

City of Birmingham
Birmingham Shopping District Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 1, 2022 - 8:30 a.m.
The Community House
Birmingham, MI 48009

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, September 1, 2022, at 8:33 a.m. at The Community House.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD

PRESENT: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts

ABSENT: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow, Director Emeritus Fehan

ADMINISTRATION: Ecker, Brook, Gerber, Bassett

ALSO PRESENT: Chris Braun, Madeline Gibbs

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS None.

3. PRESENTATIONS None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Markus, seconded by Quintal to approve the minutes dated August 4, 2022.

VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts
Nays: none
Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow

5. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None

6. REPORTS

a. FINANCE REPORT – GERBER

Gerber reported that they are working to close out the books from the last fiscal year. Approximately \$111,000 from last year's assessment was rolled into the July tax roll. About half of that has been collected so far. The current fund balance is approximately \$933,000. This will increase as more assessment dollars are collected.

At the end of July, expenses were at about 5%, which is good. Last year finished with expenditures at 98% of the budgeted amount.

b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - ECKER

Ecker reported that RFP's for a retail consultant and the electrical services for Winter Markt have been posted on MITN. She expects to hold interviews with retail consultant candidates in October and to have a recommendation for the Board to consider at the November meeting.

The S. Old Woodward Reconstruction project is progressing as planned and should be substantially completed by the end of October.

The Birmingham Bucks S. Old Woodward Construction promotion has not come close to using all of the allocated funds. Ecker said this was likely due to the limited number of businesses eligible within the construction zone.

Ecker also shared that Claire Galli, the BSD events and office assistant, submitted her resignation. She will be done at the end of the week.

Pohlod suggested moving item 8. a. Executive Director Search, to the beginning of the meeting since some board members may have to leave early. The board agreed.

NEW BUSINESS (moved up on the agenda)

a. Executive Director Search

McKenzie shared that the selection committee held first round interviews with four candidates. Two of those moved on to the next round, which involved a written piece on the benefits of the BSD and a presentation on how they would market the BSD. He said that after the first round, the two candidates were in a statistical tie, but after the presentation, Candidate 1 became a clear choice for the selection committee. The committee was impressed by her experience as the director of the DDAs in Ferndale and Dearborn, as well as by the resources she was able to pull together for her presentation, as well as her well thought out goals and objectives.

Lipari added that the selection committee felt they had two very strong candidates after the first interview. She added that she is very comfortable moving forward with Candidate 1. She believes that Candidate 1 will be able to deal with the issues facing Birmingham.

Pohlod expressed that she felt the candidates this time were much stronger than they were when the last executive director was hired. Candidate 1 was identified as Cristina Sheppard-Decius.

MOTION: Motion by Lipari, seconded by McKenzie to approve the hiring of Cristina Sheppard-Decius as the new Executive Director of the Birmingham Shopping District as recommended by the selection committee.

Roberts asked about a background check. Ecker shared that background checks and reference checks were successfully completed for both candidates and Ms. Sheppard-Decius' requested salary fell within the advertised range.

Pohlod added that Sheppard-Decius is currently under contract with Dearborn until the end of December. However, Sheppard-Decius feels that she can be out of the contract by the end of November. The plan would be for her to start attending BSD meetings and work in the office 1-2 days per week on an hourly basis to begin the transition and to begin working for the BSD full time on December 1, 2022. Ecker would remain involved with the BSD through the transition period.

**VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts
Nays: none
Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow**

c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS

No meeting was held in August. Pohlod advised that she would be stepping down from the Special Events Committee. She plans to remain a part of the Marketing and Advertising Committee. However, she will be stepping down from the chair position of that committee. Pohlod suggested appointing Kay as the new chair of the Marketing and Advertising Committee.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING - KAY

Kay shared that the committee held two meetings in August. The first meeting had a presentation from NEXT about Birmingham's Big Night Out. Chris Braun, the director of NEXT, explained that they are targeting the over 50 community with this event that will be held at Daxton Hotel on October 20, 2022.

Ecker added that Stuart Jeffares requested the BSD sponsor the event. Ecker worked with Jeffares to secure Daxton Hotel as a venue. Jeffares would like the BSD to donate Birmingham Bucks e-gift cards in the amount of \$25 each to distribute with each ticket purchased. The maximum donation would be \$4,200 in Birmingham Bucks since the event is limited to 168 tickets. Ecker informed the board that there is still significant funding left for Birmingham Bucks as the S.I Old Woodward construction Birmingham Bucks program has been under-utilized.

Jeffares also asked for assistance from the BSD in promoting the event to the business community. Bassett shared that the BSD has not used their internal lists to promote other organizations in the past, but this is something that the board can decide to do.

Markus explained that there is a difference in letting membership know of an opportunity and in soliciting donations.

MOTION: Motion by Markus, seconded by Kay to support the communication of information on Birmingham's Big Night Out to merchants.

**VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts
Nays: none
Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow**

MOTION: Motion by Kay, seconded by Lundberg to approve the donation of Birmingham Bucks e-gift cards in the amount of \$25 per ticket sold to Birmingham's Big Night Out to a maximum total donation of \$4,200 in e-gift cards. Gift cards will have an expiration date of December 31, 2022.

**VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts
Nays: none
Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow**

Markus shared that NEXT is one of the more culturally competent senior centers in the area. It services Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin, and other communities. NEXT has been operating out of the old Midvale School building, but they do not have a lease. The City Commission has directed Markus to work with NEXT to find a more permanent solution – possibly staying at Midvale with a lease or purchasing the building from the school district.

Kay reported that the second Marketing and Advertising Committee meeting in August was to begin work on the Holiday Gift Guide. This insert will be distributed with the November issue of SEEN Magazine. Therefore, it needs to be complete by early October.

The committee discussed spending some extra money to have the insert distributed to Grosse Pointe, which they feel is more worthwhile than adding extra pages.

The committee also discussed changing the BSD logo to be more in line with the new City of Birmingham logo.

MOTION: Motion by Markus, seconded by Quintal to follow the recommendation of the BSD board chair and to appoint Kay as the chair of the Marketing and Advertising Committee.

**VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts
Nays: none
Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow**

MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - LIPARI

Lipari reported that there had not been an August meeting. The DPS appreciation luncheon would take place on September 14 at 11 a.m. Ecker added that the BSD could no longer provide the funds to cover the expenses for the lunch. Pohlod has offered to host the luncheon. If other board members would like to contribute, they can do that through Pohlod directly. Board members are also welcome to attend.

Lipari also shared that there will be one more power washing which will take place the week after the art fair. Quintal added that he thinks the planters looked the best that they have in years.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - MCKENZIE

McKenzie shared that they are moving forward with recruiting a third party retail consultant. Changes are being made to the pipeline report to merge two reports.

When doing a deeper dive into the business mix analysis, some problems were discovered. Some stores were counted multiple times. The final report should be completed soon.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ecker shared that during the last two Executive Committee meetings the committee reviewed the activities of each of the BSD committees, as well as the success of Day on the Town, the Birmingham Bucks programs, the executive director recruitment, and the renewal of the BSD special assessment, which is set to expire at the end of the year.

Markus suggested that, since there are now minutes for each committee meeting, that chairs can be more succinct in their reports.

d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN

No report given.

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 Quintal, seconded by Kay to approve the vouchers, dated September 1, 2022.

VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts

Nays: none

Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

8. NEW BUSINESS

b. New BSD Logo

Pohlod explained that the board packet contains different versions of the proposed new logo for the BSD. The Marketing and Advertising Committee recommends the BSD board adopt a new logo that is in line with the new City of Birmingham logo. The committee would like the rollout to be timed with the completion of S. Old Woodward Phase III construction project.

Ecker added that the City's Wayfinding Committee has approved the proposed logo.

MOTION: Motion by Lundberg, seconded by McKenzie to approve a new BSD logo as illustrated in Version 2 and Version 4B, in board packet, to replace the existing BSD logo.

VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts

Nays: none

Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow

MOTION: Motion by Lundberg, seconded by Kay to approve the use of Pantone colors 648, 5473, 2460, 032, 12% Screen of Black and 50% Screen of Black as the new BSD print color palette.

VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Kay, Lipari, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts

Nays: none

Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Surnow

c. BSD Assessment Renewal

Pohlod reported that, every four years, the BSD needs to look at where we things stand and make budget projections. If the assessment remains the same, the fund balance will begin to decline. Historically, the board has wanted to keep the fund balance between \$500,000-\$600,000, which is what would be required to end operations of the BSD.

If the assessment remains the same for the next four years, the fund balance will fall closer to \$400,000. There is a feeling that some businesses are still struggling to come out of COVID. Therefore, it may be beneficial to stay the same for the short term with an increase in year 3 of \$.05 for Area 1 first and second floor. Area 1A would be half of that. Each BSD committee will discuss this topic at their next meeting.

Markus added that there are always challenges with revenues versus expenses. People are concerned about raising rates, but expenses continue to increase. He feels it is very conservative to wait two years before implementing an increase.

Ecker added that the Executive Committee is recommending a \$.05 increase in year 3 for Area 1 for first and second floors.

Quintal shared that he will not support an increase for second floor. He feels that, with so many offices moving to remote workforces, there is a lot of vacant space and large tenants are still figuring out their new norms.

Markus responded that those were valid points and it is important to hear them. Roberts proposed a \$.025 increase in year 3 and another \$.025 increase in year 4.

Pohlod explained that this would be an on-going discussion. A formal recommendation will be presented to the Board at the October meeting.

d. Horse and Carriage Contract

MOTION: Motion by Markus, seconded by Quintal to approve a contract with Top Hats & Tails Carriage Company for the provision of horse and carriage services in downtown Birmingham during the 2022 holiday season at a maximum total cost of \$10,000.00, and authorize the Chairperson and the Executive Director to execute the agreement.

VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts

Nays: none

Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Kay, Lipari, Surnow

e. Holiday Lighting Request from DPS

Ecker requested deferring this item to a future meeting.

MOTION: Motion by Markus, seconded by Quintal to defer discussion of the Holiday Lighting Request by DPS to the next meeting.

VOTE: Yeas: Eid, Lundberg, Markus, McKenzie, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts

Nays: none

Absent: Astrein, Hockman, Kay, Lipari, Surnow

9. INFORMATION

a. Retail Activity

b. Announcements

c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT – 10:05 A.M.

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

APPROVED