

**Birmingham City Commission
Long Range Planning Minutes
January 20, 2024
8:30 a.m.
Municipal Building, 151 Martin
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/901033380>**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Elaine McLain, Mayor, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk, called the roll.

Present: Mayor McLain
Mayor Pro Tem Schafer
Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Long
Commissioner Longe

Absent: Commissioner Baller

Staff: City Manager Ecker; City Clerk Bingham, Information Technology Manager Brunk (Zoom), City Engineer Coatta, Assistant City Manager Clemence, Library Director Craft, Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant City Manager Fairbairn, Parking Systems Manager Ford, Communications Director Gamboa (Zoom), Finance Director Gerber, Police Chief Grewe, Building Official Johnson, Human Resources Manager Woods, Museum Director Pielack (Zoom), Birmingham Shopping District Director Sheppard-Decius (Zoom), Fire Chief Wells, Department of Public Services Director Zielinski

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

CM Ecker made introductory remarks.

A. Finance

- a. Five-Year Financial Forecast 2023 to 2027
- b. Digital Budget Book — Status Update

FD Gerber introduced the items. Spencer Tawa from Plante Moran and FD Gerber presented Item A(a) and FD Gerber presented Item A(b). FD Gerber answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Water and sewer funds previously limited the amount of infrastructure improvements that could be accomplished, and so raising the water and sewer fund rates would allow for more infrastructure improvements;
- It was valuable that the City was investing more of the general funds into improving infrastructure;
- The infrastructure improvements would represent improvements in safety as well; and,

- The transparency reports available in the Digital Budget Book will be useful.

Public Comment

Staff answered informational questions from David Bloom.

B. Public Services

- a. Parks & Recreation Master Plan Implementation

DPSD Zielinski presented Item B(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- A community garden was previously considered for Barnum Park and tabled due to questions of demand, water and tool access, oversight, theft of produce;
- Bloomfield Hills and Royal Oak have community gardens that could potentially serve as models for Birmingham;
- It would be appropriate to relocate the outdoor exercise equipment that NEXT paid for from Midvale to St. James Park; and,
- The next round of park bonds should be used for parks that will have the highest impact. Since the park bonds were supported by individual neighborhoods seeking improvements to the playground equipment at their local parks and to expand park accessibility, it is important that the bonds be used for those purposes.

Public Comment

Staff answered informational questions from Mr. Bloom.

Dave Palmeri, president of the Birmingham Little League, spoke in support of redesigning two additional fields in Kenning Park.

C. Engineering

- a. Changes in Stormwater Management
- b. Upcoming Capital Projects 2024

CE Coatta presented the items and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Funds are allocated towards maintaining the safety of the sidewalks;
- The City should reach out to business owners to emphasize the importance of maintaining alley cleanliness; and,
- The City should consider whether a policy regarding the aesthetics of rain barrels in the front yard should be implemented.

Public Comment

Mr. Bloom thanked the Engineering Department and a contractor for assisting him with an issue at his property.

D. Planning

- a. Historic Preservation
- b. Transit Planning

PD Dupuis presented Items D(a) and D(b) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- There is funding available for owners looking to make improvements to a historic home;
- Crossing Woodward should be made safer for pedestrians, and potential other multi-modal ways of crossing Woodward should be explored;
- Old is not the same as historic. More information on how historic properties influence neighborhood development and growth would be beneficial. The Commission should be kept apprised of historic preservation efforts in the City;
- It is important to balance community benefit with individual property owners' rights; and,
- The Commission should continue to be apprised of the City Manager's efforts to promote increased safety and pedestrian walkability along the Woodward corridor.

E. Birmingham Shopping District

- a. Long-Range Economic Growth Plan

BSDD Sheppard-Decius presented Item E(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Adding lighting and other aesthetic improvements to the alleys would be beneficial; and,
- Improvements to the alleys should be considerate of adjacent residential.

F. Fire Department

- a. Insurance Services Office (ISO) Update

FC Wells presented Item F(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Carbon monoxide detectors save lives, and a combustible gas detector can also be purchased relatively inexpensively for safety improvements;
- Birmingham is known for its emergency response services, and the responsible departments deserve commendation; and,
- Working towards an ISO rating of one is valuable because it represents safety improvements for the community.

G. Police Department

- a. Police Department / City Hall Safety & Security, Building Redesign & Expansion

PC Grewe presented Item G(a) and staff answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Improvements to the Police Department and City Hall should be a high priority;
- Birmingham residents remain concerned about the safety of crossing Woodward;
- Increased traffic enforcement on Woodward results in an increase in funds due from the City to the 48th District Court; and,
- While the Police Department will likely be located off-site, the City will still have a responsibility to renovate City Hall in order to make ADA, security, utility, and other improvements.

H. Lunch

The Commission briefly recessed, and returned from recess.

I. Parking

a. Parking System Improvements

PSM Ford presented Item I(a) and staff answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Using QR codes to initiate payments could pose a security issue, and should be evaluated further before implementation. The QR code signs would at least have to be regularly evaluated for either tampering or replacements by malicious actors;
- Improving the lighting and aesthetics of the parking garages will help people feel more safe in using the garages;
- Internet connectivity along Old Woodward can impede people from using ParkMobile, and should be improved;
- PSM Ford deserved thanks for hearing the APC's frustrations about perceived changes to its role;
- It would be useful to review how boards such as the APC meet the City's needs presently, and whether changes in those boards' charges or meeting frequencies would be appropriate;
- Each ParkMobile account has a history of paid parking. If an inaccurate parking fine is issued, a ParkMobile user can present their paid parking history to the City to rectify the issue; and,
- Garage users would not be required to use a QR code to initiate a payment.

J. IT

a. Cyber Security & IT Infrastructure

ITM Brunk presented Item J(a) and staff answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- Residents having connectivity issues in their homes should escalate their concerns with their internet and cellular services providers, as appropriate.

K. Clerk's Office

a. Digitizing Applications and Processes

CC Bingham presented Item K(a) and answered informational questions for the Commission.

The Commission thanked the Clerk's Office for providing food and refreshments during the LRP.

L. Building Department

a. Paperless Plan Review

BO Johnson presented Item L(a) and staff answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- A link on the website to the paperless plan review process would be helpful. Residents are finding the paperless process beneficial.

M. Library

a. Renovation Update & Future Planning

LD Craft presented Item M(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

N. Museum

- a. Museum Updates

MD Pielack presented Items N(a). The Commission had no questions on this item.

O. Human Resources

- a. Recruitment and Retention

HRM Woods presented Item O(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments:

- The work of the employee engagement committee would be valuable; and,
- City staff and HRM Woods were commended for their work for the City.

P. Manager’s Office

- a. Communications Enhancements
- b. Senior/Recreation Building Project – 400 E. Lincoln
- c. Citywide Sustainability Efforts

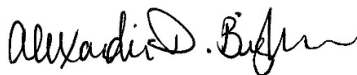
CD Gamboa presented Item P(a), CM Ecker presented Item P(b), and ACM Fairbairn presented Item P(c). Staff and Cris Braun, Executive Director of NEXT, answered informational questions from the Commission.

The Mayor asked Commissioners to comment on or highlight something of note from the day’s proceedings. Commissioners noted:

- The volume of items discussed, and the future need for some prioritization of those items and projects;
- The extent of coordination and collaboration interdepartmentally and with other groups, as well as the City Administration's awareness of, and participation in, that collaboration;
- How the Human Resources Department’s recruitment and retention efforts enable the City to have the best-suited staff for City work;
- When Commissioners ask questions of staff, those questions are asked in an effort to collaborate in improving projects and the City’s overall functioning; and,
- Thanks were extended to all of the City’s boards, to everyone who was present for the LRP session, and to all who participated in the work that went into the LRP.

V. ADJOURN

Mayor McLain adjourned the meeting at 2:19 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist