

**Birmingham City Commission /
Planning Board Workshop Session
Monday, June 21, 2021
7:30 p.m.**

Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/event/3470/videos/563053049/>

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pierre Boutros called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Commission

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Mayor Boutros
Mayor Pro Tem Longe
Commissioner Baller
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Hoff
Commissioner Nickita
Commissioner Sherman

All located in Birmingham, MI.

Planning Board

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Chair Scott Clein
Robin Boyle
Stuart Jeffares
Bert Koseck
Daniel Share
Janelle Whipple-Boyce
J. Bryan Williams
Jason Emerine, alternate

All located in Birmingham, MI.

Absent:

Nasseem Ramin, alternate
Daniel Murphy, student
Jane Wineman, student

Administration: City Clerk Bingham, Planning Director Ecker, Building Official Johnson, City Attorney Kucharek, City Manager Markus

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Mayor Boutros explained the purpose of the joint workshop session and the meeting procedures that would be followed.

A. Outdoor Dining Discussion

PD Ecker introduced the item.

Chair Clein said it would be most helpful to know whether the Commission wanted the Planning Board to conduct a broad review of the outdoor dining ordinances or whether the Commission wanted the Board to focus on discussion enclosures.

Discussion generated a number of items for the Board to consider, including:

- What issues City departments encountered while the temporary outdoor dining standards were in place;
- Whether encroachment upon neighbors' properties might be permissible with the consent of the neighbors;
- How to ensure that potential year-round outdoor dining does not become de facto indoor dining;
- How to deal with matters of capacity, sidewalk clearance, ADA compliance, excessive uses of public space including public parking, summer versus winter regulations, public versus private regulations;
- How other municipalities, nationally and internationally, address outdoor dining;
- How expanded outdoor dining would impact the City's various mixed-use districts;
- How to make sure that the ordinance is enforceable;
- How to approach differences between bistro, Class C, economic development licenses, theater/hotel/onsite brewing, and non-alcoholic outdoor dining;
- Whether platforms are consistently necessary for outdoor dining;
- How to deal with snow and street sweeping;
- Whether minimizing covered space in the public right-of-way would be appropriate;
- How to ensure that outdoor dining is held to similarly consistent and high standards as buildings are in Birmingham;
- Whether all outdoor dining structures have to have roofs or walls year-round; and,
- How climate control might be used to mitigate colder weather without requiring complete enclosures.

The consensus was that the Board should review the outdoor dining ordinance overall and that their focus should not be limited to enclosures.

Public Comment

Blake George, restaurant owner, stated that the popularity of outdoor dining in the last year was often due to indoor dining being unavailable. He said it would be harder to persuade diners to dine outside in the colder months without a roof or partial protection from the wind. He stated that changing restrictions are hard on the restaurant owners and employees. He asked the Commission and Board to note that one size would not fit all in making these regulations, since restaurants operate in a variety of circumstances.

Joe Bongiovanni, restaurant owner, asked the Commission to consider maintaining the current temporary outdoor dining standards. He said the discussion was an encouraging one, and said that Summer 2020, despite the many difficulties, was the best summer for outdoor dining in the City thus far.

B. Parking Standards Discussion

PD Ecker introduced the item.

The Commission responded affirmatively to both questions included in the agenda packet regarding this item.

There was a general consensus among the Board and the Commission that lowering the parking requirements, especially for residential developments, would have a positive impact on the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Longe and Ms. Whipple-Boyce said a potential positive outcome to lowering the residential parking requirements could be the redevelopment of some office spaces into residential spaces.

Mayor Pro Tem Longe and Commissioner Baller commented that lowering the parking requirements could help increase the 'missing middle' housing available in the City.

A number of Commissioners spoke about the need to update how the Parking Assessment District (PAD) is managed as well. Of particular interest was figuring out what fees or costs would be more appropriate for businesses benefitting from the PAD to pay.

Commissioner Nickita said there is a national trend in urban design to lower parking requirements for a variety of reasons, including changing mobility options, work from home options, and better shared parking arrangements.

Commissioner Host said that the APC should advise the Planning Board as to whether sufficient parking would be available for a proposed development, and that the Planning Board should decline any applications that do not provide sufficient parking.

CM Markus noted that residential taxpayers in the City have not had to pay for the building of new parking decks. He noted those funds have been raised from general obligation bonds, which were paid back by parking system revenues and assessments to the businesses that benefited.

CM Markus spoke in favor of shared parking, saying an ideal scenario would be 95% occupancy in the decks at all times. He said that the City should decrease site-specific parking in developments, and stated that maintaining it burdens land in an inefficient manner. He said that developers are often concerned about offering less on-site parking, but said he has seen it work well in other places and that it would work in Birmingham as well.

Commissioner Baller expressed curiosity about possibly providing building height incentives for developers that create publicly-available parking in the Triangle District.

Public Comment

Paul Reagan agreed with Commissioner Host's proposal about making sure sufficient parking is available for developments before permitting them. He agreed that the Parking Assessment District needs to be reviewed.

David Bloom expressed concern that insufficient parking in the parking structures can lead to excess parking in the residential areas. He said that a parking structure in the Triangle District would be positive.

C. Activation of Public Property at Southfield and Wakefield Discussion

PD Ecker introduced the item.

CM Markus said the first step in exploring this item would be a discussion with the neighborhood and with the public. He explained that previous concerns about activating this area partially stemmed from not soliciting public feedback earlier in the process.

There was consensus from both Board and Commission members that exploring activating this property would be positive.

Mr. Jeffares explained that he lives in the neighborhood across the street from this property and that it would be important to ensure that all residents nearby are invited to participate in the discussions. He said previous discussions partially suffered from only communicating with neighborhood association presidents, whose views did not always represent the perspectives of everyone living nearby.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce emphasized that everyone should be invited to participate since Market Square is frequented by Birmingham residents from many different neighborhoods who could all benefit from the use of property.

CM Markus said the property should include restrooms, and said that as of right now it seemed that Market Square might be willing to offer donations towards facilities built on the property in question.

Mr. Williams stated that he lives in Birmingham Farms, and said they were having a meeting in July 2021. He said he would let the City know further information to see if initial discussions about the property could be scheduled for that meeting. He said the neighborhood also has an issue with cut-through parking, and said it would be positive for the City to discuss that issue with the neighborhood as well.

Commissioner Baller spoke in favor of using Bang the Table as one way of soliciting feedback regarding this parcel. He said that if leases are involved the City should use the leverage to get a development that meets the City's needs/

Commissioner Nickita noted there are a few other similar publicly-owned parcels in the City that would benefit from further activation, including one already undergoing some discussions near the Chesterfield Fire Station and one at the corner of Eton and Lincoln.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce noted that the Multi-Modal Transportation Board recently discussed adding sidewalks to parts of the neighborhood adjacent to this property. She said that information should be provided to residents as part of the discussions.

Public Comment

Maureen Field explained she lived near the property and was against the proposal in 2015. She said that the potential for increased traffic in the area was a significant concern. She stated that the owner of Market Square put in trees and landscaping on City property without getting

permission from the City. She said this gave her pause in terms of working with the owner of Market Square.

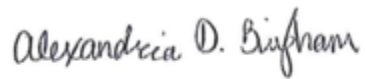
Mayor Boutros thanked the Board, Commission, Staff, and public for their participation.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Occurred during the discussion of each item.

V. ADJOURN

Seeing no further comment, Mayor Boutros adjourned the meeting at 10:44 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk
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