

**Birmingham City Commission
Long Range Planning Minutes**

January 22, 2022

8:30 a.m.

Municipal Building, 151 Martin

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/event/3470/videos/664574028/>

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Therese Longe, Mayor, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk, called the roll.

Present: Mayor Longe
Mayor Pro Tem Boutros
Commissioner Baller
Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Host
Commissioner McLain
Commissioner Schafer

Absent: None

Administration: City Manager Markus, City Clerk Bingham, Information Technology Manager Brunk, Police Chief Clemence, Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant to the City Manager Fairbairn, Communications Director Gamboa, Finance Director Gerber, Building Official Johnson, Birmingham Shopping District Director Kammer, Library Director Kraft, City Attorney Kucharek, Human Resources Manager Lambert, Parks and Recreation Manager Laird, Museum Director Pielack, Consulting City Engineer Surhigh, Parking Systems Manager Weingartz, Fire Chief Wells, Department of Public Services Director Wood, Assistant City Engineer Zielinski

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 state your name for the record, and direct all comments or questions to the presiding officer.

Oakland County Commissioner Chuck Moss said he was speaking as a resident, and raised the issue of how to handle vacant office space in the City post-Covid-19.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

CM Markus made introductory remarks.

I. Finance

A. Five-Year Financial Forecast

FD Gerber introduced Finance section.

Timothy St. Andrew, of Plante Moran, presented Item I(A).

Commissioner Baller recommended that projections be made to demonstrate what would occur if the Commission enacted policies that would result in low-to-no growth in taxable value.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, CM Markus said Staff could discuss whether it would be appropriate to create a chart estimating when the operating millage might intersect with the Headlee limit for a given set of assumptions.

Public Comment on Finance

David Bloom asked how past years' charts showing the Headlee Limit vs Operating Millage projections compare to the actual figures.

CM Markus said Staff could determine that answer.

Paul Reagan said the City should put more funding towards improving the City's streets and sewers, and recommended the City consider bonds to fund those improvements.

In reply to another question from Mr. Bloom, FD Gerber noted that the gap between revenue and expenditures for Community Development is largely represented by the costs of Code Enforcement, which has generally been a priority for the City.

II. Public Services

DPSD Wood introduced the Public Services section.

- A. Parks & Recreation Bond Dollars Recap
- B. Parks & Recreation Bond Project Overview
- C. Lincoln Hills & Springdale Golf Course Initiatives

DPSD Wood presented Items II(A) and II(C). PRM Laird presented Item II(B).

Commissioner Host thanked DPSD Wood and PRM Laird for their work.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, FD Gerber stated that revenues generated by the golf courses are used to fund the golf courses.

In reply to Commissioner McLain, Mayor Longe stated that the unanticipated costs mentioned in Item II(B) vis-a-vis the Chesterfield Fire Station refers to a potential park in the nearby green space.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, Mayor Longe stated that signage directing people to parks is under consideration as part of the City's wayfinding project.

In reply to Commissioner Baller, CM Markus noted that profits from the golf courses could be used to offset golf course-associated costs, which would allow for some of those funds to be used elsewhere.

CM Markus and Mayor Longe both noted that the sale of naming rights would be another way of generating potential funding for Parks and Recreation projects.

In reply to Commissioner Host, CM Markus, Mayor Longe, and DPSD Wood stated that the Commission's conclusion regarding the Ice Arena's financials was that they would be tracked and reported with similar specificity and transparency as an enterprise fund. They clarified that the Commission, at last discussion, did not direct Staff to turn the Ice Arena into an enterprise fund.

Commissioner Schafer stated that the user interface at the Ice Arena needs to be modernized, which in turn would help drive user engagement.

Commissioner Haig asked which City projects, generally, might have to be delayed or cancelled since costs have gone up since the original estimates.

Public Comment on Public Services

In reply to Mr. Reagan, PRM Laird stated that pickleball players prefer that the courts be located together as opposed to throughout the City.

In reply to Mr. Reagan, CM Markus noted that NEXT has indoor pickleball available in the winter months. He also noted that there is a potential second venue opportunity for pickleball near Southlawn and 14 Mile.

In reply to Jonathan HOFFLEY and Mr. Reagan, DPSD Wood stated the total expenditures for the Ice Arena are expected to be under the approximately \$5.7 million budget.

III. Engineering

CCE Surhigh introduced the Engineering section.

