



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
AUGUST 18, 2016

Call to Order

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

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Bernie Campbell (VP-ED), Brian Hoffa (Council-ED), Merlin Weaver (Realtors Assoc.-P), Joe Eways, II (Property Representative-P), Bob Ludgate, Ludgate Engineering Corporation (LEC) and Sam Loth, Community Development Services (CDS).

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

Guests: Jan and John Roland (Residents-PPL Issue) and Ken Peffley (SSB Resident).

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Bernie Campbell to approve the Meeting Minutes as presented for July 21, 2016.

Second by Merlin Weaver. Motion Approved unanimously.

Treasurers Report

- Dave Meas was not present for the meeting.
- Sam Loth reported that Dave & Debbie Meas have posted a farewell closing notice for their business, Hair on the Avenue at 3459 Penn Avenue, Sinking Spring as of August 13, 2016.
- Chuck Coleman noted that Dave and Debbie have been traveling back and forth to property in Phoenix, AZ for several years and the closure is not unexpected.
- Bob Ludgate added that Dave's presence on the BOSS 2020 Committee and in the community will be missed.
- Sam said that he will work with Dave to close out Dave's responsibilities as Treasurer for BOSS 2020 and can keep the records for the Committee while it searches for a replacement Treasurer.
- Chuck Coleman asked those present if there were any suggestions to replace Mr. Meas?
- Bob suggested that Lisa Gantner may be willing to accept since she already does this work for the Recreation Commission.
- Bernie Campbell suggested that Jim Adams would be a good Treasurer.
- Sam said he will contact both Lisa and Jim by phone to discuss the opening and that he will request other suggestions from the core group of BOSS 2020 members.

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

PPL Proposed Transmission Line in the CBD

BOSS 2020 opposes a new 'secondary' PPL transmission line to be constructed above ground on a route from Spring Township southward along Broad Street, over Penn Avenue to the RR tracks directly through the center of the proposed New Town Center.

BOSS 2020 Response

- BOSS received approval from Borough Council to send a letter to PPL objecting to the proposal and suggesting a PPL/BOSS/Borough representatives sit-down meeting to attempt a resolution to the issue.
- Borough Council directed BOSS 2020 to request assistance with the meeting from Senator David Argall's office. BOSS 2020 contacted Jon Hopcraft, the Senator's Legislative Aide for assistance with arranging the meeting.
- Jon phoned Sam Loth to report that the Senator's office has made an arrangement to meet with PPL representatives in conjunction with Spring Township on Tuesday, August 23rd in Harrisburg. He recommended that neither Sinking Spring Borough nor BOSS 2020 should contact anyone further until after this meeting has occurred. Jon will report to Sam on any desired next moves, if necessary.
- Sam Loth asked John and Jan Roland (Guests) if their neighborhood group, "Citizens Against State Hill-Berkshire Transmission Line", which was formed to combat this proposal, had spoken to PPL. John responded that no, the group was establishing a Website and Facebook page but had not spoken with PPL.
- Bob Ludgate explained that any solution arrived at between PPL, the Neighborhood Group and the BOSS 2020 Committee should be comprehensive. BOSS 2020 will not act narrowly within its own self-interest but rather, will act broadly to resolve this issue.
- John Roland asked whether it would be beneficial for the individual neighbors involved in the group to contact the Senator's office?
- Bob responded that no, this would not be necessary at this time. Bob asked Sam to contact Jon Hopcraft to insure that the Roland's receive an email notice of the outcome at the PPL/Senator's/Spring Township meeting. Sam agreed.
- Joe Eways asked whether PPL had been made aware of the large public investment in the SSB Revitalization Project?
- Bob said that Sam had developed the report on monies publicly invested at the local, county and state levels. Sam said that if required, he would present the report to PPL at any subsequent meeting.
- Brian Hoffa said that he had asked whether there was a possibility to bury the new transmission line? He said that PPL responded yes, they would be willing to bury the line but that the budget assigned to the project could not sustain that extra cost. The additional cost would have to be passed on to rate payers. Brian further said that all rate payers had absorbed the cost of the Cabela's project so why not this project as well.
- Sam agreed with Brian. The company is a public utility and therefore, all expansion and improvement projects *should* be borne by the entire base of rate payers.
- Joe asked whether the right-of-way for the transmission line would remain the same if it were to be buried? No one knew the answer to this question. Sam will research the question.
- Merlin Weaver said that he uploaded the news story on PPL and the transmission line to a website called www.nextdoor.com which is a free private website for local neighborhoods. He said that there has been feedback on the issue right away.
- Finally, Sam asked John and Jan Roland to email him the new addresses for the Website and Facebook page and that he will see that the BOSS Committee has access to and signs the online petition to PPL. He will also post the information on the BOSS 2020 website.

BOSS 2020 Website

- Sam Loth took the opportunity to report to the Committee that new videos and content have been posted to the www.boss2020.org website.

