

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION  
LONG RANGE PLANNING MINUTES  
JANUARY 27, 2018  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 151 MARTIN  
8:30 A.M.**

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

Mayor Andrew Harris called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

Administration: City Manager Valentine, City Attorney Currier, Police Commander Albrecht, Communications Director Byrnes, Fire Chief Connaughton, Assistant Library Director Craft, Assistant Fire Chief Donahue, Planning Director Ecker, DPS Manager Filipski, Finance Director Gerber, Police Commander Grewe, Assistant City Manager Gunter, Assistant to the City Manager Haines, Building Official Johnson, Library Director Koschik, City Clerk Mynsberge, City Engineer O'Meara, Museum Director Pielack, HR Manager Taylor, BSD Director Tighe, Assistant Finance Director Wickenheiser, DPS Director Wood

**III. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

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

Finance Director Gerber introduced Assistant Finance Director Wickenheiser.

Finance Director Gerber noted that this document is not a budget, but is based on certain assumptions regarding taxes, inflation, capital outlay and other factors, all of which may or may not occur. The point of the Forecast is to lay out what could happen, which will be clarified through the budget process.

Finance Director Gerber introduced Tim St. Andrew from Plante Moran and Doug Bohrer, audit partner for the City to present the Forecast.

Mr. St. Andrew presented a brief overview of the forecast and covered the highlights.

Mr. St. Andrew reviewed the State Equalized Value (SEV) versus the City's Taxable Value:

- Nearly 70% of general fund revenue is in the form of property taxes.
- There is no limit on SEV growth or decline.
- The limit on taxable value is the lesser of 5% or the rate of inflation, but there is no limit on the decline of taxable value.

- The Taxable Value will only decline on a property-by-property basis when the SEV equals the taxable value.
- In healthy housing market years, the SEV will outpace the City's Taxable Value because of the limitations, and then in years of housing market decline, the SEV declines while the City's tax revenue is still climbing. This is positive because it will protect the City in the case of a housing market decline.
- The City's Taxable Value growth in 2018 is forecasted to be 5.2%, going down to 3.4% in 2022, and these numbers exceed projected inflation.
- The SEV growth is forecasted to be 6% in 2018-2019, going down to 4% in 2022.

Mr. St Andrew then explained the Headlee Millage Limit (HML) compared to the Operating Millage (OM).

- The OM has been relatively steady going back to 2001 and is forecasted to remain steady.
- The HML has not been steady. In 2001, the HML was over 14 mills and there was a sharp decline between 2001 – 2008 because there was growth and rollbacks. In 2008, when the recession hit and values were not increasing, there were no rollbacks. Now, increasing taxable values are creating rollbacks again, which City Management has projected to continue into the future.
- Birmingham has always been below the Headlee max. The HML could impact the City by limiting the City's capacity to raise millage out into the future. If the rates remain the same the Headlee max could meet the HML out past 2022, and the City might have to roll back the millage being levied.

Mr. St. Andrew then presented the forecasted fund balance numbers for the general fund, the major streets fund, and the local streets fund.

- The general fund balance is projected to increase steadily throughout the five year period, driven by the increase in property tax revenue.
- City Management is assuming inflationary increases with exceptions being transfers to the street funds and capital project funds.
- The major and local street fund balances are expected to fluctuate but on balance they remain relatively steady through the forecasted period. This fluctuation is to be expected because the fund balance is driven by projects, which will change the amount of available funds.
- The largest sources of revenue for the major and local street fund balances are transfers from the general fund and transfers from the State. Funding from the State is expected to increase by 2% until the end of the forecast, at which point the funding from the State is expected to remain flat.

Mr. St. Andrew then presented the General Fund Forecast Unassigned Fund Balance compared to targeted levels. The targeted levels set by the City Commission are a minimum of 17% of general fund operating expenditures, and a maximum of 40% general fund operating expenditures. Unassigned fund balance is fund balance that is not restricted by an outside source, or fund balances that are not already committed or designated for another purpose.

Mr. St. Andrew then finished by presenting the Water and Sewer Rate forecast. The most significant assumptions were the cost of water and the cost of sewage treatment and the scope and timing of future capital projects. Based on the assumptions made, the increase in cost for both the cost of water and the cost of sewage treatment are expected to be inflationary

throughout the forecasted period, with water estimated to be between 3% - 4.5% and sewage treatment estimated to be between 1% - 3.5% per year.

Mr. St. Andrew explained to:

- Commissioner Hoff that the General Fund Forecast Unassigned Fund Balance compared to targeted levels for 2017-2018 is lower because of the upcoming Old Woodward project.
- Mayor Harris that on the SEV versus the City's Taxable Value chart that when you factor in the assumptions on new developments, overall taxable value can climb by more than inflation.

City Manager Valentine drew attention to the slide on the General Fund Forecast Unassigned Fund Balance. He noted there is an increase in the later years, but he and City Attorney Currier looked at obligated liabilities which will have an impact on the Unassigned Fund Balance as the obligated liabilities increase. He clarified that in this presentation everything is taken in isolation, but there will be other factors to consider going forward.

Commissioner DeWeese pointed out there is a margin where the City can stay under the Headlee Cap where the tax rate could be lowered, and the City would still have the income it needs.

City Manager Valentine stated that:

- Birmingham is ahead of a lot of communities in terms of how the City has expanded its capacity by lowering the millage rate.
- The capacity is going to diminish over time.
- Reinvestment in the community will help protect the City against any potential negative effects from diminishing capacity over time.

Finance Director Gerber confirmed for Commissioner Nickita that these projections do take future capital expense projects into account. Mr. Gerber specified that the estimates are based on similar projects' costs and may need to be revisited in the future as costs change.

## **II. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **A. Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan**

DPS Director Wood introduced Sarah Traxler from McKenna Associates, Inc.

Ms. Traxler explained that:

- Birmingham participates in Parks and Recreation planning to make the City eligible for grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, to help the City prepare programs, and to design improvements for parks.
- Master Planning for parks communicates the community's values and creates a historical record for future City leaders to remember what was undertaken in prior planning years.
- Master Planning for parks does not obligate funds for projects, does not set programs in stone, and does not design parks, though it does provide the basis for designing parks in the future.
- Birmingham undertook a traditional planning process that aligns with the state's requirements for planning.

- Values communicated through public engagement were natural area stewardship, inclusiveness, emphasis on health and fitness, connectivity between the parks, and maintenance of a high level of customer service.
- People choose to live in areas with high investment in Parks and Recreation.
- Goals and objectives were updated:
  - Goal 1: Foster an inclusive and unique community.
  - Goal 2: Provide parks and recreation facilities that are beautiful, high quality, respect history, offer a variety of experiences, both passive and active, are well maintained, and are accessible to all residents of the community.
  - Goal 3: To create a community of healthy residents by providing opportunities which promote and encourage active lifestyles and mobility.
  - Goal 4: Provide recreation programming and facility opportunities that meet the needs and interests of the entire community.
  - Goal 5: To use existing community resources efficiently, demonstrate fiscal responsibility, and coordinate and partner with other entities to ensure the availability and opportunity for comprehensive and quality services and facilities.
  - Goal 6: To become a leader in sustainable, innovative maintenance practices to protect our natural community resources. Demonstrate environmental stewardship and reduce adverse health effects to all residents, while maintaining public use, access and enjoyment.
  - Goal 7: Operate the Department of Public Services in an effective and efficient manner so as to maintain a high level of customer service.
- Both system de-enhancements and specific park enhancements are recommended.
- On February 6<sup>th</sup> the Parks and Recreation Board will be reviewing and potentially recommending the draft plan, and on February 12<sup>th</sup> Ms. Traxler will re-appear for a public hearing before the City Commission.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman shared concern that the draft plan only states a goal of analyzing playground equipment, and therefore lacks sufficient, specific attention to making playground equipment barrier-free and universally accessible. Ms. Traxler told Mayor Pro Tem Bordman that the feedback would be shared with the Parks and Recreation Board.

