

City of Birmingham  
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding  
**Thursday, March 3, 2022 - 8:30 a.m.**  
The Community House  
Birmingham, MI 48009

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, March 3, 2022, at 8:32 a.m. at The Community House

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

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

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

**ADMINISTRATION:** Brook, Kammer, Gerber

**2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Motion by Astrein, seconded by Kay to approve the minutes dated February 10, 2022.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 12 Nays, 0 Absent, 0

**4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

**5. REPORTS**

**a. FINANCE REPORT – GERBER**

Gerber reported that the balance sheet shows a negative number for the SAD. This is due to a late journal entry. The balance is \$912,898 which is 14% collection rate through January. Gerber said that he looked ahead in the financials and the collection rate goes up to approximately 50% through March 1. This is a little slower than usual, but assessment bills were mailed out a little later than typical.

The fund balance is approximately \$523,000, which is in line with where it should be. We are getting closer to our pre-pandemic norm. Expenses to date are at about 59% of the budgeted amount, which is also typical.

The cash flow year to date is a little lower than projected. This is probably due to the special assessments being mailed a bit late and payments coming in a little slow. Gerber expects that this will correct itself.

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

Kammer shared that there was a merchant meeting on February 16 at the Daxton Hotel. The group discussed Restaurant Week and employee attraction challenges. Transportation and childcare seemed to be important issues. Since there are close to twenty buses that run through downtown Birmingham each hour, Kammer would like to look into offering bus passes or discounts to employees.

Kammer also met with the city manager to present the proposed 2022-2023 budget. He will bring it to each committee.

Work continues on collecting data for the business mix analysis. Kammer encouraged the board to work to align the BSD branding to the city branding.

Hockman encouraged board member to attend the March 9 planning board study session will be addressing outdoor dining.

## **c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **SPECIAL EVENTS – ASTREIN**

Astrein reported that the Farmers Market would begin its 20<sup>th</sup> season on May 1. The plan is to return to pre-pandemic activities like kids' crafts and event days. We will also be adding fitness activities on the second Sunday of each month. Over 20 vendors have already applied.

The committee is working on a possible August Art Walk. This would be done in partnership with the Birmingham Arts Board.

The Downtown Dino visited on Random Act of Kindness Day and gave out treats to about 40 individuals in the heart of downtown.

Brook explained that there was a recent buy one get one free promotion with Birmingham Bucks. Individuals could purchase up to \$50 in Birmingham Bucks and would get a matching Bucks certificate free. This was courtesy of a \$10,000 grant from Consumers Energy. This offer was promoted on social media and through an eblast.

Pohlod mentioned that the business information survey had a question regarding participating in the Birmingham Bucks program that was confusing. Brook said that she would look into it and make the appropriate update.

### **MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD**

Pohlod shared that the committee discussed implementing an employee attraction program. Items discussed include working with the YMCA for a list of childcare options and possibly subsidizing bus passes. When talking to businesses, they top areas of concern were transportation and childcare.

Pohlod mentioned the Birmingham Bucks promotion with funds from Consumers Energy. She explained that purchasing is a multi-step process that works through a third party. Therefore, the BSD is not able to make it easier. However, Galli produced an instructional video to help shoppers.

In regards to upcoming construction on S. Old Woodward, the committee is looking into a Birmingham Bucks promotion, complimentary valet, and a texting app that would offer immediate responses to those texting questions.

There will be a spring fashion insert for SEEN Magazine and a summer video featuring Birmingham events.

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

Lipari reported that the committee is working on construction valet plans. Astrein asked if there have been talks with Weingartz about funding from the parking advisory committee. Kammer said that he has spoken with Weingartz as well as individuals in the city's engineering and planning departments. In addition to exploring valet options, they are also considering renting private lots in the area so that people can park their own cars and still be close to the stores they want to visit.

Lipari also mentioned that the BSD no longer needs all of the concrete planters. There is a possibility of auctioning them.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - MCKENZIE**

McKenzie shared that the pipeline remains robust. Brilliant Earth recently signed a lease. Kammer gave a Text My Gov proposal at the last meeting.

CC Consulting's contract will expire at the end of the month. The committee began discussions with Ciura and would like to continue to work with her. Surnow added that there has been a lot of action, including signed deals, in the past year in Birmingham. Ciura wants to be paid for all of her work. However, she is working under a contract that the board already amended. She has now hit the maximum allowance for signing bonuses, under the contract. Surnow would like to see her work with the BSD for another year and thinks that she can be coached on how to communicate with staff and avoid discontent in the future. The committee talked about this in depth. Even with fewer vacancies, they feel that it is important to keep relationships fresh. They would like to keep having leases signed, but feel that they need to improve how the contractor is managed.

Quintal asked retail occupancy rate. Surnow said that it is in the high 90's and going up. Quintal suggested a shift in focus to office space as many tenants are downsizing. Surnow agreed that that would be a good topic of discussion for the next meeting.

## **WAYFINDING - FEHAN**

Fehan reported that the Wayfinding Committee has made tremendous progress. He expects that they will have a presentation for the April meeting. This would include a new city logo. The BSD is encouraged to work to coordinate their logo with the new city logo, as they would like to have a more unified look throughout the city and its departments.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT - HOCKMAN**

Hockman shared that the committee chairs held their quarterly meeting and discussed the plan for S. Old Woodward construction activities and promotions.

### **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 Astrein, seconded by Quintal to approve the vouchers, dated March 3, 2022.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 12 Nays, 0 Absent, 0

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Retail Consultant Contract**

Hockman referred this back to the Business Development Committee.

**b. Miles Scope of Work**

**MOTION:** Motion by Astrein, seconded by Quintal to approve the new scope of work from Miles regarding the monthly website support and hosting.

Kammer explained that Miles designed the new website and currently hosts it. Miles recently submitted a new scope of work showing increased fees for hosting. Although it is a significant increase, Miles said that the \$586 per month that we had been paying was a reduced amount since it was new website and had been under development. They said that the monthly fee should have been \$900.

Due to increased data usage and traffic, the proposed monthly fee is now \$1,107. Kammer asked about lowering the fee. Miles said that it would not be possible to go back to the \$586, but if limits are placed on data and uploads, it may be possible to go back to the \$900 per month fee.

Pohlod agreed that she was aware that the \$586 was temporary and that the monthly fee would go up to \$900 per month. She acknowledged that they added video headers, which although they are data heavy, are more dynamic and she feels that they are worth the additional expense.

Markus asked about the certificate of insurance from the original contract being expired. Kammer said that he would ask the company for an updated certificate.

Fehan asked if the \$1,107 covered everything that we want the website to do. Kammer said that it does, but there will probably be additional charges if we update to a new style guide.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 12 Nays, 0 Absent, 0

## **9. INFORMATION**

**a. Retail Activity**

**b. Announcements**

**c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule**

## **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Pohlod shared that Greek Islands Coney Island had a hood fire that morning and asked Kammer to reach out to them.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT – 9:42 A.M.**

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