- A. Lead Service Line Replacement Program Update
- B. Backyard Sewer & Water Master Plan Update
- C. Upcoming Capital Projects
- D. Infrastructure Condition Ratings

Mike MacDonald of Hubbell, Roth and Clark presented Item III(A). CCE Surhigh presented Items III(B) and III(C). ACE Zielinski introduced Item III(D) and Nick Nicita of Hubbell, Roth and Clark presented Item III(D).

Mayor Longe asked that the slides from the presentation of III(D) be provided to the Commission and posted to the City website.

Commissioner McLain thanked D'Angelo Brothers for their work on the lead service line replacements, stating that she had heard a lot of positive feedback from residents. She also thanked the Engineering Department for their analysis, noting that every time streets are cut into that their service life is reduced.

In reply to Commissioner Host, CCE Surhigh stated that the approximate \$6.5 million in annual spending that would be required to reach an average Pacer level of six referred to total expenditures per year, not additional expenditures.

Public Comment on Engineering

Mr. Bloom commented on increasing permeability in the City, on the need to hire a permanent City Engineer, on how road maintenance will be funded, and on his concerns regarding the reduction of parking in the S. Old Woodward project.

Mr. Reagan said that the Engineering Department should interact with the public more on the topics of roads and sewers.

IV. Planning

PD Dupuis introduced the Planning section.

- A. 2040 Master Plan Update
- B. Multi-Modal Infrastructure - Woodward Avenue Enhancements
- C. Birmingham Green - Environmental Planning

PD Dupuis presented Items IV(A) and IV(C). ACM Ecker presented Item IV(B).

Commissioner Baller said the City should leverage community resources, including Engage Birmingham and the City's business community, in order to achieve the City's goals vis-a-vis Woodward.

In reply to an inquiry from Commissioner Baller, PD Dupuis said he saw the Birmingham Green Plan likely developing first in dialogue with the 2040 Plan, then hopefully through a review by the Planning Board, then through a review by the Commission.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Boutros, CM Markus said that ACM Ecker would be taking point on the ongoing Woodward discussions. He said that the Commission should remain involved in the efforts and that the efforts should not be delegated to another board, committee, or subcommittee.

Commissioner Host praised Planning's efforts to increase sustainability and historic preservation. He said he was in favor of exploring water retention on properties as an ordinance requirement for new construction. He noted that two residents on Pleasant Street were in the process of building the first net zero certified single family residence in Oakland County, and said the City should go further to publicize that and similar projects.

Commissioner Haig said that increasing the incentives for stormwater retention on a property should be explored.

CM Markus concurred with Commissioner Host about requiring stormwater retention for new construction. He noted there are other retention options such as rooftop and parking lot retention. He said stormwater retention incentives could also be looked at for properties not otherwise going through the development process. He said that Birmingham is currently behind the curve in terms sustainability, and that he wants to see the City become a leader in sustainability. He explained that sustainability should be a cornerstone of all community development efforts.

Commissioner Haig asked if the S. Old Woodward project took into account potential changes that could result from a Woodward road diet.

CM Markus said the plans for S. Old Woodward had indeed sought to minimize any knock-on effects from a future Woodward road diet. He noted that a road diet for Woodward was also likely many years in the future, and that much-needed improvements to S. Old Woodward should not be delayed out of concerns regarding a potential future Woodward road diet.

Public Comment on Planning

Mr. Bloom recommended that the City explore geothermal options when it redoes the roads, and expressed concern again about the S. Old Woodward project's potential effect on parking.

Mr. Reagan spoke in favor of the S. Old Woodward project, recommended that S. Old Woodward exit onto Woodward adjacent to the 555 Building instead of further down, said he supported a road diet for Woodward, and said the City could plan to address potential resident concerns about a Woodward road diet.

Cindy Rose said she wanted to see the S. Old Woodward project progress as-planned.

V. Birmingham Shopping District

BSDD Kammer introduced the Birmingham Shopping District section and presented Items V(A) and V(B).

- A. Business Support for South Old Woodward During Construction
- B. Advertising & Marketing Initiatives

Commissioner Baller said that the BSD and Planning should explore the potential for second-floor retail or restaurant uses in former office spaces.

Mayor Longe noted commercial tenants like yoga studios could also be considered.

Commissioner Haig agreed with Commissioner Baller. He said ensuring that zoning would allow a space like the Rust Belt Market in Ferndale would also be worth considering.

