

City of Birmingham  
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding  
**Thursday, September 3, 2020 - 8:30 a.m.**  
ZOOM Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, September 3, 2020, at 8:32 a.m. via ZOOM Meetings

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD**

**PRESENT:** Astrein, Hockman, Kay, Lundberg, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Valentine

**ABSENT:** Eid, Fehan, Solomon, Surnow

**ALSO PRESENT:** Marianne Gamboa

**ADMINISTRATION:** Tighe, Brook, Comerford

**2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Tighe recognized Melinda Comerford for 20 years of service to the BSD plus another 7 years working as a 1099 employee. Tighe compared Comerford to the mortar that holds all of the bricks of the BSD together. She keeps the BSD humming behind the scenes. She works with property owners and farmers market vendors, creates invoices, reports, and board packets. Tighe said that it is truly a pleasure to have Comerford on our team.

Hockman added that, on behalf of the board, he would also like to thank Comerford for her dedication and commitment and let her know that she is appreciated. Comerford thanked everyone for the kind words and said that it has been her pleasure to be a part of the city and the BSD over the years. Tighe shared that Comerford will be receiving a commemorative plaque.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Motion by Astrein, seconded by Roberts to approve the minutes dated July 30, 2020.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 8 Nays, 0 Absent, 4

**4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Valentine shared that the Maple Rd. project continues to make progress. Working on the right of ways has been taking time. They are working on electrical and irrigation systems as well as the concrete between the sidewalk and the street. The Southfield Road intersection is also progressing nicely.

Valentine added that there will be a Master Plan meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. He also shared that the free parking in the structures was extended through the end of December. There is a one-time charge for monthly permit parkers, this is to so spots are only held for those who want to keep them.

Efforts are ongoing to help restaurants with expanded outdoor dining. Commission approved the outdoor space through March. Now, the liquor control board needs to approve it as well.

Lundberg thanked Valentine for the extended free parking. She said that it was very well received by her staff.

## **5. REPORTS**

### **a. FINANCE REPORT – TIGHE**

Tighe reported that we have completed the first month of the new fiscal year. The fund balance at the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year was \$850,126. The finance department is working to reconcile which invoices are a part of the last fiscal year and which are from the year that has just started.

We are just starting to get into line items. Events have been quiet. There have not been any large expenses. We have a healthy fund balance and there is nothing significant to report.

### **b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - TIGHE**

Tighe shared that we are now almost six months into the pandemic. Back in April, the BSD board made plans to move forward with emergency initiatives to help with the COVID-19 pandemic and we have achieved everything we committed to doing.

Thanks to the city, patio dining has been very successful for restaurants. DPS has been handling reservations for outdoor fitness classes. We were not able to hold a Night on the Town event or the Cruise. The board reallocated \$100,000 to help and we have spent \$80,000 thus far.

Valentine suggested that we should be looking at a longer plan. There could be some shortfalls in collecting special assessments and the vaccine still seems to be far off. He said that we need to be flexible but have a general vision because this is going to be longer term.

Hockman agreed and said that we will work on that. This is a good snapshot and he looks forward to hearing from the committees.

Tighe added that when property owners do not pay their assessments it is handed over to Oakland County. We will receive the money but it takes some time. Valentine said that the dollars are not the only concern, but what services will we have if businesses close and how will we address the issues.

Astrein asked what the collection rate was. Tighe responded that it was around 96%. Valentine reiterated that he thinks we need to have a guideline strategy. Hockman said that we would work on it.

### **c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS - ASTREIN**

Astrein reported that there was a discussion at the last special events committee meeting about opening the farmers market back up to a walkable format. Concerns about the current COVID situation were discussed. There were also comments about the drive-through format working well, considering the circumstances. Kathy Fusilier, one of the founding farmers proposed reopening to foot traffic. The challenge is that the city has deemed the market a special event, not an essential service.

At the committee meeting, Fire Chief Wells added that he had concerns that reopening to walkers could possibly cause an increase in COVID numbers. Astrein explained that we had to cancel other events in the city this year. He feels that it is important that we stay consistent. The committee voted on whether they should re-open the market to foot traffic. The result was 3-3.

