



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
MARCH 16, 2017

Call to Order

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

Present: Charles Coleman (President-D), Lisa Gantner (Treasurer-D), Brian Hoffa (Council Economic Chair-ED), Merlin Weaver (Realtor-ED), Ken Pick (Berks Redevelopment Authority), Sam Loth (Community Development Services) and Bob Ludgate (Ludgate Engineering).

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

Guests: Robin Jasinski (Resident) and Keith Dmochowski (Reading Eagle).

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- **Motion by Lisa Gantner** to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 16, 2017.
Second by Brian Hoffa. Motioned passed.

Treasurer's Report

- Lisa Gantner reported a balance in the General Fund totaling \$3,276.88 as of February 28, 2017.
- Sam Loth asked whether BOSS 2020 had renewed their annual membership with the Greater Reading Chamber and Economic Development Corporation (new name as of 01/01/17)? Lisa answered that yes, the BOSS organization renewed their membership.
- Sam wondered if BOSS 2020 was taking full advantage of the resources of the Chamber after Dave Meas' departure from Reading last September? He suggested that BOSS may want to contact the Chamber to review the various Committees and other activities of the Chamber.
- Bob Ludgate said that the Chamber is merged with the Greater Berks Development Fund and the Greater Reading Economic Partnership but that each organization still maintained their own structure. The new Executive Director of the umbrella organization is Randy Pierce.

- Merlin Weaver agreed that a review of the Chamber's profile would benefit BOSS. Bob Ludgate wondered if BOSS could somehow access a regional platform for economic development to emphasize the regional aspects of the BOSS 2020 Crossroads Improvement Plan.
- **Motion by Bob Ludgate** to authorize Sam Loth to contact the Chamber and perform a review. Sam would report back to BOSS in April or May. **Second by Lisa Gantner.** Motion passed.
- Sam also asked about whether BOSS and/or the Borough had renewed the annual membership with the PA Downtown Center? He asked whether the Committee still felt that the support services of the PDC were valuable to BOSS?
- Brian Hoffa replied that yes, he believed the membership and resources of PDC were still appropriate and that the Borough has been maintaining the annual membership. Brian asked Sam to check with Mike Hart, Borough Manager about our current status with the PDC. Sam will follow-up.
- **Motion by Brian Hoffa** to approve the March 2017 Treasurer's Report as presented. **Second by Merlin Weaver.** Motion passed.

Committee-of-the-Whole

BOSS Restaurant Placemat Fundraising - Round 3

- Sam Loth reported that he had spoken with Lucille Freeman of Rieck's Printing in West Reading and that Ms. Freeman has been selling advertising for the new placemat since February's meeting. To date she has sold \$1,150 in advertising and that Ms. Gantner should begin receiving checks for payment shortly.
- Ms. Gantner acknowledged that yes, she has received two checks thus far. Ms. Freeman reminded BOSS that the procedure is to deposit the checks in the BOSS account, keep a record of same and each month, generate a check to Rieck's Printing for 40% of the revenues received for advertising within the period.

BOSS Crossroads Improvement Plan - FASTLANE Grant Program

- Bob Ludgate reported that he and Sam Loth attended the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS) Technical Committee meeting on March 2nd and had petitioned for a **Motion** from that Committee to recommend the Sinking Spring project to PennDOT Central as a FASTLANE Grant candidate.
- The Technical Committee responded by **Motioning** to review the Federal Guidelines and Regulations of the FASTLANE Program to ensure that it did not conflict with the RATS Transportation Improvement Plan funding process already in place. They will make a recommendation to the full Committee at a future date.
- The RATS Technical Committee *did* state that they believe the Sinking Spring project start date could be accelerated by one year from October 2018 to October 2017 and that Alan Piper and his staff are authorized to make that recommendation to the full RATS Committee. Bob said that he attended the

full RATS Committee meeting earlier today and that the **Motion** did not happen but that he is confident the action will occur.

- The FASTLANE Grant Program pays for fully 60% of projects it awards. The 60% can include acquisition and disposition of property as well as professional costs i.e. engineering and construction costs. The 40% matching requirement could come from whatever funds PennDOT may allocate for the Phase 4 intersection engineering and construction.
- In order to be considered for the Federal FASTLANE Program, the Sinking Spring project would have to be recommended to PennDOT Central for a final decision to include it. The next application will be due in the fall of 2017.

2017 BOSS 2020 Revitalization Action Plan

- Sam Loth reported that members of the BOSS Committee and Borough Council met with the Berks County Commissioners this afternoon and that the meeting was successful.
- Brian Hoffa said that the Commissioners will sign a letter of support for the Crossroads Improvement Plan as a regional economic development impact and that other agencies should consider funding for the project with that in mind.
- Sam also asked the Commissioners to consider a second CDBG allocation of funding to assist with the acquisition and disposition of private properties in the Phase 4 (Shillington Road) intersection realignment and reconstruction.
- Finally, BOSS requested that the Commissioners consider their own County ADD program for further support of Sinking Spring Borough.
- All requests will be considered when budgeting occurs each year.

Additional Meetings

- Sam reminded the Committee that he was following up on a scheduled meeting with Senator Bob Casey, making initial contact for a meeting with Senator Pat Toomey and US Representatives Costello and Smucker.

Sinking Spring Borough Council - Project Financial Analysis

- The Committee discussed a Financial Analysis report for the benefit of Borough Council and others that would focus on the Crossroads Improvement Plan and provide details on financing, regulatory controls and timing for construction.
- Sam has distributed some preliminary information on financial products and Capital Improvement Plans.
- The Committee directed Sam to contact the PA Economy League about what services they may be able to offer. He will report back at the April 20th BOSS Meeting.

Additional Uses of a Financial Analysis

- Bob Ludgate expressed that a Financial Analysis would be very valuable to potential developers.
- When recruiting tenants, a developer could use the Analysis to help finance retail fit outs.

- Brian Hoffa asked what are the essential concerns of a developer? BOSS should create a tool box with useful incentives.
- Sam Loth pointed to the use of independent retail recruiting companies that specialize. Another resource would be the data held by the PA Downtown Center.
- Bob mentioned Cape Asset Management. What has their experience been with the Spring Market Center?
- Other local resources are our own real estate brokers i.e. Joe Eways, Jim Adams and Merlin Weaver.

Volunteers - Business & Community Alliance (BCA)

- Brian Hoffa asked the Committee for some suggestions on how to inform Sinking Spring residents and other stakeholders about the revitalization and on how to recruit volunteers for the BCA projects?
- Lisa Gantner suggested a Borough Newsletter "box" with information on how to volunteer for projects.
- Merlin Weaver said that using the Borough Facebook page to explain the BCA and the projects plus using the BOSS Facebook page would yield results.
- Bob Ludgate suggested networking, 'face to face' meetings with other residents to talk about the projects.
- Sam Loth reminded the Committee that Julianne Schieffer, a Penn State Urban Forester is willing to hold "Tree Tender" classes in the Borough.
- Brian suggested that the classes be available regionally rather than just for the Borough residents.

PennDOT Penn Avenue Betterment Project

- Chuck Coleman asked about the status of Phases 2 and 3-1 of the Crossroads Improvement Plan as it coordinates with the PennDOT Betterment Project to resurface and improve Penn Avenue?
- Bob Ludgate responded that there is a meeting scheduled between PennDOT and Sinking Spring in Allentown on March 20, 2017 to review gas company utility needs. Once this utility upgrade is completed, PennDOT will rebuild curbs and sidewalks including the BOSS 2020 Project work along Penn Avenue. This also includes the Pedestrian safety work from the 4400 Block to the 3900 Block - new sidewalks, crosswalks, bumpouts, etc.
- Penn Avenue in Sinking Spring including the Phase 2 intersection cuts and signal locations will be constructed this spring and summer 2017.
- The new approach roads to link with the new intersection plus the new entry cut for the Columbia Avenue Extension with the first segment of the Columbia Avenue Extension will be constructed in the spring/summer of 2018.

Old Business

BCA Projects

- Brian Hoffa said that the western Gateway project should include a creek bed and bridge cleanup as well as landscaping on both the north and south sides of Penn Avenue. The existing bus shelter can remain but enhancements can be

considered. Another consideration should include the Sunoco station and the land within that lot.

Land Use Planning Workshop

- Lisa Gantner reported that the Albright College Land Use Planning Workshop was excellent and that BOSS should continue to refer to the 'Complete Streets' program when planning streetscape enhancements.

New Business

- Lisa reported on a new concern of urban designers; new regulations that allow for personal cell phone towers to be installed in the public right-of-way.
- Sam asked to learn more about what a personal cell phone tower is and what the new regulations mean. Research needs to be conducted before more discussion can occur.

Adjourn

Motion by Brian Hoffa to adjourn at 8:30 PM. Second by Chuck Coleman.

Motion passed.

***Next Meeting: Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 7:00 PM
Borough Council Chambers***