

**DRAFT**

**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM MULTI-MODAL  
TRANSPORTATION BOARD  
Thursday, March 5, 2020  
City Commission Room  
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Multi-Modal Transportation Board held Thursday, March 5, 2020.

Chairwoman Johanna Slanga convened the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairwoman Johanna Slanga; Vice-Chairwoman Lara Edwards; Board Members Amy Folberg, Tom Peard, Doug White

**Absent:** Board Members Daniel Rontal, Katie Schafer, Joe Zane

**Administration:** Jana Ecker, Planning Director  
Scott Grewe, Police Commander  
Austin Fletcher, Assistant City Engineer  
Laura Eichenhorn, Transcriptionist

**MKSK:** Brad Strader

**2. Introductions**

None.

**3. Review Agenda**

No changes.

**4. Approval of MMTB Minutes of February 6, 2020**

Police Commander Grewe expressed concern that that the line "Police Commander Grewe presented the item" under Section 5 of the February 6, 2020 minutes did not sufficiently indicate that all three parts of stop sign warrant studies item were presented to the Board. He also asked that the minutes be updated to indicate that there were no Board questions or comments regarding the latter two stop sign warrant studies which recommended signs at Bennaville and Edgewood and Bennaville and Grant.

The February 6, 2020 minutes were subsequently amended to reflect these changes, per Police Commander Grewe's request and the Board's approval.

**Motion by Ms. Edwards**

**Seconded by Mr. White to approve the MMTB Minutes of February 6, 2020 as amended.**

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Edwards, White, Folberg, Peard, Slanga

Nays: None

## **5. Review of Draft Master Plan**

Planning Director Ecker presented the item.

Mr. Peard said it would be helpful to the general public if the intent of public works projects like the Neighborhood Loop or the Circulator were stated in the plan.

Ms. Edwards cautioned that promoting a more dense, mixed-use, urban environment in the long-term is often in conflict with the short-term preferences residents have for on-street parking in their neighborhoods. She said that allowing each block to determine its own parking restrictions from the four recommended options in the draft may only exacerbate the clash between residents' short-term preferences and the City's long-term planning goals.

Ms. Folberg said the parking section should be clarified. She said the current draft wording seemed to indicate that these decisions would be made at the neighborhood level for the entire neighborhood, rather than at the street level by the residents on that street.

Planning Director Ecker said that clarification could be added.

Chairwoman Slanga suggested that the master plan could offer some guidelines to determine what kind of parking restrictions would be appropriate or reasonable for a given street.

Mr. White agreed with Chairwoman Slanga, saying that guidelines would help minimize the number of streets that pursue unnecessarily restrictive parking limitations.

Police Commander Grewe told the Board that the Police Department currently goes through a vetting process with residents who want to pursue parking limitations for their street. He explained that if the complaint is simply about wanting street parking available in front of their house, residents are advised that parking cannot be limited in that way. If there are larger concerns, the resident(s) have to provide documentation of the issues and the Police Department helps them craft an appropriate petition to take to the neighbors. He said the main goal is to leave parking open as much as possible, while removing the negative parking issue at hand.

In reply to Chairwoman Slanga, Police Commander Grewe confirmed that if the draft's more limited parking ordinances are approved and instituted then the City would begin a review process of the current parking ordinances. He said different geographical areas would be discussed for parking ordinance simplification, and input from the residents would be solicited.

Mr. Strader defined universal design as standards, defined by the National Access Board, that

provide more accessibility than Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Planning Director Ecker explained that universal design, as used in the draft, is primary in regards to a goal for the City's parks.

In reply to a request by Chairwoman Slanga for further clarification in the draft, Planning Director Ecker said the intent to provide 'universal access to all parks' could be clearly stated.

Planning Director Ecker explained that a 35 m.p.h. limit for Woodward would have to be pursued through legislative means because Woodward is a state-owned road and Birmingham has no direct say over the speed limit. She explained that if Birmingham were to do a speed study for the section of Woodward that runs through the City, the speed limit would then have to be set at the speed that 85% of drivers are doing, which would undoubtedly be faster than the desired 35 m.p.h.

Mr. Stader explained that when cities take over responsibility for streets from the state they are able to set their own speed limits. He said that Kalamazoo has pursued that option and Lansing is considering the same thing. He also said there is a movement to have safety and context considered in addition to the speed of 85% of vehicles, which might be a good way for Birmingham to advocate for lower speeds on Woodward.

Ms. Edwards said that even though the Woodward-Bowers intersection is the best Woodward intersection in Birmingham, it should not be left off the list of potential Woodward intersection improvements. She said any chance the City has to make pedestrian crossings safer and more comfortable should be pursued.

Mr. Peard said this was another area where the draft would benefit from clearly stating the intent of the proposed changes. He said it would help residents understand what goals the City is pursuing in recommending various improvements.

Mr. Strader explained that micro-mobility and micro-transit could refer to scooters, small shuttles, or other ways to get around very locally.

Ms. Edwards said a broader recommendation to explore options and placement for electric vehicle charging stations could be beneficial.

After Board discussion, Mr. Strader suggested language could be added to the draft stating that Birmingham intends to "be a leader in preparation for changes in transportation technology and infrastructure to accommodate autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles, micro-transit and other forms of mobility."

The Board voiced approval of Mr. Strader's suggested language.

Ms. Folberg and other Board members expressed concern about lowering the speed limit to 20 m.p.h. on residential streets. They said that without the data that indicates that 20 m.p.h. is more than an arbitrary number, they would be hesitant to include that specific recommendation in the plan.

Planning Director Ecker explained that if the recommendation is included in the final plan it would still be reviewed and studied before implementation.

Ms. Folberg said that language pointing to the intention to slow traffic, rather than choosing a specific speed limit without study, would be more appropriate for the master plan. Ms. Folberg suggested the City could pursue the creation of infrastructure that encourages lower driving speeds or could undertake a review of residential speed limits.

Planning Director Ecker suggested the plan could support slowing traffic in neighborhoods through design and planning.

The Board voiced approval of Planning Director Ecker's recommendation.

Ms. Folberg said she felt very strongly that bicycle lanes on higher-speed roads, such as Woodward, must be protected lanes. She said data indicates that most fatalities resulting from bicycle-vehicle crashes happen on high speed roads.

Chairwoman Slanga said that in addition to supporting more wayfinding along the Booth Trail and better connections between the Booth Trail and the Birmingham Museum, she would also support better connections and wayfinding between the Quarton Lake Trail, the Booth Trail, the Linden Park Trail, and the Fairway Trail.

The Board said they wanted language in the draft that would encourage the use of permeable, eco-friendly, universally accessible surfaces for City parks and trails.

Planning Director Ecker clarified for Chairwoman Slanga that the plan's recommendation to expand the Oakland - S. Old Woodward pocket park proposes to remove the paved area to the south of the pocket park, rather than the southbound lane of the intersection.

At the Board's request, Planning Director Ecker said the language would be changed clarify that the recommendation is actually to remove excess width along Oakland, since it is not actually a lane that would be removed.

## **6. Review of SEMCOG Regional Bike Plan**

Planning Director Ecker explained the item.

Chairwoman Slanga noted that there are not many opportunities for bicycle connection between Birmingham and its immediate neighbors.

Chairwoman Slanga and Ms. Edwards both said it would be beneficial if more could be done to connect Birmingham trails to more actively used bicycle trails outside the City.

Planning Director Ecker summarized that the Board wanted the plan to provide better connections between urban communities and from urban communities to the trails that go out to the rural trails.

## **7. Meeting Open to the Public for items not on the Agenda**

**8. Miscellaneous Communications**

Police Commander Grewe notified the Board that the City Commission approved the ordinance change to restrict bicycles, scooters, and similar transportation means from sidewalks in the central business district. He confirmed there would be signs, and that the restriction would be enforced from Woodward to Southfield and from Oak to Brown.

**9. Next Meeting – April 2, 2020**

**10. Adjournment**

No further business being evident, the board members adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Jana Ecker, Planning Director

Austin Fletcher, Assistant City Engineer

APPROVED