Birmingham City Commission Minutes
December 9, 2024
Municipal Building, 151 Martin
7:30 p.m.
Vimeo Link: https://vimeo.com/1037694745

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

II. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Bingham called the roll.

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

Absent: None

Staff: City Manager Ecker; City Clerk Bingham, Finance Director Designee Chavez, Assistant City Manager Clemence, City Engineer Coatta, Planning Director Dupuis, Assistant City Manager Fairbairn, Finance Director Gerber, City Attorney Kucharek

KMG: Brian Deming

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

Announcements
Appointments

12-618-24 Birmingham Shopping District

Sloane Wolf was interviewed by the Commission for the appointment.

MOTION: Motion by Baller:
To concur in the City Manager's appointment of Sloane Wolf to the Principal Shopping District Board as a business representative to serve the remainder of a four-year term to expire November 16, 2026.

VOICE VOTE: Ayes, Commissioner Host
Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Long
Commissioner Schafer
MPT Baller
Mayor Longe

Nays, None

RECOGNITION OF STAFF
Clerk's Office
Martha Valone

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

Kristy Barrett commented regarding the Senior/Community Center project, the Commission's requests for information regarding the project, potential taxpayer concerns regarding the project, and the project's potential impact on the availability of future funding for infrastructure projects.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

12-619-24 Consent Agenda

Mayor Longe noted her recusal from Item E due to her home being within the project area.

MOTION: Motion by Haig, seconded by Long:
To approve the Consent Agenda with the note that Mayor Longe is recusing from the vote on Item E.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes, Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Host
Commissioner Long
Commissioner Schafer
MPT Baller
Mayor Longe

Nays, None

A. Resolution to approve the City Commission Workshop meeting minutes of November 18, 2024.

B. Resolution to approve the regular City Commission meeting minutes of November 18, 2024.

C. Resolution to approve the warrant list, including Automated Clearing House payments, dated November 28, 2024 in the amount of $1,189,846.40.

D. Resolution to approve the warrant list, including Automated Clearing House payments, dated December 5, 2024 in the amount of $287,624.08.

E. Resolution to set the Public Hearing of Necessity for the road surface cape seal treatment meeting the requirements for assessment, for all properties within the project area on Yorkshire Road from N. Eton to Coolidge Highway, Dorchester Road from St. Andrews to Coolidge Highway, Buckingham Avenue from N. Eton to Edenborough, Edenborough Road from Dorchester to Windermere, Yosemite Boulevard from Adams to Columbia, Yankee Avenue from Villa to Yosemite, Ann Street from Frank north to the dead end, and Northlawn from Southfield to Shipman on Monday, January 13, 2025, at 7:30 P.M.; and

   If necessity is determined on January 13, 2025, to meet on Monday, January 27, 2025, at 7:30 P.M., for the purpose of conducting the Public Hearing to Confirm the Assessment Roll for the new pavement installation meeting the requirements for assessment, for all properties within the project area on Yorkshire Road from N. Eton to Coolidge Highway, Dorchester Road from St. Andrews to Coolidge Highway, Buckingham Avenue from N. Eton to Edenborough, Edenborough Road from Dorchester to Windermere, Yosemite Boulevard from Adams to Columbia, Yankee Avenue from Villa to Yosemite, Ann Street from Frank north to the dead end, and Northlawn from Southfield to Shipman.

F. Resolution to authorize the City Manager to use the City's allocation of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds toward lead service line replacement and any remaining funds not spent on lead service replacement be used as follows: a total of $24,000.00 be put towards audit fees for fiscal year 24/25, fiscal year 25/26, and fiscal year 26/27, and the remaining amount, estimated at $200,696.13, be used towards the purchase of a new ambulance, Rescue 1.

G. Resolution to accept the resignation of Samy Eid from the Birmingham Shopping District Board, to thank him for his service and to direct the City Clerk to begin the process of filling the vacancy.

VI. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Audit Presentation

FD Gerber introduced the item and Timothy St. Andrew and Philip Femminineo, auditors from the Plante Moran team. FD Gerber and Mr. St. Andrew answered informational questions from the Commission.

The Plante Moran team thanked City staff for their assistance, and the Commission thanked all involved for their production of the audit.

The Commission also recognized FD Gerber for his completion of his last audit presentation prior to his upcoming retirement.

12-620-24 Selection of an Architectural/Engineering Consultant for Final Site Plan and Design and Construction Plans for 400 E. Lincoln

The Mayor, Brian Deming, owner's representative for the City, and Staff spoke regarding the item and answered informational questions from the Commission. Each bidder presented and was interviewed while the other bidders waited in a separate room. The presentations, in order, were from INFORM Studio, McIntosh Poris, and Neumann Smith.

Public Comment
Cris Braun, Executive Director of Next, commented on the project's productive continuing negotiations, supported selecting Neumann Smith, and noted the likely benefits of moving forward with this project.

Parrish Underwood, President and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit, also commented on the productive continuing negotiations and answered informational questions from the Commission.

Commissioners raised the following points during their discussion of the bids:

- This project would not yet have unanimous support from Commissioners because of some concerns regarding the programming, space, and taxpayers' potential willingness to invest in the project.
- While all the presentations were impressive, Neumann Smith had a lot of relevant, recent experience and a good understanding of Birmingham's specific needs. The 3D renderings would be helpful to residents trying to understand the plans. The Neumann Smith team also had an apparent enthusiasm for the project.
- More clarity regarding the programming spaces is necessary. The community needs to be the emphasis of the project, and calling it a community center makes sense.
- It is possible to reach a project that will provide benefit for all stakeholders. An architect will assist in that process. All three bidders have excellent reputations. Neumann Smith seems to be the most appropriate firm for this particular project, given their relevant experience. Neumann Smith's presentation also emphasized the importance of validating the program and right-sizing the project, which will produce value for the community.
- In the future, committees related to particular projects should interview the bidders. Neumann Smith would be the most appropriate selection based on the strength of their written submission and their presentation. That said, the City is likely not ready to proceed with an architect at this time. This process must emphasize the quality of the outcome, rather than the speed with which the outcome is reached.
- Given competing City infrastructure needs, the necessity of this project should be further evaluated. Questions regarding the optimal relationship between the City and the provision of recreational and senior services remain.
- The City's assistance in the provision of recreation and senior services contributes to the financial and social vitality of Birmingham. Birmingham is affluent and should offer its residents improved recreational and senior services via this project.
- This project has been in process for approximately ten months so far, and seems to be a Commission and community priority given the level of engagement in the process.
- While questions may remain, the professionals, ad hoc committee, City staff, Commissioners, and residents involved in the process remain engaged in discerning the next best steps. Hiring an architect will help further refine the vision for the project.

- Next has until mid-2027 in its present space, and the YMCA is still functioning in its present space. The Commission has more time to work with these entities and the community on ensuring this process is done well.
- Neumann Smith has the depth of experience in pool facilities, recreation centers, and space planning and utilization that the City would need in order to move forward in this project. It is likely the building size could be further reduced through working with an architect. The City can continue its work on infrastructure, the police station, and City Hall while also working on this project.
- The suggested motion would not commit the City to full architectural services. It would provide a schematic design, information on costs, and guidance for the bond vote. The City requires a group with that skill set to advance the project to the next stage. To reach the project's smallest size and lowest cost, engaging an architect is necessary.
- It might be possible to slow the project schedule a bit, to allow for more time doing community engagement, and to aim for an August 2025 vote if deemed appropriate by the selected bidder and the Commission.
- There was some reluctance to hire an architect before the agreements between Next, the YMCA, and the City were solidified.
- Increased community engagement during the schematic design phase could be useful.
- The contract with the selected bidder would allow the City to disengage from the project and process at any time.
- Without the expertise of an architect, the City will be unable to offer further clarity on the project.
- If hiring an architect means that concrete data could be provided, that would be worthwhile.

MOTION: Motion by Haig, seconded by Long:
To approve an agreement with Neumann Smith for the preparation of the final site plan, design and construction plans for a new building at 400 E. Lincoln in the amount not to exceed $354,200. In addition, to authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to sign the agreement on behalf of the City. Funding for this project has been budgeted in account #101.0-656.000-811.0000.

and

Further to appropriate and amend the 2024-2025 General Fund budget as follows:

Revenues:		
Draw from Fund Balance	101.0-000.000-400.0000	$450,000
Expenditures:		
Health and Welfare	101.0-656.000-811.0000	$450,000

MPT Baller felt that some important information was still lacking, and opposed the motion on that basis.

Commissioner Long supported the motion since working with an architect would provide reassurance, information, and would allow the project to further come into focus.

Commissioner Schafer noted the community value of this project and that hiring an architect would provide clarity on the next steps.

The Mayor concurred with Commissioners Long and Schafer. She added that the Commission reserved the right to withdraw from the process if, in the new year, it was determined that there were insurmountable concerns regarding the financials, revenue models, or other aspects of the project.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes, Commissioner Haig
Commissioner Long
Commissioner Schafer
Mayor Longe

Nays, MPT Baller
Commissioner Host

The Mayor thanked all the bidding teams.

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

IV. REMOVED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

X. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Communication regarding speed mitigation measures on Shirley and Arlington

XI. REPORTS

A. Commissioner Reports
   1. Notice of Intention to Appoint to the Public Arts Board
B. Commissioner Comments

The Mayor shared a letter of gratitude from the residents of the Baldwin House thanking the Commission and City staff for their efforts to advocate on their behalf.

MPT Baller noted it was sad that the City would not be able to preserve the established elm trees on Linden, and recommended the City endeavor to communicate about this and similar issues with increased sensitivity.

Staff answered informational questions from the Commission regarding upcoming workshops and the upcoming Commission appointment process.

After discussion, the Commission reached a consensus regarding the upcoming Commission appointment process. The process would be as follows:

- Each applicant would have the opportunity to speak for three minutes during a workshop prior to the meeting.
- Then, during the regular meeting, the City Clerk would offer each present Commissioner the opportunity, in random order, to recommend a candidate for further interview. This process would occur twice, yielding an anticipated ten or fewer candidates, since one Commissioner would be absent and one Commission seat is vacant.
- Then, the recommended candidates would be interviewed by the Commission.
- Following the interviews, the Commissioners would make nominations and vote on the nominations.
- Each Commissioner would be allowed to vote for a single candidate.

<u>Public Comment</u>
In reply to Pam Graham, it was determined that all candidates would be permitted to remain in the meeting throughout the appointment process.

C. Advisory Boards, Committees, Commissions' Reports and Agendas
D. Legislation
E. City Staff

INFORMATION ONLY

XII. ADJOURN

The Commission motioned to adjourn at 12:08 a.m.

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist