

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION
LONG RANGE PLANNING MINUTES
JANUARY 16, 2016
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 151 MARTIN
8:30 A.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rackeline J. Hoff, Mayor, called the meeting to order at 8:38 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

ROLL CALL:	Present,	Mayor Hoff Commissioner Bordman Commissioner Boutros Commissioner DeWeese Commissioner Harris Mayor Pro Tem Nickita Commissioner Sherman
	Absent,	None

Administration: City Manager Valentine, City Attorney Currier, Clerk Pierce, Finance Director Gerber, Senior Accountant Burrick, DPS Director Wood, BSD Director Heiney, Police Chief Studt, Commander Albrecht, City Engineer O'Meara, HR Manager Taylor, Building Official Johnson, Fire Chief Connaughton, Assistant to the Manager Haines, IT Director Gemmell, City Planners Ecker & Baka, Museum Director Pielack, Library Director Koschik, Assistant Library Director Craft

III. DISCUSSION ITEMS

I. FINANCE

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST

Tim St. Andrew, Plante Moran, presented the five-year financial forecast. He explained the state equalized value (SEV) and the taxable value. He noted that the SEV can go up with the market, where the taxable value can only go up by the lesser of 5% or inflation. He stated that it has been a good housing market and it is anticipated that it will continue to improve. City Manager Valentine explained that as taxable value grows, it is anticipated that the City will return to a high point in 2018-19.

Mr. St. Andrew stated that with the property tax growth and strong building permit activity, the City is expecting to see increases in the general fund, fund balance after 2017. The major streets fund and local streets fund relies heavily on general fund contributions to fund the services provided. He noted that throughout the five years, the City is heavily investing in the infrastructure.

In response to a question from Commissioner Harris regarding the delta between the Headlee cap and the operating millage, Joe Heffernan, Plante Moran, explained that Birmingham has never had to decrease its millage because it was forced to by the Headlee reduction. It is unusual for Headlee not to be impacting a community. Mr. Valentine stated that the reason for that is this strategic planning process to manage that gap. It is one of the key considerations when considering what maintains the AAA bond rating and any future needs.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Finance Director Gerber explained that the capital projects include buildings, parks, and other types of capital needs. The status of each project is listed and whether funds have been set aside for these projects. He noted that it is a tool used to determine future capital needs the City may have.

II. ENGINEERING MAJOR & LOCAL STREETS

City Engineer O'Meara explained that Birmingham has approximately 22 miles of major streets and 63 miles of local streets. He noted that in 2014-15 only \$1.8 million was collected in gas tax revenues for road maintenance and \$7.8 million was spent. The difference was collected from the local property taxes. He explained how resurfacing projects are selected and what is done in a reconstruction project. In addition he explained the difference between resurfacing vs micro-surfacing, crack sealing vs asphalt rejuvenating, and unimproved vs improved roads.

DPS Director Wood explained the capeseal process and estimated price ranges. She confirmed for Commissioner Sherman that the average lifespan of a capeseal road is 7-10 years depending on the maintenance and conditions. Commissioner Sherman commented that the Commission will have to decide if it wants to improve the roads or to continue with a temporary fix.

Dorothy Conrad encouraged the City to provide a better explanation of improved roads for the general public knowledge.

Mayor Pro Tem Nickita suggested the City create a video to explain the process to improve roads and give examples of improved and unimproved roads.

Mr. O'Meara explained the street projects planned for 2016, 2017, and 2018. In response to a question from Commissioner Boutros, Mr. O'Meara explained that the road work is prioritized based on a point system after the roads and infrastructure are evaluated.

SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE

City Engineer O'Meara explained that the sidewalk repairs which residents are responsible for include sidewalk damage crossing their driveway or if the sidewalk was lifted up due to a tree on their property. In the downtown area, the business owners are charged for brick repairs or wider than typical sidewalks. He explained that each year a different area of sidewalk is inspected and replaced as needed.

Commissioner Harris questioned if regularly scheduled repair to a sidewalk is billed to the property owner. Mr. O'Meara stated that approximately 85% of the bill is paid by the City.

BACKYARD SEWER AND WATER MASTER PLAN

City Engineer O'Meara presented a history of the backyard sewer and water plan. He explained that in 2010 a master plan was created to address the issue of backyard sewer. He noted that easements are required in order to line the backyard sewers in the Quarton Lake area. He stated that there are a number of properties who have not signed an easement. Mr. O'Meara stated that 100% compliance is needed before the sewer can be lined.

ADA PARKING REQUIREMENTS

City Engineer O'Meara explained that the ADA code has changed. As the new streets are built, the new parking meters must be installed at 42" above grade and will be shorter than in the past. In addition, if a street is reconstructed or resurfaced downtown, handicap spaces must be included at a ratio of 1 vehicle for up to 25 spaces on the block marked with the blue lines, blue meter, and standard disabled parking sign. It is recommended to do this on angled parking where possible. For parallel parking, if there is a 14 foot sidewalk or bigger, the space must be built five feet wider into that sidewalk for side-loading vehicles. He stated that approximately 64 spaces throughout the downtown would have to be marked handicap. He stated that this will go before the Advisory Parking Committee, then to the City Commission.

DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURE PLANNING

City Engineer O'Meara explained the history of the parking system. He stated that a parking study committee was formed to address future parking demand. He explained the parking demand versus available parking. The ad hoc parking development committee was formed to study this. He explained the parking structure options considered by the committee.

Mayor Hoff noted that the committee determined to not go further with the Pierce Structure and to focus on the North Old Woodward Structure.

Mayor Pro Tem Nickita commented on parking capacity and noted that Bates Street makes the most sense.

III. BIRMINGHAM SHOPPING DISTRICT (BPS) PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION

BPS Director Heiney explained the mission of the BPS and the four operational areas that the BPS operates to support the commercial district which includes marketing/advertising, special events, maintenance capital improvements/beautification, and business recruitment. He explained that the BPS has steadily increased its fund balance while keeping the assessment rate flat and maintaining and improving services. The fund balance provides an opportunity for the BPS to provide additional support to business and property owners during the next several years of downtown construction scheduled to begin in 2017. The idea is to utilize the additional resources to provide services to bring shoppers downtown. One of the services is valet parking at strategic locations six days a week and to add additional signage indicating the business are open during the construction.

IV. PLANNING CITY-WIDE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

City Planner Baka presented an overview of the Birmingham Future Land Use Plan, Downtown Birmingham 2016 Plan, Eton Road Corridor Plan, Triangle District Plan, Alleys and Passages Plan, and the Multi-Modal Transportation Plan. He reviewed the key achievements and objectives in each plan.

Dorothy Conrad expressed concern with overbuilding in the residential areas. She suggested a review of residential development be incorporated into the planning process.

Mayor Pro Tem Nickita suggested the plans be unified. He commented that the City needs to get in front of certain things such as lot combinations. He stated that the City defines what the plan should include.

Commissioner Bordman noted that there is no mechanism to identify historic homes.

REGIONAL PROJECTS

City Planner Ecker discussed regional collaboration and the principles of transit oriented development. She explained the status of the bus rapid transit system. She noted that a Regional Transit Authority was established to oversee all of the regional mass transit projects in metro Detroit.

Ms. Ecker explained that the Woodward Avenue Action Association received a grant to do a complete streets study on the entire Woodward Corridor. She explained that complete streets feature bike lanes, sharrows, bike paths, transit stops, better crossing opportunities, crossing islands, bumpouts, traffic calming measures, accessibility features. She explained that the Woodward Avenue Complete Streets Plan will be presented to the Commission soon.

In response to a question from Commissioner Harris, Ms. Ecker explained that each community has a representative speaking on its behalf before the Regional Transit Authority. Mr. Valentine noted that as the groups gather collaborative consensus for the corridor, the actual implementation will have a local impact.

Ms. Ecker confirmed for Commissioner Boutros that if the plan gets to the preliminary engineering stage where the plans are drawn, the City would have a much larger role in the plan as it would be reviewed by City boards. She noted that the speed limit is regulated by MDOT.

BISTRO LICENSE PROGRAM REVIEW

City Planner Ecker presented a review of the bistro program and reviewed the bistro regulations. She stated that the objective was to control the types of restaurants that were coming in and to make sure they were what the community was looking for. She explained the bistro review process and noted that as a result of the bistro program, there have been ten new bistros and seven existing restaurants that converted into the bistro program.

Peter Bray suggested a program be created that would encourage family restaurants.

The Commission recessed at 11:35 AM.

The Commission reconvened at 11:41 AM.

V. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES

ENHANCED ISLANDS – WOODWARD AVE.; ROUGE RIVER TRAIL MASTER PLAN; POPPLETON PARK SITE PLAN; ADAMS PARK SITE PLAN; KENNING PARK MASTER PLAN; BARNUM PARK

DPS Director Wood explained that the City has contracted with Michael Dul to begin working on plans to enhance the islands on Woodward between Oakland and Brown for form and function.

Ms. Wood explained that the Rouge River Trail Master Plan includes the addition of pedestrian bridges located in Booth Park connecting from North Old Woodward; Linden to Lynn Smith Park; replacement of the bridge on West Maple walkway to Linden, Booth Park and Willits connecting the open lot; and Willits west of Maple connecting to Baldwin Avenue. Ms. Wood explained that a consultant was hired to move forward on a design competition process.

Mayor Pro Tem Nickita commented that a lot of clarity is needed on the budgeting as the design will dictate the cost. Ms. Wood confirmed that it is a very preliminary estimate. The enhancements could include a plaza feature, boardwalk, bridge, and foundation. She explained that it is the components that lead up to the bridge that are part of the project which takes into consideration the terrain, slope, plaza, and the development of the area.

Commissioner Bordman and Mayor Hoff questioned if the design competition would be presented to the Parks Board first or the Commission. Mr. Valentine stated that the design competition should meet the objectives of the Commission which had the idea that introduced it. The Parks Board should implement and work out the details on the program and return to the Commission with a formal recommendation.

Ann Bray commented that the climate is changing which affects the river. She noted that this is the only wildlife corridor fly-away for the birds left in southeastern Michigan.

George Stern encouraged the integration of the Museum with the park and trail system.

Ms. Wood explained that there is a park concept plan for Poppleton Park, Adams Park, Kenning Park and Barnum Park.

Cindy Rose commented on the fundraising efforts for Barnum Park improvements.

The Commission recessed at 12:26 PM.
The Commission reconvened at 12:47 PM.

VI. BUILDING DEPARTMENT ONLINE INSPECTION SCHEDULING & PERMITTING

Building Official Johnson explained the improvement to the permitting process which will allow permit holders to schedule inspections online. He explained the ease of the process and how it will increase efficiency. He noted that the inspection results could be emailed to the permit holder as well. He stated that staff will still accept calls in the office to schedule inspections.

Mr. Johnson confirmed for Mayor Hoff that it is anticipated the department will go live by the end of April, 2016.

VII. POLICE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Police Chief Studt explained the organizational changes in the Police Department include moving from three 8-hour shifts to four 12-hour shifts. This will reduce the overtime, and allow for easier scheduling of ongoing training. The Deputy Chief position will be eliminated and replaced with three commanders to oversee operations, investigations, and services. Chief Studt further explained the various staff trainings and interagency agreements currently in place.

In response to a question from Commissioner Bordman regarding body cameras worn by officers, Chief Studt explained that each vehicle has a camera system. He noted that he would like to see the legislature enact standards on body cameras prior to implementation.

VIII. LIBRARY

STATUS OF PROPOSED ADULT SERVICES RENOVATIONS LONG RANGE LIBRARY BUILDING VISION

Library Director Koschik explained the objectives of the library improvement project include efficiency of the building, infrastructure improvements, improving circulation and wayfinding, providing better handicap accessibility access for families, increase study and collaboration spaces, and expanding the youth areas. He noted that the aesthetic improvements include respecting the integrity of the Birkerts addition, bringing in more light, and improving the acoustics. He explained that all three phases would cost approximately \$5.7 million. He pointed out that Phase 1 would not compromise any improvements or vision for Phases 2 and 3. The next step is to come up with funding strategies.

Commissioner DeWeese questioned the plan to bring this before the Commission to proceed with Phase 1 and the funding mechanism. City Manager Valentine explained that this will come before the Commission to award the contract for Phase 1, which the Library will be funding. The funding for the actual project will be discussed at the budget session.

Commissioner Harris noted that a committee could be formed, as suggested by the Library Board, at that time without compromising funding consistent with the Phase 1 timeline. He questioned if the Library Board envisioned that the committee would address all three phases or just the latter two. Mr. Koschik confirmed that the main interest is in the first phase, then to have a discussion on Phases 2 and 3.

Dorothy Conrad and Patty Edwards expressed support of the library project.

David Bloom and Jim Suhay agreed that a committee should be formed for this project.

Commissioner Sherman left at 1:46 PM.

IX. FIRE DEPARTMENT

CHESTERFIELD FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION

Fire Chief Connaughton explained the history of the Chesterfield Fire Station. He commented on the operational needs which the new station will address including a larger apparatus bay, men/women bathrooms and locker rooms, and communication/work room and the opportunity for growth to house more than two firefighters. He stated that it is anticipated the project will be complete in August, 2017.

X. HISTORICAL MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN

Museum Director Pielack explained that the museum will be reviewing the strategic plan. She explained the successful outcomes of the plan include increased attendance at the museum and on-line presence, grant funding for a number of projects such as the outdoor wifi in the park. She noted that this year the structure for the historic Hill School Bell will be constructed. She stated that going forward the focus will be on digitization of the collection and continuing the park accessibility, the wifi improvements and rebranding.

In response to a question from Mayor Hoff, Ms. Pielack confirmed that the preferred name of the museum, based on the survey, is "The Birmingham Museum". She explained that the name change will be incorporated into the rebranding process.

XI. CITIZENS ACADEMY

Assistant to the City Manager Haines introduced a Citizens Academy program to increase understanding about how local governments operate. She stated that it would be held once a year and limited to twenty participants. The Commission expressed support of this program.

Ashley Aidenbaum expressed support of the Citizens Academy.

CITY LOGO

Assistant to the Manager Haines explained that it was suggested the City review its branding and image in regards to updating its logo as the current logo is almost twenty years old. She explained the process would start by issuing a Request for Proposal.

Mayor Pro Tem Nickita expressed support of the rebranding of the City logo.

Mayor Hoff suggested this move forward once the Commission has completed its goal setting.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

George Stern, 1090 Westwood, suggested Greenwood Cemetery be added to the next Long Range Planning agenda. He requested that the Commission charge the Cemetery Board to return to the Commission with the status of what they are doing about reclamation.

City Manager Valentine clarified for Mr. Stern that the Commission did not direct that the reclamation process be started. He explained the Commission direction regarding the sale of the new graves.

V. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:16 PM

Laura M. Pierce
City Clerk