

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION  
LONG RANGE PLANNING MINUTES  
JANUARY 28, 2017  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 151 MARTIN  
8:30 A.M.**

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

Mayor Mark Nickita called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

ROLL CALL: Present,	Mayor Nickita Commissioner Bordman Commissioner Boutros Commissioner DeWeese Mayor Pro Tem Harris Commissioner Hoff Commissioner Sherman (late)
Absent,	None

Administration: City Manager Valentine, City Attorney Currier, Acting Clerk Arft, Finance Director Gerber, DPS Director Wood, BSD Office Manager Rondello, Commander Grewe, Commander Albrecht, City Engineer O'Meara, HR Manager Taylor, Building Official Johnson, Fire Chief Connaughton, Assistant Fire Chief Donahue, Assistant to the Manager Haines, IT Manager Brunk, City Planners Ecker, City Planner Baka, Assistant Planner Chapman, Museum Director Pielack, Library Director Koschik, Assistant Library Director Craft, DPS Manager Filipiski

**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**I. FINANCE  
FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST**

Financial Director Gerber introduced Tim St. Andrew of Plante Moran, who was present to provide a brief overview of the forecast, and explain some highlights of the forecast.

Mr. St. Andrew explained the forecast covers the General Fund, the Major and Local Street Funds, and the Water and Sewer Funds. He noted there are many assumptions in the forecast which will change as the facts and circumstances change. The intent is to help identify areas of concern and of opportunity to help the City revise its fiscal strategy. He added it is important to understand that the numbers are estimates, and to understand the assumptions used in the forecast.

Mr. St. Andrew reviewed the City's State Equalized Value (SEV) compared to the Taxable Value (TV). He pointed out the downturn the City experienced between 2008 and 2012, and noted the City has rebounded nicely from that downturn. Growth in the 3 – 5% range has occurred in the last few years, and looking out into the forecasted period, the City is expecting 3 - 5% growth in TV. He noted that SEV is growing faster than TV and that is forecasted to grow at about 5 – 6%. He said the gap between SEV and TV in the future is good, because in the event we have another real estate downturn, the large gap between SEV and TV really provides a cushion for the City.

Mr. St. Andrew said because the percentage of TV increase on the City's existing properties is expected to exceed inflation, the City is expected to have some Headlee rollbacks, meaning the maximum millage allowed is rolled back based on a mathematical formula. He noted it is a pretty steep decline over the next 5 years. He noted this is not really a concern because when looking back historically, the City's actual levy has been well below the Headlee limit. He said in 2021 the gap narrows, and said if that trend continues, the City could be impacted by this and limited by what it can levy.

Finance Director Gerber noted that in the years between 2018 and 2019, the operating millage jumps back up. He said the operating millage decrease just before 2018 is for the two year Library millage. The forecast assumes that in 2019 – 2021, that the Library millage would go back into the operating millage and be consistent with prior years. He said as we move into those years, the information will change as we get into the budgets.

Commissioner DeWeese asked if the Library millage continued and the City did not raise the City's millage rate, would the gap remain bigger. Finance Director Gerber confirmed that. Mr. St. Andrew added that as these rollbacks happen, it is important to remember that right now, rollups are allowed. As that comes down, that is down for good. If that trend comes true, the City is limited long term.

Mr. St. Andrew explained the forecasted fund balances for the General Fund and two Street Funds. He noted the slight dip in the General Fund between 2016 and 2018. He explained that is driven by capital projects that the General Fund is going to help subsidize. From 2018 to 2021, it is expected to climb. The reasons for that climb include continued TV growth and relatively steady building permit revenue. He said the road fund balances are dependent on the capital projects, the timing of the projects, the cost, and the funding from the General Fund. He noted that the Major Streets Fund is expected to be relatively flat over the forecasted period, and the Local Roads Fund is flat through 2018, and then when some of the projects are completed, that it is anticipated to climb to just over \$6 million.

City Manager Valentine said we will revisit this as we go forward. The intent with the Major Streets Fund is to maintain a flat, stable, cost expectation for it. The same thing will be worked on with the Local Roads Fund as well. He added the City is budgeting consistently in that way.

Mayor Nickita, in looking at the substantial increase in 2019 – 2021, asked if we are anticipating that many projects in the Local Streets Fund to justify that amount. Finance Director Gerber said the City could transfer to Major Streets Fund or not transfer the funds. The idea is to maintain a consistent transfer to those funds to flatten it out so that on the General Fund side, it is a relatively stable amount that is being transferred, then it is not up and down from year to year, causing financial distress or concerns. He noted that the steep increase expected in the General Fund is a result of the millage rate going back up after the Library millage, so there is some opportunity to look at millage rates in those years as well.

Commissioner Boutros asked what the target of funding is. Finance Director Gerber said it is to keep it around the \$2 – 3 million range. Commissioner Boutros asked if that is sufficient to maintain the local streets for the next 10 years. Finance Director said that is why we try to look at projects going out five years to determine if the funding for those years is sufficient.

City Manager Valentine said the size of project determines what the cost is going to be. We try to maintain and structure the projects to fit the fund so that it is flat, but there is going to be some variation. The idea is to try to flatten that line and avoid large transfers and spikes in those funds.

Mr. St. Andrew explained the Unassigned General Fund balance compared to target levels. Unassigned Fund Balance is the component left over and discretionary, which is liquid and unrestricted by any outside source. The Commission set a target level of 17 – 40%. The expected Unassigned Fund Balance in the future will be within the target in 2017 – 2019. It is forecasted to be above the target for the last two years of the forecast. This is an opportunity to see concerns and areas of opportunities.

Mr. St. Andrew explained the Water & Sewer rate forecast. There are a lot of factors go into this, with the main ones being the cost of water and sewer, the capital projects, and water units sold. Taking those into consideration, the City is expected to need only inflationary increases in the water and sewer rate throughout the forecasted period. City Manager Valentine added that the rate is subject to any changes from GLWA and SOCCWA, where the water is purchased.

Commissioner DeWeese asked what the expected inflation rate is. Finance Director said it is overall about 2. Water and sewer has a bit higher inflation rate, given GLWA's recommendation to keep everything at 4% or less.

Commissioner DeWeese asked how higher inflation impacts the City, Headlee-wise, because our costs would go up. Finance Director Gerber agreed our costs would go up. Mr. St. Andrews said the City would have less of a rollback, which does not impact the City now, because the actual levy is less than the Headlee maximum.

Commissioner Hoff said that during Long Range Planning, the Commissioners focus on setting guidelines, and determining projects, and the end result is the budget session and determining and setting the millage. She asked Finance Director Gerber about the millage amounts which are different from what she is seeing today, particularly the Library millage. City Manager Valentine explained the different categories on the chart which clarified the concern about the Library millage for Commissioner Hoff.

Commissioner DeWeese asked what the implications are if the Library millage is kept the same as it is now. City Manager Valentine said the higher the current tax rate, the sooner the City will reach its Headlee maximum. The Library has a separate Headlee, and will be facing this as well. Commissioner DeWeese asked for an explanation at some point in the future of Headlee impacts and what the City's options might be.

David Bloom asked if new development is included in the projections.

Mr. St. Andrew explained that any new development is not taken into consideration.

## **II. ENGINEERING**

### **2017 Local Street Paving Program**

City Engineer O'Meara described the construction projects this year, with the highlight being the Old Woodward project. Everything will be replaced within the quarter-mile stretch between

Willits and Brown. Also a short section of Maple will be replaced from Pierce to just east of Old Woodward to correct the grading issues that we have at the main intersection. That project is hoped to take place roughly between May and September of this year.

Also Oak Street will be reconstructed for the block in front of the Quarton Elementary School property. The water system will be replaced, and a large storm sewer extension will be installed so that streets to the north and west of there can have storm water directed to the storm system, and out of the combined system. Finally, the City will construct parent drop off lanes to service the elementary school, as agreed to with the school district.

The commercial section of Poppleton Ave. will be reconstructed. This pavement is in poor condition. We are currently in discussions with Kroger management to arrive at a plan that keeps the store as accessible as possible, while allowing room for the road to be replaced.

Select sections of concrete on Lawndale Ave. immediately next to Woodward Ave. will be replaced.