Greening & Tree Tending - Julianne Schieffer - Certified Urban Forester

- Sam introduced Ms. Schieffer to the BOSS 2020 Committee and said that both he and Brian Hoffa had met Ms. Schieffer at the Tree Tenders workshop series at the PA Horticultural Society (PHS) headquarters in Philadelphia earlier this year.
- Julianne proceeded to present information on grants and funding that the State government has reintroduced since Governor Wolf's administration began.
- First, a "Tree Planting" program that has been a standard grant has been reinstated. The maximum value of this grant is \$10,000 and has a 50-50 match component. Forms for the grant application are available online. One requirement is for the community to already have performed a mapping of all street trees in the municipality. Two estimates for planting trees are required in the application. A new representative at the Penn State extension service is Shea Szwerwer at c-szwerwer@pa.gov. Julianne also stated that she is an appropriate contact for all programs and that she can also approve proposals for projects.
- Second, a new grant program is "Innovation Grants". Presently there is little known as guidelines are still being developed. At this time there is no value assigned to the grant program. One of the categories of activities for this grant is "Green Infrastructure and Sustainability" which seems likely to apply to the Sinking Spring strategic plan. There is a match for this program at 50-50 however, this can include in-kind and volunteer hours which can be valued at anywhere from \$20 to \$40 dollars per hour depending on the project.
- *The deadlines for both of these grant programs is September 30, 2016.*
- Both Brian and Sam agree that the first step is to establish a 'Tree Commission' in the Borough. Brian asked Julianne to assist the Borough/BCA in developing a data base of local tree tenders and other individuals who would be willing to form the new organization. Julianne said that she would assist with both the Tree Commission and the Innovation Grant application.
- Sam stated that an application for both programs could be submitted in the 2017 funding round.
- Julianne added that the Berks County Conservancy has a representative, Larry, who can help the SSB/BCA team with the Master Gardeners in Berks County. A second group is the Penn State Extension, Beth Finley.
- Chuck Coleman added that the landscaper and gardener who supported the BOSS 2020 Planter Project are also designated Master Gardeners.
- BOSS 2020 could also speak with the Sinking Spring Historical Society. Often, these groups maintain information on the legacy of trees that have been planted over time within a community.
- Brian asked Julianne if SSB could sponsor a local Tree Tenders class? Julianne answered that yes, it can but there is a minimum of 20 that must register for the class and that the Borough would need to designate a site to plant one tree as part of the process.
- Bob Ludgate said that when intersections along Penn Avenue are rebuilt, there will be 'slices' of leftover land that become public and would be available for public greening including landscaping and new trees.
- Julianne explained that the Borough would benefit from having its own 'Tree Ordinance' because those municipalities that do NOT have an ordinance fall under the State Code. Most communities do not realize that the State Code requires the municipality to be responsible for the maintenance of all street trees within its borders.

PennDOT Betterment Project Progress

- Bob Ludgate (LEC) reported that both Water and Gas utilities are relocating lines under Penn Avenue between Columbia Avenue and Shillington Road in anticipation of the PennDOT Betterment project that is now being constructed from Womelsdorf to Sinking Spring.
- A protective fence has been erected around the four properties from the intersection of Columbia & Penn Avenues westward to make the properties ready for demolition.
- Presently workers are removing asbestos from the Bitner law office building. Once this hazardous work is completed, the contractors will begin razing the four buildings starting with the law office. Next will be the former Borough Hall building and then the remaining two

structures. The total contract includes other structures which are scheduled to be completed by the end of October 2016.

Phase 2 (Penn/Columbia/Cacoosing Intersection) & Phase 3-1 (Columbia Ave Extension)

- Bob Ludgate has been working with PennDOT to win their approval for constructing the new Phase 2 intersection and the new Phase 2 approach roads designated as 'local roads' instead of 'major highways'. This will allow SSB to build new approach roads with less lanes and to a lower, more relaxed standard. For example, the approach road of Cacoosing Avenue can have two stop lanes instead of three at the signal and the Columbia Avenue approach road can combine the right turn lane with a straight ahead movement instead of building two separate lanes.
- Currently, PennDOT won't relax a standard to allow for trucks with a WB67 designation to make right turns. The WB67 truck is the longest allowed by law in Pennsylvania and PennDOT insists that the new intersection be built to allow this truck to make a right turn "*right lane to right lane*".
- Bob is also trying to get PennDOT to agree to build the new intersection in its entirety and not include SSB in the construction. This would save the Borough a significant amount of funds.
- To date, Bob has the agreement of the staff engineers/planners to use a more relaxed standard and is working on an official designation. The PennDOT design group has also agreed to allow two-phased construction of the intersection:
 - a) Intersection essentials in 2017 by PennDOT.
 - b) Phase 2 Approach Roads and the link to Phase 3-1 in 2018 by SSB.

Combining Phase 2 and Phase 3-1

- Sam Loth said that he and Bob Ludgate agree that the Borough could realize additional substantial savings in construction spending if both PennDOT and DCED would allow the Borough to construct Phases 2 and 3-1 simultaneously in 2018.
- Joe Eways asked if the two agency grant programs have any conflicts that could prevent that from happening?
- Bob said that there are two separate programs but that the goals are essentially the same.
- Sam explained the current strategy to achieve the goal of combining the projects:
 - a) Get an executed contract from DCED for Phase 3-1 as soon as possible.
 - b) Win approval for a lower designated standard Phase 2 project from PennDOT.
 - c) After the agencies provide approvals, then approach both to combine Phases 2 & 3-1.

BOSS Phase 3-2 Columbia Avenue Extension 2016 MTF Grant Application

- Sam Loth reported that the application was submitted on July 29, 2016 two days before the deadline. He further stated that because of the time constraint to prepare the grant, last year's budget outline was used because there wasn't enough time to develop an entire new budget. The project is essentially the same but because total costs of the Phase 3-1 and Phase 3-2 are different, DCED has asked for several adjustments to the submitted budget.
- Sam and Bob will review the DCED requests and work to satisfy them tonight after the meeting is over. We will submit them to DCED in draft form for review.

BOSS Phase 4 Penn/Shillington/Mull Intersection

- Bob Ludgate said that the SSB Phase 4 Intersection Realignment Project has been approved and listed on the local Transportation Improvement Plan developed by the RATS Committee earlier this spring and summer. He further said that the State TIP should also list the project.
- Bernie Campbell used his laptop to search online for the listing but could not find SSB on the list. Bob said that its possible the new list isn't posted yet but that he is confident of our approval.

Phase 4 Intersection Construction Using a P-3 with the Spring Market Center Owners

- On July 27th Bob Ludgate, Sam Loth, Brian Hoffa and Mike Hart met with David Hill and Gary Davies, partners/owners of Spring Market Center. The two partners brought along their leasing agent Laura Cardner.
- During the wide ranging conversation, the partners expressed an interest in supporting the BOSS 2020 Phase 4 intersection construction plan. However, because of their schedule to install four or more new tenants into the existing center in 2018, they would like to discuss an accelerated road construction schedule in order to better fit into the further development of their property.
- They have suggested that their company may be willing to partner with the Borough and State to privately build Phase 4 on behalf of the public entities and be repaid for their investment on an extended schedule. By constructing Phase 4 themselves, they can plan to build out their center to fit the public roads, ingress, etc.
- Bob Ludgate has arranged a meeting on Monday, August 29th in Harrisburg with a representative of the Governor's Action Team, Senator Argall, Representative Jim Cox, PennDOT Secretary Leslie Richards, the Cape Asset Management partners and BOSS representatives. The goal is to convince the State to agree to a P-3 and construct Phase 4 in an advanced schedule period.
- Brian Hoffa said that it is important to involve Spring Market Center owners because as they build out the footprint with new tenants, BOSS 2020 does not want the properties facing into the center but rather facing out towards the new roadways. This creates access for passing traffic, both vehicle and pedestrian. The Center partners agree with this perspective.
- Bob said that during the meeting, he will bring up the idea of applying to the Federal "FAST" program for highway funds as one idea to overcome the industrial freight bottlenecks that exist in Sinking Spring.

BOSS 2020 Project Financial Impact Report Updated

- Sam Loth thanked Bernie Campbell for updating the Financial Impact Report on behalf of the BOSS/SSB Action Plan. This is one component that is critical to include in the Borough's New Town Center promotional introductory package.
- Sam pointed out that the Report will also serve a second important function; to provide critical information on the financial outlook for the Borough as it weighs options on how to finance the overall BOSS 2020 Official Map Infrastructure Plan.
- Bob said there are two alternatives. 1) Finance the project and extend the financial impact over a long period i.e. 30 years. 2) Continue to "Pay-as-you-Go" which shortens the financial burden time frame and causes greater pressure on Borough operations.
- Sam suggested that research be completed on the costs involved to the school district over time and the same for the County. In the current report, those two line items are at 0 which is first, unrealistic and second, makes the report appear not to have been completed.
- Joe Eways will research Lower Heidelberg's Legacy Project which does include residential development in addition to the commercial development. He will review what impact this has had on the School District.
- Bernie Campbell will ask the SD for their data on residential development and its impact.
- Sam will contact the County for guidance on that line item.

Penn Avenue Facade Improvement Grant Program

- Sam Loth reported that there are four new projects since July 1st. They are all in the western end of Penn Avenue, 4205, 4216, 4040 and 3976. Two projects are commercial.
- Phase 2 of the project at 4209 Penn Avenue is now ready to begin.
- Forrest Glass' project for his business properties at 3419-3421 is set to begin during the first week of September. This is a total rehabilitation of the twin structures and the eastern facade on the through street alley.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, September 15, 2016 at 7:00 PM
Borough Hall