

**Birmingham City Commission Special Meeting Minutes - Workshop**  
**December 4, 2023**  
**Municipal Building, 151 Martin**  
**6:15 p.m.**

Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/888945671>

**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 the public parking system.**

**I. Call to Order**

Elaine McLain, Mayor

**II. Roll Call**

City Clerk Bingham called the roll.

Present: Mayor McLain  
MPT Schafer  
Commissioner Baller  
Commissioner Haig  
Commissioner Host  
Commissioner Long (arrived 6:18 p.m.)  
Commissioner Longe

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Ecker; City Clerk Bingham, Assistant City Manager Clemence, Parking Systems Manager Ford, City Attorney Kucharek

APC Members: Chair Al Vaitas, Vice Chair Richard Astrein; Members James Arpin, Kevin Kozlowski, Michelle Moody

**III. Presentation & Discussion**

CM Ecker introduced the topic, and PSM Ford presented the topic. Staff answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners made the following comments in the course of discussion:

- The APC members in attendance were thanked for attending;
- The described changes to the parking system would be beneficial, and more changes to governance and management would also likely be beneficial;
- Increased data reporting on parking to both the APC and the Commission would be valuable;
- It would also be worthwhile to run the parking system more like a business in order to retain and increase funds that can be reinvested into the parking system;
- Alternatively, management of the parking system should be focused on managing the interaction with people who live in, visit, and do business in Birmingham;
- The APC and Commission should be more involved in terms of expenditures and civic improvements, especially since the parking decks are often the source of the first impression visitors to the City have;
- The APC should either be run according to its founding ordinance, or the ordinance should be changed;
- City administration should be commended on the changes to the parking system that have been made so far;
- Some of the aesthetic considerations regarding the parking decks will be improved through the work of the Wayfinding Committee;
- Changing some of the on street parking from one to two hours will decrease on street parking turnover and decrease parking in the decks, which may be counter to the parking system's goals;
- One way of handling a possible one to two hour on street parking shift would be to increase the rates for the on street parking;
- Restriping the decks will need to take structural load into account given the increase in both average vehicle weights and the increased weight of electric vehicles (EV) relative to internal combustion engine vehicles;
- It will be necessary to understand how the structural load will then impact net occupancy, and how

that will affect occupancy percentages;

- Since WJE has indicated that increased vehicle weights would not pose an issue in the decks, it would be necessary to receive a written attestation to that fact. The City should also receive a written description of how restriping the garages would affect occupancy;
- Other municipalities are moving EV charging to basements in order to mitigate concerns about the weight of electric vehicles in parking decks;
- A nearby municipality has recently installed a new parking mechanism which has proven controversial. In contrast, Birmingham should continue to provide a parking system that meets the needs of its users;
- It will be interesting to see the effect of increasing the number of employees in parking systems department;
- Parking circumstances can change significantly in relatively short periods of time, and so it is important for the management of the parking system to remain nimble;
- The plan to have the City manage the parking systems instead of an external contractor will be a beneficial change. This will increase the amount of data and reporting the City will have access to;
- While facilities, operations, and management are improving, the City needs more investment in communication regarding the two free hours in the decks, parking zones, and other parking issues. Dynamic pricing would also necessitate increased communication;
- It would be helpful to discuss whether the parking information included in the 1980 Birmingham Plan is applicable to today, or whether that information should be updated;
- It is important that people are made to feel safe in the parking decks and that wayfinding is reliable enough that they are able to locate their parked vehicle upon returning; and,
- There is anecdotal support among residents for moving on street parking from one hour to two hours.

#### **IV. Public Comment**

##### APC Comment

Chair Vaitas explained how some of the permit parking works.

Vice Chair Astrein explained the importance of one hour meters.

Mr. Kozlowski spoke regarding some of the current challenges of understanding the parking system's financials and utilization. He noted that if parking utilization is permanently decreased from prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there might be more worthwhile uses for some of the smaller parking areas in the City.

Mr. Arpin asked questions regarding: parking demand in the downtown area, whether it would be useful to determine the demand differences between peak and average parking, and the City's present approach to the former Parking Assessment District. Mr. Arpin also concurred with Mr. Kozlowski about the need for more clarity regarding the parking system's financials.

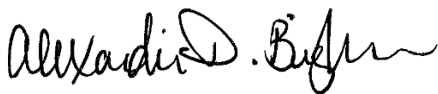
Ms. Moody noted that introducing EV charging would introduce some operational challenges, and emphasized the importance of ensuring that the EV chargers remain functional.

##### Public Comment

David Bloom commented on various aspects of the parking system.

#### **V. Adjourn**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist