

City of Birmingham  
Birmingham Shopping District Meeting Minutes  
**Thursday, March 2, 2023 - 8:30 a.m.**  
The Community House  
Birmingham, MI 48009

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, March 2, 2023, at 8:32 a.m. at The Community House.

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

**PRESENT:** Kay, Lipari, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Surnow

**ABSENT:** Astrein, Eid, Hussey, Director Emeritus Fehan

**ADMINISTRATION:** Brook, Sheppard-Decius, Gerber, Ecker

**ALSO PRESENT:** David Hohendorf

**2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Motion by Kay, seconded by Surnow, to approve the minutes dated February 2, 2023.

**VOTE: Yeas:** Kay, Lipari, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Surnow

**Nays:** none

**Absent:** Astrein, Eid, Hussey

**4. FINANCE REPORT – SHEPPARD-DECIUS**

Sheppard-Decius explained that overall, the BSD is under budget. However, due to the timing of the special assessment billing, most of the BSD's income does not come in until the final quarter of the fiscal year. Markus reminded the board of the importance of keeping a healthy fund balance since so much of the income comes in late in the year.

**5. APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS**

**MOTION:** Motion by Surnow, seconded by Kay, to approve the vouchers, dated March 2, 2023.

**VOTE: Yeas:** Kay, Lipari, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Surnow

**Nays:** none

**Absent:** Astrein, Eid, Hussey

**6. PRESENTATIONS**

a. **Strategic Plan Draft**

Sheppard-Decius presented a draft of the BSD vision and mission statements for review. She identified the top four core values. Key issues and needs included the business mix analysis, including an assessment of different price points; accessibility and curbside management; and connecting the districts.

She also shared a draft of the goals and objectives. Markus added that resident engagement is important. He feels the downtown also serves as a neighborhood. Although the BSD's mission is to serve business interests, there is also the need to recognize the residential neighborhood and to have a balance.

The board discussed having one more strategy session to complete the process. Sheppard-Decius said that she would work on scheduling the session. She also mentioned that they due to a holiday conflict, the April board meeting would need to be rescheduled.

#### **b. FYE2024-26 Draft Budget**

Sheppard-Decius shared that, although the BSD currently has a large fund balance, the board has expressed a desire to work with a balanced budget. Sheppard-Decius recommends some staffing changes, including adding hours for the PR specialist position, possibly making the position 30 hours for the BSD, instead of shared with the City. Pohlod questioned the number of hours allowed before benefits are required. Sheppard-Decius said she would confirm with HR.

Sheppard-Decius would also like to include money in the budget to improve alleys and to help the triangle district. These additions require making approximately \$200,000 in cuts in other areas.

The fund balance currently sits at over \$1 million. The board discussed what an appropriate fund balance is and asked Sheppard-Decius to check to see how low the balance gets at the lowest time of the year – since assessments are paid during the final quarter of the fiscal year. Board members agreed that there is a need for a fund balance for things that are unexpected or unusual like COVID and road construction. Markus mentioned that there has been some pressure from City Commission for new special events. Funds may need to be set aside to help start some of these events.

Sheppard-Decius reported the Business Development Committee is concerned about cutting their budget. Surnow added that although it may not all be needed for incentives, it would be great if it was all used as that would mean that multiple desirable new businesses would be coming to town.

Markus reminded the board that budgets could be amended throughout the year. Sheppard-Decius added that line item movement is done by the board at a board meeting, only if the budget will be greater than the approved bottom line, does the budget need to be officially amended.

Pohlod suggested that the board did not need to approve the budget today. This is a first look. Each committee can take a closer look at their area and discussion can continue at the next meeting.

### **7. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **a. Marketing Budget**

Pohlod suggested waiting to approve the marketing budget. The board all agreed.

### **8. Old Business**

#### **a. Events Budget**

Sheppard-Decius explained that when she presented the special events portion of the budget at the last board meeting, she had not taken into account credits that had been issued. The credits have now been removed from the expenses and the budget is much closer to where it was expected to be.

## **6. REPORTS**

### **a. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - SHEPPARD-DECIUS**

Sheppard-Decius reported that the City attorney and the finance director reviewed the draft of the by-laws. She asked the board to review them so they can vote on them at the next meeting.

The next Merchant Meeting is scheduled for March 15. Police Chief Grewe will attend to introduce himself and to share some tips for retailers.

Staff has been having a difficult time getting quotes from a website design company that would be able to work with the structure of our current website. Therefore, the BSD has entered into a six-month contract with the current provider.

Sheppard-Decius explored acquiring different URLs. A broker currently holds the downtownbirmingham.com rights and is asking for \$1,000-\$2,000 to release it. We have secured downtownbirmingham-mi.com and downtownbirminghammi.com.

The cost for planters has almost doubled, but Mosher is still the least expensive quote.

Bank of Ann Arbor and Wells Fargo Advisors have committee to sponsorships for the coming year for a total of \$27,500. We are still looking for a \$2,000 sponsor for the Spring Stroll. Markus suggested reaching out to Boji Group. Surnow said that his company might be interested.

### **b. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### **SPECIAL EVENTS – SHEPPARD-DECIUS**

Sheppard-Decius shared that the committee discussed replacing Birmingham Restaurant Week. They are currently exploring two different options. One is more website based and would feature the chef and/or owner and a behind the scenes look. The other would be a twist on Restaurant Week, but not focused on discounts, more on a chef specialty.

#### **MARKETING & ADVERTISING - KAY**

Kay reported that had a meeting with SEEN Magazine regarding a Spring Fashion piece. They are working on confirming models and the location. Pohlod added that they might decide to produce reels instead of a longer video.

#### **MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - LIPARI**

Lipari shared that the committee continues to discuss holiday lights and the balance of costs and labor. They plan to have a recommendation for the board at the next meeting.

Markus mentioned that he recently saw a magazine feature showing some new and innovative things cities were doing with holiday lights. He suggested changing things up so people notice them again – sometimes, after seeing the same thing year after year; people become blind to what is around them.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - MCKENZIE**

McKenzie reported that CB2 opened. He also shared that the committee is making progress putting together the proposed incentive program for commercial realtors who sign leases with desired businesses. Many factors need to be considered.

The business mix analysis is nearing completion. Staff is working to add categories for price point and local vs. national retailer.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT - POHLOD**

Pohlod reported that items the Executive Committee discussed have already been covered. She added that there is an opportunity for the BSD to sponsor/host a table for an OTSC event for students to meet with business owners and learn about possible careers. She would like to see if there is interest in doing this for a future event.

### **c. PARKING REPORT**

No report given

### **d. WAYFINDING REPORT – LIPARI**

Lipari shared that the City plans to redo the water tower soon. The committee is looking into adding logos to the new parking equipment.

## **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

## **9. INFORMATION**

**a. Retail Activity** – provided in packet

**b. Announcements** – no new announcements

**c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule** – provided in packet

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Hohendorf shared that he supports Markus's idea of referring to downtown Birmingham as a neighborhood. He suggested referring to it as the Birmingham Downtown Neighborhood in documents.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT – 10:00 A.M.**

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

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Amy Pohlod, BSD Board Chair

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Date