Certain dead-end streets will be resurfaced. Money from the county has been received for use in a commercial area. Since it is a small amount of money, the department is planning to replace handicapped ramps, patching the asphalt and putting a capeseal layer on streets in Triangle District.

Backyard sewer lining in the Quarton Lake area will be discussed in more detail today focusing on the area north of Oak, between Chesterfield and Lake Park. Also the City hopes to line the sewer that is south of Maple, between Maple and Yosemite in the Birmingham Villa subdivision.

Parking structure improvements are planned for the Chester Street structure, changing all of the lights to LED. In the Park Street structure, all of the structural steel will be painted, which will impact the customers. They will time that so it is not done at the same time the Old Woodward construction project is underway.

The sidewalk program will focus on the north central part of the City between the Rouge River and Adams Road. They will also focus on the north east corner of downtown doing scattered repairs.

In response to Commissioner Hoff, City Engineer said the Oak Street sewer system would not be replaced, since the sewer is located in the front yards, not the road. They are considering lining it. He added that there is no sewer presently and the City will be building a storm sewer to help provide a storm sewer outlet for the area north of there in the future.

Katy Schafer, a Fairway Drive resident, expressed the interest of neighbors to have sidewalks installed on the street. She explained the steps some of the neighbors have taken to gather support of all residents. She added that the neighbors have explored some opportunities to help subsidize the project, and learned about the Safe Routes to School program through MDOT. They have partnered with Pierce Elementary School in the effort which supports the effort. Nearly 1.5 miles of new sidewalk would be installed on Fairway and Northlawn in an effort to achieve a walking/biking path to Pierce Elementary School.

Commissioner Hoff asked if Ms. Shafer thought with the support and possible funding through MDOT, the group would get support from the residents who are opposed. She said they were hopeful; however, they have not re-introduced it to the neighbors. They want to wait until they have facts available on the route, what homes would be involved, and the cost.

In response to Commissioner Boutros, Ms. Shafer said about 50% are opposed.

Commissioner Harris asked if the procedure for a project such as this is the same as the process followed for installation of curbs on unimproved streets. City Manager Valentine confirmed it is.

Commissioner Hoff said the available funding may factor in the neighbors' decision for or against the project.

Mayor Nickita said the process for this sidewalk is the same as other projects, except the funding source in this case might be factored in to the dialog.

Ms. Shafer said the City has to apply and get approval for the grant, and the City was unwilling to apply without neighborhood support. Their hope is to adjust the process slightly in order to disseminate correct information to the neighbors.

Mayor Nickita said that it appears that the residents are working with staff and the City Manager to figure out how to move forward.

In response to Commissioner Bordman's question of what is next, City Manager Valentine said the next steps include educating the residents in the neighborhood, and then achieve at least 51% neighborhood support on a petition enabling the City to move forward with the grant application. A meeting would then be scheduled with the neighbors impacted allowing them the ability to confirm or reject their participation on the petition. He added that the chance of obtaining the grant is increased by having 51% support for the project. In the absence of that support, the grant application is going to be weakened.

Mayor Nickita said there is clearly an interest and an avenue that needs to be explored. He said part of that effort is the recognition by those who oppose the project to understand this other avenue is available, and having the City participate and assist in orchestrating it.

Ms. Shafer explained that the grant application is not necessarily based on neighbors' approval. The application requires that surveys be sent out to the parents at the school to assess attitudes toward walking and biking to school.

Mayor Pro Tem Harris asked Ms. Shafer if she knows how much support the proposed sidewalk has currently, and do those opposing it know the cost could potentially be partially defrayed. Ms. Shafer said they have discussed it briefly, but did not want to proceed further.

David Bloom commented on the City process for improving streets and the threshold of support that was required in the past.

Wendy Dwint commented on the City's requirements and the difficulty obtaining support without the cost implications.

Mayor Nickita said that the City has cost estimates and can provide the information.

Brett Altman commented on the construction on Oak, speeds in the area, and the plans for the drop-off area.

City Manager Valentine said that plans have been prepared and are available to him. City Engineer O'Meara added that the Glenhurst intersection will be smaller than it is currently.

### **Sewer and Water Master Plan updates**

City Engineer O'Meara explained the Sewer and Water master plan updates, and the progress in several areas.

Commissioner Bordman confirmed with City Engineer O'Meara that no houses can be done between Puritan and Lake Park north of Raynale, unless all property owners on Puritan agree. City Engineer O'Meara added all the properties are on the same sewer.

City Engineer O'Meara explained for Commissioner Hoff why the plans do not include going to Lakeside. He said the subdivision was platted differently and 100% participation is required. Staff is contacting the owners with targeted letters and will be making phone calls as well.

Commissioner Bordman confirmed with City Engineer O'Meara that some subdivisions have different approval requirements due to the platting process. He explained additional circumstances which prevent the project moving forward.

City Manager Valentine explained the intention to construct the project in phases, based on acceptable easements we receive.

City Attorney Currier said the City contracted for title searches as to the quality and nature of the easements in the areas. He explained that the subdivision was built with backyard sewers. Generally, it was discovered that one third of the properties have no easements, one third which have easements do not indicate whether they are public or private and generally interpreted as public easements. One third of the easements were inadequate due to size. The subdivision was built before it became part of the City. The easements were not dedicated to the City, therefore, the City would be trespassing without the easements. He added that is why the City needs 100% approval in those areas.

Peter Bray commented on a long range plan for rat control.

City Manager Valentine explained that issues related to private property would be handled and enforced through Code Enforcement. The City properties are managed in the same way as private property is required to do. City Engineer O'Meara noted that the City baits the sewers about 3 – 6 months in advance of any excavation for sewer work. City Manager Valentine said the same situation occurs when homes are being built. He suggested contacting Code Enforcement.

Dorothy Conrad commented on water service and the 10 year time period owners are given to tie in to the water and sewer service.

Cindy Rose commented on the possibility of getting an easement from an owner in situations where an owner is holding up a project that is beneficial to all. City Attorney Currier explained the difference between sidewalks which lie in the right of way which belongs to the City. Backyard sewers are on private property, and no proper easements were granted to the City. The City needs the easements in order to avoid paying condemnation costs.

Melissa Allen commented on sidewalks and the process for building them.

David Bloom commented on the possibility of placing a lien on property. City Attorney Currier said the City does not have the right to place a lien on property. The cost of filing a notice with the Register of Deeds on property would be more expensive than attempting to directly contact the owner.

### **Sewer & Water Lateral Replacement Policy**

City Engineer O'Meara provided the history and updates on the Sewer & Water lateral replacement policy. He explained the reasons for changing the City policy to require water laterals.

Commissioner Hoff asked why the lead pipes are replaced at City expense. He said that typically it is a small number of lead services that are found. It is also a positive public service. She asked if water laterals are required, what the owners will replace it with. City Engineer O'Meara said they are replaced with 1" plastic.

Commissioner Bordman asked how he identifies that a home has lead service. City Engineer O'Meara said the City has records, and a homeowner can contact the City to inquire.

City Manager Valentine said this is a road maintenance issue, because the degradation of the roads due to the many cuts that are made for the replacement of water laterals. By mandating that the water services be replaced, cuts in the roads are eliminated thereby improving the life quality of the roads throughout the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Harris asked why the water laterals were not required in the 2007 policy. City Engineer O'Meara said the sewer laterals were collapsing and in need of replacement.

City Manager Valentine explained that this issue will be brought back to the Commission for action. The purpose of this update was to provide the Commission with some background information for a future policy discussion.

Commissioner Sherman arrived at 10:00 AM.

Cindy Rose commented on the lead that may run from the water service and into the home. City Engineer O'Meara said that the City does contact the homeowners and strongly urges replacement of those lines.

*(Due to technical/equipment issues, the audio file was unavailable for the remainder of the meeting.)*

Brett Altman asked if there is any safe lead level. City Engineer said it is best not to drink the water.

Commissioner DeWeese clarified that the replacements would be done at the time of road construction.

Dorothy Conrad commented about upcoming road projects.

City Engineer O'Meara, DPS Director Wood and Finance Director Gerber shared information regarding a proposal and analysis for a second water meter for outdoor use only.

Commissioner Hoff and Mayor Pro Tem Harris agree with the recommendation to wait 12-24 months to give water customers time to experience a dry summer with the new billing system which includes the storm water portion. It is expected to be a significant difference for many customers.

Commissioner Sherman commented on the assumptions as far as water usage. City Engineer O'Meara said the assumptions may be a bit on the high side.

City Manager Valentine noted that the communities that offer a second water meter are not on combined sewers.

Ann Bray commented on smart meters and objects to their use.

Melissa Marks commented on the changes in the billing. City Manager Valentine briefly described the change in storm water methodology charges.

Brett Altman commented on overwatering and cost of second water meter.

### **Alley Maintenance**

City Engineer O'Meara and Planning Director Ecker briefly presented information on Public Alleys in the Downtown.

Commissioner Sherman expressed concerns about safety in the Willits Alley and enforcement of regulations.

Commissioner Boutros commented on the Brooklyn Pizza Alley and its condition.

Mayor Nickita said the issue is prioritizing and budgeting for an alley initiative in order to move forward with needed repairs/improvements.

Commissioner Hoff agreed, and suggested to coordinate alley work at the same time as Old Woodward project to minimize disruption. She suggested there are other factors besides financial.

City Manager Valentine said the ordinance could be revised for alleys with parameters, consistency, and standardization, and then proceed with prioritizing the work.

Mayor Nickita suggested making retailers aware that they may receive value by maintaining the alleys better.



Commissioner Boutros expressed concern with the overflow garbage in alleys and enforcement activity.

### **III. Planning**

#### **Master Plan**

Planning Director Ecker presented the City's history of implementing master plans and ordinances that are intended to guide and regulate the growth of the City in order to promote the type of development that the citizens and property owners value.

Commissioner Hoff commented on the idea of a committee being formed to review the responses.

Commissioner Bordman asked to pay special attention to the residential areas.

Commissioner DeWeese suggested the scope section be more strongly stated.

Scott Clein, Planning Board chairman was asked by the Planning Board to emphasize the single most important thing from a planning perspective, because so many overlays have been pieced together, and inconsistencies are being found. He suggested that after 37 years, this needs to be pushed forward.

#### **City-wide Parking Enhancement Efforts**

Planning Director Ecker described the variety of downtown parking options available including five parking decks, three surface parking lots, on-street metered parking, and valet options. She reviewed the parking deck rates and permit enhancements, parking meter enhancements, valet enhancements, addition of the temporary parking lot at 35001 Woodward Avenue, technology advancements to parking management system, and additional parking opportunities. She explained the long term strategies for the area. Planning Director Ecker noted that currently, there are no public parking structures or surface lots within the Triangle District. She noted that based on the findings of the Ad Hoc Rail District Committee Review Report, the City Commission has referred the report to the Planning Board to review and then to propose recommendations to encourage shared parking in the Rail District.

Commissioner Bordman commented on handicapped accessible parking.

Discussion followed about the downtown parking changes, including ParkMobile, parking updates on the City website in real time, and state of the art technology.

Mayor Nickita commented that off-site parking is a fall back option when decks are under construction.

City Engineer O'Meara said employees view off-site parking negatively.

Commissioner Bordman commented that the times that the decks have been closed is a short term situation, and not an all-day occurrence.

Commissioner Hoff said it is difficult to develop long term parking strategies for the future. Mayor Nickita agreed that it is challenging.

Commissioner Bordman suggested that the Request For Qualifications is reviewed by the appropriate City boards and committees before coming to the City Commission.

City Manager Valentine said a subcommittee will review the qualifications of the respondents.

Commissioner Bordman suggested that the Parks & Recreation Board be involved in both the Request for Qualifications and the Request for Proposals.

Commissioner Bordman suggested that the plans include a sale or lease option.

Mayor Pro Tem Harris suggested that at the RFQ and RFP stages, the Ad Hoc Parking Committee and City Commission provide input on selecting developer, and then once chosen, the committees would then get involved.

City Manager Valentine provided an update on the Corridor Improvement Authority progress with Oakland County and the current impasse with the county. He explained the advantages to the Tax Increment Financing is the capture of taxes.

Planning Director Ecker said the study revealed that all private use parking is a problem, and the City should encourage shared parking, especially with more nighttime and weekend uses now.

Mayor Nickita suggested a discussion with stakeholders in the district to create dialog and awareness of what is there and available. Planning Director Ecker noted that the Planning Board discusses that with applicants in the district.

Paul Robertson commented that parking is so limited in the district and that the City needs a deck and to develop other side of Woodward as part of the downtown.

David Bloom commented on development, bonding and density issues.

### **Woodward Crossings**

Planning Director Ecker described the difficulty some intersections create when attempting to cross Woodward Avenue. She noted that the Multi-Modal Transportation Board has recommended intersection and pedestrian crosswalk improvements at intersections along Woodward Avenue, including 14 Mile Road, (North of) Emmons, E. Lincoln, Bowers, Forest and E. Brown, Oakland, and Oak Street.

Commissioner Bordman said the Woodward Avenue and Oak crossing is of particular importance, and she was under the impression that because Woodward Avenue is a state road, the City was unable to make improvements. Planning Director Ecker said the City can have some impact. She added that the City can do some things if the City is willing to pay for them.

Mayor Nickita said it comes down to funding priorities, as the state is open to listening, but not paying.

Commissioner Bordman noted a court decision in New York, where safety issues were known and not improved. She suggested the City send a copy of the decision to MDOT with the discussions the City has had.

Commissioner Hoff said she would like something done with Woodward and Oak.

City Manager Valentine said lighting systems are being reviewed so that they are more visually apparent to drivers, as well as possibly expanding the budget for crosswalks along Woodward.

Mayor Nickita said MDOT is beginning to recognize the need for crosswalks.

Planning Board Chairman Clein noted that the Planning Board supports enhanced crosswalks, and supports a crosswalk at Oak and Woodward Avenue as a priority. He suggested the speed limit on Woodward Avenue in Birmingham be lowered.

#### **Brownfield Redevelopment Authority**

Planning Director Ecker provided history of the authority established in 2005 by the City Commission and recent activity.

Mayor Nickita suggested an evaluation is needed.

#### **IV. Birmingham Shopping District Strategic Plan Update**

BSD member Jeff Hockman described the Plan for Downtown Construction of Old Woodward in 2017 for BSD.

Mayor Nickita commented that we have learned a lot from other communities that have experienced this type of project in their downtowns. He suggested that with changes in property owners in town, the City wants to pass on the culture and traditions of the downtown area.

#### **V. Building Department Online Inspection Scheduling & Code Updates**

Building Director Johnson described the Building Department activity as construction activity levels remain high. He also explained the online inspection scheduling which will be going live on March 1 of this year. He explained that both Building and Engineering Departments are experiencing increased difficulties with a number of projects during both plan review and inspection procedures. He identified some of the problem areas encountered by both departments. He suggested changes to the City Code will increase efficiency for both staff and the public saving valuable time on both sides. The changes are expected to be presented to the City Commission in late April.

Commissioner Hoff asked if repeat offenders are a problem for the non-compliance issues. Building Director Johnson said it is more a lack of understanding, and is not a problem with every job.

Dorothy Conrad asked about a construction project on Yorkshire with no progress, and expressed concern over parking in a front yard. Building Director explained the ordinance for that situation, and suggested we may need to review that.

Ms. Conrad commented on the tree removal at Whole Foods. Building Director explained that the plans call for a retaining wall in that area. Mayor Nickita added that some trees are to be added in approved plan.

Mayor Nickita agreed that the City should review the ordinance with respect to parking in front of a house.

David Bloom commented on online inspections.

Commissioner Hoff asked if his department staffing levels are appropriate at this time, and Building Director Johnson said staffing is fine at this time.

*(At this time, a brief lunch break was taken.)*

## **VI. Department of Public Services Parks Master Plan**

DPS Director Wood presented information about the Parks Master Plan. She noted that a Request for Proposal will be underway in short order and the process will officially begin. In the past, such Master Plan updates have taken approximately six to eight months from start to finish.

DPS Director introduced Public Services Manager Aaron Filipski who was also present. He noted that a Parks Master Plan is needed to apply for grants.

Commissioner Hoff asked if a Master Plan consultant is in the budget. Director Wood confirmed it is, and added that the department hopes to hire the consultant in the first or second quarter of this year.

Commissioner Hoff asked if the department is going to request funding for new projects in the 2017-18 budget. Director Wood responded there will be such a request.

Pat O'Neill commented that he supports the Kenning Park project, and indicated support from Little League. City Manager Valentine indicated that a meeting would be scheduled to discuss it.

## **Capeseal Program**

Public Services Manager Filipski provided information about the Capeseal program. He noted the City maintains approximately 30 miles of 'unimproved' roads. Unimproved streets are generally uncurbed, gravel-based roadways that have been partially improved through a process called 'cape sealing'. He described the process, and noted the roads require regular maintenance, performed by a contractor, with assistance from DPS personnel. He said the department is planning another similar project for the fiscal year 2017-18.

Commissioner Sherman commented that the program was reinstated when the economy turned and said the City should consider whether to continue the program, or encourage improvements to the streets. City Manager Valentine said it is more advantageous to improve. Commissioner Sherman prefers to go back to previous policy of improvement.

Discussion followed about citizen initiated projects and the process. Commissioner DeWeese suggested the City provide the citizens with options for the road.

### **Water Meter Portal**

Public Services Filipski said when considering ways to further improve the quality and level of service to water customers, the Department of Public Services is investigating a web-based customer portal system that provides residents convenient access to the data provided by the meter reading network. Usage graphs, comparative analysis, account history, and bill estimates, and also features personalized threshold alerts. With these alerts, customers can be automatically notified when estimated bills or consumption have reached a certain level, or when abnormal usage may indicate a possible leak. Residents who elect to participate in this voluntary program can chose a number of notification methods including text message, email, phone, and standard mail. A Request for Proposal posting is planned for March 2017, and this innovative technology could be available to residents by June 2017.

Commissioner Hoff asked about the subscription cost. DPS Manager Filipski said it is a one-time set-up fee. City Manager Valentine added it has not been decided whether to pass the cost on to consumer.

Commissioner Bordman expressed support for the idea.

### **Bulb outs enhancements**

DPS has prompted us to actively review the condition of the bulb outs this past year on W. Lincoln Avenue between Woodward and Southfield. There are seven intersections as part of the reconfigured section of W. Lincoln that added bulb outs. The most abused location is the intersection of Pierce and W. Lincoln, particularly the southeast followed by the southwest bulb outs. Mr. Filipski described a product the department is considering which is a road shoulder stabilization grass paver porous system that provides turf protection based on the vehicle usage and potential for vehicle rollover onto the noted bulb outs on Lincoln Avenue. It will eliminate the ongoing ruts on the roadway which continue to create a continuing maintenance and aesthetic issue. The proposed trial area will be the most severe bulb outs along W. Lincoln Avenue.

Commissioner Bordman asked if the system will allow grass to grow normally. She is in favor of testing this and noted it is handicapped accessible, and may have possibilities in other situations.

### **SOCORA Recycling Single Stream Conversion**

Jeff McKeen of SOCORA described the single stream system to be rolled out later this summer. Residents will receive 65 gallon recycling carts to replace the current carts.

Commissioner Hoff expressed concern about the size of the cart, and storage of it. She also noted it could be heavy. General Manager McKeen said the size of the new cart is similar to the recycling bin footprint.

David Bloom asked about costs, and GM McKeen said SOCORA hopes to be marginally, economically profitable.

## **VIII. Police Department System Upgrades**

Commander Scott Grewe was present to provide the Police Department's priorities in the 2017-18 fiscal year:

### 9-1-1 system replacement

This project involves the replacement of emergency call processing equipment at (3) workstations in the Birmingham Police Department Communications Center. The new ECW equipment will be interfaced with the city's administrative telephone system to streamline communications for our dispatch staff. Oakland County is funding approximately 60% of the total project costs including network replacement and software. The City of Birmingham's cost for the system is estimated at \$84,305.15, with an installation date which is currently projected for April 2017.

### Watchguard video

The current digital in car video system was purchased from WatchGuard Video at a cost of \$92,840 in September 2011. The original system purchase included a one year warranty plus one additional year of prepaid maintenance. The department has just entered the fifth year of extended warranty coverage, which is the maximum period allowed by WatchGuard. The department is pleased with the overall performance and reliability of the WatchGuard Video system.

The Police Department has requested \$72,300 in the 2018-19 Drug and Law Enforcement Budget to replace this system. The replacement cost is significantly lower than the original purchase price as the department is a "legacy customer" and therefore fees for evidence library, wireless transmitter kits and technical services are waived.

Security system upgrade – police and department of public services Following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, a security system was installed to protect the City Hall building and police pistol range. A similar system was installed at the Department of Public Services. Vigilante Security was the selected vendor for these projects. For the past 16 years, these systems have functioned very well but are now in need of replacement due to age, availability of parts due to obsolescence and technological upgrades.

The proposed update would shift the system design to an IP based control. The police portion of the update is estimated and budgeted for the 2017-18 fiscal year in the amount of \$26,750, with an additional \$17,320 in funding requested for the DPS facility upgrade. The security systems provide access control using proximity readers. Electronic cards or keys are used to operate the gate arms and doors. Access to the buildings and parking lots is provided for each employee as requested by the respective department head.

Some of the features of this system are as follows: Electronic keys are issued to each police and fire vehicle; Electronic cards issued to employees and city commissioners also serve as a photo identification card; Parking in the City Hall parking lot is provided for police cars, specific staff cars and city commissioners.

Commander Grewe explained the 911 replacement system will also allow the department to triangulate for location, provide elevation location, and the new system will allow for texting to the Police Department, including photos.

Mayor Nickita confirmed that the new system will still be card operated.

## **IX. Fire Department**

### **Chesterfield Fire Station Construction**

Fire Chief Connaughton said the Chesterfield Fire Station replacement project continues to move forward. Once the station is closed for demolition, response personnel and equipment from the Chesterfield Fire Station will be temporarily relocated to the Adams Fire Station. All responses for emergency services will respond from the Adams Fire Station until such time that operations at the new Chesterfield Fire Station can begin.

Chief Connaughton added that February 23<sup>rd</sup> will be the bid opening, with the recommendation to go to the City Commission on March 13<sup>th</sup>. April 3<sup>rd</sup> is the planned start construction date, with October 27<sup>th</sup> as the anticipated end date.

## **X. Historical Museum**

### **Strategic Plan**

### **Park Master Plan**

### **Bicentennial Planning**

Museum Director Pielack explained the Museum's planning initiatives, which will be coming to City Commission for consideration, including the new 2017-2020 Museum Strategic Plan, and a master landscape plan for the park and site

She added that for the upcoming City bicentennial, the Museum Board is considering a book project to coincide with the City's bicentennial in December 2018.

Commissioner DeWeese encouraged Director Pielack to follow up with BSD and the Chamber of Commerce due to their community connections.

## **XI. Library**

### **Long Range Library Improvement Funding**

Library Director Doug Koschik discussed the Adult Services Renovation project underway at the Library, and commented on the future phases of renovation.

Commissioner Hoff expressed support of current and future plans, and said the Library has done a good job of renovating for a third of the cost of what was proposed.

Commissioner DeWeese commented on Library Headlee vs. City Headlee, and the importance of having entire library project built into the budget.

## **XII. Adult Services (NEXT)**

### **Future Planning Efforts**

Director Chris Braun was present to provide information about NEXT. She described the recommendations of the Joint Senior Services Committee. She added that NEXT membership exceeds 1500, and is open 62 hours per week. Participation has increased more than 100% and outreach services have grown by 17%. She asked for support to re-establish the JSSC in the near future.

Commissioner Hoff expressed hope that Birmingham Public Schools will continue to allow the use of the facility by NEXT. Director Braun believes the school district has no intention of change, and noted that the building houses a pre-school program, which is tuition based.

Commissioner Bordman said the growth of NEXT is due to Director Braun's leadership.

David Bloom commented on Headlee.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Robert Ziegelman congratulated Mayor Nickita for being inducted into the American Institute of Architects College of Fellows.

**V. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 PM.

Cheryl Arft  
Acting City Clerk