

**Birmingham City Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Workshop
Monday, March 14, 2022
6:30 p.m.**

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/683112653>

Workshop Session

This will be considered a workshop session of the City Commission. No formal actions will be taken. The purpose of this workshop is to participate in a discussion regarding food trucks and social districts.

I. Call to Order

Therese Longe, Mayor

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, Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant City Manager Ecker, City Attorney Kucharek

III. Presentation & Discussion

CM Markus introduced the item. ACM Ecker and PD Dupuis presented the item.

Commissioner Baller said the City needed to determine its vision for social districts and food trucks.

Commissioner Haig concurred.

Commissioner Baller recommended that three scenarios be explored for food trucks:

- Removing City ordinance obstacles to special events having food trucks;
- Reducing the 90-day notice currently required for neighborhoods getting permission to put food trucks in the street next to parks; and,
- Setting up areas where food trucks could be allowed during certain periods.

Commissioner Baller said it would be useful to know whether there is any interest in social districts from the City's liquor license holders. Mayor Longe concurred.

Commissioner Schafer and Mayor Longe both noted that food trucks would likely benefit young families as an easy, inexpensive way to purchase meals. Mayor Longe noted that prior feedback provided to the Parks and Recreation Board about food trucks said that they would be especially useful in parks, since it would mean families did not have to pack up and leave to get food.

Commissioner Schafer ventured that food trucks in general would be more complementary to brick and mortar restaurants than competitive, considering the fact that they would be offering different food and experiences from each other. She stated that in order to test food trucks the City could initially limit them in the way it does ice cream trucks. She noted that since the City is considering social districts later than many other Michigan communities, Birmingham could benefit from the lessons learned elsewhere. She noted that the response to social districts in the State has been generally favorable, and that many social districts expanded after their initial introduction.

Commissioner Haig said food trucks were worth looking at further. Regarding social districts, he said he would like to hear the pros, cons, and cost impacts from other municipalities already allowing them. He said he was concerned about social districts' potential negative impacts and the City's ability to improve on what it already has.

Commissioner Haig and Mayor Pro Tem Boutros both said they wanted to hear more from operators in terms of what would make coming to Birmingham worthwhile.

CA Kucharek noted that a social district permit would be granted to, and paid for by, the liquor license holders interested in having one. The City would be responsible for designating the area. She confirmed that the area would need to be blocked off and signed. She noted that the City would likely have a hold harmless agreement in place with the participating establishments.

It was clarified that any spaces part of a social district would need to be blocked off, including roads, but that the City could choose to just include sidewalks, alleyways, or passageways, or other areas if it so chose.

Mayor Pro Tem Boutros said he was in favor of exploring both social districts and food trucks further. He said the City should try food trucks during a special event, like the Fourth of July weekend, before changing ordinances.

Mayor Longe noted unanimous consensus that food trucks should be explored further, observing that Commissioner Host had previously expressed his support for the idea. She said she supported Commissioner Baller's three scenarios as focal points, adding that there should be clarity regarding how a group qualifies as a 'neighborhood' to request permission to host a food truck. She suggested that the City should allow stands in parks and not just food trucks.

IV. Public Comment

Bill Loizon, of Franks Etc., sells hot dogs at the Birmingham Farmers' Market. He said he would be concerned about operating in Shain Park because he would not want to negatively impact Brooklyn Pizza. In response to Commissioner questions, Mr. Loizon briefly summarized some of his operational considerations.

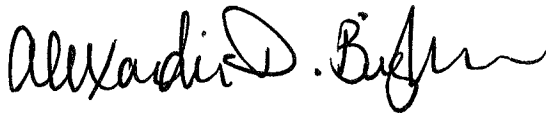
Mayor Longe noted that, in the event these topics are directed to the Planning Board, the Planning Board would have further operational conversations with Mr. Loizon and other operators.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce, a resident and Planning Board member, said she was supportive of both food trucks and social districts being sent to the Planning Board for further study.

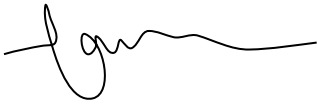
In reply to Commission inquiry, ACM Ecker noted that the Commission could give formal direction regarding these two topics during a regular meeting.

V. Adjourn

Mayor Longe adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham
City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist