

Village of Byron  
Special Council Meeting Minutes  
December 19, 2012

Meeting called to order at 2:00pm by President Musall

President led Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call – Present: Bessenbacher, Brunell, Cole, President Musall. Absent: Root. Vacant seats: 2

Cole moved, Brunell seconded to approve the Agenda as presented. All Ayes. Carried

President explained purpose of meeting to gather ideas, discuss direction and plan for downtown and to provide access to information and resources.

Justin Horvath from the Shiawassee Economic Development Partnership facilitated the discussion, explaining importance of crafting a vision for how to work together on the downtown rebuilding effort. Several persons were in attendance, including business owners and agency representatives.

The discussion included how to approach the issues and who could act as the single point of contact for any program, application or contract. Need to outline basic priorities, identify community needs and ensure community is ready to apply for funding.

President Musall cautioned that council was prepared to assist in providing a framework for funding for owners if it aligned with their intentions to rebuild, but would follow mood/temperament of owners.

James Espinoza from MSHDA spoke to housing issues at it relates to funding opportunities. Several people spoke of parking needs for downtown businesses and concern if there is a focus on rentals in the upper floors of the downtown businesses, where would they park?

Mark Wilutis spoke about difficulty he had in obtaining grants. One response was to reiterate why a project manager would be beneficial. Owners are still awaiting insurance settlements, creating a unique opportunity for owners to hash out details and apply for funding.

Historical registry status was also discussed. Byron is listed in the National Historical Registry and it was noted that demolition is allowed. The value of the street wall being saved was discussed, which brought up the importance of a visioning process. Lisa Demankowski spoke on creating a survey or providing residents visual aids to establish their vision for the community.

Rob Durk questioned if the reinvestment process wasn't like putting the cart before the horse. Too many issues remain unanswered on unsettled insurance claims, the likelihood of loans being unaffordable, and a business climate still reeling from the economic downturn.

Also acknowledged was importance of discussion as they are productive in determining issues, understanding opportunities, creating dialogue with business owners and providing access to funds.

Roger Kelley spoke regarding demolition cost issues. Still not determined is outcome for vacant building on North end of block. With demolition, it is most cost effective to do all work at once. President Musall requested Village Attorney Tom Bridges research what liability is attached to vacant building.

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After all issues were discussed, Justin Horvath recapped the findings of the meeting.

Where do we go from here – who leads? Christy Cook would be willing to provide framework.  
Visioning process necessary to determine which businesses are staying/rebuilding and which are not.  
Understand funding application deadlines.  
Discussing decisions of business/building owners as that will focus the efforts of Village Council to set policy.  
Owners not ready to move ahead as their focus is on property and insurance issues.  
Village role to keep dialogue moving.  
Some feel it may be too soon to set another meeting for the first of the New Year. Others felt that in order to promote as much assistance as possible, it is better to meet sooner than later.

With no further discussion to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 3:43pm.

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James Crain – Clerk

Date

Rick Musall - President