



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
NOVEMBER 17, 2016

Call to Order

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

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Lisa Gantner (Council/Treasurer-P), Brian Hoffa (Council Economic Chair-ED), Robert Metzgar (Wilson SD-ED), Joe Eways (Sickafus-ED), Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment Authority), Bob Ludgate, (Ludgate Engineering Corporation [LEC] and Sam Loth, Community Development Services [CDS].

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

Guests: Lindsay O'Laughlin (Reading Eagle) and Gary Intelisano (Resident).

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- **Motion by Brian Hoffa** to approve the Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2016. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motioned passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

- Lisa Gantner said that, according to records dated in August 2016, the balance in the general fund is \$3,190.00.
- Sam Loth explained that bank statements and more are placed in the Revitalization slot of the Borough's mail slots for Council. Usually, Borough staff will place the BOSS mail with copies of our Agenda and Minutes for each meeting.
- Ms. Gantner said that she has two checks for \$100 each and isn't certain what they are for.
- Mr. Loth said they are payments for the advertising placemats now being used at Borough restaurants. Mr. Loth said he will contact Ms. Gantner to help her with the paper work.
- Approval of a Treasurer's Report is tabled until the next meeting of BOSS 2020.

Joint Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

- The Joint Comprehensive Plan includes West Reading, Wyomissing, Spring Township and Sinking Spring.
- Wyomissing has generated a call to update the Plan in 2017 and has hosted the formation of a representative committee for this purpose.
- Sinking Spring's representatives are Mike Hart (Borough Manager), TJ Huckelberry (Borough Council) and Chuck Coleman (Planning Commission Chairman).
- Chuck Coleman reported that updating the Joint Comprehensive Plan protects all municipalities from unwanted uses in specific areas.

- Sam Loth explained that an individual municipality such as Sinking Spring Borough by law must accommodate all legal 'uses' (activities). This is impractical for a small Borough, hence the joint plan. This allows for a broader geographic area to allow for the sum total of uses. For example, a community like West Reading acting alone would need to have a zoning area for agricultural uses. With the joint plan, one of the other municipalities can handle that use.
- The Wyomissing and Wilson School Districts also have representatives on the Joint Committee.
- Mr. Coleman said the Committee will update statistics as one major goal.
- Mr. Loth said that he wants a copy of the full membership for the Committee. He said that this Committee is a valuable connection to surrounding communities. If we are to be successful in revitalizing Sinking Spring's central business district (CBD), we are going to need the support of these communities.
- Mr. Loth pointed out that the PPL Transmission Line issue is an example of being able to turn to neighboring communities for support.
- Bob Ludgate said that when Sinking Spring was conducting the LUPTAP Study in 2009, the former Wyomissing Borough Manager stated that, "Solving Sinking Spring's traffic congestion will help all surrounding communities."
- Joe Eways asked regarding the PPL issue, if Sinking Spring is able to assemble the support of all the other communities?
- Mr. Loth suggested that BOSS 2020 and Borough Council should make "support against the PPL line project" a strong issue with our three joint Committee representatives. He said that having this opportunity to voice our needs and wants to the joint Committee is very important.
- Brian Hoffa said that he has a letter drafted by Mr. Loth that is addressed to PPL outlining the BOSS/Borough Council's position and that this letter could serve as a template to be edited and then presented to the joint Committee as a way to raise the Borough's Revitalization Project profile and to win support. The goal would be to have the letter signed by the joint Committee and sent to PPL.
- Mr. Hoffa mentioned that any correspondence with PPL should include their Sr. Right-of-Way Specialist, Douglas Grossman.
- Mr. Ludgate said that one of our BOSS goals for this joint Committee should be to "Make the Sinking Spring Plan a Regional Project". We should endeavor to get the other Boroughs and Spring Township to back us up. He also suggested that the City of Reading Planning Commission should be another agency to secure support from. He said that the message could be "If PPL gets away with this project in Sinking Spring, then all other towns are at risk as well."

PPL State Hill-Berkshire Transmission Line

- Sam Loth said that there has been no word nor any mail from PPL since the meeting with PPL representatives on September 22nd at Borough Hall. The Borough and BOSS have been waiting for documents that explain several alternative routes that PPL said they investigated and the various analysis methods they used to conclude that other routes were not viable.
- Bob Ludgate said that one alternative discussed was the "Snyder Road" route which was a 100% buried line and that the Borough had specifically asked for this information.
- One letter arrived from PPL stating that the Cacoosing Creek route that had been previously rejected was reviewed a second time on behalf of a request by the Borough. However, the letter was dated September 22nd which was the same date that the request was made at a joint meeting between PPL, the Borough and BOSS 2020. This was the same date that PPL staged its 'Open House' activity. BOSS wonders how it was possible for PPL to conduct a thorough review of the route from 2:30 PM to 5:00 PM as they were preparing for their Open House? The BOSS Committee suspects that no review was conducted but rather PPL used its previous findings and claimed that they revisited the route.
- The BOSS Committee will research the following:
 - > The feasibility and cost of launching a legal opposition to the PPL project.
 - > What is the time frame for PPL to determine the need to seek Eminent Domain.
 - > What is the step-by-step process.
 - > How does the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) become involved.

- Mr. Loth and Mr. Hoffa are mounting a letter writing campaign to begin ramping up the activity on this issue. Mr. Hoffa provided Mr. Loth with his edits on the draft letter. Mr. Loth will revise the letter and return it to Mr. Hoffa for his signature.
- Mr. Loth will draft a letter from BOSS 2020 to PPL with Charles Coleman's signature as President.
- The following is the Public Utilities Commission website address:
www.puc.pa.gov

BOSS 5-YR Strategic Projects & Financing Plan

- In June 2016, Sam Loth, Mike Hart and Lisa Gantner (Brian Hoffa was absent) met to discuss the overall impact of the Revitalization effort on the Borough and it's ability to finance it's match obligations for grants as well as provide the funding needed to meet the gaps for property acquisition and many other costs of the Official Map infrastructure plan.
- The group determined that it would be a great help to Council if BOSS could provide a time line over the next several years on various grants, projects and estimated costs. This way, Council would be able to use the report to plan.
- Sam Loth has drafted the 5-Year Strategic Plan. He has distributed the latest Draft #6 to the core active members of the BOSS 2020 Committee. He is asking for comments and suggestions to improve the report for Borough Council's December 1st meeting.
- Brian Hoffa pointed out that nowhere in the draft report is there a mention of further assistance from the County. He suggested that the Commissioners, the Redevelopment Authority, the Planning Commission and the Industrial Development Authority all have resources that might be tapped by the Borough to support the various initiatives planned over the next 5 years.
- Mr. Loth will add these comments into the report once he researches what resources might be appropriate.
- Mr. Loth asked all BOSS 2020 members to review the Plan and e-mail suggestions and/or edits to him in a timely manner so that he can incorporate them into the report. Mr. Loth would like to e-mail a final draft of the report to members of Borough Council for their review prior to the December 1st meeting. The e-mail version could go out as early as Monday, November 28th.

New Town Center Plan

- Bob Ludgate reported that he and Mike Hart will be meeting with the Western Berks Ambulance Corps shortly to discuss the Corps possibly moving into the New Town Center project. He will report on the outcome of the meeting.

New Town Center Planning Committee G&O

- Sam Loth explained that a Planning Committee needs to be created to work with Council, BOSS, Property Owners, Developers and others to determine many aspects of what the New Town Center will look like. For example, he said that the New Columbia Avenue Extension will carry heavy truck traffic from Columbia Avenue to Shillington Road and vice versa. How will the bypass road be designed to minimize its affect on pedestrian traffic in the downtown shopping district? This new Committee will need to become active in early 2017.

TIF District Timeline

- The Berks County Redevelopment Authority will be responsible for creating and overseeing the proposed Tax Increment Financing District. This is the tool recommended as the strategy to pay the Borough back for its up front financing of property acquisition, clearing and preparation of the tract for development.
- Joe Eways asked when the TIF District would officially begin its role?
- Ken Pick explained that the first step in creating the TIF is to appoint representatives from all three (3) entities (Borough-School District-County). Therefore, he will discuss this with the Wilson School District Superintendent and the County Commissioners to begin the process. Bob Ludgate will inform the Borough Council.

- Mr. Pick said that the official start date for the TIF would be when all properties have been acquired and the tax base is at its lowest. This strategy maximizes the value of the TIF tax receivables and allows for the widest flexibility for the three taxing bodies.
- Mr. Pick went on to say that the TIF start date then would be dependent on how soon Phase 4 of the Official Map plan can be implemented.

BOSS Phase 4 (Penn-Mull-Shillington Intersection Realignment)

- Bob Ludgate stated that new Federal regulations may change the thinking on whether Federal Tax Credits can be used to pay for a proposed P-3 (Private-Public-Partnership) development of Phase 4.
- Mr. Pick said that the properties to be acquired along Krick Avenue for construction of Phase 3-1 must begin as soon as possible.
- Mr. Ludgate said that Borough Council has agreed to identifying and designating the official Appraiser to be used.
- Mr. Eways added that the Borough will operate with a loss of tax revenue from those properties that will be acquired and razed along Krick Avenue and Shillington Road while the roadways and intersections are realigned. Mr. Eways added that property owners along the south side of the 3700-3800 Blocks of Penn Avenue could move to reassess the properties thereby causing a further loss to the tax base temporarily.
- Brian Hoffa said that this is why the Borough needs a time line from BOSS on the 5-Year Strategic Plan. It will help Council to plan properly.
- Mr. Ludgate said that, in his opinion, the private developers who own the Spring Market Center would rather build Phase 4 rather than wait for PennDOT to build it. If a P-3 builds it, Phase 4 could be completed by 2018-2019 while if PennDOT builds it, the project would take until 2023-2024 to complete.
- Mr. Ludgate asked STV Traffic Engineers to write a proposal that would build Phase 3-1 (New Columbia Avenue Extension). This proposal would include \$150,000 for an engineering budget. If approved, the proposal would advance the overall plan as a "Design Exception" which would allow for an accelerated project.

BOSS Construction Phase 2 & 3-1

- Bob Ludgate said that STV is currently working on engineering plans to revise Phase 2 in order to build Phase 2 & 3-1 simultaneously.
- Robert Metzgar added that, as the Wilson School Board liaison, he is being asked two questions repeatedly; 1) What is the Time Line for the Revitalization Project and 2) How is the PPL issue going to affect the outcome of the Revitalization Plan.
- Mr. Hoffa said that the time line should be written into the 5-Year Strategic Plan (TIF District) and that BOSS 2020 and the Borough are still developing a strategy for the PPL Transmission Line issue.

BOSS 2020 Facade Improvement Grant Reimbursement Program

- Sam Loth reported to the Committee that in 2016-2017 a total of 10 Projects had been completed with a total combined reinvestment by property owners of \$47,140.57.
- The total amount of grant funding disbursed during this period equaled \$23,321.29.
- The reinvestment amounts into properties noted above do not include private reinvestment that is not linked to the grant program. For example, a residential property may be improved facing Penn Avenue with investments listed. However, that same property may also include reinvestments on three other facades (both sides and rear) that are not listed here. This dollar amount is being investigated.
- Currently, there are four (4) more projects that are underway totaling a private investment of \$47,714.76 with grants to be issued totaling \$21,362.50.
- After these last 4 projects receive their reimbursement grants, the balance of funding on hand for the program totals \$5,316.21.

- Therefore, it is the recommendation of Sam Loth, BOSS 2020 Coordinator that BOSS request from Council a Resolution to apply to PA DCED for a second round of facade grant funding totaling \$50,000.
- **MOTION by Brian Hoffa to request a Resolution from SSB Council permitting an application for Round 2 Facade Grant funding totaling \$50,000. Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion passed unanimously.

2016-2020 BOSS/Borough Action Plan

- Sam Loth distributed a Website Progress Report from Kendra Giangiulio, Internet & Website Administrator.
- The boss2020.org website is up and running and the following pages are active; Home, Mission & Vision, Organization, Borough History, Meeting Minutes and BOSS 2020 News.
- A Facebook page is also up and running.
- The next project for the website is to start a Business Listing for all operating businesses in Sinking Spring Borough.
- Bob Ludgate added that BOSS should post the 2016 Marketing Study for the New Town Center on the website.
- Brian Hoffa also suggests that the 5-Year Strategic Plan be posted once it is reviewed and accepted by the Borough Council.
- Mr. Hoffa would also like the Market Study to be printed and bound for use as a marketing tool. He also suggested that a copy be sent to The Reading Eagle.

Old Business

- Brian Hoffa asked BOSS 2020 to research and design a large sign for the corner of Penn & Columbia Avenues to express the Borough's Revitalization Plan.
- Lisa Gantner said that she has a small design challenge underway for a simple banner design with "Sinking Spring" in the design. She also believes the banners should be sponsored as it has been offered in the past. She suggested that Signs & More in Shillington might be able to handle the project.

New Business

- Sam Loth stated that he would write a short story on the Facade grant program for the Fall 2016 Borough Newsletter. He will submit the story on Friday, November 18th.

Adjourn

- **MOTION by Brian Hoffa to adjourn the meeting. Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion approved unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

NEXT MEETING

**Thursday, December 15, 2016 @ 7:00 PM
Borough Council Chambers**