

Birmingham City Commission - Workshop Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 24, 2022
Baldwin Public Library – 300 W. Merrill – Rotary Room
6:00 P.M.
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/742827876>

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Therese Longe called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Absent: Commissioner Schafer

Administration: City Clerk Bingham, Assistant City Manager Ecker, Assistant to the City Manager Fairbairn, City Attorney Kucharek, City Manager Markus

Strategic Planning Facilitator:
Lew Bender

III. PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

Dr. Bender outlined the strategic planning process, noted he would be providing written reports on the process, and facilitated the discussion. He explained Master Plans focus on land use while Strategic Plans are about addressing the City's challenges and leveraging its opportunities more broadly.

In reply to Dr. Bender, Commissioners and Staff described the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.

Dr. Bender then provided the Commissioners with a prompt, asking them to imagine what relationships with other communities, public-private partnerships, structures, staffing, or other community aspects they would show Dr. Bender if they were giving him a tour of Birmingham in about five years' time.

He advised them to keep their focus realistic and achievable. Dr. Bender divided the Commissioners into two groups to discuss the prompt, and asked CM Markus, ACM Ecker, and Mayor Longe to move between the groups.

Dr. Bender then the groups to present the themes from their respective discussions.

Some themes the Commissioners described included:

- A new, expanded, and financially sustainable senior center with accessible parking, extended hours of operation, well-prepared staff, and members from all the surrounding communities;
- A completed downtown streetscape;
- Land use ordinances that balance new development and incentives to renovate existing homes;
- Some neighborhoods with mixed-use aspects and the continued redevelopment of many of the neighborhoods;
- More affordable housing and more visitors and residents of a wider diversity of cultures and backgrounds;
- A Woodward Avenue that has made some progress towards a road diet, has well-marked crosswalks with crossing flags, and has pedestrian-scale development at the intersections with other roads;
- Some progress towards increased connections between the east and west sides of the City;
- Progress in the Triangle District, including a lack of any blighted or abandoned properties;
- More community events, including programming for children and families, occasional street parties, and celebrations of the culinary arts in the City;
- A generally increased sense of community;
- Park improvements that were funded by the City's Park Bond;
- The City's attractiveness to builders and developers who want to work in partnership with the City and who adhere to the City's codes and ordinances;
- A balance of the rights of builders and developers and homeowners in the City; and,
- Having maintained all of Birmingham's previous successes thus far.

In reply to Dr. Bender, the Commissioners noted that there was a lot of overlap between the two groups' themes.

Dr. Bender said he would write up a report of these themes and then would provide the document to AtCM Fairbairn for corrections to nomenclature before distribution.

The Commission and Staff then discussed ways of encouraging the public to attend the public engagement session.

AtCM Fairbairn described the City's communication capacities for publicizing the public engagement session. She noted that the City would also be encouraging individuals to encourage other individuals to attend.

Dr. Bender also encouraged the Commissioners to promote the public engagement session via word-of-mouth.

It was mentioned that one of the breakout groups could possibly be on Zoom so that members of the public who could not attend in person could still participate.

In reply to Commissioner inquiry, Dr. Bender stated that in strategic planning sessions with other municipalities, new themes do arise from the public engagement sessions, but generally the themes often resemble Commission comments.

In reply to Dr. Bender, the Commissioners and Staff shared their closing thoughts.

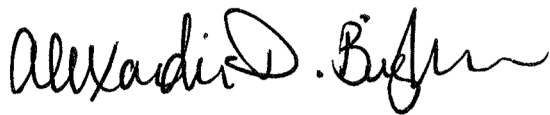
IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Reagan and Gordon Rinschler both provided public comment and noted the importance of the senior center in terms of building community.

Cris Braun, Director of NEXT, also spoke about the importance of the senior center in terms of building community.

V. ADJOURN

Seeing no further comment, Mayor Longe adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham
City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist