

City of Birmingham
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding
Thursday, March 4, 2021 - 8:30 a.m.
ZOOM Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, March 4, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. via ZOOM Meetings

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD

PRESENT: Astrein (Birmingham, MI), Eid (Birmingham, MI), Hockman (Bloomfield Hills, MI), Kay (Birmingham, MI), Lundberg (Bloomfield Hills, MI), Markus (Birmingham, MI), McKenzie (Birmingham, MI), Pohlod (Birmingham, MI), Quintal (Birmingham, MI), Roberts (Bloomfield Hills, MI)

ABSENT: Surnow

ALSO PRESENT:

ADMINISTRATION: Brook (Royal Oak, MI), Bassett (Birmingham, MI), Comerford (White Lake, MI), Gerber (Birmingham, MI)

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

David Hoehendorf, Doug Fehan, Shannon Selby

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Kay to approve the minutes dated February 4, 2021.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

5. REPORTS

a. FINANCE REPORT – GERBER

Gerber reported that the January balance sheet shows approximately \$551,000 in cash. Funds are continuing to come in from the special assessment. We billed out approximately \$1,054,000. As of January reporting, approximately 22% had been collected leaving a balance of \$820,000. The deadline for these bills is tomorrow, March 5. As of yesterday, 63% had been collected. This is slightly lower than in the past, but not unexpected. We will continue to collect until the end of May. At that time, unpaid assessments will be sent to Oakland County for collection with taxes.

The fund balance is approximately \$435,000. We are currently 58% of the way through the budget year. There is very little that is of concern right now. Downtown maintenance is at 61%. Therefore, we will keep an eye on that. Some expenditures have not been able to occur due to COVID-19. The cash flow year to date is \$172,000 less than projected. This is due to assessments being mailed later than usual and a slower start to them being paid.

Astrein asked if there is a penalty for assessments paid after the March 5 deadline. Gerber responded that there is a penalty. He said that commission did not waive the penalties. Roberts asked who gets penalties that are collected. Gerber said that they would go to the BSD. He said that they transfer the amount of the special assessment and the late fees plus 15% when it goes to the tax roll. Roberts noted that theoretically, if we collected all of the money billed, we would be over \$800,000 now. Gerber agreed.

b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

No report given

c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that we had originally budgeted \$20,000 toward Birmingham Bucks for the Birmingham Restaurant Week promotion. The receipts submitted brought the total amount of Birmingham Bucks distributed to over \$41,000. The committee felt that it was in the BSD's best interest to fulfil all requests for Bucks.

Roberts shared that overall, he was pleased with the Restaurant Week promotion. He added that he is looking forward to being able to open his restaurant to 50% capacity.

Astrein thanked the BSD team for fulfilling the Birmingham Bucks submissions as over 700 people submitted their receipts.

Astrein reported that City Commission approved the three special event applications submitted – Farmers Market, Movie Nights and Day on the Town. The Farmers Market will open as a walkable market but will keep things basic. We will see what elements we can add as the season progresses.

The committee decided to postpone the next Birmingham Bucks promotion until fall. The group is quite excited about the new website after getting a preview of it at the last meeting.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD

Pohlod reported that work on the new website continues. The committee has worked on how to define categories and sub-categories. There is still some work being done. The committee expects the new site to go live in mid-March.

The committee had to postpone the spring fashion promotional video shoot. It will take place at The Daxton on March 30 and will have a target launch date the week of April 12.

Pohlod gave the board a virtual tour of the new website showing some of the new functionality and options that we will have. She explained the decision to use more muted colors that will not go out of style while still being ADA compliant with a call out color. She shared that they may add some additional descriptions and categories in the future.

On behalf of the board and constituents, Hockman thanked Pohlod and the committee for the phenomenal job they have done. He recognized what an improvement it is from the current site and the amount of time that went into it. Hockman asked about the rollout plan.

Pohlod said that when it is ready we would send an email to merchants and do Instagram and Facebook promotions. Hockman suggested that the next merchant meeting might also be a good place to share the new website. Pohlod thanked everyone for their comments and let them know that they would receive a link to the development site.

Astrein asked if we have funding to cover updates for the new website. Hockman agreed that we need to keep this in mind and pointed out that staff will be able to handle many of the updates. Pohlod added that they would allocate part of the marketing budget to the website for updates and additional functionality.

MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - QUINTAL

Quintal shared that they received bids for hanging baskets and planters. The current vendors were the lowest bidders. He added that the DPS appreciation luncheon would be held soon.

Snow removal needs to go out to bid. Quintal questioned if we are limited to a three-year contract. Markus responded that he did not think so, but he would confirm. Quintal said that he would like to be able to extend another year or two. Markus explained that they prefer to limit contracts to three years so they can check the marketplace. He said that city commission is actively encouraging review, but he believes that there is some flexibility. Bids are required for expenses of \$6,000 or more. Markus has asked legal counsel to prepare a ballot initiative to bring this issue up to date, as \$6,000 is now a very low threshold.

Quintal added that during the last snowfall the contractor had two pieces of equipment breakdown, which caused a delay in clearing the triangle district.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - MCKENZIE

McKenzie said that they would be adding collateral to the business development portion of the website. He explained that the recruitment and retention report shows that two deals became signed leases. Number 4 was a store choosing to stay in Birmingham instead of moving to Somerset and number three is a home-furnishing store that will become an anchor tenant due to the square footage. The store is expected to be a magnet to others.

McKenzie added that site visits are going well and that Ciura is feeling positive about the future. The Detroit Free Press is doing a story about Linda Dresner closing. We were able to share positive things that we have done.

The committee is also working on revising Ciura's contract as it is up for renewal.

Hockman added that he wants the board to understand that what we have now is a dashboard that is easier to understand. We are now more easily able to see what is happening. He thanked McKenzie for his efforts. McKenzie asked board members to share their feedback and let them know that he will be adding a distinction to show which are new businesses and which are retentions.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT - HOCKMAN

Hockman shared that the committee has narrowed down the list of candidates for the executive director position to seven. Interviews are scheduled for next week. The committee will then decide if a second interview is needed. The goal is to have a recommendation for the board at the April meeting.

Hockman also reported on committee appointments. McKenzie was appointed as vice chair of the business development committee. Pohlod was appointed to the executive committee. Ron Rae was appointed to the maintenance and capital committee.

Hockman added that he has been working closely with staff and he wants the board to understand that the staff has stepped up and is doing a phenomenal job. Things are running well. Hockman thanked the staff for their efforts.

d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that staff recommended that free parking in the structures be extended through the end of June. They counted vehicles in the structure, and found that usage was at only 37%. The committee passed the free parking extension. The next step is for it to get approval from city commission.

Over 500 permits have been canceled in the structures and are now available to sell. Approximately 1,600 requests have been removed from the waiting list. This committee would like to look into the remaining 5,200 on the waiting list.

e. CHAMBER REPORT

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 Kay to approve the vouchers, as submitted, dated March 4, 2021.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Spring/Summer Floral Planters Agreement

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Kay to approve the agreement with Mosher & Associates, LLC for Spring/Summer Floral Planters pending signatures.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

b. Floral Hanging Baskets Agreement

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Pohlod to approve the agreement with Worry Free, Inc. for Floral Hanging Baskets pending signatures.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

c. Creation of Director Emeritus Position

Hockman shared that Fehan has been a life-long Birmingham resident. He recently moved, but has expressed an interest in remaining involved with the BSD. He has been very involved and helpful in all matters. Therefore, Hockman suggests creating a position of Director Emeritus.

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by McKenzie to create the position of Director Emeritus on the BSD board with the following guidelines:

1. The BSD shall create the position of Director Emeritus for members of the BSD Board who no longer qualify to serve on the Board due to residency or change in location.
2. A Director Emeritus may be appointed by a majority vote of the Board provided the Director seeking this appointment has a minimum service of ten (10) years with the BSD.
3. The Director Emeritus position shall be a non-voting position, but may participate in all Board and Committee meeting discussions and voice opinions, as he/she deems appropriate.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

d. Appoint Director Emeritus

Hockman thanked Fehan for his service. He expressed the board's appreciation of all of his efforts and said that they are glad that he is willing to stay involved.

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Pohlod to appoint Douglas Fehan as Director Emeritus, seeing that he has provided the minimum qualifications of ten (10) years of service to the Board. As Director Emeritus, Douglas Fehan shall be permitted to participate in all Board and Committee meeting discussions, but will be a non-voting member of the Board.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

9. INFORMATION

a. Retail Activity

b. Announcements

c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Markus confirmed his earlier thought that contracts can be for a term of longer than three years if the board chooses to write them in that manner.

Pohlod thanked the board for their positive comments and made sure to let everyone know that work on the new website has been a team effort. She thanked the other board members who also serve on the marketing committee, Kay, Eid, and Lundberg as well as Bassett and Comerford for the many hours that they have dedicated to the project.

11. ADJOURNMENT – 9:35 A.M.

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