

**Birmingham City Commission
Special Meeting Minutes
Workshop
Monday, October 3, 2022
6:00 p.m.**

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/751471923>

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 Sustainability and Leaf Blowers.

I. Call to Order

Therese Longe, Mayor

II. Roll Call

City Clerk Bingham called the roll.

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

Absent: Commissioner Baller
Commissioner McLain

Staff: City Manager Markus; City Clerk Bingham, City Planner Blizinski, Planning Director Dupuis, City Attorney Kucharek

III. Presentation & Discussion

CM Markus introduced the workshop.

PD Dupuis and CP Blizinski presented.

Sustainability

In reply to Commission inquiry, Staff explained:

- It was recommended that positions on the Sustainability Board (the Board) not be limited to certain career types. The interview process would help the Commission discern appropriate appointments to the Board;
- While the Board could be both proactive in addressing sustainability issues and reactive to the Commission's recommendations, the charge of the Board would ultimately be a policy decision by the Commission;

- Creating a Sustainability Plan alongside the Board would be appropriate and both in conjunction will allow sustainability to be more of a priority in the City;
- The Board could also be tasked with engaging young people and the community at large with the City's sustainability efforts. Projects like building a City rain garden or pulling garlic mustard along the Rouge River are two preliminary projects in which younger people could be involved. Scouts and high school students looking for volunteer credits are two groups of younger people likely be interested;
- The Board's mission could be altered as the Board evolves;
- Given the breadth of the topic of sustainability, it would be more appropriate to create a permanent board on the topic than an ad hoc one;
- Residents would be welcome to provide comment on the Board's proposed structure and focus before the Board begins recruiting;
- Since it is easier to pass resolutions than it is ordinances, the initial phases of the Board could be shaped via resolution. That way the Board would have time to grow before it is enshrined in ordinance;
- The Board could also formalize a working relationship with the Oakland County Sustainability Director;
- Down the line, it may be worth creating a position for a Sustainability Director that could be shared among a few communities; and,
- Staff would return with a recommended resolution.

Commissioner Schafer expressed enthusiasm for increasing sustainability efforts in the City. She concurred with Staff's recommendation that the Board not be limited to certain career types. She noted that the Multi-Modal Transportation Board regularly has consultants who educate its members on different transit-related topics, and suggested that the Sustainability Board could possibly benefit from similar education. She said that the Sustainability Board could possibly meet with Sustainability Staff or board members from nearby municipalities to learn more about their experiences.

The Mayor agreed that the Board would allow the City to focus on sustainability. She said the Board could review and recommend options from local and best practices on a more regular basis than the Commission presently does.

Leaf Blowers

The Mayor recommended there be quiet hours for all users to follow and an educational plan on the detriments of gas and oil powered leaf blowers. She suggested that the City should also recommend that gas and oil powered leaf blowers be replaced with electric leaf blowers when they need to be replaced since the City is likely to further restrict the use of gas and oil powered leaf blowers in the future.

CM Markus said he would like to know the difference in productivity between gas and oil powered leaf blowers and electric ones.

PD Dupuis said he would enquire with Ferndale about whether they have any leaf blower restrictions.

In reply to the Mayor, CA Kucharek clarified that the ordinance restricts various types of noise to certain times of day for both residents and contractors.

It was discussed that the Commission could: change the times of day in the ordinance, prohibit production of certain types or levels of noise within certain areas of the City, expand the types of noise limited, and/or add in holiday time restrictions if desired.

CM Markus noted that decibel measurements are a difficult criterion for enforcement and said there are likely

better criteria.

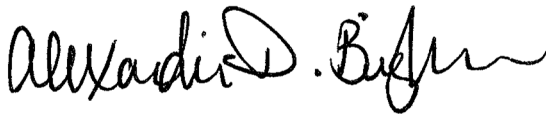
Commissioner Haig noted that decibels are a standardized metric and said the City would have to choose a similarly standardized metric. He also raised concerns about prohibiting certain types of noise on Sundays or religious holidays. He said that changing from gas and oil powered leaf blowers to electric ones just changes the audio frequency of the noise produced. He also said that phasing out the gas and oil powered leaf blowers is unlikely because high-quality ones rarely need replacements.

The Mayor said that looking at other municipalities' regulations could help Birmingham determine appropriate regulations.

IV. Public Comment

V. Adjourn

Mayor Longe adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham
City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist