

City Of Birmingham
Regular Meeting Of The Planning Board
April 9, 2025
City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on April 9, 2025.
The meeting was convened at 7:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Present: Vice Chair Bryan Williams; Board Members Robin Boyle, Stuart Jeffares, Bert Koseck, Daniel Share, Janelle Whipple-Boyce; Alternate Board Member Duncan Currie; Student Representatives Carter Anderson, Olivia Betanzos

Absent: Chair Scott Clein; Alternate Board Member Nasseem Ramin

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis; City Planner Blizinski, City Transcriptionist Eichenhorn

B. Approval Of The Minutes Of The Regular Planning Board Meeting of March 26, 2025

04-15-25

Motion by Share

Seconded by Koseck to move the approval of the minutes of March 26, 2025 as presented.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

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

Nays: None

C. Chair's Comments

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the meeting's procedures.

D. Review Of The Agenda

E. Meeting Open to the Public for Items Not on the Printed Agenda

F. Unfinished Business

G. Rezoning Applications

H. Community Impact Study and Site Plan Review

I. Special Land Use Permits

- 1. 280 E. Lincoln – Grace Baptist Church – Request for Special Land Use Permit Review for Renovation & Addition to Existing Religious Institution**

CP Blizinski presented the item and staff answered informational questions from the Board.

Andrew Walters of Metro Consulting Associates spoke on behalf of the project.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- Changes were made to the parking lot since the last meeting in response to Board comments about safety. The project still meets the parking requirements.
- The open space variance did not pose a challenge from a planning perspective. It integrates with the potential project at 400 E. Lincoln and the nearby credit union.
- While the applicant should enter into negotiations for a possible shared parking agreement with the City, committal to a shared parking agreement with the City should not be mandated by the Board.

04-16-25

Motion by Share

Seconded by Boyle to adopt the findings of the Planning Department in the report dated April 9, 2025 related to the approval criteria outlined in Article 7, Section 7.36 of the Zoning Ordinance and recommend approval to the City Commission the Special Land Use Permit application for 280 E. Lincoln – Grace Baptist Church – based on the site plan drawings submitted to the Planning Board on April 9, 2025 and subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The applicant submits plans that meet the 10 ft. side yard setback or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals;**
- 2. The applicant submits plans that meet the minimum open space requirement or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals;**
- 3. The applicant must enter into negotiations for a shared parking agreement with the City of Birmingham to reduce the impact of parking on the neighborhoods; and,**
- 4. The applicant must comply with the requests of all City Departments.**

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Nays: None

J. Site Plan & Design Reviews

- 1. 280 E. Lincoln – Grace Baptist Church – Request for Final Site Plan & Design Review for Renovation & Addition to Existing Religious Institution**

04-17-25

Motion by Share

Seconded by Boyle to adopt the findings of the Planning Department in the report dated April 9, 2025 related to the approval criteria outlined in Article 7, Section 7.27 of the Zoning Ordinance and recommend approval to the City Commission the Final Site Plan and Design Review application for 280 E. Lincoln – Grace Baptist Church – based on the site plan drawings submitted to the Planning Board on April 9, 2025 and subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The applicant submits plans that meet the 10 ft. side yard setback or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals;**
- 2. The applicant submits plans that meet the minimum open space requirement or obtain a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals;**
- 3. The applicant must enter into negotiations for a shared parking agreement with the City of Birmingham to reduce the impact of parking on the neighborhoods;**
- 4. The applicant must comply with the requests of all City Departments;**
- 5. The applicant understands that site plan approval shall be valid for a period of one year from the date it is granted. Upon request, the appropriate reviewing body may grant an extension not in excess of one year to the applicant prior to the expiration date in accordance with Article 7, Section 7.28 of the Zoning Ordinance.**

Board member comments were as follows:

- The ordinance does not distinguish between a significant and a minor encroachment into the side yard. This would be a relatively small encroachment of an exit stair and a railing, which may help with the variance request.**
- If this were a new site plan, three curb cuts would likely not be recommended. Since this is an existing site, the Board emphasized creating the safest conditions possible within the circumstances.**
- A shared parking agreement between the applicant and the City would be good urban planning.**
- The project was welcome, and represents an improvement to the site.**
- The applicant accommodated the Board's requests regarding parking, which made the project safer. The applicant's efforts in that regard were appreciated.**

Motion carried, 7-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Nays: None

K. Study Session

1. Impervious Surface, Open Space & Lot Coverage – Study Session

PD Dupuis reviewed the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- This proposal would limit the practice of xeriscaping.**
- The proposed language should be clarified to more clearly communicate the intent.**
- Planning staff should consult with the Building Department about how the proposed changes might affect open space calculations.**
- There was some concern that a 65% vegetation requirement may excessively limit the sizes of porches, driveways, or walkways.**
- Limiting residents' ability to xeriscape may not be appropriate.**

- Xeriscaping promotes water conservation. While some residents may not find it aesthetically pleasing, the question of individual property rights arises.
- It may not be appropriate to define artificial turf as impervious, since it is what is below turf that more actively affects perviousness.
- If a stair is built inside a garage, a garage is permitted to be 75 square feet larger than it otherwise would be. The ordinance does not permit that clearly. This discrepancy should be corrected.
- If a home forms a U-shape, and a deck were located within the U, the calculation of the open space is different than if the deck were in front of a more traditional linear facade. This aspect of the ordinance should be reviewed as well.
- The diagram was helpful.
- Birmingham ordinances are very complex, especially for people unfamiliar with navigating them. Simplifying them where possible is worthwhile.
- It would make sense to postpone consideration of this item until the May 16, 2025 meeting, in part so the Chair would have the opportunity to opine.

2. Childcare Ordinance – Study Session

PD Dupuis reviewed the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- It is important for the City to have the capacity to have home child care businesses.
- These changes would not allow home child care businesses anywhere they are not already permitted. The changes would remove the SLUP requirement.
- It could be beneficial to remove the SLUP requirement in the interest of efficiency.
- Alternatively, the SLUP process allows residents more opportunity to offer input. Consequently, retaining the SLUP requirement may be appropriate.
- On page 50, 'group day care' should be replaced with 'group child care'.
- The City should consider allowing 'group child care homes', a less intensive use, in any zone where the more intensive 'child care centers' are allowed.
- The zones in which child care centers are permitted could also be reevaluated.
- The ordinance could require that each child care related business must be licensed by the State or meet the State requirements. This might sufficiently address the concerns that would otherwise arise during a SLUP process, and might alleviate the need for SLUPs for these businesses.
- If the ordinance does not require meeting the State minimum requirements or State licensing, then a SLUP process should be required.
- The Board should review the State requirements to ensure that they adequately address possible City concerns.
- This topic touches on a broader planning question around defining a 'private' home, as the number of 'private' homes housing additional commercial uses has increased.

L. Miscellaneous Business and Communications

1. Pre-Application Discussions

i. 525 N. Old Woodward – Luxe – Outdoor Dining

The applicant was not in attendance.

It was Board consensus to postpone the preapplication review until the applicant was in attendance.

- 2. Communications**
- 3. Administrative Approval Correspondence**
- 4. Draft Agenda**
- 5. Action List**
- 6. Other Business**

M. Planning Division Action Items

- 1. Staff Report on Previous Requests**
- 2. Additional Items from tonight's meeting**

N. Adjournment

No further business being evident, the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.



Nick Dupuis, Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist