

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION
LONG RANGE PLANNING MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2020
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 151 MARTIN
8:30 A.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pierre Boutros, Mayor called the meeting at 8:30 am

II. ROLL CALL

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Boutros
Mayor Pro Tem Longe
Commissioner Baller
Commissioner Hoff
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Nickita (arrived at 8:34)
Commissioner Sherman

Absent: None

Administration: City Manager Valentine, Assistant City Manager Gunter, City Attorney Currier, City Attorney Kucharek, Acting City Clerk Arft, Human Resource Manager Myers, Assistant to the City Manager Gallagher, Fire chief Wells, DPS Director Wood, Finance Director/Treasurer Gerber, Assistant Finance Director Wickenheiser, City Engineer Fletcher, Assistant City Engineer Bridges, Police Chief Clemence, Police Commander Grewe, City Planner Ecker, Building Official Johnson, Baldwin Library Director Koschik, Museum Director Pielack, Parks & Recreation Carrie Laird, and Assistant Fire Chief Bartalino

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

The City of Birmingham welcomes public comment limited at the Mayor's discretion on items that do not appear in the printed agenda in order to allow for an efficient meeting. The Commission will not participate in a question and answer session and will take no action on any item not appearing on the posted agenda. The public can also speak to agenda items as they occur when the presiding officer opens the floor to the public. When recognized by the presiding officer, please step to the microphone, state your name for the record, and direct all comments or questions to the presiding officer.

Mayor Boutros explained the new public comment section.

- David Bloom, 1591 Stanley, commented on the new location of Public Comment. The section has been added to the beginning of the agenda.
- Paul Reagan, 997 Purdy, commented on the parking situation in Downtown Birmingham; noting that it is currently a problem.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

I. 8:30 AM – 9:10 AM Finance

A. Five-Year Financial Forecast

Mark Gerber gave an overview of the Five-Year Financial Forecast. He reminded everyone that what he was presenting was not a financial forecast and not a budget; meaning the numbers will change. It is a working document:

- Tim St. Andrews, of Plante Moran, discussed the Headlee Act Limit v Operating Millage and he discussed water and sewer rates.

II. 9:10 AM – 10:00 AM Public Services

A. Parks & Recreation Improvement Plan

DPS Director Wood presented the Improvement Plan for the parks around Birmingham that were identified as needing improvement.

City Manager Valentine explained the funding opportunity available to make improvements where needed.

B. Ice Arena Facility Analysis

Robert Stempien, Plante Moran reviewed all of the components of the Ice Arena:

- It was built in 1973.
- The equipment inventory is complete.

C. Maple/Eton Bridge Enhancements

DPS Director Wood presented the history of the project and gave a status update.

D. Lead Water Line Improvement Plan

DPS Director Wood and Engineer Fletcher presented an action plan to replace lead water lines in Birmingham.

- There are 728 identified properties requiring new water lines.
- There are 8 critical properties identified and a change order is out for approval to mitigate the problem.
- It is anticipated that the project would take 5 weeks to complete.
- City Manager Valentine expressed that there is a consortium of communities to find funding for this anticipated expenditure.

Commissioner Hoff expressed that she understood City Manager Valentine to say that if a new Parks and Recreation bond was issued, it would result in approximately \$37 per taxpayer annually. City Manager Valentine explained that the number was arbitrary based on the assumptions that he set forth. She further asked if the \$37.00 is in addition to what citizens are currently paying or does it replace something that they have already been paying and eliminated due to current bond obligations being met in the coming year. City Manager Valentine affirmed that it would be a net cost due to reducing obligations and adding the new bond.

Commissioner Hoff understood that the suggestions for the Ice Arena is not a new build, but a total renovation.

Mr. Stempien, Plante Moran, affirmed that he is recommending renovation to the arena based on the current utilization of 83% of hours available and booked hours. 52% of utilization is from hockey rental, which is the highest revenue per hour. He also said that until the arena reaches a threshold of 95% utilization of revenue generating activity, building a new arena is not recommended.

Commissioner Hoff asked if the proposal is needed and not a want. Mr. Stempien affirmed that it is a need due to the aging infrastructure of the facility. She also asked if some of the organizations that use the facility could contribute to the renovations, similar to what Little League has done for the ball fields. City Manager Valentine felt that it is probable once the City decides what direction they would like to go.

Commissioner Hoff discussed the phases of the project. Since the Ice Arena is a need and the other pieces of the project are simply wants. She went on to ask why some of the parks that have been in discussions for years are in phase two as opposed to phase one.

City Manager Valentine explained that input was requested from the public and the priorities that they wanted and that is how the priority list was developed.

Mayor Pro Tem Longe, commented as having been involved in that process, need and public interest was carefully considered. Great consultation with City staff about what was possible with the available funds and time allotted to use the funds. She went on to say that the assessment was leaning toward shovel ready projects.

Director Woods agreed that the readiness, staff time, and overall timing of funding was considered in phasing the project.

Mayor Boutros asked what would happen if the money were not used in a timely manner.

City Manager Valentine explained from a financial standpoint that once the bond is approved, the City would then be committed to do the project in a timely manner. There would be penalties and certainly, it would not be favorable in the pursuit of future bonds and a poor practice to follow.

Commissioner Hoff responded to that point that the last time a bond was issued for this type of project; it was spread over a period and the complete amount was not used.

City Manager Valentine explained that the Commission authorized up to a certain amount and issued a lesser amount.

Commissioner Nickita commented on the Maple Eton Bridge. He expressed that he is an advocate for doing something with that bridge and has been for a long time and is excited that the City is addressing it. He wants to know what the design element would be. He felt that the cart is coming before the horse in terms of the electrical engineering lighting designs and there are no conceptual designs for what is expected for the bridge from the City. Commissioner Nickita recommended that before the City implements the lighting, a plan for the bridge consistent with what the City would like be in place.

City Manager Valentine commented that other communities working with CN in this same process took approximately seven years. He recognized Director Wood and her team for accomplishing this task in a year. He also felt that it is important to get DTE in to analyze where connections are available and how to get power to the site. All of this would come together with the architectural committee.

Commissioner Baller asked for clarification on how many times the bond issues would be presented to voters. Relative to funds available for depreciable assets in the parks system, there are small expenditures that are big wins and should not wait for a bond to move forward. He recommended setting a level of expenditure that is reasonable. He also felt that the future of the ice arena should have more discussion due to the sizeable investment and life of the asset. In terms of the architectural review committee, there are two vacancies on a three-member panel. He appealed to anyone knowing anybody interested, to urge them to apply.

City Manager Valentine confirmed that the action being proposed is to go before the voters once.

Public Comment:

- Matt Wilde, 975 Madison, was recently elected to be the President of the South Poppleton HOA. One of the big things that has him engaged is Adam’s Park. He said that it has been an eyesore his entire life. He has learned that this has been on a priority list since 2006 when Birmingham acquired it back from Roeper. In 2016 there was a concept plan that was endorsed, in 2017 it was included in the budget but the funding went away, in 2018, put on the priority list and voted that way. So today, he is thrilled to see Adams Park in Phase I of the project phase today. He and his neighbors will support the bond required for the project. He commended the commission for coming together for a planning meeting on a Saturday morning.
- Mike Kopmeyer, 1351 Bennaville, thanked everyone for all of the hard work that went into the planning. He also suggested walking paths in the park, especially in Kenning Park. A combination walk path and bike path in the Rail District would be desirable and greatly improve the City’s parks.
- Ann Bray, 1269 Buckingham, was delighted about the plan to develop parks and encouraged the teams to work with the land.
- Larry Bertolini, 1275 Webster Street, commented on Kenning Park being the only park for that area of town.
- David Bloom, commented on Phase III of the library and felt that the Parks and Recreation Board should work with the library on future projects. He also shared his thoughts on one-off elections.
- Gary Petrovich, Birmingham Unified High Schools Hockey, wanted to be considered for a locker room for the Hockey team at the ice arena.

III. 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM Planning

A. City-wide Master Plan Update

Planning Director Ecker gave a comprehensive overview of the updated Master Plan and reviewed the draft Master Plan. She summarized the main concepts of each section.

B. Alley Regulations

City Planner Nick Dupuis discussed possible remedies for current alley regulations.

C. Multi-Modal Initiatives

Planning Director Ecker described the issues of transit development.

D. Green Infrastructure

City Planner Nick Dupuis presented this item.

E. Downtown Overlay Amendments

Planner Brooks Cowan presented this item.

Commissioner Hoff asked about additional cost relative to Alley Regulations. Planning Director Ecker expressed that there are no additional cost anticipated. It was approved "as needed" to go through the City Manager if more public engagement was needed along the way.

Commissioner Hoff noted that Greenwood Cemetery was not mentioned in the Historical Preservation section or any section of the Long Range Plan. She expressed that it should be put in the long-range plan and attention paid to the cemetery in the City's historical preservation efforts. Especially since the commission just approved a short-term contract for Greenwood's operations.

Commissioner Nickita suggested encouraging by way of awareness that the greenest building is the one that is already built. Keeping existing property is more sustainable and should be a goal of the administration.

Commissioner Hoff commented on Yoga studios and small fitness facilities are only allowed on the south end of downtown. She noted that there is one across from the Townsend Hotel.

Director Ecker explained that some have been grandfathered or granted use variances that are akin to schools.

Commissioner Nickita commented on frontage ordinances and felt addressing this is important. In seeking the best design, Birmingham has a specific esthetic value and local vernacular that can always be enhanced or strengthened. He recommended that the City tie into what has already been studied and implemented.

Commissioner Baller expressed his excitement for the Yoga Studio. He hopes that it could spike the same interest as the Bistro ordinance.

Mayor Boutros commented on an interesting program initiated by the City of Detroit in November that reduced parking and meter fines by 50% for qualifying residents. Commissioner Sherman suggested that is a planning issue.

Public Comment

- Ann Bray, 1260 Buckingham Street, commented on the Multi Modal Initiatives. She mentioned that she is yet to see a cyclist on Eton where a large piece of land that was taken away from drivers. It actually created difficulty for large vehicles to pass. She also noted the new threat of electromagnetic radiation that is increasingly coming. While science has not concluded what the effects are on the environment, there is an effect.
- Mike Kopmeyer, 1351 Bennaville, echoed Ms. Bray's comments regarding the environment. He futhered his comments on cycling lanes on Eton Street that make no sense. He feels that the motorist and cyclist should share the road and utilize a good path. In terms of the green initiatives, the trees that are planted are not providing a canopy. The overlay is exciting and long overdue. An Amtrak station on the Birmingham side is a keystone to opening up Birmingham to the rest of the world. He also mentioned that streetcars or trollies would enhance downtown.
- Elaine McClain, 425 N Eton and chairman of the Birmingham Area Cable Board, commented that the meetings are rebroadcast at 3A.M. She liked to see cycle only parking spaces in town.
- Larry Bertolini, Webster St., commented on residential storm drainage. While some homes have catch basins in the back with storm lines connected to the street. Has the new master plan addressed improved storm drainage.
- Paul Reagan, 997 Purdy, commented:
 - 20/40 Plan and the introduction of apartment buildings creating higher density into the neighborhoods.
 - Parking study results could be implemented now.
 - Updated tact on parking enforcement.
 - Parks are part of the Multi Modal Plan.
- David Bloom, 1591 Stanley, is opposed to proposed seams in neighborhoods. In response to the Overlay District, everyone needs to listen to Paul Reagan and be mindful of parking.
- Scott Clein, Yosemite Blvd, Chairman of Planning Board, commented on the Birmingham Plan and challenged everyone to engage in the spirit of positivity, civility, and collaboration. He also challenged the leaders of the community to lead, be enthusiastic and encouraging to every member of the public and staff. They know how the community

works best. Take the challenge to the board levels to get involved in other public meetings and provide feedback. The goal is to make the plan more acceptable to the community.

IV. 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM Engineering

A. Quarton Lake Backyard Sewer and Water Master Plan
City Engineer Fletcher introduced James Gallagher to present this item.

B. Major Streets Capital Improvement Plan
City Engineer Fletcher presented the plan.

C. SAW Grant Initiative
James Surhey, HRC, described the program and accomplishments.

City Engineer Fletcher commented that it is great timing for this program based on the City's current needs.

D. Maple Road – Phase 2
City Engineer Fletcher presented this item and discussed key dates of upcoming events.

Commissioner Hoff asked about structures on the easements of the Quarton Lake project. Is that why residents have not given permission.

City Engineer Fletcher replied yes, and explained where the structures are located. He furthered offered that there may be times that work has to be done in the backyard of the homes but the work is generally trenchless. There are impediments involved.

City Manager Valentine felt that some of the resistance is related to comfort levels in granting an easement to their property. A new approach is in process.

Commissioner Hoff asked if the City have received the grant for the SAW Initiative. City Engineer affirmed that the work has been completed and the funds have been reimbursed by the State. The next phase is the replacement of the lead lines.

Mr. Surhey complimented the City on the completeness of the City's records.

Commissioner Baller asked if the GIS information is available to the public. City Manager Valentine affirmed that it is available on the City's website. Commissioner Baller asked have sensors been put in the sewers to monitor activity. It was affirmed that the City is no longer using sensors. Commissioner Baller noted that the focus is on North of Oak, and wonder why South of Oak may have been ignored.

Commissioner Nickita commented on the Maple Project and asked if MDOT is responsible for approving all of the signage. He expressed concern about the increased traffic, and has it been communicated to everyone effected. City Engineer Fletcher affirmed that it is a Birmingham project.

City Manager Valentine expressed that there is a new communications team to help promote these efforts. They will push the information out and move with the project.

Public Comment

A member of the public congratulated the team on the Sewer Master Plan and asked how will it be funded. He felt there is no money for sewer updates and street paving. He referenced a sewer lateral replacement program that was introduced some years ago and has not been addressed. He further asked the commission to not postpone the South Old Woodward project.

City Manager Valentine corrected the record by explaining the grant and how it assist the City in prioritizing the roads. It does not implement a program to address the roads. The City has consistently had an aggressive infrastructure improvement program that has been followed. Five to ten million dollars per year is committed to do the improvements. It is an ongoing program.

Elaine McClain, expressed that there is a company that does partner with Birmingham residents if this program moves forward. She also noted that seven years ago when she came to the meeting with a low profile tire that got caught in a pot hole, it was handled in the regular course of City operations. She said that everyone is working on it, just report the potholes when you see them.

Commissioner Hoff noted that the Sewer Lateral program has been in effect all along and never went away. Anytime a sewer is being replaced, the residents are given an opportunity to have their sewer lateral replaced at a reduced cost through the City.

Cindy Rose expressed that South Old Woodward has been in need of a facelift for a long time. It appears mediocre and the project should not be put off again.

V. 12:15 PM – 12:30 PM Lunch Break

VI. 12:30 PM – 12:45 PM Birmingham Shopping District

A. Downtown Retail Attraction Program

BSD Director Tighe presented this item. She recognized the board, gave the history of BSD development, and described the district and the plans in place to support the City's upcoming construction projects in Downtown Birmingham.

Commissioner Hoff complimented the BSD on snow removal in downtown and asked how it is working out since the renovation of Old Woodward. Director Tighe expressed that they are able to make it accessible to the pedestrians. There have been no issues thanks to DPS's work on clearing the street. She further asked what happened to the holiday light canopy over Merrill St. Director Tighe stated that they were unable to do that this year due to Merrill's capital improvement project that is replacing the entire front façade.

Commissioner Nickita asked if there had been many opportunities to collaborate with upcoming developments during planning phases to accommodate the current market of retail.

The BSD meets with business owners and new developers on a regular basis to provide input.

Paul Reagan reiterated the parking challenges.

David Bloom asked for data from retailers on the loss of business during the Woodward reconstruction project.

BSD Director Tighe holds regular merchant meetings to talk about best practices that businesses used. She reported that some businesses did better. There were no reports of losing any retailers during that time. Planning and strategy has been put in place to support the downtown businesses during times of construction.

Mayor Boutros thanked all of the City boards, staff and departments for all of their collaborative efforts to make Birmingham the number one City to live.

B. Maple Project Mitigation Plan

VII. 12:45 PM – 1:00 PM Fire Department

A. Departmental Enhancements

Chief Wells discussed risk reductions

VIII. 1:00 PM – 1:15 PM Police Department

A. Departmental Enhancements

Chief Clemence presented information about the City's active shooter response; and police accreditation processes.

IX. 1:15 PM – 1:30 PM Building Department

A. Online Permit Program

Bruce Johnson, introduced online permit processing and acceptance.

X. 1:30 PM – 1:45 PM Library

A. Building Renovations - Phase 3 Plan

Doug Koschik presented an update on the Library construction project.

City Manager Valentine clarified that the opportunities for the Library to fund their own project diminishes over time due to the Headlee Act. In the short term, if the strategy is to do Phase 3 then the upcoming budget should be considered to capture the funds.

Commissioner Hoff supports phase 3, and likes everything so far. She wanted a refresher on the initial millage proposal particularly was it for a specified time or until all phases were complete. Commissioner Hoff does not want to overextend the City.

City Manager Valentine explained that the project phased and subject to commission approval. He expressed that this is Long Range Planning and everything does come with a price tag. It is not a budget hearing where funds are requested.

Commissioner Sherman asked how will the timing work with some of the funds not being released until 2025.

Mr. Koschik explained that phasing the project accommodates the projected short falls.

Commissioner Baller expressed disappointment that the Plaza is being taken out, but commented that he supports the project.

Commissioner Nickita noted that he is very impressed with the progress of the project. It has been on time, on budget and, at times, under budget. He would like to see an analysis of cost to value as the Library moves forward with phase three.

Commissioner Host asked why the Café is important. He noted that it is also controversial.

Doug Koschik commented that the demand for café's are in demand and are highly utilized. He noted that the Novi Library has a Starbucks. He did say that the café would not be the main business of the Library, just a compliment.

Public Comment

- Bob Ziegelman suggested that the Library is part of the Civic Center and part of the City. The café would connect the Library to the Community House and Shain Park.
- Mr. Suhay, Library Board, added that this plaza is so important to the western edge of the municipal campus. The City's participation is needed in a formal way early in the project.
- David Bloom commented that it is nice to see the Library spending tax dollars wisely by using the phased approach. He would like to see the Library and Parks and Recreation Board collaborate on the space. He suggested that Mayor Pro Tem Longe work on that collaboration.
- Mayor Boutros complemented the Library board on the building renovations at the Library.

XI. 1:45 PM – 2:00 PM Birmingham Museum

A. Strategic Plan Update

Leslie Pielack presented this item including a 3-year cycle.

B. Heritage Zone Improvement Plan

Leslie Pielack presented this item.

Commissioner Hoff complemented Ms. Pielack's efforts and reiterated her interest in seeing more attention given to the historic preservation and historic elements of Greenwood Cemetery.

Commissioner Nickita asked about the status of digitizing; Ms. Pielack updated everyone on the digitization of the museum's collections. Commissioner Nickita went on to ask if the goal is to be able to access the collections on line. Ms. Pielack advised that Copyright issues exist.

XII. 2:00 PM – 2:30 PM Manager's Office

A. Unimproved Street Planning

Assistant City Manager Gunter gave an overview of draft policy document.

B. Adult Services Planning

Assistant City Manager Gunter advised that membership has increased.

C. Enhanced Email Communications

D. Parking Planning

Assistant City Manager Gunter reviewed current issues, and plans for parking.

Commissioner Sherman asked if language is added to the City's forms to comply with Federal regulation related to the enhanced email communications.

City Manager Valentine deferred to legal counsel.

Commissioner Nickita felt it is a great plan to enhance communications.

Mayor Pro Tem Longe addressed the Joint Senior Service Committee in her comments. The Interlocal agreement is a great step but would like to see it pursued in parallel with an agreement with the Birmingham Public Schools.

V. ADJOURN

Adjourned at 2:57pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Arft, Acting City Clerk
/vc