Birmingham City Commission Minutes
September 8, 2025
Municipal Building, 151 Martin
7:30 p.m.
Vimeo Link: https://vimeo.com/1116885569

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Therese Longe, Mayor, opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Deputy City Clerk Brown called the roll.

Present: Mayor Longe
MPT Baller
Commissioner Emerine
Commissioner Long
Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Schafer

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Ecker; Senior Engineering Technician Bialik, Deputy City Clerk Brown, Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant City Manager Fairbairn, City Attorney Kucharek, Building Official Zielke

III. PROCLAMATIONS, CONGRATULATORY RESOLUTIONS, AWARDS, APPOINTMENTS, RESIGNATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS, ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS, INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements
Appointments

09-263-25 Advisory Parking Committee

Lisa Silverman was interviewed for the appointment.

MOTION: Motion by Long:
To appoint Lisa Silverman to the Advisory Parking Committee as a regular member, professional firm member, to serve the remainder of a three-year term to expire September 4, 2028.

VOICE VOTE
Ayes: Emerine, Schafer, Baller, Haig, Host, Longe, Long
Nays: None

Museum Board

Judith Keefer was unavailable for an interview. Appointment was pended to the next meeting.

CC Bingham swore in the present appointees.

Introduction Of Staff
Engineering Department – Brian Bialik

IV. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Thomas December commented regarding the Engineering Department's and Assistant City Engineer Cory Borton's great work with the Adams Road construction project.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

09-264-25 Consent Agenda

MOTION: Motion by Haig, seconded by Long:
To approve the consent agenda with the omission of Item E.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Ayes: Emerine, Schafer, Baller, Haig, Host, Longe, Long
Nays: None

A. Resolution to approve the City Commission regular meeting minutes of August 25, 2025.

B. Resolution to approve the warrant list, including Automated Clearing House payments, dated August 27, 2025 in the amount of $10,137,270.75.

C. Resolution to approve the warrant list, including Automated Clearing House payments, dated September 3, 2025 in the amount of $510,383.88.

D. Resolution to approve a Special Event Permit as requested by Lutheran Church of the Redeemer to hold the 2025 Christmas Nativity Display daily, beginning on November 26, 2025 and ending December 30, 2025, contingent upon compliance with all permit and insurance requirements and payment of all fees, and further pursuant to any minor modifications or event cancellation that may be deemed necessary by administrative staff leading up to or at the time of the event.

F. Resolution to approve the appropriations and amendment to the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Capital Projects Fund budget for bus shelter installation as follows:

Expenditures:		
101.0-701.000-811.0000	Other Contractual Services	($17,833.00)
Expenditures:		
403.0-901.020-981.0100	Capital Projects Fund – Capital Outlay	$17,833.00

G. Resolution to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the contract with Avineon, Inc. for the upgrade, deployment and support of ArcGIS Enterprise for the City in the amount not to exceed $36,300 and further, to approve and amend, the 2025-2026 Information Technology budget as follows:

Information Technology Fund Revenues		
Draw from Fund Balance	636.0-000.000-400.0000	$36,300
Expenditures		
Computer Maintenance	636.0-228.000-933.0000	$36,300

H. Resolution to approve the purchase of a 2026 Ford F350 Regular Cab 4X4 XL DRW Chassis from Bell Equipment Company, located at 78 Northpointe Drive, Lake Orion, MI 48359, through the MI-Deal Contract #240000000166, in the amount not to exceed $149,946.00. In addition, to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the agreement on behalf of the City. Funds for this purchase are available in the FY 2025-2026 Auto Equipment Fund account #661.0-441.006.971.0100.

09-265-25 Necessity to Hold Public Hearing on October 6, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. to Satisfy Sec. 50-42 Requiring Condemnation of a Dangerous Structure

Staff answered an informational question from the Commission.

MOTION: Motion by Haig, seconded by Host:
To set a public hearing date of October 6, 2025 at 4:30 in the afternoon to consider condemnation of the structure at 611 Elm Street (a/k/a 635 Elm Street) as unfit for human habitation and a menace to the health, morals, and/or safety of the public and is a public nuisance requiring demolition.

