

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION / PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD  
JOINT WORKSHOP SESSION MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2014  
DPS FACILITY, 851 SOUTH ETON  
7:30 P.M.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Scott D. Moore, Mayor, called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

ROLL CALL OF CITY COMMISSION:

Present,	Mayor Moore Commissioner Dilgard Commissioner Hoff Commissioner McDaniel Commissioner Nickita Commissioner Rinschler Mayor Pro Tem Sherman
Absent,	None

ROLL CALL OF PARKS & RECREATION BOARD:

Present,	Ms. Bordman Mr. Kaplan Ms. Longe Mr. Meehan Mr. Ross Mr. Wiebrecht Mr. Cusimano, Student Representative
Absent,	Mr. Stevens Mr. Cross, Student Representative

Administration: City Manager Valentine, Clerk Pierce, DPS Director Wood, Museum Director Pielack

**III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**A. Park Project Priority Discussion**

**Improvements to recreational assets:**

- **Manor Park – Evaluate and consider alternate entrance location to relieve neighborhood impacts and increase usage.**

Ms. Longe explained that the park is underutilized and has poor access to the public. Mr. Wiebrecht noted that a nature preserve would serve as a unique purpose for the park to create it as a community park.

Commission Rinschler agreed that the park is unused. He suggested something be done to it to make it more desirable or to use it as a nature preserve. He noted the vacant lot across from the park is used for pick up soccer games.

Mayor Moore agreed that the board needs to determine whether the park should be a nature area or recreation area.

- **Poppleton Park – Evaluate additional parking options and alternate entrance to relieve neighborhood impacts and accommodate baseball/soccer users.**

Ms. Longe explained that this is an intensely used park with great potential for increasing the capacity, without burdening the neighborhood.

Mr. Wiebrecht suggested adding an entrance to the park from Madison which would allow for additional parking and less impact on the neighborhood. Ms. Bordman noted that additional permits would be required to create a right-hand turn onto Woodward from the park.

The Commission discussed the impact on the neighborhood and expansion of the parking. Ms. Longe noted the Board has received parking complaints. Commissioner McDaniel and Mayor Moore agreed that this is a high priority item.

- **St. James – Field improvements for baseball/soccer users.**

Ms. Longe explained that the park is in good shape and is well used. She noted there have been random issues of enforcement of unleashed dogs. Above and beyond regular maintenance, it is the fields that need to be crowned.

- **Adams Park – Site improvements in consultation with Roeper School and neighborhood groups.**

Ms. Longe explained that the asphalt pad needs to be removed, improved plantings along the fence line, new basketball hoops and nets, and improved play area as it is lumpy. She noted that should the Commission feel this is a priority, there is a neighborhood group and the school who would be interested in providing funding.

The Commission agreed that this is a high priority. Mr. Kaplan suggested the park be added to the City map.

The Commission received a communication from Brian Wilmers regarding improvements to Adams Park.

- **Linn Smith/Linden Park – Consideration of linking bridge.**

Ms. Longe explained that the park is underutilized and primarily used by walkers. She noted there is an opportunity to add a low impact bridge across the river which will vastly open up the walking potential to connect the two neighborhood areas and improve utilization of the parks.

In response to a question from Mayor Pro Tem Sherman, Ms. Longe confirmed that Mr. Lasser still has interest in adding a plaza and vista feature, however the board does not feel it is a high priority.

Mr. Wiebrecht suggested trees be added to the west side of the park to screen several houses and define the park on that side.

Commissioner Nickita noted that the City is known for its recognition of design and suggested the design of the bridge be considered.

- **Soccer Sites - Review all park spaces for opportunity for field improvements and to create additional field space.**

Ms. Longe explained the soccer sites encompass multiple parks. She suggested the priority be to increase the level of investment to improve the current use.

Mr. Kaplan agreed as there are issues with unevenness of the fields and weeds. He suggested the normal maintenance of the grass be done on a Thursday or Friday instead of Monday.

Mayor Moore commented that this is not an expensive fix and would make the fields more usable.

- **Trail Improvements – Review and consider existing master plan options.**

Ms. Longe commented that the trail system has a large amount of acreage. She suggested the master plan be revisited and elements chosen for improvements.

Commissioner Rinschler suggested the Board endorse elements of the plan that could then be added to the budget. He suggested staff consider ADA requirements with any improvements.

Commissioner Nickita noted that the trail is a very important asset. He stated that some areas are not passable. He suggested priority be given to fixing the basic items to bring it up to square one.

- **Universally Accessible Playground – Inclusive equipment and surface.**

Ms. Bordman stated that the parks are not accessible to all abilities and all ages. She suggested future planning include surfaces suitable to the elderly and individuals with disabilities. She suggested one park be devoted to universally accessible equipment.

Ms. Longe noted that there are opportunities for grants and corporate sponsorships. She suggested Barnum Park or Poppleton Park could be considered.

**Working with donor community partners:**

- **Booth Park - Consideration of Phase 3 corner plaza development.**
- **Barnum Park – Consideration of remaining plan elements.**
- **Kenning Park – Consideration of next phase review including walking path addition.**

Ms. Longe noted that the three parks have master plans with community involvement. She suggested a walking path be added to Kenning Park to define the boundaries of the park.

The Commission discussed the donor program. Commissioner Rinschler noted that the market is competitive if not actively soliciting. Commissioner Hoff stated that fundraising has been resident driven and obtaining corporate donations and grant writing is a job in itself. Commissioner Nickita stated that the needs would have to be very clearly defined and elements that would be fundable would have to be prioritized.

**Other issues:**

- **Improve enforcement of park rules - off leash dogs and dog waste.**
- **Mechanisms to enhance advertising and marketing efforts for all parks/properties – increase awareness.**

Ms. Longe explained that citizens have expressed concern with the enforcement of park rules such as letting dogs run freely in the parks. She noted that they are working on installing new

park signage. She suggested an endorsement from the Commission in the paper would be beneficial to inform people of the park rules.

## **V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ashley Aidenbaum stressed the importance of the trail system and aesthetic continuity. She suggested engaging the Public Arts Board.

Cindy Rose expressed concern with the condition of the soccer fields. She noted that the bridge at Linn Smith Park needs to be addressed.

Dave Palmeri, Birmingham Little League, stated that the little league is willing to contribute funds. He suggested the plan be implemented in a phased structure. Mayor Moore suggested he contact the City Manager for further discussion.

Leslie Pielack, Museum Director, noted the central location of the John West Hunter Park at the Museum. She stated that she would like to see the park become more user friendly.

Erin Rosman suggested the impact of the flooding on the baseball diamonds near Kenning Park be addressed. She expressed concern with potential parking issues with the park improvements.

Dorothy Conrad expressed concern with dogs off-leash in the parks and owners not cleaning up after their dogs.

Larry Bertollini commented that the Kenning Park Plan needs to be revisited as there remain questions to be resolved.

City Manager Valentine explained the next step is for internal discussion with staff, then Commission discussion at the Long Range Planning Session and Budget Session.

## **VI. ADJOURN**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 9:28 PM.

Laura M. Pierce  
City Clerk