

City of Birmingham
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding
Thursday, February 10, 2022 - 8:30 a.m.
The Community House
Birmingham, MI 48009

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, February 10, 2022, at 8:35 a.m. at The Community House

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD

PRESENT: Astrein, Eid, Hockman, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, Pohlod, Quintal, Surnow, Director Emeritus Fehan

ABSENT: McKenzie, Roberts

ALSO PRESENT: Charlie Cavell, Jana Ecker, Melissa Fairbairn, Paul Glantz, Anthony Laverde

ADMINISTRATION: Brook, Kammer

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

3. PRESENTATIONS

Hockman recognized representatives from Birmingham 8. The theater has been in business for 95 years, making it one of the longest running businesses in Birmingham. Paul Glantz thanked the board for the recognition and acknowledged Ted Fuller and Carol Illitch for the roles that they played in the theater's longevity. He also thanked Anthony Laverde and his team who handle the daily operations of the theater.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Kay to approve the minutes dated December 2, 2021.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 2

4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

5. REPORTS

a. FINANCE REPORT – KAMMER

Kammer reported that most of the expenses for special events have already occurred for this fiscal year. The cash flow shows an ending balance of \$546,666. Marketing and advertising still has expenses coming. The magazine budget line is funding the seasonal video productions.

Bills for special assessments were mailed in January. Payment is due by March 31.

b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - KAMMER

Kammer shared that, although the Gateway Signage Committee began with a focus on the triangle area where S. Old Woodward and Woodward Avenue meet, they are now looking at the city overall. The committee is made-up of representatives from both the BSD and the city. It will be examining branding for both entities.

Kammer reported that an article ran recently in the Birmingham Eagle regarding the BSD supporting small businesses. He also presented at the city's long-range planning workshop. During that workshop, County Commissioner Chuck Moss urged the BSD to pay attention to the increasing number of vacancies in office space as it may affect the downtown.

c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS – ASTREIN

Astrein reported that holiday activities went well. Winter Markt had 50 vendors. The tree lighting event was very crowded and approximately 1,500 families visited with Santa. Since Restaurant Week recently concluded, Astrein asked Eid for feedback. Eid shared that his restaurants had very successful first weeks, but the snowstorm hurt them during week two.

The committee is working on planning 2022 events including a possible scavenger hunt during construction.

Fehan commented that he is very impressed with the growth of the holiday activities. Kay added that the non-profit who ran the beer tent at Winter Markt was very happy and would like to work a greater portion of the event this year.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD

Pohlod shared that the committee did not meet last month. However, the Restaurant Week video is playing on the BSD website as well as through sponsored posts on social media. Work is being done on the next video. There will also be a fashion spread distributed as an insert in SEEN Magazine.

The BSD received a \$10,000 grant from Consumer's Energy to use as a match for people purchasing Birmingham Bucks. The plan is to start a targeted promotion on February 17, which is random act of kindness day.

The committee decided that, instead of holding a job fair, it would work on information to help with workforce development that small businesses can use to help with recruitment.

MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - LIPARI

Lipari reported that the committee did not meet last month. There was a large snowfall and Quintal pointed out that the city issued many citations to businesses who did not remove the snow in front of their stores in a timely manner. Astrein shared that his business was cited.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - SURNOW

Surnow shared that he is pleased that there are more signed leases on the pipeline. This indicates that the committee's effort is making a difference. As the vacancy rate lowers, there will be a shift to work more on retention. They are also putting together a business mix analysis.

Markus suggested inviting a member of the city planning staff to a future meeting. He thinks it is important for the committee to have a good understanding of what is involved in bringing a business to town. Kammer agreed and pointed out a recent occasion when a lease was signed, but the business that planned to rent the space did not qualify under the zoning requirements for that parcel.

Markus also reference the 20-foot retail liner and that the BSD may want to look into adjusting provisions in the future. He also expressed concern about the businesses warping to one particular type of retail and the importance of a balanced mix of businesses for a vibrant downtown.

Hockman added that he wants to make sure that we work with city departments in regards to the upcoming S. Old Woodward reconstruction project. Funds have been allocated to help support businesses during construction.

Kammer reminded everyone that construction would be one of the items on the agenda for the next Merchant Meeting, which will be held on February 16. The city will be holding an informational meeting for the public on February 21 at 5:30 p.m. in the Commission room.

Markus introduced Ecker and Fairbain as part of the succession plan he has in place for his departure. He explained that he has been encouraging them to attend different board and committee meetings to get a full picture of how the city operates.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT - HOCKMAN

Hockman reported that Year in Review reports were included with the annual assessment bills. They were mailed in January. Kammer added that the Year in Review report was also sent to businesses within the district.

d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN

Astrein gave credit to the city manager for hiring a dedicated parking manager. He said that having someone in that role has made a big impact. The waiting list for monthly parking passes in the structures has been drastically reduced.

Markus added that they have begun looking into the N. Old Woodward structure again. It is in need of repairs, but they want to look at the big picture, not just patching problems.

Ecker explained that the planning board is working on a final plan for restaurant's use of parking spaces to create decks. There are several steps to this process. There will be a public hearing, but that will probably happen in a few months. Astrein asked if they were planning to limit the number of decks per street. Ecker replied that there is not currently a limit in the plans. Astrein stated that he feels that it is important for retailers to be involved in the process.

Eid mentioned that he is encountering a challenge with the number of parking places that are required for S. Old Woodward businesses based on the square footage of the business. He said that this is holding back reasonable expansions. The planning board will discuss decks and outdoor dining at their March 9 meeting.

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 Markus, seconded by Astrein to approve the vouchers, dated January 6 and February 10, 2022.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 0 Absent, 2

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. INFORMATION

a. Retail Activity

b. Announcements

c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Pohlod asked Kammer to schedule a committee chair meeting in March or April to discuss plans for upcoming construction.

Cavell introduced himself as an Oakland County Commissioner. With redistricting, he will soon be representing a portion of the city of Birmingham and wanted to make sure that the community knows he is there to help.

11. ADJOURNMENT – 9:42 A.M.

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