Hockman asked Tighe to capture that information in a staff memo to present to the city manager and commission. Pohlod added that we need to keep looking at it so that we can plan for next year and how the market will open.

Astrein shared that the committee also discussed Santa House and how to host safe Santa visits. The current plan is to not allow visitors in Santa House, but instead have visits take place in front of Santa House. There is also discussion of a virtual tree lighting. The Winter Markt decision should be made in the next 30-days. Carriage rides seem unlikely this year.

Astrein added that he would like to give special recognition to Brook. She has had to deal with difficult customers at the farmers market and she has done it very well.

## **MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD**

Pohlod updated the board that there will be a video coming out in the next few weeks that will highlight fall fashion. There will be follow-up videos for the holidays which will be more of a gift giving guide. The series of videos will be released over the fall and winter.

The website RFP drew in 35 submissions. The committee is very excited to see what will come out of that as the businesses need a strong presence – especially now. She added that the committee is open to new ideas. If anyone has any suggestions, they should let her know.

## **MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - QUINTAL**

Quintal reported that they would like to change the look of the planters next year as they have too much green. The hanging baskets seem to be making a comeback and look okay now.

Since there are still funds available, the committee decided to keep the full snow removal contract and power washing.

Quintal also mentioned that it seems like the city has been dirty – masks and other trash on the ground. Pohlod agreed that there was an excessive amount of trash after the cruise weekend. Valentine commented that there are more trashcans out now and hopefully that will help.

Quintal reiterated that the committee is very glad to be keeping the full snow removal contract. Valentine suggested that they might want to enhance the contract this year as he sees people not wanting to shop in malls. Therefore, it is important to make sure we are an attractive alternative. Astrein agreed that there are now more obstacles in the way and the patios are remaining open. Quintal pointed out that much of the sidewalk is now much wider than it has been. Therefore, they may want to look at them doing two passes (instead of just one).

Astrein inquired about the spray paint lines on the sidewalks on Old Woodward and if they come off. Valentine explained that the paint is designed to wear off, but it will take a while.

Pohlod pointed out that some stores are currently not open as many days as they typically have been and this could impact when they clear the sidewalk in front of their stores. Quintal said that he would talk to the contractor about adding an extra pass.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - TIGHE**

Tighe shared that the committee is continuing to work on retention and attraction. A speaker presented at the last merchant meeting and another merchant meeting will be held soon. We are also looking into holding a virtual real estate/property owner roundtable meeting in October.

We are continuing to work on relationships with property owners. More calls and Zoom meetings are being done than in person. These calls have helped with making connections to resources like the various grants that have been available through the federal, state and local government. Businesses have been very appreciative of the PPE kits.

The committee has also helped retailers and restaurants connect to smaller lending institutions. Quarantine Cash was valuable as was the marketing video.

Attraction efforts have found that about 30 prospects on our list have encountered financial difficulties, but we do have another 170 retailers on our list. We continue to look for good retailers that are also financially strong. Many retailers are sitting on the sidelines right now. Somerset retailers have also been added to the prospect list as malls are seeing dramatic changes.

Tighe reported that Johnny Was would open on September 12. Astrein commented that malls do not allow the flexibility in hours/days and that could be an advantage to us.

Valentine asked if, in regards to the report, it made sense to better integrate the list of retailers and their information into a report so we can see the big picture. Tighe responded that she could refine the report more.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT**

No report given.

### **d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN**

Astrein shared that they are pleased to have free parking in the structures through the end of December. At the next meeting, they will be discussing and approving smart meters.

### **e. CHAMBER REPORT - BAUMAN**

There was no report from the Chamber.

### **f. COMMUNITY HOUSE REPORT**

There was no report from The Community House.

## **6. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

**MOTION:** Motion by Astrein, seconded by Pohlod to approve the vouchers, as submitted, dated September 3, 2020.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 8 Nays, 0 Absent, 4

## **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 – 9:27 A.M.**

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