

City of Birmingham
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding
Thursday, June 4, 2020 - 8:30 a.m.
ZOOM Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, June 4, 2020, at 8:33 a.m. via ZOOM Meetings

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD

PRESENT: Astrein, Eid, Fehan, Hockman, Kay, Lundberg, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Surnow, Valentine

ABSENT: Solomon

ALSO PRESENT:

ADMINISTRATION: Tighe, Brook, Gerber

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Joe Bauman, Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Surnow to approve the minutes dated May 8, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 9 Nays, 0 Absent, 1 - Due to technology problems, Eid and Quintal were unable to vote

4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Valentine shared that the Maple Road reconstruction project is now 20% complete and is running on schedule.

Roberts explained that the U.S. Senate passed PPP changes that extend the program to twenty-four months. He said that this is good news for people with loans and that there is still money available if people still want to apply.

5. REPORTS

a. FINANCE REPORT – GERBER

Gerber reported that the balance sheet through April shows that 91% of the special assessment has been collected. Typically, it is closer to 95% at this time, but due to the current situation, this is not bad. The city is continuing to try to collect.

About \$2,000 is still showing as outstanding from last year. This is a challenging time to settle with the county, but it is done and should show up in June.

The April fund balance is about right for this time of year. The BSD is 83% of the way through the fiscal year and most items are in that range. Expenditures are at 70% due to activities with the road project starting-off slower than anticipated.

Year to date cash flow is right on target. \$71,000 is budgeted for valet during construction, but that program hasn't started yet.

Hockman asked if the special events variance is a timing issue. Tighe answered that yes, it is.

b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - TIGHE

Tighe let the board know that she would be presenting a budget briefing to the city commission on Saturday between 12-1 p.m. She invited board members to view the presentation.

Tighe shared that she and the BSD team have been busy adhering to the 30 and 90-day plan. We are finishing the first 30-day segment. She thanked committee members and staff for keeping things moving and putting plans into place.

Hockman also thanked Tighe and the BSD staff for their efforts.

c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that the most summer events have been canceled. He said that the drive-through farmers market is going well and that approximately 225 cars drove through last weekend. Hockman shared that he has driven through the market (as a customer) and he agrees that it is going well. He said that vendors seem to be happy and this is a good alternative.

Astrein shared that Day on the Town will not be able to take place in its typical fashion since we do not want to encourage crowds to gather. The committee is still working on alternative formats. Kay added that customers are already asking what the plan is for Day on the Town.

Astrein said that he thinks consumers are hesitant to come out. Kay shared that his first week reopen sales were similar to Christmas time. Tighe said that she would schedule a joint meeting between the special events committee and the marketing committee to discuss options.

The concern is controlling numbers. Tighe reminded the group that we have to be very careful to adhere to the executive orders regarding crowd sizes.

At the last commission meeting, the commission unanimously approved a resolution stating that the Birmingham Cruise Event would not take place this year and that Birmingham would not be participating in the Woodward Dream Cruise. It is expected that Woodward will still have cars cruising, but the hope is to reduce the number of people gathering and coming in from out of town.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD

Pohlod updated the board that the first batch of Quarantine Cash was just emailed. The BSD may send out a second round of Quarantine Cash. Kay mentioned that someone had already redeemed her Quarantine Cash at his store.

Pohlod also shared that the magazine is on hold right now. A decision will be made soon. The first promotional video for the city has been created. There will be another one later in the summer with a different topic. They are also looking at doing a fall fashion piece. Tighe said that she would email a

link out to the board for the video. The timing is perfect to start promoting. Fehan shared that he has seen the video and he thinks that it is impressive. Tighe said that it will be used on social media and in digital advertising. Fehan said that it is important for the board to know where it is going.

Pohlod added that they are looking at Hulu or YouTube and targeting a mid-June release. She also reported that they have chosen not to move forward with the bids that were submitted for the new BSD website. They plan to repost next month.

MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - QUINTAL

Quintal shared that planters and hanging baskets are in good shape. Construction signage and lighting are up. The committee will continue to monitor the situation to decide if and when free construction valet will begin.

Tighe mentioned that some fun and inspirational signage will be hung along the construction barricades.

Fehan asked where things stand with parking. Valentine said that the structures will be free until September 1. On street parking will reengage in the next week with soft enforcement – giving warnings. Now that the stay at home order has been lifted, they want to have more turn-over at the meters. Starting Monday, reminders will be given that parking is now being enforced. Fehan said that it is important to let BSD businesses know.

Pohlod asked why the meters are bagged on the south end of town. Valentine said that he was not sure, but he would look into it. Astrein asked if there will be signage indicating that the structures will have free parking until September 1st. Tighe responded that she is working on it.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - SURNOW

Surnow said that the first batch of Quarantine Cash has been distributed. This program is a mutual effort between the marketing and business development committees. We are still trying to increase the participation from businesses.

PPE kits are being distributed. Surnow commended the BSD team for their efforts. He said that there has been a huge response and that businesses really appreciate the supplies. He mentioned that the BSD has spent \$1800 on gloves and \$2,000 on masks.

The crowd funding campaign launched recently. Approximately \$10,000 has been raised. The Community House made a \$5,000 donation, \$5000 has been donated from the community and Oakland County will match up to \$4,000 soon.

Cindy is continuing to work on tenant recruitment. She is pursuing any opportunity that she can and is adding prospects to the list.

Valentine asked if there has been discussion on strategy – does it need to be adjusted due to the current situation? Surnow responded that they have talked about reaching out via social media and that it would be worth exploring the actual content further. It will be interesting to see what happens with malls. Although it may not be in a pamphlet, a key point right now is that the downtown area is an alternative to a mall setting. Cindy is reaching out to Somerset tenants with information on Birmingham being open-air.

Valentine suggested talking to landlords to see if there is an opportunity to open more spaces so that we can position ourselves to be more accommodating. Surnow said that he is not sure how much contact Cindy has had with landlords, but he does know that she has been asking for different layout options.

Kay mentioned that he heard that six stores at Somerset will not be reopening.

Pohlod asked when the ICSC conference was supposed to be held as she noticed it was canceled in vouchers. Tighe replied that it had been scheduled for May and is canceled and the regional event in New York in December has also been canceled.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Hockman pointed out that just one month ago the board adopted a plan and the BSD has now hit all of the markers set which is very impressive. Fehan agreed and added that he thought it would be helpful if we could communicate this to the city commission.

d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that the committee met yesterday. Outdoor dining decks are being approved for restaurants. This will impact parking spaces. Valentine added that they are looking into a resolution to expand street use as well.

Fehan shared that he found responses to a survey created by Hazel, Ravines, and Downtown and sent to their customer base, to be very interesting – especially the comments where customers state they are comfortable only eating outside. Valentine agreed that that is the only way that it is going to work. Fehan said that he would like the commission to see the survey and the comments. Valentine responded that they could be included in the packet.

e. CHAMBER REPORT - BAUMAN

Bauman shared that it has been a challenging time for the chamber. They are continuing to advocate for businesses. All programming has been moved to a Zoom format. They are holding at least two webinars per week to help businesses. Yesterday, Bob Gibbs spoke to a group of 80 people. Next week there will be a presentation on how to build podcasts into digital marketing. These programs are free to everyone, not just members.

Time is being spent on advocacy and making sure that officials understand issues businesses have had and challenges going forward. There has been a financial cost to the chamber. The Village Fair had been rescheduled but is now canceled. The fair is typically the largest fundraiser for the chamber and allows the chamber to donate to local non-profits. Unfortunately, this will not be able to happen this year.

The chamber is also helping to promote the reopening of the rail district.

f. COMMUNITY HOUSE REPORT

There was no report from The Community House.

6. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS

MOTION: Motion by Fehan, seconded by Astrein to approve the vouchers, as submitted, dated June 4, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 11 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. INFORMATION

a. Retail Activity

b. Announcements

c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT – 9:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jaimi Brook (back-up notes on file)