

City of Birmingham
Birmingham Shopping District Proceeding
Thursday, November 5, 2020 - 8:30 a.m.
ZOOM Meeting

Minutes of the meeting of the Birmingham Shopping District Board held Thursday, November 1, 2020, at 8:32 a.m. via ZOOM Meetings

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF BOARD

PRESENT: Astrein, Eid, Fehan, Hockman, Kay, Lundberg, Pohlod, Quintal, Roberts, Surnow, Valentine

ABSENT: Solomon

ALSO PRESENT:

ADMINISTRATION: Tighe, Brook, Bassett

2. RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

David Hoehendorf, Dennis Pazzi

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Motion by Fehan, seconded by Pohlod to approve the minutes dated October 1, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 11 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

4. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Valentine shared that Maple Road has reopened to traffic. They are currently working on final touches. All work should be complete in the next couple of weeks.

He reported that the city's bond initiative overwhelmingly passed. This means that upgrades will be made to some of the parks and the ice arena over the next few years.

Valentine also let the board know that, after twenty-four years with the city, he decided to look at new opportunities. He will be leaving his position as city manager at the end of the year.

On behalf of the board, Hockman thanked Valentine for his service and wished him well in his future endeavors.

5. REPORTS

a. FINANCE REPORT – TIGHE

Tighe reported that the accounting department is still reconciling the last fiscal year and the current one. The fund balance through the end of September is \$673,791. There is nothing significant to report as we are on target with expenditures.

A purchase order was processed last fiscal year for \$75,000 for construction valet parking. Since it was not used, it will be released and go back into the general fund. Cash flow for the first quarter of the fiscal year is trending correctly. Special events has not had as much activity. Therefore, there is a little extra money in that area.

b. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - TIGHE

No report given.

c. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

SPECIAL EVENTS - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that the committee unanimously voted to cancel the Winter Markt this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. Small Business Saturday is November 28. We will be running a Birmingham Bucks promotion. Shoppers can earn \$25 in Birmingham Bucks for each \$100 spent at a BSD store or restaurant. Maximum earning is \$100 per person.

Hazel, Ravines & Downtown will be handing out hot chocolate on Small Business Saturday. Santa visits also start that day. They will be socially distanced this year.

The tree lighting event will be done virtually. Brook shared that we are working with a third party provider to run a scavenger hunt using a customized app on peoples' phones. The scavenger hunt will take place in the heart of downtown on Saturdays and Sundays from Thanksgiving through Christmas.

The Great Decorate tree-decorating contest will also be taking place. There will be two \$5,000 small business grants for the winning trees.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING - POHLOD

Pohlod updated the board that the committee is working on an insert for the November issue of SEEN Magazine. It will be a gift guide. She said that the committee has not had as much input due to the COVID-19 situation, but she feels that the team did a good job putting it together. A high number of different stores are included.

Filming of a holiday video will take place this week. It will include ideas on how to dress-up your home for the holidays. Once produced, it will be used similarly to the last videos with several media outlets.

The website RFP process went well. Thirty-six companies submitted proposals. The committee did four initial interviews and had second interviews with the final two companies looking more at how the back end of the website would be set-up. The committee is now ready to recommend that we move forward with Miles. There will be a contract proposed later in the meeting.

MAINTENANCE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS - QUINTAL

Quintal reported that the holiday decorations would be going into the planters late this week or early next week. The chandelier lights will also be hung. The committee decided not to hang lights over Merrill Street this year. The extra money will go to enhancing the snow removal contract.

The new snow removal contract will include all bump outs for an additional \$4,300 and an additional pass from Wilits to Brown. There have been some requests that we do the full sidewalk, but that is not practical right now.

Astrein asked if there is anything that can be done about the paint on the sidewalks. Valentine said that the paint is designed to fade off over time and that there is no way to remove it sooner.

Valentine also commended the committee for looking at the snow removal contract again. He said that he believes that it is a good strategy and can help to make shopping in Birmingham more attractive than shopping at a mall.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - SURNOW

Surnow shared that the committee is working on putting together a list of goals and objectives. He said that they have almost completed their business plan. He feels that it will be helpful to have something with which to measure progress. He expects that they will have something to present to the board in the next month or two.

The broker round table presentation from Costar on national retail real estate was a little depressing, but the Birmingham outlook is much better. The local vacancy rates are much lower than nationally. The committee is continuing to work with Ciura on the existing pipeline.

Valentine commended Surnow and the committee for being proactive and putting together a strategy. He added that he feels that they have been working very well with the marketing committee.

Hockman shared that he felt that the property owner round table was well done.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Hockman reported that the board had conducted its annual review for Tighe and that it went very well. She scored 4.87 out of a possible five, which is higher than last year. The board recognizes the work that she has been doing during this unprecedented year. She has done a great job of staying organized, continuing to be in contact with merchants and property owners as well as the community. The board thanks her for her hard work. Tighe thanked Hockman and added that it is her pleasure to serve.

Hockman continued that Tighe's goals for the coming year would focus on business development and marketing. These goals will be used for next year's evaluation.

Hockman also shared that later in the meeting there will be a motion to reallocate \$200,000 from the budget to COVID-19 efforts. The BSD had approved \$200,000 to be used in the prior year for construction valet parking and marketing and was not used due to COVID. Therefore, the executive committee is recommending \$125,000 to go to marketing, \$15,000 to snow removal and \$60,000 to tenant recruitment. This will have an impact on the fund balance but it is important in tough times to have the resources needed. Hockman stated that it is important to approve this today so that funds can be used during the holiday season. Construction is now complete and we want people coming back to Birmingham.

d. PARKING REPORT - ASTREIN

Astrein reported that the parking advisory committee met yesterday and voted to recommend to commission that they continue free parking in the structures through the end of March. This still needs to be approved by city commission and would be revisited at the end of March.

Some construction has been done around town to continue to make things more ADA compliant. Astrein commended Commander Grewe who he said has done an excellent job leading that project.

Pohlod thanked the parking advisory committee for extending free parking. She said that she thinks that the first quarter of 2021 will be very difficult for many businesses.

Astrein added that they did charge permit holders a one-time \$100 fee to keep their permit. About 250 permits were turned in and will be made available to others soon.

e. **CHAMBER REPORT - BAUMAN**

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 November 5, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 11 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Request to Extend Snow Removal Agreement

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Kay to extend agreement with Nick's Maintenance for downtown sidewalk snow removal for the 2020-2021 winter season. This option to extend is detailed in the original agreement dated June 2017.

VOTE: Yeas, 11 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

b. Website Redesign and Hosting Agreement

MOTION: Motion by Astrein, seconded by Pohlod to approve the agreement with Miles Partnership for Website Redesign & Hosting services to assist the BSD in building a more appealing and user friendly website for the Birmingham Shopping District's downtown businesses and visitors.

Pohlod shared that the committee talked about what is important in the new design and the proposed features include a more interactive map and a back-end that is easier to use. She

added that Miles has shown that they are good at project management and that they also have creative ideas.

VOTE: Yeas, 11 Nays, 0 Absent, 1

c. Request to Reallocate Funds

MOTION: Motion by Hockman, seconded by Astrein to reallocate the \$200,000 that was not spent on construction valet parking to be used for the remainder of the fiscal year in the areas of marketing (125k), business development (60k) and maintenance and capital improvements (15k).

Valentine commented that we identified these funds early on as available and now is a good time to put them to use. He feels that this qualifies as a time to spend some reserves as the next six to twelve months will be critical to the city and the downtown.

VOTE: Yeas, 10 Nays, 1 - Kay Absent, 1

9. INFORMATION

a. Retail Activity

b. Announcements

c. Letters, Board Attendance & Monthly Meeting Schedule

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

11. ADJOURNMENT – 9:15 A.M.

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