CM Markus said businesses on second floors would have to be ADA compliant, that the City would continue its tenant-mix analysis to try and ensure that no particular type of business is overrepresented, and noted that vacancy rates do not reflect which tenants may be underutilizing their spaces and/or may not be renewing their leases due to Covid-19.

Public Comment for the Birmingham Shopping District

Mr. Reagan said the City needed to address insufficient parking for its businesses, and ventured that Birmingham's real estate costs are prohibitive for all but major retailers.

VI. Lunch Recess

VII. Fire Department

- A. ISO Update

FC Wells introduced the Fire Department section and presented Item VII(A).

FC Wells concurred with Commissioner Schafer that it would be helpful for the public to understand that repairing water lines also helps keep fire hydrants operational, thus promoting resident safety.

Mayor Pro Tem Boutros and Commissioner Schafer commended FC Wells for the Fire Department's responsiveness to community needs during Covid-19.

VIII. Police Department

PC Clemence introduced the Police Department section and presented Items VIII(A) and VIII(B).

- A. Succession Plan
- B. Police Department Building Safety and Security Analysis

Public Comment for the Police Department

Mr. Bloom said that if construction is done to the Police Department care should be taken to ensure that the historic character of the building is retained.

IX. Parking

PSM Weingartz introduced the Parking section and presented Items IX(A), IX(B), and IX(C). He thanked OC Grewe for managing parking over the last year.

- A. Current Issues and Concerns
- B. Implement new PARCS
- C. Capital Improvements

In reply to Commissioner McLain, PSM Weingartz confirmed the system would allow people without smartphones to enter and exit the decks. He also noted that he is working on getting a contract in place for preventative maintenance on the decks' elevators.

Commissioner McLain noted that the restriping parking spaces in the decks will accommodate larger vehicles than before, which will result in a loss of spaces in the decks.

PSM Weingartz confirmed.

CM Markus clarified that PSM Weingartz will eventually be in charge of both on-street and deck parking, but that PSM Weingartz was resolving some of the parking decks' more emergent issues first. He stated that he also intends for PSM Weingartz to have an inventory of private lots in the future to see how the City can best interface with the private resources available. He clarified that parking enforcement would still remain under the purview of the Police Department.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, PSM Weingartz said the decks are estimated to have a couple more decades of life available.

PSM Weingartz explained how he was evaluating technology for the decks to Commissioner Baller, noting that all the options under consideration could be updated more easily than the City's current technology.

CM Markus confirmed for Commissioner Baller that the City is evaluating parking pricing, and that those considerations will be brought before the Commission for review.

Mayor Pro Tem Boutros asked that the decks be better lit and that the credit card options be easier to use.

Replying to Mayor Pro Tem Boutros, PSM Weingartz stated that his goal is to have the waitlist for parking permits gone by March 1, 2022 and to use more flexible permitting options that will mitigate the need for a waitlist moving forward.

Mayor Longe noted that more attention needed to be paid to cleanliness in the decks and stairwells.

Public Comment for Parking

Mr. Bloom commented on how the 2019 parking bond debate related to current parking system decisions.

X. IT

ITM Brunk introduced the IT section and presented Items X(A) and X(B).

- A. 2022 Upgrades
- B. New Tech

Commissioner McLain thanked ITM Brunk for his work to keep the City government connected with residents throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

XI. Building Department

BO Johnson introduced the Building section and presented Item XI(A).

- A. Electronic Plan Review Process

Replying to Mayor Pro Tem Boutros, BO Johnson confirmed that the Electronic Plan Review Process is live and undergoing improvements.

Mayor Pro Tem Boutros commended BO Johnson for the Review Process' implementation.

XII. Library

LD Kraft introduced the Library section and presented Item XII(A).

- A. Long Range Building Program - Phase 3

Commissioner Haig stated that a resident raised concern about the shape and profile of the collaboration room, since it does not continue the Library's exterior curve. He also asked if geothermal options for snow melting had been considered.

LD Kraft said that many options were considered for maintaining the curve, but that this proposal best accommodated the interior and exterior needs of the Library. She noted that former Commissioner Nickita had said the proposed architectural design of the collaboration room was appropriate. She said that geothermal options for snow melting could be considered for the next phase of the Library's updates.

In reply to Commissioner Baller, LD Kraft explained how the cafe would function.

Mayor Longe said she was excited about the the ways the Library could interface with and support activities in Shain Park.

Commissioner Schafer said the updates looked like they would be very beneficial for the City's youth.

LD Kraft said the intention is to have Phase Three completed in November 2023. She explained what parts of the Library would be altered by Phase Three, and noted it includes the Library's plaza.

Public Comment for the Library

Mr. Bloom recommended that ways to retain the curved shape of the Library be further explored.

XIII. Birmingham Museum

MD Pielack introduced the Birmingham Museum section and presented Item XIII(A).

A. Expanding Public Access

Replying to Commissioner McLain, MD Pielack noted that parking for the Museum is in the Chester Street Deck, and that there is one ADA parking space and one spot for drop-off and pick-up on site. She noted that the City's upcoming wayfinding improvements could possibly include an indication of where one should park when visiting the Museum.

XIV. Communications

CD Gamboa introduced the Communications section and presented Items XIV(A), XIV(B), and XIV(C). ITM Brunk contributed to Item XIV(A).

- A. GovPilot Citizen Concern App
- B. Informational Materials
- C. Skyway Interactive Virtual Tour

XV. Human Resources

HRM Lambert introduced the Human Resources section and presented Item XV(A).

A. Succession and Development Planning

In reply to Commissioner Host, CM Markus stated that the City had just hired an additional Assistant City Engineer and would be interviewing a candidate for the City Engineer position in the next few weeks.

HRM Lambert indicated that it may be appropriate to consider expanding Human Resources' budget for training during the upcoming budget process. He also noted that the City has a tuition reimbursement program for Staff.

CM Markus noted that each department also has its own budget for training its Staff.

Commissioner Baller raised the question of how offering wages more akin to the private sector would affect hiring and employee retention.

The Mayor said that would be an appropriate topic to raise during strategic planning.

Commissioner McLain noted such a change would also affect discussions with the City's unions.

Replying to Commissioner Haig, CM Markus confirmed that the City benefits from internship programs which function akin to apprenticeships.

XVI. Manager's Office

ATCM Fairbairn introduced the Manager's Office section.

- A. Strategic Planning
- B. NEXT

ATCM Fairbairn and CM Markus presented Item XVI(A). Cris Braun, Director of NEXT, and CM Markus presented Item XVI(B).

Mayor Pro Tem Boutros expressed support for the goals set out in both Items XVI(A) and Item XVI(B).

Commissioner McLain said community support for seniors remained a priority, and said she was proud of NEXT for staying open through Covid-19 to support the community.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, Ms. Braun said NEXT would be hoping for an addition of at least 10,000 extra square feet when the time comes.

Commissioner Haig recommended the City consider a community and senior center, with a neighboring dog park, at the Derby Well site.

Public Comment for the Manager's Office

Mr. Reagan said he wanted to see more funding for seniors, continuing that a lease at Midvale should be a short-term solution, and long-term the City should bond to build NEXT a new building.

CM Markus noted that repurposed buildings are often used for senior and community centers to good effect. He noted that NEXT functions well in its current space, although the building would benefit from further investment. He said that if the City determines during strategic planning that it would like a new building for NEXT that could be pursued.

The Mayor noted there are a number of benefits to NEXT's current location.

XVII. City Attorney

City Attorney Kucharek introduced the City Attorney section presented Items XVII(A), XVII(B), and XVII(C).

- A. Discuss Charter Issues
- B. Process for Revising Charter
- C. Charter Revisions for State Law Compliance and Efficiency

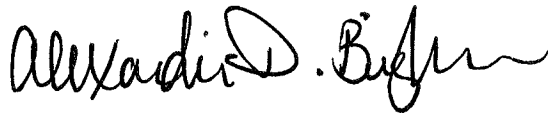
In reply to Commissioner McLain, CA Kucharek confirmed that signatures are required for electoral candidates in Birmingham and that payment of a \$100 fee to waive the signature requirement does not apply in the City.

Commissioner McLain noted that the City's website currently states that a \$100 payment is a way to waive the signature requirement and recommended that be corrected.

In reply to Commissioner Baller, CA Kucharek stated that best practices and similar communities' rates are being evaluated to recommended rate changes to the Commission. She noted that rates in the Charter cannot be indexed and need to be specific amounts.

V. ADJOURN

Mayor Longe thanked all departments for their presentations and for their work on behalf of the City. She adjourned the meeting at 4:16 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham
City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist