



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

MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 17, 2022

Call to Order

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

Present

Merlin Weaver (President-Dir R-BAR-ED)
Lisa Gantner (Treasurer-Chair SSB Recreation-D/SCG)
Mike Hart (Member-Borough Manager-ED)
Brian Hoffa (Chair SSB Econ Comm-P)
Sam Loth (BOSS Coordinator-CDS-ED-D/SCG-P)

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

Absent

Bernie Campbell (Vice President-Whirley Drink Works-ED) *Authorized*
Jim Adams (Member-Berks IDC-ED) *Authorized*
Robert Metzgar (SSB Econ Comm-ED) *Unauthorized #1*

Guests

Jaime Perez (Realtor-SSB Resident)

A Quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Brian Hoffa to approve the Meeting Minutes of January 20, 2022. Second by Lisa Gantner.
Motion passed 4 Yes / 0 No / 3 Absent

Treasurer's Report

- Lisa Gantner: Through March 15, 2022 the General Fund balance is \$ 3,402.53 after issuance of a check to Marshall Pickard for \$160.00 to begin the BOSS Website design project.
- Lisa Gantner: Requested that Sam Loth send her the necessary link/form for BOSS to become members of the Smart Growth America subsidiary, LOCUS. Sam agreed.

Motion by Brian Hoffa to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented through March 15, 2022. Second by Lisa Gantner. Motion passed 4 Yes / 0 No / 3 Absent

Re-election of Jim Adams for a 3-Year Term

- Merlin Weaver: Jim Adams' original Term on the BoD ended on December 31, 2021. Jim has retired from his business enterprise and has extricated himself from most appointments in and around Berks County. Jim has indicated that he wishes to offer his seat to a new member and, he would accept a 1-Year Term extension as a member of the BoD if no new member is forthcoming.
- Lisa Gantner: Jim Adams has been a valued member of our Board. Can we proceed with the Borough's technology improvements for remote 'Zoom' attendance?
- Mike Hart: Robert Metzger and I have not researched the costs; first there is a need for expensive equipment upgrades and then a monthly Zoom/Other fee.
- Brian Hoffa: It might be good for the Borough to have these improvements but not to accommodate one person. Presently, there doesn't appear to be a pressing need to adopt public meeting broadcasts and maintain a 'Facetime' style account. I will however contact Spring Township, our neighbors, to learn more about the needs and costs for this technology.
- Sam Loth: Jim is a very valuable resource for the BOSS Committee. I advise that the Board act to keep Jim Adams involved in some capacity.
- Brian Hoffa: I recommend we ask Jim Adams to remain active in an honorary advisory role on the BoD.
- Merlin Weaver: I will call Jim directly and explain that BOSS wishes for his advice as an honorary member of the Board. Jim would have no voting power.
- **BOSS Committee Consensus: Accept Jim Adams as an Honorary Advisor to the BoD.**

Nomination of Jaime Perez to the Board of Directors

- Sam Loth: Jaime Perez has been attending meetings since late last year. He has indicated his interest in being elected to the BOSS Board of Directors.
- Merlin Weaver: Requested that Jaime Perez offer some background on his life experience.
- Jaime Perez: I am a lifelong resident of Berks County and graduated from the PA College of Technology. I worked with the Albert Boscov Housing Revitalization Program in the City of Reading and the Greater Reading Neighborhood Housing Program including the Tax Credit Program. I have served as the Government Affairs Chair for the Reading-Berks Association of Realtors and worked for the Berks Housing Authority. Quote: "I want to be active and contribute to BOSS! I can help with developing a Budget and an Action Plan for BOSS and can help with a 'Voids in the Marketplace' review plus interact with construction companies, developers and more.
- Merlin Weaver: I have known and worked with Jaime and find him to be a man of action.

Motion by Mike Hart to elect Jaime Perez to a three-year term on the BOSS Forward Revitalization Committee Board of Directors. Second by Lisa Gantner. Motion passed 4 Yes / 0 No / 3 Absent. The term of office shall be from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2024.

PROJECTS

Phase 2 CBD- Infrastructure Improvement Project

BOSS Phase 2 Groundbreaking Ceremony

- Brian Hoffa: We have confirmed that a new backhoe will be onsite for photo opportunities. We have designed and are hopeful that three separate billboards can be built and positioned prior to the Groundbreaking. Mike Hart has secured 10 shovels and hard hats for dignitaries. To date we have

positive RSVPs from US Congresswoman Houlahan, PA Senator Argall and our new District 11 Senator Gephart, Commissioners Leinbach and Rivera, Mark Evans from D&E and a representative from GRCA. Possible attendees include US Senator Casey and PennDOT's Mike Rebert. We've invited the TV and newspaper. I've got Senator Argall speaking first and then if Chrissy Houlahan wishes to speak, she would be next followed by the Berks Commissioners and our SSB Mayor.

- Merlin Weaver: What about social media?
- Brian Hoffa: I can ask the Borough to post the event. Sam can send out a notice to his email list! Sam agreed to distribute an event notice.

Project Construction Start

- Mike Hart: We received a good number of responses to the original advertising but only hosted three companies at the mandatory pre-bid meeting. We also extended the deadline for responses to March 28, 2022. We have no idea what the bid amounts will be! We are concerned considering inflation and the cost of construction materials like asphalt while the Ukrainian War rages. Prices could be very high.

New Town Center Redevelopment Project (NTC)

D&E Consultants D-1 Form-based Code Ordinance (Draft 3)

- Brian Hoffa: D&E has provided me with a close-to-final version of the Ordinance with all changes for one last review. There are two (2) new color renderings.
- Sam Loth: I've read through the third draft word-for-word and have a limited number of comments. I will meet for a few minutes with Brian after the BOSS meeting to go over the comments and leave Brian with the highlighted ordinance and my comments.
- Brian Hoffa: I will be making a presentation on the FBC ordinance to the Planning Commission next Tuesday evening.

Design Guidelines for the Form-based Code Ordinance

- Sam Loth: Design guidelines are mentioned in the D&E FBC Ordinance many times. Now that we are closing in on a final Ordinance, we must begin to organize a Sub-committee for the NTC FBC Design Guidelines project. I advise a 5-7 member Sub-committee including local business owners, property stakeholders and other new faces.
- Brian Hoffa: Sam, why not send out an invitation to those categories on your distribution list and the active members of Council, the Planning Commission and others. Sam will write a brief 'job description' of the project and send it along with an invitation to participate.

BOSS TEAMS

BOSS Promotion & Publicity Team

BOSS Website Design & Development

- Merlin Weaver: Requested an update from Website Sub-committee member Brian Hoffa. The Sub-committee consists of Merlin Weaver, Brian Hoffa and Robert Metzger.
- Brian Hoffa: The Sub-committee met with Marshall Pickard, Website Designer, several times. Marshall is currently creating a Website Development and Design plan to present to the Sub-committee.
- Merlin Weaver: May we have some meeting minutes for the remainder of the Board to see? It would benefit the project and would provide a written record of the work being accomplished.

Promotional Event with SS Fire Company

- Brian Hoffa: The SSB Fire Company has agreed to co-host a community special event on Sunday, September 18, 2022 in the afternoon. We are calling this event "TRUCKTOBERFEST". Several food trucks will be invited to set up at the Fire Company grounds adjacent to the Borough Park playing

fields. Brian said that he can continue to attend meetings however he will need several volunteers to work with him on this project. The next meeting is April 3, 2022.

- Jaime Perez: Volunteered to help with this event.

OLD BUSINESS

Small Cell Tower Regulating Ordinance

- Sam Loth: Reported to BOSS on the actions in Borough Council on March 10th. The Borough Solicitor stated that the current State law allows telecommunications companies to install 5G antennas/relays virtually wherever it suits the mission to expand broadband equitably. The one exception is that no 5G post/pole antennas are allowed in developments where all wires are underground. Sam then suggested that this should be the long-range goal of the Borough; to bury all above ground wires.
- Sam Loth: This is a very important issue because the blighting influence of antennas, TV dishes and other visual blight could go unchecked, slowing the overall improvement to the public environment. A clause prohibiting these to any location except the roofs of buildings in the D-1 New Town Center might protect the new development from blight incursions of this nature.
- Mike Hart: A better, more powerful time to work with developers and contractors is when they bring in land use development plans for approval by the Borough/Planning Commission/Zoning Board. At that time they are more willing to compromise based on their need to receive plan approvals. In the case of the D-1 district, BOSS can insert language into its Design Guidelines.

BOSS Consensus: Write the clause into the Design Guidelines and use the opportunity to work with projects as they are presented for land use development approvals.

RATS Committee Membership

- Sam Loth: Last month we learned that RATS had appointed Brian Hoffa to fill an empty seat on the Committee. Sam asked for an update from Brian.
- Brian Hoffa: There's a lot to learn. RATS is involved with many ongoing projects and there are many procedures to become familiar with. I will keep the BOSS Committee advised of my progress.

BOSS Work Plan for FY-2022

- Sam Loth: I realize that everyone is distracted at this time in history however, I did much of the original organizing work for our Work Plan (Action Plan) and asked BOSS members to respond to me. I gave everyone 12 days to do so however, no one has responded as of this meeting. I truly do need the assistance of each BOSS Board member.
- Merlin Weaver: Sam, resend the Action Plan to the Board; make it a little easier for Board members to assist.

BOSS Grants Timeline

Sam Loth: I cannot develop a full and appropriate listing of grant programs to consider until BOSS has an Annual Action Plan. One step follows the other. I can provide more obvious grant programs. For example, this Grant Timeline will include the DCED Façade Improvement Grant program and the DCED/PennDOT Multimodal Grant programs available in the spring/summer grants windows.

NEW BUSINESS

Phase 4 CBD Infrastructure Improvement Project

- Brian Hoffa: PennDOT hosted a virtual public meeting with the intent to update all involved in Phase 4. Those on the phone call were surprised and not happy to learn that PennDOT has redesigned the Phase 4 roadway Official Map design. Their 'preliminary' design leaves Shillington Road intact until the very last portion as it meets Penn Avenue. A simple elbow turn is what they are proposing. This leaves all properties currently lining the west face of Shillington Road intact. PennDOT will not remove these structures.

- Further, PennDOT wishes to use an existing alleyway as the primary ingress/egress from/to Shillington Road from our new through-route , 'Main Street'.

Response from Alan Piper (RATS Committee)

PennDOT was not proposing to use the alley as the connector for the new "Main Street". What they have indicated on the plans is that they would use the alley as the access / egress point for several businesses who's frontage would be impacted by their proposed plan (McDonald's, Jiffy Lube and Senda Auto Sales). There is a question that remains as to the official status of this alley / driveway that could impact this proposal. That will be addressed by PennDOT as they move further through the design process.

- Sam Loth: This is an ominous turn for the worse. PennDOT is only thinking of *their departmental budget*; they have not given any thought to the original Official Map design as an economic tool. Just like the PPL Power Line controversy, this broken promise by PennDOT must be responded to. BOSS should advise/recommend that Council discuss this issue with Senator Argall and others including US Rep Houlihan's office and Senator Bob Casey's office whose positions are higher than the Borough.

Board Member Bernie Campbell

- BOSS sends its condolences to member Bernie Campbell and family on the loss of Bernie's Father recently. Thank you for your service Bernie and please rejoin the Committee's work when you are able to.

Adjourn

Motion by Brian Hoffa to adjourn at 8:45 PM. Second by Lisa Gantner. Motion passed 4 Yes / 0 No / 3 Absent

NEXT 'LIVE' MEETING
Thursday, April 21, 2022 at 7:00 PM
Borough Council Chambers