

Birmingham City Commission Workshop Minutes
December 1, 2025
City Commission Room 205, 151 Martin
Street 6:30 PM
Vimeo Link: <https://vimeo.com/1142191282>

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

2. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Bingham called the roll.

Present: Mayor Baller, Mayor Pro Tem Long, Commissioners Long, Host, Kozlowski, Kolb

Absent: Commissioner Haig

Staff: City Manager Ecker; Assistant City Manager Clemence, Assistant City Manager Fairbairn, City Attorney Gaudenzi, City Attorney Kucharek

3. PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

A. Historic Preservation Master Plan Introduction - Nick Dupuis, Planning Director

Planning Director Dupuis presented the item. Staff answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners raised the following points in the course of discussion:

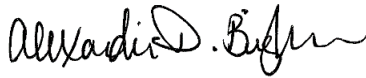
- This Historic Preservation Master Plan (Plan) focuses on the practical steps the City can take to preserve historic homes. It also intends to educate the community on what it means to have a home historically designated, or to have a home recognized as historic in some other way.
- Concerns about costs tend to fuel many of the concerns and misconceptions about historic preservation. Addressing these concerns through financial incentives and/or education wherever possible could increase historic preservation and designation within the community.
- There is a state tax incentive program for historically designated homes.
- Creating a financial incentive program for the maintenance of historic homes could be worthwhile. While the City would be unable to use public funds towards private resources, there may be organizations that could financially assist historic homeowners.
- The Heritage Home program should be prioritized early on as an approachable way to increase public awareness of historic preservation.
- The community is interested in historic preservation and in reducing home teardowns.
- Planning staff was commended for its work on the Plan, and the HDC has expressed its support for the Plan.
- The cost of a demolition permit must be tied to the cost of the staff time required to process the permit.
- The City has worked to preserve homes built by the architect Wallace Frost. It is likely that other recognized architects undertook work in Birmingham as well, and the City should surface and include those homes in its historic preservation efforts.
- Irving Tobocman is one such architect who built homes in Birmingham.
- The City must explore the impacts of demolition delays in other municipalities. Since a demolition delay could increase the costs of certain new homes, it would be important to understand whether demolition delays have the intended effect of increasing opportunities for historic preservation.
- It should be determined whether demolition delays would apply only to homes recognized and/or designated, any home over a certain age, or all homes in general.
- While anyone can recommend that a home be considered for historic designation, the City has only ever engaged in voluntary historic designation.

- Demolition delays could raise concerns around diminishing someone's property values.
- The Commission expressed no support for the involuntary historic designation of private homes.
- Requiring non-contributing resources within historic districts to be reviewed could contribute to delays and increased costs for homeowners.
- The Plan carefully balances incentives and disincentives as ways of promoting historic preservation.
- The Plan is also in dialogue with the 2040 Plan. It will be necessary to pay attention to the details of implementing both.
- It should be clarified whether goals Pro-7 and Pro-9 are regulatory or non-regulatory. If they are both regulatory, there may be other concerns.
- In order to enable all involved parties to have clear expectations, any adopted standards and policies should be applied with consistency.
- These efforts may increase affordability in Birmingham.
- Using the word 'quaint' as a descriptor for Birmingham was questioned.
- Action items should be described as incurring some cost if their implementation requires either staff time or City resources.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

5. ADJOURN

The Commission adjourned the workshop at 7:27 p.m.



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist