

City Of Birmingham
Regular Meeting Of The Planning Board
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
Held Remotely Via Zoom And Telephone Access

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on March 10, 2021.
Chair Scott Clein convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Present: Chair Scott Clein; Board Members Robin Boyle, Stuart Jeffares, Bert Koseck, Daniel Share, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams; Alternate Board Members Jason Emerine, Nasseem Ramin; Student Representatives Daniel Murphy, Jane Wineman (all located in Birmingham, MI)

Absent: None.

Administration: Jana Ecker, Planning Director ("PD")
Brooks Cowan, City Planner
Nick Dupuis, City Planner
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

03-033-21

B. Approval Of The Minutes Of The Regular Planning Board Meeting of February 24, 2021

Mr. Share said "or the applicant reduces the overall building signage by 47.76 square feet" should be removed from the resolutions for the SLUP and Final Site Plan approval for Birmingham Pub.

Chair Clein recommended the paragraph at the top of page six be amended in terms of grammar. He suggested it could read: 'Chair Clein said the zig-zag pattern that would result from the addition of the dining pods would have negative ramifications for those with visual impairments.'

Motion by Mr. Share

Seconded by Mr. Williams to approve the minutes of the Regular Planning Board Meeting of February 24, 2021 as amended.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Share, Williams, Koseck, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Clein, Jeffares

Nays: None

03-034-21

C. Chair's Comments

Chair Clein welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. He stated the meeting was being held under the auspices of state legislation. Chair Clein reviewed the meeting's procedures. He described the focus and purpose of the first study session item.

Chair Clein welcomed the Board's new student representatives.

03-035-21

D. Review Of The Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

03-036-21

E. Study Session Items

1. Direction from Review of First Draft of 2040 Birmingham Plan

PD Ecker introduced the item.

Recommendations from the Board members were as follows:

- The revision should note in the direction regarding neighborhoods that the potential population increase for Birmingham went from 2,000 people to 1,000 people.
- Slowing traffic on Woodward should receive greater attention.
- Instead of talking about Woodward north of Maple, the focus should be expanded to be on Woodward from 14 Mile to 16 Mile.
- Words like 'green' and 'sustainable' should be defined.
- The Plan should be careful about incentivizing renovation over new construction in all cases. Sometimes it is greener or more fiscally sound to build new, so nuance has to be allowed.
- 'Incentivizing' renovation should be clarified to mean in terms of more flexible planning techniques and not in terms of monetary incentives.
- Electric charging stations should be mentioned as part of the drive towards sustainability.
- In addition to creating new historic districts, it would be helpful to have options for strengthening the ones that already exist.
- While something should be done regarding Old Woodward south of Haynes, selling it is not the only available option. It could be used or zoned differently, for instance.
- The housing proposals for the South Old Woodward alleys should also prevent hazardous cross traffic where the streets come in at an angle into the commercial or residential zones.
- The Plan should be relevant, distinctive, and bold. A prologue should be included that describes the context of the pandemic during which the plan was written. A dashboard with figures about Birmingham in terms of households, population size, permitting or other data could be included at the beginning of the plan.

- While the boldness should not be applied to the neighborhoods, as residents are largely satisfied with them as they are, it should be applied to thinking about other areas of the City including but not limited to the Triangle and Rail districts.
- The senior center should be prioritized.
- Including 'stretch goals' which point Birmingham in the right direction would be a positive part of the plan for application outside of the neighborhoods.
- The master planning team should reach out to the Birmingham School Board to review their long term planning and to see where the City's and the School District's interests might align.
- The Plan has to be flexible enough to allow for changes to strategy when very unusual circumstances arise, like has happened in the past year with the pandemic.

A number of members of the Planning Board commended the master planning team on their letter regarding the revisions that will be applied to the first draft.

Public Comment

Larry Bertollini said he would like to see: allowances for greater lot coverage for things like car ports in the rear of homes that would not cause drainage issues; beautification of Adams Square; and, discussion of how the golf courses could be more utilized for the benefit of residents.

Andrew Haig commended the master planning team and the Planning Board on their work. He expressed some concern in trying to consider the School Board's plans in the City's master planning process since they function independently. He also said he would like to see the Plan broach the topic of narrowing Woodward like Ferndale is doing.

Jack Burns said that as more people remain in work from home positions, the most successful communities will develop and retain 15 minute neighborhoods. He said that Birmingham is close to already having 15 minute neighborhoods, but could solicit local institutions of higher education to develop more of a physical presence within the City.

Beth J (complete last name not given) said she hoped the master planning process would not delay the planned improvements to S. Old Woodward.

Andy Bastile said he was interested in how the master plan could factor in potential future developments in autonomous vehicles.

David Bloom commended everyone who worked on the Plan. He said getting current resident buy-in to the Plan would be the most important aspect of the Plan overall.

Jeff Bozell asked if there was frustration with the School Board on the part of the Planning Board in regards to the master planning process.

Chair Clein said there was no frustration at all on the part of the Planning Board. He said there was only an acknowledgement that the School Board functions independently from the City but still could be considered as part of the planning process.

There was Board consensus that the letter dated March 8, 2021 from DPZ could be submitted directly to the Commission along with the above comments from the Board, and did not need to return to the Board for further discussion.

Chair Clein thanked all involved in the master planning process thus far. He noted that while buy-in from current residents is important, the Plan's focus is on the next 20 years during which the population of Birmingham will inevitably shift and change. He said the Plan must strike a balance between the interests of the current population and what will help the community thrive long-term.

2. Status Update on Study Session Items

PD Ecker reviewed the item.

Mr. Jeffares recommended the Board aim to complete whatever the two simplest items would be first.

The Board decided to discuss this item in conjunction with the next item.

3. Action List 2021-2022

CP Dupuis introduced item.

Mr. Williams noted that only April-June 2021 will not be focused on the master planning process.

Chair Clein suggested that since the Commission and City Attorney have discussed medical marijuana regulations that it should be moved higher up on the list.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce said outdoor dining should be addressed as soon as feasible since the Commission would likely want to have the changes in place for winter 2021 and the item is a complicated one.

There was consensus that the quickest topics on the list to resolve would be the Special Land Use Review process, the glazing standards and the solar panel regulations. It was agreed that some combination of these three topics would be discussed at the Board's April 2021 meeting. At subsequent meetings the Board would work on the outdoor dining and medical marijuana regulations.

Motion by Mr. Williams

Seconded by Mr. Share to approve and recommend to the City Commission the Planning Board Action List as amended for 2021-2022.

Jeffrey Atto thanked the Board for working to make the installation of solar panels a less onerous process for residents.

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Williams, Share, Koseck, Boyle, Whipple-Boyce, Clein, Jeffares

Nays: None

03-37-21

F. Miscellaneous Business and Communications:

a. Communications

b. Administrative Approval Correspondence

CP Dupuis reviewed two proposed changes to EM Bistro's plans. He noted the outdoor seating had been updated to align with the Commission's recommendations, and that the indoor dining plans proposed a seating increase from 46 seats to 48 seats.

Noting that the proposed 48 seats still keeps the indoor seating well below the 65 seat limit for bistros, Mr. Boyle recommended the changes be administratively approved.

The Board concurred with Mr. Boyle.

c. Draft Agenda for the next Regular Planning Board Meeting (March 24, 2021)

d. Other Business

03-038-21

G. Planning Division Action Items

a. Staff Report on Previous Requests

b. Additional Items from tonight's meeting

03-039-21

H. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

Jana L. Ecker

Planning Director