Ms. Traxler told Commissioner Hoff that the specific park enhancements include the planning period and estimated time of completion, and are not listed in priority order.

DPS Director Wood then provided highlights from the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan:

- Universal Design is an important part of the Master Planning process and includes criteria for parks above and beyond ADA requirements.
- The Master Plan seeks to improve all the parks that have not received other recent improvements.
- Total estimated improvement costs are \$6 million.
- Opportunities for funding include grants, private/public partnerships, and crowdfunding opportunities.

DPS Director Wood explained to Commission Hoff that the \$6 million figure only includes projects which have an earmarked amount. Ms. Traxler's presentation included a number of additional projects with costs that are to be determined, and so Ms. Wood's presentation did not include those.

## Proposed Bonding

City Manager Valentine stated that:

- DPS Director Wood's presentation was an overview, not all-inclusive.
- The City's previous \$25 million Parks and Recreation bond is no longer available. The bond was authorized in 2001, and the last issuance was in 2008. Too much time has elapsed to re-access the initial authorization.
- Funding the Parks and Recreation Plan out of General City Funds is not currently in the plan and would have a significant impact on City operations going forward.
- The City currently has a limit of \$289 million in debt capacity, and current debt outstanding is about \$18 million, which is about 6% of the City's debt limit. These numbers demonstrate bonding capacity should the City choose to pursue that as an option.
- The City is AAA bond rated, which means going to the market now is to the City's advantage.
- The City currently has a large debt capacity which is likely to continue.
- Municipal bonds are attractive in the investment market.
- The City's current debt is diminishing.
- The City will be losing the \$25 million bonding debt in the coming years, which means Birmingham could reassume the same amount of debt in order to reinvest in the community.
- Bonding allows improvements to occur in the near term.
- If the City chooses to do \$6 million in projects, City Manager Valentine recommends \$5 million in bonding because opportunity exists for state grants and other potential sources of funding.
- Assuming the City does bonding for 15 years at \$15 million, the millage rate would be about .17 mills which would be added onto the debt levy going forward.
- If the \$15 million is serviced at 20 years instead of 15, the millage rate would be .13 mills going forward.
- In 2021, the City debt levy declines significantly because the sewer bonds are being paid off in that fiscal year. The debt service in that year will drop from a prior rate of 1.049 mills to .5621 mills. Looking at a potential new debt levy of .17 mills, the rate is still lower than the City's current debt levy.
- In 2023-2024, the last payment on the first parks and recreation bond will be paid off, therefore the debt levy will be .4 mills less in 2024-2025.
- The current annual impact to the taxpayer would be about \$42.50 per year on average, assuming the .17 mill levy.
- The Commission can look at the Five-Year Plan, decide on the projects to complete, and schedule the ballot questions for the millage accordingly.
- Bond debt is funded from general tax dollars for the parks bond.
- A parking structure bond's debt service would be paid from the parking system. A user fee would pay that debt, not Birmingham's general tax dollars.

City Manager Valentine then laid out deadline dates for putting the millage question on the ballot:

- May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 would put the question on the August primary; and,
- July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 would put the question on the November general election.

Commissioner Nickita stated that Birmingham should work with experts in crowdfunding and grant writing in order to enhance the City's ability to find alternative sources of funding.

## **B. Parks & Recreation Improvement Funding**

DPS Director Wood stated that the company which manages the Ice Arena has provided the City with an estimated cost for replacing the refrigeration system. The City will undergo an overall building assessment with a different vendor.

DPS Director Wood explained to Mayor Pro Tem Bordman that "playground enhancements" entail replacing the playgrounds with universal design equipment.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman asked DPS Director Wood:

- To confirm that, in addition to Poppleton Park, Crestview, Linden, and Pembroke Parks all have plans for accessible playground equipment enhancements.
- Why Poppleton relies on different funding sources than the rest of the parks named.

DPS Director Wood stated that all the parks could conceivably use the same fund sources. The only difference is that grants and public/private partnerships were being emphasized for Poppleton.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman stated that all the funding sources for accessible equipment should be the same, and that the playground enhancements in each park should be explicitly described as accessible.

## **C. Capeseal**

DPS Manager Filipski reported that in October 2017, a 2.5 mile capeseal project was concluded. The average assessment for the homeowner for this improvement was \$932, and included the following streets: Larchlea, Westchester, Berwyn, Radnor, Avon, Bryn Mawr, Fairfax, Puritan, and Willow Lane. The City has received positive feedback on this project.

The City is now looking at a capeseal project in July 2018 that amounts to almost 6 miles, which is double the size of the October 2017 project. It ranges from Chesterfield east to Lakepark, and from Maple north to Quarton, with chip seal only.

The projected timeline for the project is as follows:

- Information Packets went out to residents August 2017
- Hearing Notices are planned for February 2018
- Informational Forum in February 2018
- Public Hearing of Necessity is planned for April 2018

When the July 2018 project is concluded, Birmingham will have treated about a third of the City's capeseal streets.

DPS Manager Filipski said residents can:

- Expect three to four days of work over the course of one to two weeks, and may include weather-related adjustments.
- Find out about the capeseal schedule at a dedicated webpage ([bham.gov/capeseal](http://bham.gov/capeseal)) on the Birmingham website.

DPS Manager Filipski stated that the Commission helped the City invest in a patch oven which allows the City to perform street preparation itself instead of including it as part of the bid, which has led to significant savings for Birmingham.

City Manager Valentine told Commissioner Hoff that:

- This capeseal project is being undertaken at the request of the residents of these neighborhoods. The point of the Ad Hoc Unimproved Street Study Committee is to study additional and wider changes to the pattern of street maintenance within Birmingham.
- The residents of these neighborhoods have also been advised that they have the option to improve their streets, instead of capesealing them.

Commissioner Hoff stated that she would like street improvements reiterated as an option for these neighborhoods during upcoming informational meetings.

DPS Manager Filipski told Commissioner Hoff that information on improving the streets is being provided to the residents much more proactively than in previous projects to make sure the residents are very clear on their options.

#### **D. Water Portal**

DPS Manager Filipski:

- Introduced the AquaHawk internet portal which allows residents to monitor their City water consumption as of February 1, 2018.
- Stated that DPS, the Treasury Department and Utility Billing played essential roles in setting up the AquaHawk portal.
- Presented the options available on the portal, which include water usage, estimated bill, how many days are left in the billing cycle, the option to set alerts for certain thresholds including usage and dollar amount.
- Explained that the AquaHawk is free to set up, and Birmingham is the only municipality in the area using something like this.
- Stated that the system is to monitor water usage, but not to pay bills since that feature came at a significant additional cost.

DPS Manager Filipski told Mayor Harris that:

- This account includes both water and sewage use; and,
- The City will be publicizing this through inserts in the next water bill and through social media.

Commissioner DeWeese said that the inserts should be sent out in more than one quarterly bill because citizens may overlook the information the first few times.

#### **E. Maple/Eton Bridge Enhancements**

DPS Director Wood gave an overview of the Maple/Eton Bridge Enhancements. The Commission hired Walker Consultants to look at the structural orientation, concrete, painting and lighting aspects of the bridge. DPS Director Wood continued:

- CN Railroad owns the Maple Bridge.
- The project is for aesthetic improvements.
- Presenting pictures from other aesthetically improved bridges as an example of the types of enhancements that are possible.
- The probable costs based on scope of work are either \$253,000 for option one which includes sidewalk updates only, or \$393,000 for option two which includes updates to both the sidewalk and roadway. Both options include updates to the façade on the east

and west ends of the bridge. Final design and bidding would need to be carried out before actual costs are determined.

- The bridge is from the 1930s and is in relatively good condition. There is some concrete deterioration, rusting, water leeching on the bridge, and lead paint on the ceiling. There is soil and sediment build-up on the sidewalk which contributes to cracking, maintenance issues and the collection of water and debris.
- Some trucks get stuck under the bridge which leads to deterioration as well.
- Walker Consultants does not recommend the ceiling be upgraded due to costs.
- Walker Consultants does recommend updating lighting, and it is included in both options. If lighting is added, however, it will draw attention to the issues with the sidewalks, so the sidewalks have been included in both options as well.
- City Engineer O'Meara is in contact with CN Railroad. CN Railroad has historically approved painting projects, may carry out some of the structural repairs needed, but will not be responsible for the aesthetic maintenance of the bridge.
- Once terms are finalized with CN Railroad, DPS Director Wood will present the proposal to the Commission. CN Railroad is unlikely to approve writing, but a mural may be approved.
- The City will be in touch with other stakeholders in the area to explore opportunities for sponsorship or cost-sharing on the project.

DPS Director Wood explained to Commissioner Boutros that:

- The City does not have a contract with CN Railroad. In order to update the bridge, the City would have to do a Right of Entry application.
- CN Railroad is exploring what improvements they will be responsible for internally. CN Railroad may repair some of the spalled concrete before the City paints.

DPS Director Wood told Commissioner Nickita that there is no estimated schedule on the project, but it is a City priority.

City Manager Valentine stated that the foundations of the project need to be clarified before the project moves forward.

Commissioner DeWeese stated that since CN Railroad operates independent of local government, they cannot be obligated to do any updates they do not deem necessary. The goal, as a result, is for Birmingham to pursue the right to make updates the City deems necessary.

Mayor Harris opened the issue for public comment.

Dorothy Conrad stated that the homeowner's association of which she is a member would like to see Pembroke Park wired in order to provide lighting for events.

City Manager Valentine told Ms. Conrad that the most opportune time to voice these comments would be the February 6, 2018 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board.

Ms. Conrad urged the Commission to move forward with the proposed aesthetic updates to the Maple/Eton Bridge.



Anne Bray stated that the Commission is missing an opportunity to deal with carbon sequestration in the 5-year plan. Ms. Brae continued:

- Carbon sequestration occurs by fixing the ground.
- Eight species of different plants begin the process of carbon sequestration.
- The City needs to move away from Kentucky bluegrass, and cease poisoning the smaller plants that are growing in order to contribute to what is now becoming a global effort.
- The City needs to stop poisoning its water.

DPS Manager Filipski told Ms. Brae that the water alert amount on AquaHawk is set by individual households. Ms. Brae stated that perhaps the City should set a threshold for usage, after which a two-tier pricing system should be applied.

John Rusche stated:

- He found City Manager Valentine's bond presentation interesting.
- It would be helpful for homeowners affected by the City's upcoming capeseal project to have a sense of the costs versus how long various types of repairs would last.

City Manager Valentine confirmed for Mr. Rusche that homeowners affected by the capeseal project will be provided with information regarding the different options' costs and longevity.

### **III. Planning**

#### **A. City-wide Master Plan Update**

From Planning Director Ecker's December 20, 2017 memo to City Manager Valentine:

The Future Land Use Plan ("the Plan") was the last comprehensive master plan to be adopted by the City (1980). Much of the information provided in the plan was intended to be projections up to the year 2000, and is in need of updating.

Over the last several years the City Commission and Planning Board have been actively discussing the potential scope of an RFP for a new comprehensive master plan.

The following list outlines the information in the plan that is out of date or policies that are currently included in the draft RFP for review and updating:

- Community vision and planning objectives;
- Update of Population section to include current demographic data, future projections and analysis;
- Update of Regional and Surrounding Development section to include current and projected demographic data (residential, retail, office, mix of land uses) and analysis of the region, regional and downtown development trends and regional collaboration efforts;
- Update of Residential Housing section to include neighborhood vision in residential areas, analysis of changes in residential patterns and residential areas from 1980 to now, typology and character of neighborhoods, development trends, future projections and future direction;
- The physical characteristics of neighborhoods should be identified and documented including historic attributes, landscape conditions, housing type and the period of construction for each area;
- Review and update of Transportation section to include current vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle data, recent and currently budgeted infrastructure improvements, current multi-modal trends, regional transportation projects,

- and future recommendations based on regional and national best practices;
- Update and review of existing land use, updated recommendations for future land uses and an updated future land use map including the area of Woodward between 14 Mile Rd. and Lincoln, known as the S. Woodward gateway;
  - Parking analysis and recommendations for both public and private parking regulations throughout the entire City including consideration of parking requirements, public parking needs, residential parking permitting requirements, accessible parking needs, potential for shared parking and emerging and innovative technologies;
  - Review and update of the Policies section to encourage the implementation of the City's vision, current goals, best practices, current technological advances, and innovative policies.

The RFP also provides direction for a Comprehensive Community Engagement Plan that details how public input will be acquired throughout the master planning process and an Infrastructure Analysis that reviews existing infrastructure, evaluates future needs and provides recommendations.

The Multi-modal plan adopted in 2013 is now the guiding document for the City in regards to transportation infrastructure, major right of way improvements, and user accessibility issues.

Planning Director Ecker pointed out that many changes in planning have occurred since the adoption of the City's 2013 Multi-Modal Transportation Board (MMTB) document.

City Manager Valentine told Commissioner Hoff that money was budgeted in the previous fiscal year for this process, and additional money was budgeted as part of the current fiscal year as the scope of the project expanded.

## **B. Agenda Report Formatting Procedure**

Planning Director Ecker reported:

- The Planning staff has been asked to provide a review of the current policies regarding the format of staff reports and memos in order to determine if the current format can be improved to provide the City Commission and the public with a more concise presentation of the relevant information. Currently the support data is organized in chronological order from oldest to newest.
- Comments have been received suggesting that this method has the potential to be confusing or difficult to follow as it may result in the attachments being organized in a manner that does not clearly present the information currently under discussion.
- The Planning staff suggests that the agenda report formatting procedure be revised to provide the City Commission memorandum first, then the current Special Land-Use Permit if any, then the current report, and then the supplementary information and background data.

Planning Director Ecker clarified for Commissioner Hoff the proposal is not reverse chronological order, but relevance order.

Commissioner Sherman stated the City used to format agenda reports in relevance order and stated a preference for that practice.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman suggested that the most current information should be labelled "Currently Under Consideration" in red, in order to avoid having to devise a new system of formatting.

Planning Director Ecker stated that:

- Mayor Pro Tem Bordman's suggestion is current practice, but it leads to relevant information being scattered widely throughout the agenda packet.
- The Planning Board's reports are included in relevance order, which means that the information has to be re-arranged into chronological order for the Commission reports.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman suggested that the most current information be printed on pink or red paper.

Commissioner Sherman reiterated that the request returns the agenda formatting to previous practice.

Mayor Harris stated that including a topical roadmap for each issue in the agenda packet might be most beneficial.

Commissioner Nickita stated that a page stating "Background Information", used to separate current and background information for each item, might be the most beneficial.

Planning Director Ecker stated that Planning Staff is happy to enact whatever the Commission prefers.

Commissioner Boutros expressed support for Commissioner Nickita's proposal.

Commissioner DeWeese:

- Suggested that the most relevant information be provided first, with the background information following in chronological order.
- Said he has appreciated being able to follow the whole history in order, but understands that may not be a universal preference.
- Said that either a page separating "Background Information" could work, or putting "Background Information" at the top of every background page could work.

## **C. Ordinance Reviews**

### **1. Retail Regulations**

Planning Director Ecker's report was broken into five different topics: Retail Regulations, Alley Regulations, Bistro Regulations, Review Process for the Renovation and / or New Construction of Buildings, and Site Plan Review Standards for Adjacent Properties.

Planning Director presented an overview of the topics:

- Retail Regulations
  - Retail use is required in the first 20' of depth for all buildings in the Redline Retail District. The Commission adopted a definition of 'personal services' in November

2017 in order to clarify what uses are allowed in the first 20' of the first floor of a business.

- Current Areas of Study include:
  - Potentially reducing retail district boundaries to no more than 2 - 4 blocks in size, limiting the retail uses to 'true retail' on the first floor within in this core area, and then creating a secondary district within the downtown that could allow some quasi-retail and personal service uses.
  - Whether 20' of retail depth on the first floor is sufficient. Other communities studied have a range of 35' – 80' of retail depth on the first floor.
  - Whether office-type equipment should be allowed in the first 20' of retail depth.
  - Whether there should be a maximum dimension for permitted lobbies for hotels, offices and residential units within the Redline Retail District. The Zoning Ordinance currently allows 50% of the first floor retail space to be used for lobbies, but in large buildings this allows lobbies to occupy a large expanse of the storefront space, thus creating a less active and less visually attractive section of storefront that breaks up the retail area.
  - An evaluation of current properties with buildings located in the Redline Retail District that have not been constructed to support first floor retail uses, and whether those buildings should be grandfathered in.
- City Staff is currently going through the Redline Retail District block-by-block in order to provide the Planning Board with sufficient information to carry out these studies.

Commissioner DeWeese said:

- Current properties located in the Redline Retail District that do not support first floor retail uses should be grandfathered in until major renovations or building demolition occur. Concomitantly, any buildings that can accommodate first floor retail should be strictly required to do so.
- The retail depth requirements should be increased beyond 20'.

Commissioner Hoff said window coverings should be addressed in order to promote first floor retail displays that provide interest to the street.

Planning Director Ecker told Commissioner Hoff that windows can no longer be blocked by shelving unless the retail space was grandfathered in, but window treatments are currently still allowed due to glare from the sun. Planning Director Ecker stated that this would be re-addressed by the Planning Board as part of the study of the retail depth requirements.

Commissioner Nickita said he is more concerned about the products that occupy the first 20' of retail, as opposed to the depth of the retail space. He would like to see the issue studied.

## **2. Alley Regulations**

Planning Director Ecker reported that:

- An Alleys and Passageways Plan was done in 2012 to try and activate the City's alleyways. The Plan delineates three types of alleyways, or 'vias':
  - Active vias, for cars and people;
  - Connecting vias, which are for bicycles and pedestrians only; and,

- Destination vias, with the goal of creating a public gathering space or plaza.
- There have been concerns about the conditions of the alleys including garbage, clutter, parked cars, graffiti and other issues.
- The City is exploring ways to address waste receptacle regulation, parking control regulations, paving and water retention, signage and wayfinding, and general code enforcement.
  - Other communities' approaches to waste receptacles are being studied. Some communities require each dumpster to be labelled with the owner's name and the trash hauler's name. In addition, some communities require that the dumpsters be maintained in good condition.
  - Signage regulating parking needs to be provided in order to allow the police department to enforce parking regulations in the public portions of the alleys.
  - The issues of paving and water retention could be improved by material upgrades and more attention to greening the space.
  - Signage can help direct pedestrians to retail frontage that opens up into the alleyways.

Planning Director Ecker told Commissioner Boutros that Birmingham has not been responsible for collecting the waste produced by the City's commercial retailers.

Commissioner Boutros suggested that Birmingham should attempt having one waste collector for the City. He continued that he believes the alleyways are high priority and he would like to see the issue advanced.

Planning Director Ecker explained that the current regulations on alleyways can only be enforced if a retailer comes before the Commission for a Site Plan or Design Review, which means the City is currently unable to address day-to-day issues.

City Manager Valentine acknowledged that the alleyway issues span many different City departments and are being approached through interdepartmental coordination in order to craft a comprehensive approach.

City Manager Valentine confirmed for Mayor Harris that proposals addressing these issues will be brought before the Commission.

Planning Director Ecker said that these issues are largely outside the jurisdiction of the Planning Board because they deal with areas of the City Code beyond the Zoning Ordinances.

Commissioner Nickita stated that the most successful alleys are the alleys where retail open up into the alley. He would like to discuss possible regulations which encourage both current and new developments to invest in alley activation.

### **3. Bistro Regulations**

Planning Director Ecker outlined Bistro issues which include:

- Use of Eisenglass – Doing so extends the time period outdoor dining areas are in operation which increases the number of seats for the restaurant as a whole for a majority of the year;

- District Requirements – The Downtown District, Triangle District, and Rail District have different opportunities which could merit different requirements for bistros locating within them;
- On-street Dining/Rooftop Dining – the use of on-street parking spaces and rooftops in addition to the sidewalk area allows the addition of larger outdoor dining areas;
- Parking Needs – the expansion of outdoor dining increases the number of people dining at the restaurant, which increases parking demand;
- Building Code Requirements – the enclosure of outdoor dining areas triggers Building Code regulations such as Energy Code compliance, fire suppression requirements, fire separation distances and exterior wall fire resistive ratings.
- Incentivizing Seating Capacity Tiers – Allowing an increased amount of indoor seating and/or outdoor dining seating for bistros based upon conditional standards such as shared parking, landscaping, greenspace, etc.

#### **4. Partial reconstruction vs. full redevelopment regulations**

Planning Director Ecker reported City Ordinances currently do not clearly delineate when a construction project is considered renovation, and when it is considered a new building. The Planning Board is working on clarifying that distinction, and when a project goes before the Design Review Board, the Planning Board, or the Historic District Commission as a result.

Planning Director Ecker clarified for:

- Commissioner Hoff that these ordinances relate to commercial and multi-family buildings, not single-family buildings.
- Commissioner Nickita that the current policy says that if there is no change in square footage in the project, there is no need for a Site Plan Review. The Planning Board is looking at other situations in which Side Plan Reviews should be required. Determining the percentage of changes to the exterior elevations of the building is being considered as one of the metrics for requiring Side Plan Reviews.

Commissioner Nickita replied that Site Plan Review requirements should be based on information available at the outset of a project, and not changes made as a project progresses. Planning Director Ecker confirmed this is the goal of the Planning Board as well.

#### **5. Site Plan submittal requirements**

Planning Director Ecker explained that Site Plan and Design Reviews may benefit from providing details on all the surrounding properties. The Planning Board has set a public hearing on February 28, 2018 for an ordinance amendment to update these requirements.

Commissioner Nickita cautioned that a satellite photo would provide insufficient information. He continued that a drawn Site Plan, with all adjacencies, would be sufficient.

Commissioner DeWeese stated that having the adjacencies included in Site Plans is very helpful.

### **D. Multi-Modal Initiatives**

#### **1. Woodward Avenue Crossings**

Planning Director Ecker provided an overview of Birmingham's investment in Woodward Avenue crossings:

- Woodward as a Complete Street Plan in 2016, which was for the entire 27 miles of the Woodward corridor. Proposals included shrinking the road a little bit, adding bump-outs, adding crosswalks, and making better median facilities.
- A multi-modal plan in 2013 which included proposed crosswalk enhancements along Woodward, with a focus on Woodward and Oak.
- The Triangle District Plan in 2007, which called for crossing enhancements in order to encourage foot traffic between the Triangle District and downtown.
- Woodward and Oak, which the City focused on in 2017. There is currently a plan and some funding from MDOT for the crosswalk. There will be new pedestrian countdown signals, crosswalk legs on both sides, an expanded median, new-ADA compliant ramps, ADA-detectable warning strips, enhancements at the corners, and new sidewalk on the east side of Woodward.
- New Birmingham crosswalk standards call for a 12'-14' crosswalk on Woodward, continental striping with alternating 24" painted bars and 24" inch wide spaces. MDOT does not adhere to these same standards. For the Woodward and Oak crossing, MDOT is willing to do a 10' crosswalk with the 24" alternating striping. Birmingham is required to maintain the specialized crosswalk moving forward.
- At Woodward and Oakland, there were some changes to a STOP sign on Lawndale which lead to the MMTB reviewing the whole area. The plan includes taking the crosswalk from the north side of the intersection and moving it down to the south side of the Woodward and Oakland intersection, an expansion of the median, a narrowing of the road with some added greenspace to shorten crossing across Oakland, reducing the number of right-turn lanes, moving the Stop sign, adding trees, and adding a multi-use path, all of which will be done in Spring 2018 as part of MDOT's resurfacing project. MDOT will be doing the same compromised crosswalk standards with the 10' width and the 24" inch alternating striping.
- Two mast arm signals will be installed at Maple and Woodward and 14 Mile and Woodward.
- Additional intersections will be updated in the future.

Planning Director Ecker outlined funding sources, which include MDOT, the City of Birmingham, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, the State Transportation Improvement Program, and the Transportation Alternatives Program Grant for pedestrian and bicycle upgrades.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman:

- Endorsed all of the proposed changes, with emphasis on the crosswalks at Woodward and Oak and at Woodward and Oakland.
- Stated that lengthening the crosswalk times would be beneficial so pedestrians do not have to wait at the median.

Planning Director Ecker told Commissioner Hoff that business access from Oak Avenue will remain as-is, despite the caption beneath the relevant diagram. The caption was outdated but could not be edited out of the document.

Commissioner DeWeese stated he hopes Birmingham will collaborate with Bloomfield Township in the future to create a crosswalk at Quarton and Old Woodward.

City Manager Valentine confirmed for Commissioner DeWeese that discussions about a Quarton and Old Woodward crosswalk are ongoing and promising.

Planning Director Ecker echoed City Manager Valentine and added that Royal Oak is also involved in the consideration at the south end of the Quarton and Woodward intersection.

## **2. Crosswalk Standards**

Planning Director Ecker reviewed Birmingham's adoption of crosswalk standards:

- All new painted crosswalks installed shall be of the continental style, as outlined on MDOT Detail Sheet PAVE-945-C, Sheet 3 of 3, with the exception that all painted bars shall be 24 inches wide spaced as close to 24 inches apart as possible.
- The crosswalk standards include variable crosswalk widths depending on whether the street receiving new crosswalks is considered a major street, which will receive crosswalks that are 12'-14' wide, a local street, which will receive crosswalks that are 8' wide, or any residential street, which will receive 6' wide crossings.
- The Commission decided to move forward with updating some of existing crosswalks as part of a pilot program, and budgeted \$25,000 to do so. Four intersections were chosen: Peabody & Brown Streets (CBD), Peirce & Townsend Streets (CBD), Townsend and Southfield (CBD), and Townsend and Chester (CBD), with a budget of \$6,250 per intersection.

Retrofitting the existing crosswalks will increase the costs over the budgeted amount, because in addition to the painting, the curb drop zone will need to be widened to create wider pedestrian ramps, and the detectible warning plates will need to be relocated to the center of the ramps.

Based on the changes that have to be made, the Peabody and Brown intersection alone would require the whole \$25,000 budget.

Planning Director Ecker confirmed for Mayor Harris that City staff would be coming before the Commission at a later date to determine how the crosswalk retrofitting should move forward based on the provided information.

## **3. Bike Share program**

Planning Director Ecker explained that the MMTB will be studying a bicycle sharing program for Birmingham over the long term. Planning Director Ecker reviewed options including:

- Length of rental: giving a deposit for a bicycle and returning it to a station, renting a bicycle based on a GPS location of available bicycles, a longer-term, library-like system of bicycle borrowing, or a membership system.
- Different types of bicycles available, including adaptive bicycles for mobility impaired individuals.
- Hiring companies to run the system for the City, doing a public-private partnership, or running the system as a public effort by the City.

Planning Director Ecker stated that Ann Arbor, Detroit, Port Huron and Southfield are also working on developing bicycle sharing programs at this time. If the City would like to move forward with this program in any iteration, the next step would be to perform a feasibility study which can cost up to \$100,000. Zagster, the company that runs Southfield's bicycle sharing program, offers a free feasibility study.



Commissioner Nickita stated it might be beneficial to collaborate with other municipalities along the Woodward corridor in a larger bicycle sharing program, since other communities have expressed interest as well.

Planning Director Ecker confirmed that her submitted report on Bicycle Sharing programs includes possibilities for collaboration with other communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman stated:

- She would like to see helmets available for renting as well.
- Child-size bicycles should be available.
- Birmingham needs to make sure that the rental pricing is not prohibitively expensive.

Commissioner DeWeese suggested, since the City already utilizes church parking lots for office commuters to park and carpool into the City, office workers could benefit from bicycle renting stations near those church parking lots as well. Commissioner DeWeese suggested the City could subsidize this use because it is less expensive for the City and eases congestion in the parking garages.

#### **4. N. Old Woodward Streetscape Reconstruction**

Planning Director Ecker reported:

- In 2018, Phase 1 updates will include Old Woodward from Oakland to Brown Streets and Maple from Pierce to just east of Old Woodward.
- Phase 2 will be in approximately two years, and will include Maple from Old Woodward to Woodward, and West Maple from Woodward to Chester.
- The project will be updating or installing water and sewer lines, electrical and communications systems, phone charging stations, electrical outlets, pedestrian scale and intersection lighting, medians along some sections of the road, angled parking, efforts to calm traffic, and ADA-compliant sidewalks.
- Double curbs will be removed from along Maple, and bump-outs will be added at intersections.
- Mid-block crosswalks are being explored.
- Landscaping will be prioritized through soil changes, larger and more planting beds, larger new trees, and an irrigation system.
- These changes will help encourage pedestrian activity on Birmingham streets.
- Phase 1 completion is expected in July.

Lucius Vassar, attorney and director of governmental relations at Clarke-Hill, came to share interest in Birmingham's bicycle sharing program on behalf of LimeBike, a dockless bicycle sharing company. Mr. Vassar noted that:

- He served as a city official in a different city in the past, and was inspired by the level of thought that goes into Birmingham's planning.
- He has been Lyft's legal representative since the ride-sharing company's entrance into Michigan, so he understands the experience of trying to make a company's framework work across municipalities.
- He looks forward to continuing to share information with Birmingham regarding ways that LimeBike can help Birmingham achieve its goals.

Planning Board Chairman Scott Klein commended Planning Director Ecker and city staff on their superlative presentations and expressed appreciation. Mr. Klein continued on behalf of the Planning Board:

- The results of the Birmingham Shopping District's (BSD) current study will provide the Planning Board with the information they need in order to recommend potential changes in the Redline Retail District to the Commission.
- There should be a review of what is permitted within the assessment district in terms of parking, office, and residential uses. Mr. Klein stated the information should be shared with the City's engineers as well.

Chairman Klein then continued on his own behalf that:

- He is excited about the crosswalk updates planned for Woodward at Oak and Oakland.
- Constructing the shared path to be 12' or 14' would better accommodate strollers or wheelchairs.
- He is not aware of the legal necessity within the ADA for having ramps match the size of the walks. If that is an MDOT standard, the City may not be legally required to adhere to it, which could save the City money.

Robert Boyle stated that the upgrades to Woodward in downtown Detroit included a conduit for fiber, and encouraged the City to install fiber along the Birmingham Woodward corridor as well.

City Manager Valentine said fiber installation along Birmingham's Woodward is being considered.

Mr. Boyle thanked the City for keeping the intersection at Woodward and Oak on the agenda, and suggested there be a ceremony with fanfare upon completion of the intersection.

Elaine McLain spoke as a 59-year resident of Birmingham. She shared that she had once been hit by a vehicle while in a crosswalk in front of the Birmingham Police Department, and said she is in full support of the measures the City is taking to increase pedestrian safety in crosswalks.

Commissioner Nickita thanked Ms. McClain for her comments and said it drove home the fact that all the proposed changes are about safety first.

#### **IV. Birmingham Shopping District**

##### **A. Plan for Old Woodward Reconstruction**

BSD Director Ingrid Tighe presented the BSD's Themed Advertising Campaign called Pave the Way Birmingham in order to remind citizens that, while the upgrades will be dusty, the City infrastructure will be much-improved once the process is complete.

- BSD Director Tighe continued that the highest priority is to communicate effectively and often with residents, merchants, and businesses downtown in order to keep them updated on progress.
  - Communication will occur through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and all information will be confirmed with the City in order to provide the most up-to-date data.
  - Businesses in the BSD will also receive email notifications about progress. Both residents and businesses can sign up for the BSD's e-notifications.
  - Updates will also be available on the City's website at [www.bhamgov.org/downtowninfrastructure](http://www.bhamgov.org/downtowninfrastructure).

- Merchant meetings are another avenue for sharing information about the project. The next meeting will on February 8, 2018 at 8 a.m. and will be hosted by Nina Macklemore on Old Woodward by the Birmingham 8 Theatre.
- Information will also be provided via television, radio, newspaper, and magazines.
- The BSD is considering a program called “Birmingham Bucks”, which would reward purchases made in Birmingham by providing further coupons which can be used in Birmingham stores. The program would be funded by the BSD. According to Gazell Sports, a retailer with locations in both Birmingham and Kalamazoo, MI, a similar program promoted business during a similar construction project in Kalamazoo.
- Signage will be posted throughout the City that will say things such as “Pardon Our Dust” and “Open for Business” with the social media links provided.
- DPS will provide orange signs for each merchant affected by the construction.
- Lights will also be installed between each merchant.
- Free valet service will be offered throughout the City. Tentative locations include N. Old Woodward where the construction begins, S. Old Woodward near the Peabody mansion, W. Old Maple near Roots, and then on the east side around Hamilton.
- Several events will occur throughout the construction period. There will be:
  - A kick-off party for the beginning of the construction;
  - A potential public art display, done by both professional artists and residents, with a public jury; and,
  - Events for families, including a potential scavenger hunt for a Birmingham-themed mascot with prizes.
- Selfie spots where families can take pictures and a thermometer showing the construction progress will also be installed.
- If construction ends in July as planned, the Day on the Town could also be an end-of-construction celebration.

### **B. New Retail Consultant**

BSD Director Tighe reported the BSD board voted in September 2017 to broaden its business development with the following strategy:

- Support and retain existing businesses by connecting current merchants, restaurants, and businesses to resources.
- Attract new retailers using a three-prong approach attracting 1) local, Michigan-based stores 2) regional retailers and 3) national retailers.
- Retain a third party consultant to conduct a metro analysis, community core analysis, and development of marketing and branding program. Additionally, conduct market research analysis to determine strong national and local retailers that would fit well in the BSD to build a robust tenant recruitment plan.
- Implement a City, Property Owner, and Broker program to connect brokers representing specific properties to potential businesses interested in locating to Birmingham.

To accomplish the above goals, the BSD retained Buxton Company to create a comprehensive marketing strategy that enables the BSD to understand the consumer profile of our retail trade area and to identify specific retailers who will fit well in the BSD. The formal kick-off of the partnership was on November 29, 2018. The plan continues with:

- An update to the BSD marketing material and PR campaign;

- The BSD's attendance at the International Conference of Shopping Centers (ICSC) in Las Vegas, where Birmingham will be meeting with national retailers the City would like to attract; and,
- Attendance at regional ICSCs.

## **V. Engineering**

### **A. Backyard Sewer and Water Master Plan**

City Engineer O'Meara reported there have been a few areas in the City with a lot of backyard water and sewer issues. The City has made the following changes to remedy the issue:

- All the backyard water main areas have been reconstructed.
- In Crestview, the water main has been completely shut down.
- Disconnections are now in progress in the two east side subdivisions as well as Old Salem Court. Final shutdown of these backyard systems is planned for 2022 - 2024.
- At the beginning of 2017, several of the Quarton Lake Estates Subdivision blocks had almost 100% of the needed easement acquisitions completed. The lining will be updated in February 2018.

Future remedies include:

- A new campaign to work with homeowners in both Quarton Lake and the small area on E. Maple Rd. advertising the progress that has been made, and asking that they work with the City to sign the necessary easements.
  - Both Quarton Lake and the E. Maple Road areas are at about 75% compliance.
- A focus on the northwest corner of the City in 2019-2022. The water and sewer system are older and all currently in the street, but there is an opportunity to separate the sewer system and get storm water out of the pipe. Modifications would be made to existent sewers to make them storm sewers.
- Sewers on Redding would be updated to be storm sewers as well.

City Engineer O'Meara explained to Commissioner Hoff that:

- Achieving 100% participation in the north part of the N. Quarton Lake area was easier than gaining it on the south side because many easements were already granted on the north side, and there were a higher number of properties in total to be contacted on the south side.
- The streets in the Quarton Lake area are not scheduled for the 2018 capeseal program.

City Engineer O'Meara told Mayor Harris that connecting the buildings to the public water main is a process distinct from the easement process.

## **B. Parking Initiatives**

### **1. Surface and Structure Parking**

City Engineer O'Meara reported:

- In June 2016 the City worked with SP+ to provide valet services at the N. Old Woodward Ave. Parking Structure on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This allowed the City to park 50 more cars in the structure.
- Valet was also provided in the Park Street structure in June 2017 in order to compensate for the spaces lost as part of the painting project in the structure.
- The City will utilize valet services during the 2018 N. Old Woodward project in order to alleviate the strain caused by the temporary loss of 130 spaces due to construction along N. Old Woodward.

- SP+ is currently surveying traffic patterns in all five parking structures around 10 AM to help determine the extent of all-day parking that is occurring without monthly permits. Once more data is available, staff will review options with the Advisory Parking Committee to help motivate employees to park on the upper levels.
- Parking Lot #6 underwent a sewer project in 2017, but has been an issue in terms of both its lack of sufficient parking space on Thursday and Friday afternoons and its concrete, which is in disrepair. The retail community would like to see these issues addressed. The City is exploring three potential solutions:
  - Performing concrete resurfacing on the lot and updating the landscaping to create screening from the adjacent neighborhood;
  - Expanding the lot into the east open-nature area by the river by 4', thus adding 14 spaces, performing resurfacing and updating landscaping for screening; or
  - Expanding the lot into the east open-nature area by the river by 20', thus adding 35 spaces, constructing the curb and gutter in this area so that almost all drainage from the parking lot is directed into a bio-swale constructed east of the lot, which would then flow into a sedimentation area that would provide further water filtering before it then enters the adjacent river.
- Currently, a temporary gravel parking lot is operating at 35001 Woodward Ave. (at the northwest corner of Maple Rd.). The owner has leased the lot to the City since the summer of 2016, at no cost to the system other than to take over maintenance costs for the property. The lot, which contains 38 parking spaces, currently allows for the sale of 50 monthly permits.
- We have also been in discussions with the owner of the property at 34952 Woodward Ave. (at the southeast corner of Maple Rd.). This lot would allow 175 vehicles temporarily until a construction project materializes. Monthly permit holders from both the Park St. and Peabody St. Structures would be the first invited to purchase a parking permit in this lot.
- The City is also in discussions with First United Methodist Church – 1669 W. Maple Rd., Ascension of Christ Lutheran Church – 16935 14 Mile Rd. (Beverly Hills), and Our Shepherd Lutheran Church – 2225 E. 14 Mile Rd. to potentially lease space in those lots. The City would offer the lots to a large employer for free if the employer could transport its employees to and from the lots.

## **2. On-Street Parking Meters**

Police Commander Grewe reported:

- The City purchased 1,277 CivicSmart meters in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The meters can accept credit card, coin, and Parkmobile payments.
- The following issues have occurred with the meters:
  - Software upgrades: meters needed to be upgraded almost immediately;
  - Low battery problems: quality issues with batteries and/or improperly charged batteries;
  - Internet connectivity issues caused by T-Mobile network bandwidth strength; and,
  - Sensors: non-operational because of all the above issues.
- CivicSmart has been working with T-Mobile to fix the connectivity issues.
- 180 meters now have upgraded connectivity as of January 2018, which includes Parkmobile updating the meters with payment information within moments of paying.
- If the upgrades continue to work on the 180 meters, the program will be rolled out to the rest of the meters in the City.

Mayor Harris expressed concern that vehicles not be ticketed if they have paid on Parkmobile but have not had their payments registered on the meters.

Police Commander Grewe told Mayor Harris that parking enforcement officers know to check for payments before issuing tickets regardless of how the meter reads during the connectivity issue.

Police Commander Grewe told Commissioner Boutros that there are two ways for parking enforcement officers to know if a meter's battery is dead:

- The meter would not be able to flash "Expired".
- New meters send information to parking enforcement officials to report when meter batteries are low.

A vehicle would not be ticketed if payment was not possible because of the meter.

Police Commander Grewe confirmed for Commissioner Hoff that:

- All the meters are getting new domes with magnification in order to increase the visibility of the meter information.
- All the meters are outfitted with stickers on the front of them with the hours payment is required, the time limit on parking at the meter, and the cost.

### **3. Downtown parking Structure Planning**

Planning Director Ecker reviewed the Plan for the N. Old Woodward Parking Deck and Bates Street extension:

- This came out of the Birmingham 2016 Plan.
- The City's objective is to solicit development plans from qualified developers that will extend Bates Street from Willits to North Old Woodward and redevelop the remainder of the site by constructing a parking facility that provides a minimum of 1150 parking spaces to replace the 770 parking spaces currently on the N. Old Woodward / Bates Street site.
- The City created both a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and a Request for Proposals (RFP) in order to break the project into phases.
- Three of the four pre-qualified development teams submitted proposals as of January 3, 2018. The proposals are currently being reviewed internally.
- The Ad Hoc Parking Development Committee (AHPDC) will be having a meeting on February 9, 2018 to decide which development team to bring in for an interview. A recommendation for a development team would subsequently be made to the Commission, with the goal of making a final decision by Spring 2018.
- All the teams included extensive community involvement as part of their proposals, which would occur through the Summer and Fall of 2018, with the goal of having a final development plan being approved by the City Commission in January 2019.

City Manager Valentine confirmed for Mayor Harris that the sale of public property would require the City to place the sale of property on the ballot for a vote after the Commission's tentative approval of the development plan in 2019.

## **VII. Fire Department**

### **Chesterfield Fire Station Construction**

Fire Chief Connaughton presented an overview of the construction project:

- On April 3, 2017 the onsite start of demolition/construction began.

- Asbestos abatement has been completed.
- The steel structure, scaffolding, and the bi-fold doors of the building is in place.
- The doors are now 14' by 14' instead of 10' by 10', which allow safer ingress and egress of the Fire Department trucks from the station.
- There will now be room for Tower #34 and storage of medical, firefighting, HazMat, technical rescue, self-contained rescue bottles and hose equipment will be able to be safely stored due to storage rooms built into the apparatus bay.

## **VIII. Police Department**

### **Local Street Traffic Counts & Traffic Control Measures**

Police Commander Scott Grewe reported that the following three topics are priorities for the police department in the 2018-2019 fiscal year:

- Local Street Traffic Counts & Traffic Control Measures.
  - A program began two years ago to start charting speeds on local streets. The purpose of this program was to identify problem streets for traffic speeds or volume and to create a database of information that the department could use when meeting with residents to discuss historical speed studies for their respective streets
- Enhanced Community Policing Efforts.
  - The department is currently in the process of developing its first community resource officer, Ofc. Casey Pedersen. This officer will meet with community groups, special interest groups, homeowners associations, local businesses, individual citizens and school groups to discuss a wide variety of issues that include: building security, home security, personal safety, "stranger danger," active shooter response and many other topics of interest. It is the hope that the officer will have completed her training by the middle of 2018.
  - A second program is one in which local churches, businesses or educational institutions concerned over active shooter incidents can contact the police department for an analysis of their emergency protocols, emergency response plans and hands-on training.
- Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Training.
  - This program offers an academically challenging curriculum developed to enhance an officer's ability to identify, evaluate and document suspected drug impairment. For 2018, Ofc. Yacoub Iseid was one of only 22 officers statewide to be selected for the DRE program.

Police Commander Grewe told Mayor Pro Tem Bordman the police department would be happy to train the Commission as part of the citywide staff training.

## **IX. Building Department**

### **A. Revised Builder's Code of Conduct**

From Building Official Bruce Johnson's report to City Manager Valentine on January 8, 2018:

The Builders Code of Conduct was adopted by City Commission in 1999. This was in response to concerns expressed by residents that builders were not properly maintaining their construction sites. The document illustrates the City's expectations of how builders and their subcontractors are to conduct themselves and maintain their construction sites while they are building in the City of Birmingham. The Building Department posts a Builders Code of Conduct sign at each building site that has construction fencing installed. The purpose of the sign is to remind builders and inform residents that the

contractors are to conduct themselves professionally and maintain the construction site in accordance with City rules and regulations. However, residents have expressed concerns that some builders and contractors appear to not take the sign seriously and suggest that updating the sign would help. In response to those concerns, we have revised the sign by tying the violations back to the City Code Sections to clarify that the City does have regulations applicable to construction sites.

With the input of the residents, the revised Builders Code of Conduct sign clearly communicates the specific sections of the City Code for violations. Additionally, the Online Inspection Scheduling feature will streamline the scheduling process for both the public and staff alike. The building department values input and will continue to seek ways to improve efficiency while providing legendary customer service.

## **B. Online Inspection Scheduling & Permitting**

From Building Official Bruce Johnson's report to City Manager Valentine on January 8, 2018:

The department also continues to push forward with technology improvements. On April 1, 2018, we will go live with an Online Inspection Scheduling program. The initial go live date for this feature was delayed to allow the developer to make some enhancements to the program that we needed. That work is now complete and over the next few months we will be testing the updates, preparing our database, and finalizing promotional documents as we gear up to go live in the spring.

Building Official Johnson told:

- Commissioner DeWeese that the department can invest further resources in making sure that, if an inspector falls behind during the day, subsequent inspections are notified of the delay.
- Commissioner Sherman that builders get a three-strike rule. After a few warnings, the builders receive a misdemeanor ticket and have to go into court. The possibility of making some of the violations into civil infractions is being explored, as it could help the City alleviate problems more quickly due to the ability to fine builders.
- Mayor Harris that it would be a good idea to list fine amounts on the Builder's Code of Conduct Sign, but due to the size of the sign the Building Department chose to hold off at this time.

City Attorney Currier confirmed that making some of the violations into civil infractions may result in the City achieving more expedient resolutions to building violations.

## **X. Library**

Library Director Doug Koschik introduced Frank Pisano and Melissa Mark, Library Board Members, and Assistant Library Director Rebekah Craft.

Library Director Koschik presented the proposal for Phase 2 of Baldwin's long-range building vision, which would consist of an expansion and renovation of the Youth Room.

## **XI. Birmingham Museum**

Museum Director Leslie Pielack introduced Tina Krizanac and Lori Eaton from the Museum Board.

Museum Director Pielack presented the proposed master landscaping plan, bicentennial planning, and museum utilization for the Birmingham Historical Museum.



Museum Director Pielack told:

- Commissioner Boutros that the landscape plan includes the building of a new sign for the Museum.
- Commissioner Hoff that the Museum's social media presence increases citizen awareness of the Museum's offerings, and may increase attendance at the programs as well.
- Mayor Pro Tem Bordman that:
  - The number of school tours decreased due to school closings.
  - The Museum is tracking program attendance. Museum Director Pielack said the Museum anticipates providing diverse offerings for the Museum is positive. If attendance to programs does not increase over the next couple of years, the type of programming will be re-evaluated.
  - Free programming sometimes does not have good returns.
- Commissioner Hoff and Mayor Pro Tem Bordman that:
  - Reaching adults allows the Museum to reach children; and,
  - Some of the visits to the Museum are documented as general visits to the grounds, as opposed to attendance of special, structured programs.
- Mayor Harris that the City's bicentennial is being celebrated to mark the first land purchase in Birmingham, which happened in 1818.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman and Commissioner Hoff shared concern that there is not enough participation in youth programs at the Museum.

Mayor Harris was encouraged by adult attendance having increased almost 300% and total visits to the Museum almost increasing by 400%.

Lori Eaton told the Commission that she is excited to be part of the Birmingham Historical Museum's Board.

Commissioner Nickita said the bicentennial is a great opportunity to highlight the history of Birmingham, and that other parts of the Birmingham community, such as the Chamber, the BSD, or the larger business community could collaborate with the Museum on the celebration.

Commissioner DeWeese agreed with Commissioner Nickita.

## **XII. Adult Services Long Term Planning**

City Manager Valentine presented the Joint Senior Services Committee's findings, which included short- and long-term strategies for adult services in Beverly Hills, Birmingham, Bingham Farms, Franklin and Southfield. From his January 5, 2018 report:

- The short term recommendations were to expand services and municipal budget requests in order to accommodate the increasing demands with increased hours and programming. This was achieved with increased municipal contributions, which began in 2014.
- The longer term recommendations were related to facility improvements and/or expansion/replacement.
- Recreating the Joint Senior Service Committee (JSSC) comprised of representatives from the current member communities and revisiting long term strategies including, but not

limited to, service structure, partnerships, funding models, program needs and related service demands based on population trends is recommended.

- Preliminary conversations with city managers from the other communities involved indicated interest in recreation of the JSSC.

City Manager Valentine explained to:

- Commissioner Hoff that NEXT is the city's contractor for adult services because Birmingham does not provide any adult services in its own capacity.
- Mayor Pro Tem Bordman that providing services to adult citizens is at the City's discretion.

Mayor Pro Tem Bordman stated that:

- NEXT's programming has both increased and improved, which has led to the facility being too small to accommodate program attendance.
- Finding a new building for NEXT's programs will involve costs in the future that the City does not currently incur. As a result, Mayor Pro Tem Bordman is in favor of reconvening the JSSC to collaboratively find a solution to the issue.

Gordon Rinschler thanked City Manager Valentine for organizing the other communities and said NEXT is enthusiastic about the upcoming discussions.

Cris Braun, Executive Director of NEXT, thanked the City Commission and staff for the work they are doing with NEXT. Ms. Braun continued:

- Creative scheduling allows programming to occur at this time, but the facilities will be maxed out if another 500 people attend programs.
- NEXT's services are important to the community, and should remain one of the City's priorities.

Greg Burry, NEXT President, thanked City Staff and Commission for their consideration of NEXT. Mr. Burry noted:

- He was the chairman of the JSSC when it began.
- NEXT is currently constrained, and the JSSC needs to be re-opened up.
- Municipalities should meet the needs of their senior population.

#### **IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Commissioner Hoff stated that requests for funding over the course of the day totaled millions of dollars, and asked City Manager Valentine how decisions on funding are made.

City Manager Valentine replied that long range planning provides the Commission, staff and citizens with an overview of all the considerations. The budget meeting in April then allows the Commission to put the City's funding priorities in order.

#### **V. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

J. Cherilynn Mynsberge  
City Clerk