

**Birmingham City Commission
Long Range Planning Minutes
January 21, 2023
8:30 a.m.
Municipal Building, 151 Martin**

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/6708293/video/787788719>

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 McLain
Commissioner Boutros
Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Schafer

Absent: Commissioner Baller

Staff: City Manager Markus; Public Services Manager Bernal, City Clerk Bingham, City Planner Blizinski, Golf Courses Manager Brito, Information Technology Manager Brunk, City Engineer Coatta, Library Director Craft, Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant City Manager Ecker, Assistant City Manager Fairbairn, Recreation Coordinator Folk, Parking Systems Manager Ford, Communications Director Gamboa, Finance Director Gerber, Police Chief Grewe, Building Official Johnson, Parks and Recreation Manager Laird, Human Resources Manager Lambert, Museum Director Pielack, Birmingham Shopping District Director Sheppard-Decius, Fire Chief Wells, Department of Public Services Director Zielinski

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mayor Longe and CM Markus made introductory remarks.

I. Finance

- a. Five-Year Financial Forecast
- b. Online Budgeting Software

FD Gerber introduced the items. Spencer Tawa from Plante Moran presented Item I(a) and FD Gerber presented Item II(b). FD Gerber and CM Markus answered informational questions from the Commission.

MPT McLain said it would be helpful that the online budgeting software could be used by the public.

CM Markus said his previous experience using the budgeting software in Lawrence, KS was that it was relatively accessible for both City Staff and the public.

In reply to FD Gerber’s comments about a shortfall in funds for capital, water, and sewer improvements, the Mayor noted that those circumstances would limit road improvements as well, since the City presently covers the costs of water and sewer improvements when road improvements are done.

II. Public Services

- a. Ice Arena - A Year in Review
- b. Parks and Recreation Bond Update – Trail Improvements
- c. Golf Courses
- d. Electrifying Birmingham

DPSD Zielinski introduced the items. RC Folk presented Item II(a), PRM Laird presented Item II(b), GCM Brito presented II(c), and PubSM Bernal presented Item II(d). PRM Laird answered informational questions from the Commission.

The Mayor was pleased to note that both the Ice Arena and the Golf Courses were revenue positive, and stated that there was tremendous work and accomplishment by DPS Staff. She said she was enthusiastic about the needs that would be addressed as part of Phase II. She said she was also glad to see electrification on Public Services’ radar.

MPT McLain recommended that residents explore the City’s interconnected trails, take photos, and upload the photos to social media with the hashtag #AllInBirminhgam. She thanked everyone for their work on the trails.

The idea of CM Markus taking the Commissioners on a tour of some of the trails was raised.

The Mayor noted that Birmingham’s recreational assets are one of the drivers of people moving to the City.

Public Comment

In reply to Pam Graham, RC Folk stated that she was monitoring the utility costs for the Ice Arena and those figures would be presented to both the Parks and Recreation Board and the Commission once available.

III. Engineering

- a. Lead Service Line Replacement and Verification Progress Update
- b. Sewer and Water Infrastructure Planning and Construction Grants
- c. Roadway Asset Management Plan
- d. Upcoming Capital Improvement Projects for 2023/2024

CE Coatta introduced the items. Mike MacDonald of Hubbell, Roth and Clark presented Item III(a), CE Coatta presented Items III(b) and III(d), and Nick Nicita of Hubbell, Roth and Clark presented Item III(c). CM Markus, FD Gerber, and CE Coatta answered informational questions from the Commission.

In response to Commissioner Haig, CM Markus said CE Coatta would explore legal options for possibly withholding Certificates of Occupancy for new residents moving into properties where lead service lines had not yet been replaced until the replacements occur.

Commissioner Schafer recommended that the documentation supplied to lead service line replacement candidates be updated with additional information to reflected the true risk of lead intoxication. She noted

that in her practice as a pediatrician all nine to 18-month old children continue to be screened for lead poisoning because it remains an issue presently.

CE Coatta confirmed that would be done.

The Mayor commended all those involved in the lead service line replacement process and noted that the City was significantly exceeding the State government's required rate of replacements. She noted that due to the speed of the replacements, the City would be able to entirely fund the lead service line replacements with the Federal funds received for the project.

Public Comment

Ms. Graham said the lead service line replacement process results could be summarized as on-schedule, under-budget, with better than expected quality results and accurate planning. She commended those involved.

In reply to an inquiry from Ms. Graham, CM Markus explained that the process of street improvements would not occur all at once because of City finances and some residents' resistance to being assessed for the projects. He said he would not be supportive of assessing maintenance costs of unimproved roads to the residents of unimproved roads.

MPT McLain noted that it was necessary for stakeholders to work together to increase the speed of the road improvements, even if the choice could initially be seen as a politically unpopular one. She noted that it was a safety issue, and that while costs have gone up for the process those costs would not become less expensive in the future. She recommended the City explore a reallocation of resources to the process. She also recommended a reconsideration of the analysis or science of how the process occurs in order to try to reduce the frustration for everyone involved.

IV. Planning

- a. Birmingham Green - Sustainability and Climate Change
- b. The Birmingham Plan 2040

PD Dupuis presented Items IV(a) and IV(b). PD Dupuis and CM Markus and answered informational questions from the Commission.

MPT McLain thanked PD Dupuis for the detailed summary of how a master plan works.

In reply to Commissioner Host, PD Dupuis said Staff would make the 'Summary of Key Actions' table from the first pages of the draft 2040 Plan more accessible to the Commission and the public moving forward.

V. Fire Department

- a. Fleet Replacement Plan

FC Wells presented Item V(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

VI. Birmingham Shopping District

- a. Downtown Birmingham Economic Growth Plan

BSDD Sheppard-Decius presented Item IV(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Haig recommended the BSD collaborate with other Birmingham assets, like the Birmingham Museum, to continue to increase Birmingham's status as a destination.

BSDD Sheppard-Decius and the Mayor concurred.

The Mayor recommended that the BSD consider an increased focus in its strategic planning on hosting family-friendly events, noting that such events would bring families into the downtown and benefit the BSD.

MPT McLain concurred with the Mayor. She noted that Commissioner Baller was interested in increasing events in the community and would likely be interested in providing feedback on the idea at a later date.

Commissioner Host stated that he had heard a lot of positive feedback about BSDD Sheppard-Decius' work.

VII. Police Department

- a. City Hall Safety and Security Building Redesign and Expansion
- b. City Cameras and Small Cell Towers

PC Grewe presented Items VII(a) and (b). PC Grewe and CM Markus answered informational questions from the Commission.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, PC Grewe stated that a specification that no cameras posing a cybersecurity risk would be included in the RFP for City cameras.

MPT McLain noted that the small cell towers options for co-locations represented a significant opportunity for the City.

Commissioner Boutros spoke in favor of the building redesign and expansion plans. He thanked those involved in the project.

Commissioner Haig recommended that the building redesign and expansion plans replace the word 'restrict' with either 'control' or 'manage' to more accurately convey the intent of the upgrades.

Public Comment

Ms. Graham spoke in support of the planned changes to City Hall that would benefit the Police Department. She also supported maintaining City Hall's historic building. She recommended the City scrutinize whether the City needed to add more office space for other departments, noting that many departments would be implementing processes that conserve administrative labor and also that many City employees could work remotely. She stated that increasing office space would increase the City's maintenance costs and needed to be justified.

VIII. Parking

- a. Repairs Over the Next 3-5 Years

PSM Ford presented Item VIII(a). PSM Ford and CM Markus answered informational questions from the Commission.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, the Mayor recommended the Public Arts Board consider the possibility of murals being permitted in certain areas of the parking decks.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, PSM Ford said he would look into how close the decks may be getting to their structural design limit given the increased weights of both newer vehicles and electric vehicles.

The Mayor noted that there is more room in the parking decks for transient users when businesses buy passes for their employees who frequently work from home.

In reply to MPT McLain, PSM Ford said he would let the Commission know the planned installation date for the new TIBA equipment at the Pierce parking deck.

MPT McLain also raised concerns that City parking spaces are smaller than necessary to comfortably accommodate the larger vehicles many people now drive.

PSM Ford said that when restriping becomes a possibility in the garages, Staff and the Advisory Parking Committee would review the pros and cons of restriping to accommodate larger vehicles.

Commissioner Boutros voiced appreciation for the parking improvements. He said that increased lighting should be the priority as it would likely draw more people to use the decks.

The Mayor said she mainly hears concerns about the lighting, stairs, and elevators in the decks.

In reply to Commissioner Haig, the Mayor noted that offering the first two hours free in the decks for transient parkers allows the City to compete with other nearby cities that do not charge for parking at all.

IX. IT

- a. Cyber Security

ITM Brunk presented Item IX(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

X. Clerk's Office

- a. Record Retention, Digitization and Retrieval

CC Bingham presented Item X(a).

XI. Building Department

- a. Downtown Code Enforcement Program

BO Johnson presented Item XI(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Boutros spoke positively about Item XI(a) and said it would help businesses with code compliance.

Commissioner Haig and MPT McLain also voiced their support for Item XI(a).

XII. Library

- a. Phase 3 Renovations

LD Craft presented Item XII(a) and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Host spoke positively about Item XII(a). He thanked LD Craft for her work on the renovation process. He noted that there had been cost savings from the Library's initial renovation proposal.

LD Craft acknowledged that the Library would not have as many services as had been imagined in the original proposal, but said that overall the Library was pleased with the increased level of services it would be able to provide and was pleased it had been able to realize some cost savings.

The Mayor said she was pleased that the Library would be able to interface with Shain Park. She asked LD Craft to work with the BSD to work together on potential future family-friendly programming for Shain Park.

LD Craft said she was enthusiastic about collaborating with City groups, including the BSD, and said Library Staff was already working on a list of potential programming opportunities.

Commissioners Haig and Boutros expressed their support for the designs.

Commissioner Boutros thanked the Library Board for their work on the renovation process.

XIII. Birmingham Museum

- a. Expanded Digitization
- b. Reduce Physical Barriers
- c. Expand Outreach

MD Pielack presented Items XIII(a), XIII(b), and XIII(c).

The Mayor congratulated MD Pielack and said Museum Staff were doing a great job. She said she appreciated the opportunity to participate in the Underground Railroad ceremonies the Museum held and noted that information was read into the Congressional record.

XIV. Manager's Office

CM Markus noted that the City now had a completed Strategic Plan, and the 2023 Long Range Plan and would have a budget before he left that would take the City from July 2023 through June 2024. He said the timing of his departure and the new City Manager's arrival could not be at a better time for the City. He stated that he was exceptionally proud of the presentations made and of all the people behind those presentations. He noted that Staff was systematically addressing a lot of the topics the Commission had previously raised as issues. He noted that many Staff members were new, and work very collaboratively with Staff as a whole. He said the Commission would see some really good things from Staff moving forward.

The Commission had a round of applause.

- a. Graphic Design Improvements – Communications
- b. Crime Reporting/Mapping Tool – Communications
- c. Succession, Development, and Retention – Human Resources
- d. Woodward Avenue Status Update
- e. Senior Services with Cris Braun, Executive Director of NEXT
- f. Resident Education and Engagement Opportunities

CD Gamboa presented Items XIV(a) and XIV(b). HRM Lambert presented Item XIV(c). ACM Ecker presented Item XIV(d). Ms. Braun, Executive Director of NEXT, presented Item XIV(e). AtCM Fairbairn

presented Item XIV(f). Ms. Braun, CM Markus, and AtCM Fairbairn answered informational questions from the Commission.

The Mayor expressed her enthusiasm for ACM Ecker's efforts to help make Woodward Avenue safer.

Commissioner Boutros commended Ms. Braun on her successes with NEXT. Commissioner Boutros also encouraged residents to take part in the programming ACM Fairbairn outlined as part of Item XIV(f).

MPT McLain thanked Ms. Braun for all of her work on NEXT's behalf and said NEXT's Board was very proud of the organization's successes.

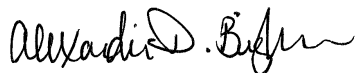
Commissioner Schafer stated that she was a graduate of Citizen's Academy, and said that she has maintained connections with some of the people she attended with.

Public Comment

In reply to Rackeline Hoff, Ms. Braun explained that the \$250,000 grant NEXT received could only be used for technology, capital improvement, infrastructure or professional services. Given the specificity of the options, Ms. Braun determined NEXT's needs would be best served by applying for funds for professional services.

V. ADJOURN

Mayor Longe thanked all Staff and consultants for their presentations, IT for running the virtual aspect of the meeting, and CC Bingham for providing refreshments for the Commissioners and attendees. She adjourned the meeting at 3:23 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist