



Borough of Sinking Spring
BOSS FORWARD
REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
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SINKING SPRING
BOSS FORWARD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 20, 2022

Call to Order

Bernie Campbell (BOSS VP) called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the Borough of Sinking Spring Council Chambers, 3940 Penn Avenue, 19608.

Present

Bernie Campbell (Vice President-Whirley Drinks-ED)
Lisa Gantner (Treasurer-SSB Recreation-D/SCG)
Brian Hoffa (Member-Chair SSB Econ Comm-P)
Mike Hart (Member-Borough Manager-ED)
Sam Loth (BOSS Coordinator-CDS-ED-D/SCG-P)

Guest

Marshall Pickard (Graphic Designer) SSB Resident
Brian Triest (Stakeholder) Oley, PA Resident

Absent

Merlin Weaver (President-RBAR-ED) A
Robert Metzger (Member-SSB Econ Comm-ED) A
Jaime Perez (Member-Keller/Williams Realtor-P) A

Note: Teams: ED-Economic, D/SCG-Design/Safe-Clean-Green, P-Promotion

A Quorum WAS present.

Approval of Minutes

- **Motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of July 21, 2022 by Brian Hoffa. Second by Mike Hart.** Motion Passed
4 Yea 0 Nay 3 Absent.

Treasurer's Report

- Lisa Gantner: The balance after payments to Marshall Pickard (Website Developer) and LOCUS (Smart Growth America Membership) is \$ 2,752.53. Lisa submitted payment of \$150 for annual membership to LOCUS and requires reimbursement, which check can be signed by Merlin Weaver.

- **Motion to approve the Treasurer’s report from July through October 20, 2022 by Mike Hart. Second by Brian Hoffa.** Motion Passed 4 Yea 0 Nay 3 Absent

PROJECTS

BOSS FORWARD WEBSITE PROJECT

Website Content & Updates

- Sam Loth: Marshall Pickard is in attendance tonight. What is the status of our updated website?
- Marshall Pickard: The website, www.bossforward.org, is posted as a test site at this time. I need to know about content. Much of the existing content is out of date. Who will be editing and providing content?
- Marshall Pickard: The general items such as Meeting Minutes, Publicity Articles, Committee Members, etc. can easily be posted by me at a nominal cost.
- Sam Loth: I can create content for the website however, there is more than a nominal cost. I suggest all members of the BOSS BoD review the test site and provide Marshall with their own comments and suggestions.
- Bernie Campbell: Members could have the opportunity to create their own content for the site with a review and approval for posting by an appointed BOSS member.
- Brian Hoffa: The Sub-committee will discuss new content posting and who/how that can occur. The Sub-committee (Merlin/Robert/Brian) will review options for updated content.

Website Business Directory

- Marshall Pickard: There is a full business directory posted on the old website. There are many listings out of date. Presently there are only a smattering of businesses listed on the test site.
- Sam Loth: What does the website look like to a member of the public that types in our home address?
- Marshall Pickard: The public sees the old website. None of that content has been changed. The old business directory is posted.
- Brian Hoffa: The business directory page should be open to Business Association members only. We need to interest the business community in supporting the overall mission of BOSS Forward.
- Lisa Gantner: What does BOSS offer in return for SSB businesses to join? I don’t think businesses should pay to be listed, at least not now.
- Bernie Campbell: I agree with Lisa, there is not enough current value to businesses. Maybe a general listing that is free and business owners could pay for upgraded listings like links to their business websites.
- Marshall Pickard: Business owners should not pay to be listed. The website must have far more visitation before value will be perceived by owners.
- Sam Loth: I will review my West Reading documents to ascertain what benefits were offered to businesses there. I recall one benefit was business and home delivery of discounted heating oil. That helped business owners save money. There was also a Telecommunications representative from AT&T. He offered a package with phone/credit card terminals and more which benefitted businesses. I will have a report for the BOSS BoD at the November 17, 2022 meeting.
- Sam Loth: I have an excel spreadsheet provided by the Borough which I have updated with additional information such as website addresses. This spreadsheet is about 5 years old.
- Mike Hart: I believe the Borough has an excel spreadsheet of operating businesses that is updated.
- Marshall Pickard: If Mike can provide the updated spreadsheet to Sam, he will add the additional information and provide the edited, updated version for the website.

BOSS Website Fundraising

- Marshall Pickard: Does the BOSS Committee want a “Donate Button” on the website?
- Bernie Campbell: What would be needed?
- Sam Loth: Before a Donate Button can be posted on the website, BOSS must register with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations, a subsidiary of the PA Department of State. The PA Solicitation of Funds for Charitable Purposes Act, 10 P. S. § 162.1 et seq., requires organizations soliciting charitable contributions from Pennsylvania residents to register with the Bureau by filing a form BCO-10 for official approval.
- Lisa Gantner: Sam, provide me with the proper information and I will complete the administration activities.

BOROUGH NEWSLETTER – FALL 2022

BOSS Newsletter Article

- Lisa Gantner: The Borough is requesting a BOSS Newsletter article for the Fall 2022 edition. The new BOSS website could be part of the BOSS article.

BOSS CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (CBD-IIP)

Phase 2 ‘Swing’ & ‘Full’ Construction Project

- Sam Loth: Table discussion on the Phase 2 projects until our next meeting on November 17, 2022.

Phase 3 – Main Street Through-Road (Columbia Avenue to Shillington Road)

- Sam Loth: The goal for Phase 3 is to construct the original BOSS Official Map three-way intersection near the RR tracks that also squares off parcels of land for development. Until this design issue is resolved, no strategic advancements can occur.

Phase 4 PennDOT Redesign of Penn/Shillington/Mull Intersection

- Sam Loth: BOSS has responded to PennDOT’s changes to the Official Map design for the Phase 4 intersection on behalf of the Borough. PennDOT is meeting with the BORO/BOSS on this and other design issues.
 - BOSS Prepared a formal Memorandum for Mike Hart’s signature that emphasized the economic development goals supporting the BOSS “Official Map” road/street design. The Memorandum emphasized recent events including housing development growth, multi-modal safety, an SCTA Mobility Hub within the revitalization zone and more. This Memorandum was distributed on August 20, 2022 to PennDOT and the Berks County Commissioners who agreed to Host meetings between the BORO/BOSS and PennDOT on the issue. Two meetings have been held: October 3rd and 12th.
 - BOSS conducted a Redevelopment Economic Impact Analysis of the proposed PennDOT intersection redesign. The analysis concluded that over a full acre of development land use will be lost to PennDOT’s design. This translates into at least a ½ Million Dollars in tax revenue losses to the Borough, Wilson School District and Berks County over a decade. This revenue loss is permanent under the PennDOT design plan.
 - BOSS contacted the regional public transit agencies BARTA (Berks County) and the RRTA (Lancaster County) overseen by the South-Central Transportation Authority (SCTA). The SCTA has listed a new ‘Mobility Hub’ in their 5-Year Strategic Development Plan. BOSS has located the site along Shillington Road and the RR tracks noted on the Kautter-Kelly Architectural Vision for New Town Center ca 2016. The BOSS New Town Center plan broadens that initiative to include a Multi-Modal Transportation Center for all modes of transportation including visitor/residential parking. This impacts the road/street design that PennDOT proposes.

PHASE 4 DESIGN ISSUES

Design Plan Alternatives Scoring Process

- Lisa Gantner: PennDOT stated that they used both the BOSS Traffic Impact Study from 2011 and their own traffic volume counts in 2022. They said that the study ‘clocks’ every movement in all current cycles. Based on PennDOT’s scoring criteria: Purpose and need, Design standards met, Design exceptions, Intersection geometry, Compatibility with the BOSS plan, Right-of-way areas, Relocations, Hazardous waste sites and Construction costs and duration, the agency chose Alternate # 1 as the proposed preliminary design for the project (See PennDOT Ultimate Buildout Design Sketch below).



- Lisa Gantner: Neither the Borough nor BOSS has ever seen those PennDOT traffic studies. The BORO/BOSS should ask for copies of the studies. How does PennDOT justify its design based on traffic counts?

[A.D.D. Services for numbers 22 through 60 Shillington Road](#)

- Mike Hart: PennDOT states that they are not permitted by Federal Law to use Federal funds to acquire private property for new roads if tenants' rents, within those properties, are subsidized (low-income/disabled). PennDOT has used this justification to fundamentally change the road/street design that BOSS has proposed and modify the assurances made to fund the entire Phase 4 'Official Map' project as proposed by BOSS.
- Sam Loth: First, has PennDOT conducted a review of all Shillington Road residential properties within the numbered group? How does PennDOT know there are federally subsidized tenants residing in any of these properties? If there are none, does this relieve PennDOT from Federal Regulations re A.D.D. for any/all identified properties? BORO/BOSS should receive an official response from PennDOT on this issue.

- Brian Triest: I am the owner of a residential property with tenants along Shillington Road. None of my tenants are federally subsidized. I can't speak for the remaining three residential properties.
- Sam Loth: I've contacted Ken Pick, ED for the Berks Redevelopment Authority. I have requested, and Ken has agreed, to reopen discussions on Shillington Road A.D.D. needs. He has asked for a Zoom teleconference in early November.
- Sam Loth: Jaime Perez, a member of the BOSS BoD and senior realtor for Keller-Williams in Greater Reading, contacted me with some interesting work arounds for Shillington Road A.D.D. He will research and prepare a report before the **next PennDOT meeting on Wednesday, November 2nd at 1:00 PM in SSB Hall.**

Compromise Final Design Plan & Construction Estimate

- Sam Loth: PennDOT's decisions without consulting BORO/BOSS have now put BOSS at least one year behind on grant funding applications. BOSS will ask PennDOT to provide engineering designs and budget estimates for the final design plan once a decision is approved by all.

Required Access to Businesses (McDonalds, Jiffy Lube, Senda Auto Sales, SS Car Wash & SS Laundromat

- Mike Hart: PennDOT has proposed using an existing alleyway from Shillington Road to access the businesses noted above from the rear. There would be no access from Penn Avenue with an ingress-only exception for McDonalds. The alley may be privately owned, is far too narrow for tandem-axle truck turns, would stifle multiple business activity and would squander precious PennDOT budget dollars for this component.
- Sam Loth: PennDOT has modified its assurances to fund the entire BOSS Official Map design in Phase 4. This results in the BORO/BOSS being unduly burdened to fund west side intersection construction when the design is 100% PennDOT's. This is patently unfair.
- BOSS contends this outcome is not the fault of the BORO/BOSS but rather, PennDOT's bureaucratic lack of empathy for the BORO/BOSS goals or the need for legitimate business access, and their pursuit of project expediency.
- Sam Loth: There are several publicized private, State and Federal grant opportunities through FFY-2025 that fund revitalization and infrastructure programs like the BOSS plan. While there are no guarantees, large funding awards are available through the application process. I will research which of these programs may address the subsidized tenant issue and, under protest, for the Phase 4 west-side Shillington Road Ingress/Egress intersection to be constructed.
- Sam Loth: We all know that the business access proposal by PennDOT is less than ideal. There are several other components of the Phase 4 PennDOT design that can be debated. The overriding question is whether or not the BOSS Committee is willing to accept the general PennDOT design which keeps Shillington Road in place and what the BORO/BOSS would want from PennDOT in compromise?
- **BOSS Committee Consensus is to be willing to accept the PennDOT Phase 4 "intersection" design while maintaining that PennDOT should build and pay for the new (west side) Ingress/Egress intersection that can connect with new driveway access to the aforementioned businesses (See PennDOT Ultimate Buildout Design Sketch above). *Intersection includes length of roadway and driveways to existing businesses e.g. 'BOSS 2020 Plan' on the sketch!***

BOSS Strategy for November 2nd Meeting with PennDOT

- Bernie Campbell: Thanks to all who have been attending the meetings and advocated for Sinking Spring. There are still several issues that have not been successfully resolved. BOSS can not continue to stand by, unable to apply for new funding because PennDOT has not reached final compromise design with BORO/BOSS. **I am asking for BOSS members and Sam to develop a list of unresolved deficiencies. Provide the list to me by Wednesday, October 26th and I will draft a document in a format that can be used on November 2nd as well as distributed to elected officials with standing if a satisfactory compromise is not achieved.**

New Town Center Redevelopment Project (NTC)

D&E Consultants D-1 Form-based Code Ordinance (Final Draft)

- Sam Loth: Table this issue until the November 17th meeting.

Motion to adjourn the BOSS Committee meeting at 8:15 PM by Brian Hoffa.

NEXT 'LIVE' MEETING

Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Borough Council Chambers