

City Of Birmingham
Special Meeting Of The Planning Board
April 30, 2025
City Commission Room
151 Martin Street, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the special meeting of the City of Birmingham Planning Board held on April 30, 2025.
The meeting was convened at 5:30 p.m.

A. Roll Call

Present: Chair Scott Clein; Board Members Robin Boyle, Stuart Jeffares, Bert Koseck, Janelle Whipple-Boyce

Absent: Vice Chair Bryan Williams; Board Member Daniel Share; Alternate Board Members Duncan Currie, Nasseem Ramin; Student Representatives Carter Anderson, Olivia Betanzos

Staff: Planning Director Dupuis; Assistant City Manager Clemence, City Manager Ecker, City Transcriptionist Eichenhorn

B. Approval Of The Minutes

C. Chair's Comments

The 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

K. Study Session

L. Miscellaneous Business and Communications

1. Pre-Application Discussions

i. 400 E. Lincoln – Birmingham Senior and Community Center

Jim Stock of Neumann Smith presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- Per Ms. Braun, Next's present parking lot reaches capacity during certain special events.
- At its current location, Next had to pave over the adjacent little league field for additional parking. Parking can be an issue for Next.
- The presentation was excellent and should be a model for other development presentations.
- The plans for the site represent a series of compromises in order to fit everything the City wants on the lot. Parking at the neighboring credit union is already challenging, and if

seniors park at the church they would have to walk around the 400 E. Lincoln building to reach the entrance. Concerns arise about parking in the neighborhood. The massing may be too high for the residential context. Buildings in Birmingham tend to have very good materials and traditional design. Concrete slabs may not be appropriate. Next functions well because its space is cohesive. This building's design may not facilitate the same kind of warm culture Next presently has. Traffic and photometric studies should occur. The proposed change to Floyd Street may inconvenience the residents of that street. This is an enormous civic project, and it is not contemplated in the 2040 Plan. The 2040 Plan solicited a significant amount of public input, and it would have been beneficial if residents had been able to comment on this possible project at that time.

- The site is used well, and demonstrates consideration for the surrounding areas. The design makes the area walkable. Improvements to St. James Park would likely be welcomed by neighborhood residents. The internal flow of the building space was well-designed, reflects a lot of consideration of the senior population, and allows for interaction between different user groups. Interactions between seniors and other populations benefit both groups. For the exterior, the height of the building is acceptable for the context and will benefit from the planned landscaping. The setback on Lincoln is appropriate, as there are both commercial and residential uses along Lincoln nearby. The administrative areas might benefit from slightly less glass and higher windows to reduce the likelihood of windows with regularly pulled shades.
- The site plan was well done. The east side of Floyd will still have a pedestrian path. While the use of Floyd is an unusual solution, it is one that fits the context. The height and massing is likely appropriate for the context. It would be helpful to have renderings that show the building within its context. Brick is traditional and can be done in a contemporary way. The amount of glass on the Lincoln facade could cause photometric challenges for the residential neighbors across the street. Signage proposals would be useful at the next presentation ~~presentation~~¹ to the Board. The density of the programming may result in parking demand issues. Avoiding using part of St. James Park for parking is preferable, but so is reducing parking spillover into the neighborhoods.
- Bright white is not an appropriate color for the exterior. A warm neutral color palette would be more appropriate, recessive, and transitional, which would reduce the visual impact of the height. It would have greater aesthetic longevity and less maintenance demands.
- Some eligible residents may presently not attend Next functions because of its current facility. The higher ceilings and smaller rooms in the proposed facility will likely be valuable to the community. Pedestrian access between St. James Park and the facility should be refined and increased.
- The allotted parking makes sense for this type of facility and the likelihood of multimodal access. The parking agreements being established with adjacent property owners will be helpful. The plans allow for future parking expansion if necessary. Timing of different programmatic demands on parking could help further inform the site design. The drive aisles could possibly be reduced in order to create more space for stronger edges against the building and to the east. It might be appropriate to put a walkway along the building to encourage looking in. This building can function as a transition between a slightly more urban space and the non-urban space of the park. Enhancing the building's integration with that context would be worthwhile. The architecture of the building should be mirrored

¹As amended at the May 14, 2025 meeting.

in the screen wall design along Lincoln. The sidewalk on Lincoln should be concrete, and the plaza in front of the building should be linked as a table to the node of trees in the island in order to calm vehicular speeds. The promenade to the south should be treated similarly. Entering the park should evoke a sense of arrival. The plaza just south of the building is a great opportunity. There might be opportunities for outdoor programming space to the south. It was appropriate that different uses in the building were designed differently. The site offers opportunities for public art.

- Rather than having drive aisles that widen by a couple of feet, they should be kept the same width and any extra space should be landscaped.
- Sustainability options for the facility will be discussed.

Public Comment

Cris Braun, Executive Director of Next, answered informational questions from the Board.

George Dilgard supported the site plan and commented regarding the setback and landscaping, the glass and color palette, the need for a traffic study, and ways of encouraging shared vehicular or multimodal access of the site.

- 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 6:49 p.m.



Nick Dupuis, Planning Director



Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist