construction of a new east/west retail and through traffic street located about 150 feet south and parallel to Penn Avenue. This construction will compel the removal of Krick Avenue, a local residential street and the removal of 15-20 private homes located there.

* The unexpected timing of the award of \$1.1 Million dollars toward construction of Phase 3-1 changes the dynamic of both projects (Phase 2 and Phase 3-1).

- Bob, Sam, Brian Hoffa (Council) and Mike Hart (Borough Manager) met on July 12th to review how best to work with both projects and with both grant awards which combined total close to \$1.9 Million dollars.
- The principle BOSS 2020 strategy is first, two win approval from PennDOT to utilize AASHTO regulations to build the new approach roads for Phase 2. Using these regulations, the engineers can then proceed to design both Phase 2 and Phase 3-1 to be constructed simultaneously as one combined project. This will save a large amount of local match funding for the two grants combined and greatly simplify the permitting process.
- If the Borough-BOSS is successful at winning PennDOT approval, then we would request CFA-DCED approval to combine the two projects.
- Sam Loth is currently writing another MTF grant funding application for **Phase 3 Segment 2** of the Columbia Avenue Extension. This application will be submitted by July 31, 2016.
- If the Borough, BOSS 2020, PennDOT, DCED and the Berks County RA can successfully cooperate to schedule joint construction of Phase 2 and Phase 3-1 for FY 2017-2019, then there is a high expectation that the final Phase 3-2 would be funded. This would complete the secondary link between the east and west central business district traffic corridors making it possible to move up construction of the last and most difficult **Phase 4** of the infrastructure plan, the realignment of the Penn/Shillington/Mull intersection.

- This would have profound positive effect on the BOSS 2020 Committee's plan to market the newly available land in the CBD for a New Town Center redevelopment and create newly configured commercial land for expanding the development in the completed **Phase 1** Spring Market Center.

BOSS Phase 4 Penn/Shillington/Mull Intersection

- Bob Ludgate stated that The PennDOT local MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) which is the Reading Area Transportation Sub-committee (RATS) has approved the listing of Sinking Spring's **Phase 4** Intersection realignment project on the updated Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) which runs from 2017 to 2028.
- The first activity is to begin Preliminary Engineering scheduled for October 2018. This first activity is funded with \$448,000 for engineering.
- The primary BOSS 2020 strategy for Phase 4 is to move the start date for engineering up by one year to October 2017. This would be helpful however, the goal is to complete Phase 4 as soon as possible. The redevelopment of the New Town Center is of paramount importance to begin realizing some return on the Borough's multi-million dollar investment in revitalization.
- The BOSS Committee consensus is that PennDOT cannot begin construction on **Phase 4 until Phase 3 is completed**. This is because Phase 3 can be used as an alternative east/west through route while Penn Avenue is being reconstructed.
- A Secondary strategy is to convince the State to allow for a **P-3 (Private-Public-Partnership)** to build Phase 4. The P-3 would include a private developer who would build Phase 4 presumably to further the developer's time-table on a New Town Center revitalization project. The private developer would agree to receive a delayed reimbursement of funding from PennDOT for building Phase 4 in return for a pre-arranged financial consideration and the developer's ability to control making the infrastructure ready for his/her revitalization project.
- A Third Strategy is to convince PennDOT to support the submission to the Federal Government of a "**FAST Program**" **grant application**. The FAST Program is designed to move multi-modal construction projects forward at an accelerated pace in order to alleviate and/or overcome bottlenecks in the 'National Freight Delivery' system. Sinking Spring is the only municipality in Pennsylvania that has a Federally designated Multi-modal 'Industrial' Connector, PA10L, Columbia Avenue between Mountain Home Road and Penn Avenue. The FAST Program would fund Phase 4 on a fast-track.
- Robert Hughes (McDonalds-ED) and partner Lee May spoke to the issue of access to their McDonalds Restaurant which was rebuilt in 2012 according to the footprint of the Official Map infrastructure plan. They asked how the completion of Phase 3-2 would affect the ability of vehicles to access the restaurant property?
- Bob Ludgate answered that BOSS 2020 would recommend that McDonalds Corporation traffic engineers review the proposed roadway and its ingress/egress to the property.
- Sam Loth said that both Bob and he have worked together on this kind of project before and have been successful at planning for this type of concern. He referred to the West Reading Penn Avenue project in 2004-2007.
- Bob added that part of the strategy for the CBD is to improve pedestrian traffic in the model which is virtually non-existent now.
- Robert Hughes agreed that he and his partners will remain active in the BOSS 2020 planning and that he wants to remain supportive of the community's efforts to improve.

PennDOT Transportation Enhancements & Keystone Communities Grant Projects

- Bob Ludgate updated the Committee on the \$346,000 PennDOT TE Grant and the \$275,000 DCED Keystone Communities Grant.
- First, in 2017 and 2018 the new sidewalk and curbing that now does not exist will be built on the south side of Penn Avenue in the 4400 Block using the \$75,000 from the DCED KC Grant allocated for that purpose.

- Second, in 2017 and 2018 improvements to two (2) intersections with curb extensions (bump-outs), new crosswalks and other improvements for pedestrian safety will be built using funds from the TE grant award.
- Third, the widening of sidewalks and improvements to storm water systems near South Hull Street in the 3900 Block of Penn Avenue cannot be built because of the needs of PennDOT and its oversight on State roads.
- Sam Loth has suggested that, instead of widening the sidewalk, BOSS 2020 should ask PPL to remove the utility pole that is causing the problem. This may be a solution. The Committee directed Sam to proceed on this issue.
- Bob suggested to the Committee that the monies associated with the 3900 Block be redirected to the intersection work at Columbia Avenue, thereby reducing the Borough's share of costs.
- Sam will make that request of DCED only after a firm plan is in place for the intersection.

2016 SSB/BOSS Action Plan

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

PPL Transmission Line Issue

- The electric utility has proposed to build a new (secondary) transmission line connecting two major east/west lines, one in Spring Township and the other in Sinking Spring Borough. In order to complete this link, PPL would add an above ground line north/south in the golf course property along Broad Street, across Penn Avenue and through the center of the proposed New Town Center to the RR tracks.
- On July 7th, Borough Council met and heard testimony from the BOSS 2020 Committee and from several homeowners and residents of the Borough and Spring Township, all in opposition to this proposal.
- Senator David Argall and Representative Jim Cox co-signed a letter to the PPL CEO strongly opposing this plan.
- BOSS 2020 has drafted a letter to PPL requesting a meeting of the two parties to cooperatively resolve this issue.
- After discussion, the BOSS Committee directed Sam Loth to present the letter to Borough Council requesting permission to proceed with its action.

Financial Report for the Action Plan

- Preparing for the presentation to Borough Council on the PPL issue, Sam Loth realized that the report on finances for the 4-Phased project can be used as a report for prospective developers. He requested that both Bernie Campbell and Jim Adams assist him with updating the Investment & Outcomes Report prepared in 2009-2010. The Committee agreed.
- Jim Adams suggested that, as part of an overall packet, that BOSS conduct a "Projected Load Study" for the Borough's CBD.
- Jim further reminded the Committee that GREP (Greater Reading Economic Partnership) is the go-to organization that can help market the New Town Center proposal.
- Lisa Gantner added that there are significant concerns about the matching funds required for the large grants BOSS 2020 is winning for the Borough. She mentioned that there are discussions about investment and loan instruments and in particular, she was attracted to "Green Bonds". The Committee asked Sam Loth to research this.
- Sam said that the CMAQ air quality program could possibly help with some funding and that an Economic Impact Analysis as suggested could be very helpful.
- Bob Ludgate said that rates for construction and building are very low at this time and the Borough and BOSS need to take advantage of the favorable climate.

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 completed
- 4902 Penn - Saunders (Phase 1 Complete). Phase 2 under development.
- 4130-32 Penn - Leiby under development
- 4056 Penn - Guinther under development

Larger Projects for 2016

- 3419-21 Penn - Glass (Full rehabilitation) Scheduled for September
- 4052 Penn - Walley (Full rehabilitation) Possible for August/September

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.

Gateways & Landscaping

- Julianne Schneider, Penn State Extension urban forester will attend the August 18, 2016 BOSS 2020 Meeting to discuss the proposed SSB programs.

Penn Avenue Banners

- Brian Hoffa and Lisa Gantner will manage this project.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, August 18, 2016 at 7:00 PM
Borough Hall