VOICE VOTE
Ayes: Emerine, Schafer, Baller, Haig, Host, Longe, Long
Nays: None

VI. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

09-266-25 Multi-Modal Transportation Board (MMTB) Ordinance

CA Kucharek, PD Dupuis, and CM Ecker presented the item.

Commissioners raised the following points during discussion:

- The City has implemented a new road improvement process in the last few years, and sometimes the engagement from residents during the process has resulted in challenging MMTB meetings. It was understandable that members of the MMTB were considering their role in the process.
- Looking at the emotions within this process is important, and could help inform how this process could be improved.
- While sometimes the Commission implements options other than the MMTB's recommendations, sometimes additional MMTB feedback is sought by the Commission as well.
- It could be necessary to better educate the public about the role of the MMTB as well.
- The Commission relies on boards to do deeper analysis of items in order to inform the Commission's deliberations.
- This is only a pause on the MMTB's meetings so the Commission may provide clearer guidance.
- At the August 7, 2025 MMTB meeting, residents expressed confusion about the purpose of the meeting.
- The majority of the City's boards are advisory.
- It will be valuable to hear from the MMTB members present this evening.
- MMTB members should not be the recipient of residents' frustration.
- While some have characterized the Commission's process as redesigning a road during review, the Commission actually selected a lower-cost item.
- The challenges in the process could possibly be reduced via longer-term planning, improved communication, and revised funding mechanisms.
- Increasing the MMTB's ability to provide feedback on costs could be useful.
- Benchmarking Birmingham's received bids relative to peer municipalities' costs for comparable projects could be helpful.
- Alternatively, Birmingham is not able to influence bid costs for projects, even if peer municipalities' costs are lower.
- Projects cannot be sufficiently benchmarked by the time they are presented to the MMTB because they are not fully designed by that point. The City would have to spend the money designing every option in order to have sufficient comparison data.
- The Engineering Department could provide the MMTB with past cost experience and estimated cost orders of magnitude for different project options. The MMTB could evaluate project options with that information included.
- Birmingham is well-known to be an engaged and proactive community. Bidders anticipate a fair amount of community, Commission, and administrative engagement, and price their projects in part to cover the costs of doing that work.
- The MMTB could rank options and explain their reasons for those rankings in advising the Commission.
- The context in which the MMTB functions has shifted since any of the Commissioners have served on the MMTB.
- When a substantial change in project conditions occurs between MMTB review and Commission review, it is understandable that the Commission would have to factor in the new information.
- It could be beneficial to have a joint meeting where a discussion on the purpose of the MMTB can occur.
- While a joint meeting could be valuable, a standard workshop before a Commission meeting would likely be insufficient to adequately discuss the concerns.
- It could be appropriate to limit the MMTB to multi-modal decisions, instead of engineering decisions as well.
- Residents on Shirley and Arlington were advised multiple times that if wider road widths were maintained after the road improvements, it would result in increased speeds.

Resident dissatisfaction with increased speeds after the project was completed was neither the Commission's nor the Board's burden.
- It could be beneficial for staff to make recommendations about how the ordinance for the MMTB could be changed, and to have that as a discussion starting point for the joint meeting.
- It could be valuable for the MMTB to have its own discussion about this process, and then for the MMTB to determine what should be brought forward from that meeting to a joint meeting with the Commission.
- Wimbleton Phase Two could be addressed by the Commission so that it is not delayed while broader MMTB process considerations are deliberated.
- Using a desirability, viability, and feasibility (DVF) framework for evaluating MMTB options within a project is valuable.
- A pause was implemented in part because the MMTB was expressing a lack of clarity about its role, because it did not handle the agenda item brought to them at the August 7, 2025 meeting, because of behavior towards staff, and because discussions of quitting or disbanding the MMTB were raised.
- The Commission values each member of the MMTB.

<u>Public Comment</u>
Gordon Davies supported the City or Commission determining whether a road should be improved or unimproved, and then the MMTB could determine the best road design for that context.

Patrick Hillberg supported revising the economic assumptions the City uses to guide road improvements.

David Hocker shared comments on behalf of Laura Engelland, who supported communicating to residents that advisory boards make recommendations, clarifying the road funding decision process for residents, and applying a DVF framework to evaluating road project proposals.

Mr. Hocker concurred with Mr. Davies, and supported revising the road review process in order to clarify for resident's information on speeds, costs, design, safety, and other factors.

Rosie Kuhl supported allowing the MMTB to engage in a reflective process that could empower them to make more useful recommendations moving forward.

MOTION: Motion by Baller, seconded by Host:
To let the MMTB meet for the purpose of what they want to say to us at the joint meeting, no other business, to ask the City administration how they would revise this ordinance, and to set a meeting that is at least two hours long for all of us to get together.

Commissioner comment on the motion was as follows:
- This would not remove the pause. It would allow for one special MMTB meeting to occur during the pause.
- All three points should be done expeditiously.
- This is an opportunity for discussion among the MMTB because ideas occur when people talk.

<u>Public Comment</u>
Paul Reagan supported the MMTB being permitted to create road design templates, being able to consider broad cost information, and allowing the MMTB to generate goals for a joint meeting before a joint meeting occurs.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Ayes: Emerine, Schafer, Baller, Haig, Host, Longe, Long
Nays: None

09-267-25 320 Martin Construction Staging and Construction

CE Coatta presented the item and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners raised the following points during discussion:
- Bates would be closed to through traffic for a portion of the project.
- Sending traffic down Martin should be reconsidered since it might contribute to increased gridlock. Sending the traffic to Brown might reduce the gridlock.

- This project could be challenging for nearby businesses and organizations, will render 19 on-street parking spaces unavailable for regular use, and will cost the City $160,000 if the project is not charged for their use of the parking spaces.
- The staging has to occur closest to where the construction would occur.
- Since Talullah has not attended any meetings to express concern about the project, it would be acceptable to trust that no significant concern has arisen.
- The Commission's discussion of this project is important since residents will want to feel there was due consideration of the impacts.
- Given the scale of this project, the applicant should be permitted to close the roads as requested.
- The Surnows are good residents of Birmingham, and have expressed interest in doing what is fair.
- It would be useful to know whether the City has charged for the use of parking spaces for construction staging before. This could help inform whether the applicant should be charged for use of parking spaces in this case.
- It could also be appropriate to review the City's policy on charging for construction staging parking space use.
- The alley behind the stores on Maple will still be accessible.

Sam Surnow, representative for the project, and Richard Check, construction manager for the project, spoke on behalf of the item.

MOTION: Motion by Baller, seconded by Host:
To approve a Construction Staging Area and Construction Coordination Agreement with 320 Investments LLC and The Alan Group for the coordination of construction activities related to 320 Martin on S. Bates Street, Maple Road, and Martin Street, and to authorize the Mayor and the City Clerk to sign the agreement on behalf of the City, with the condition that there may be a potential amendment to the agreement to add the cost of parking once that has been determined by the City Commission at a later date.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Ayes: Emerine, Schafer, Baller, Haig, Host, Longe, Long
Nays: None

The Mayor asked the applicant to be considerate of residents' convenience during the project.

Commission Discussion On Items From A Prior Meeting
Commission Items for Future Discussion

IV. REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

A. 400 East Lincoln

XI. REPORTS

A. Commissioner Reports
   1. Notice of Intention to Appoint to the Principal Shopping District
   2. Notice of Intention to Appoint to the Board of Zoning Appeals
   3. Notice of Intention to Appoint to the Multi-Modal Transportation Board

B. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Long informed the Commission that the SCC was seeking feedback from the Commission on next steps.

C. Advisory Boards, Committees, Commissions' Reports and Agendas
D. Legislation
E. City Staff
   1. Woodward Dream Cruise 2025

INFORMATION ONLY

XII. ADJOURN

The Commission motioned to adjourn at 10:05 p.m.

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist