

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024 | 2:00 PM  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MINUTES

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL B. O'QUINN, COMMITTEE CHAIR

Councilor(s) Present: Alexander, Abbott, Clarke, Moore, O'Quinn, Smitherman, Tate, Williams

1. **Call to Order**

The Meeting was called to order by the Committee Chair, Council President O'Quinn.

2. **Approval of Minutes – November 21, 2023**

**Action Taken:**

**Councilor Williams Motioned to Approve.**

**Councilor Alexander Seconded the Motion.**

**Councilor Abbott pointed out there were errors in the minutes and requested delaying the approval.**

**The Approval of Minutes Delayed for Necessary Edits/Corrections.**

3. **Council Administrator's Report- Cheryl Kidd, Councilor Administrator, Birmingham City Council**

a) **Department Budget Update:**

Mr. McDaniels is awaiting departmental feedback as to budgeted items desired in preparing the 2024-2025 budget submission.

A survey will be forwarded to each Councilor to give feedback in order that Mr. McDaniels can begin correlating the information.

Staff will also seek further guidance from the President and the Chair of Budget and Finance.

b) **Central Staff:**

The PIO Team continues creating messaging for approval for the Pre-Budget Educational Awareness regarding the budgeting process.

The 2024-2025 will contain funding for the Gallery of Distinguished Citizens expense.

There are eight (8) inductees to consider.

The last Administration did not hold an induction reception or dinner.

There are no hard guidelines as to the names put into nomination. It is dependent upon the vote of the Council to accept the names.

Staff continues to determine how any future inductees will be displayed and the associated cost the Council should expense in the upcoming fiscal year's budget.

Spacing is becoming an issue with the busts. A decision will have to be made on where to display the upcoming inductees or if the process will become digital.

c) **District Staff/Office Concerns:**

The Quarterly Discretionary Expenditure Status Report and Operation Budget Status Report were distributed. A-Teams were created to review the district budgets by districts. Each district will only be able to view their information. The information will be updated quarterly. Felicia Jolly is available to provide tutorials on Microsoft Teams, if needed.

A communication was sent out detailing the change in roles and responsibilities within Central Staff. Development in Central Staff has always been dictated by the realization that there is not staff for any one person to be the sole holder of information or expertise.

d) **Departmental Concerns:**

The Council Chambers renovations are still in process. Staff is working with the Clerk's office on the Granicus operations. Connectivity and integration appear to be the issue.

Staff inquired about cushions for the bench seating in the Chambers; the cushions will be replaced.

Ms. Kidd is working aggressively with IMS to go paperless within the department to decrease paper consumption. This will incur a cost expense within the department.

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e) **Constituent Complaints/Concerns:**

There were no complaints/concerns submitted to the Administrator.

f) **Council Travel/Events/Invitations:**

The information was provided in the Council's information packet.

g) **Questions & Directives:**

Staff is seeking further guidance on the change in the USF Agreement. Mr. McDaniels will assist with feedback.

Enabling Legislation by the Personnel Board was provided in the Council's information packet.

Councilor Abbott inquired about the Wi-Fi in City Hall. She stated that it does not work properly.

Chief Sparks requested specifics of the issues Councilor Abbott is experiencing.

Chief Sparks stated that he would have IMS to follow up on the request/issues.

**Action Taken:**

**No Action – Information Only.**

4. **Right Size Parking Amendments - Tim Gambrel, Chief Planner, PEP/Hunter Garrison**

This is a collaboration between Planning, Engineering, and Permits, Birmingham Department of Transportation, Mayor's Office and the Birmingham Police Department.

**Hunter Garrison presented information on the data.**

**Current Requirements:**

- When a development is built, the City requires a certain number of parking spaces be provided on site.
- They cannot provide more or less than the required number without regulatory action.
- Some parts of downtown do not require a certain number, and some have a 50% reduction.
- Small discounts are available for transit proximity or bike rack installation.

**Key Proposed Changes:**

- Minimum parking requirements are removed.
- Previous minimums become new maximums for surface parking lots. Parking decks do not have a maximum if ground level is activated.
- Developments over a certain size (25,000 & 50,000 sq. ft.) must submit a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan.
- Some development types have bicycle parking requirements.
- If accessible via a maintained, good condition alleyway residential parking would be required in the rear.

**What This Does:**

- Encourages infill development on vacant and smaller lots.
- Enables affordable and missing middle housing construction.
- Improves walkability and pedestrian safety.
- Makes transit more viable due to increased density along corridors.
- Addresses stormwater, urban heat island, and climate change.

**What This Doesn't Do:**

- Eliminate parking altogether.
- Remove ADA parking requirements.
- Address curb-side parking enforcement.
- Address parking in front yards.
- Affect residents' private driveways or garages.

Seattle (WA) and Buffalo (NY) were the first two cities to do right-size parking. Buffalo is the city that is most similar to Birmingham; 83% of their new developments included off-street parking. In Buffalo and Seattle more than half of new homes built since 2017 would have been illegal under the former parking minimums.

**Community Engagement:**

- A stakeholder working group was created through the Planning Commission, which had three meetings. The meetings covered minimum parking reform, transportation demand management plans, and parking enforcement strategy and 12-step plan (BDOT).
- A survey was performed and the results showed favorable results for parking minimum reform.

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**Four Key Reasons to Eliminate Parking Minimums:**

- Parking minimums make housing less affordable and limit where it can be built.
- Parking minimums make sprawl endemic, which prevents a multi-modal system from becoming viable by increasing the distance you must travel.
- Parking minimums block redevelopment of vacant or underutilized buildings as complying with minimums can make projects infeasible.
- Parking contributes to environmental hazards such as flooding and urban heat island effects. Housing cost is inflated by parking minimums. Lower-income families are less likely to own numerous vehicles, whereas higher income residents typically own more vehicles. Research shows that in 2016 typical cost renters paid per month for parking was \$142.00. Adjusted inflation increased the amount to \$200.00 per month. Getting rid of parking minimums enables sprawl repair and infill.

**Environmental Effects:**

- Parking contributes to flooding, climate change and urban heat island effect.

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM):**

- Developers would be required to provide a threshold number of TDM measures to address transportation demand.
- The number of measures they must include is dependent on the size of the development.
- Developments are not allowed to build with zero parking and not demonstrate how they will address demand.
- Examples of TDM include sharing parking agreement, private parking, carpool/vanpool priority spaces, on site care share, subsidized transit passes, enhanced commuter amenities, improved bike parking, dedicated micromobility spaces, commuter information centers, traffic calming design, and meeting low impact development standards.

**Pros to Removing Parking Minimums:**

- Enables infill development, make multi-modal systems more viable and safer, reduce suburban sprawl, addresses flooding and stormwater, addresses urban heat island effect and climate change.

**Cons to Removing Parking Minimums:**

- Parking could, over time, become less convenient for some areas.

**Summary of On-Street Parking Enforcement Strategies**

Changing regulations for private off-street parking lots.

BDOT, in partnership with the Birmingham Police Department, has started towing vehicles for public safety violations.

Park-mobile has been in place for several years. The signage and stickers will be replaced to make them more visible. Zones are being extended in several areas.

Draft a policy/set a threshold for when a vehicle can be towed for unpaid violations.

Confirm an update to date, actively-managed database of parking violations.

Make sure the enforcement officers in the field can access the database in real time.

Create a business model for managing the system.

Work with Administration to continue to the capacity; hiring of staff, growing the system, etc.

Update the fee structure.

Create a system of parking benefit districts.

Manage the permits in the system associated with residential parking management.

The Birmingham Planning Commission recommended the item with a vote of 11:2.

**Action Taken:**

**Councilor O'Quinn Motioned to:**

**(1) Delay the Decision on the Item (a date is to be determined).**

**(2) Schedule a Joint Special Called Committee of the Whole and Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting.**

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- (3) **The Planning Staff will meet with individual Councilor Offices and address their concerns on one on one.**

**Councilor Smitherman Seconded the Motion.**  
**The Item is Delayed per the above-mentioned.**

5. **City of Birmingham Construction Projects**

- a. **Family Fun Center at CrossPlex-Cornell Wesley, Director, Department of Innovation and Economic Opportunity, Jeffery Riddle, and Eric Clamintie**

The Department of Innovation and Economic Opportunity has held 14 community engagement sessions and hired a feasibility consultant that completed actual telephone interviews to furnish actual performance. The Family Fun Center will include a bowling alley, skating rink, event venue, outdoor facilities for movies, concerts, and a flex space for technology. An indoor walking track will be erected around the skating rink. The facility will be located near the round-about, close to the CrossPlex complex. As it relates to the parking, the architectural firm used the parking matrix based on statutory guidelines on a square-footage usage basis. The parking can be reduced if needed. The design is approximately 30% complete. The project managers are aiming towards a 2025 completion date. A more definitive date will be discussed at a future meeting.

**Action Taken:**

**No Action – Information Only.**

- b. **Amphitheater - Tad Snider, Executive Director & CEO of the BJCC**

**A document was distributed that follows the monthly update that is forwarded to the Councilors.**  
**A document was distributed revealing illustrations and renderings on where the state of the design as it exist to date.**

There is a total program budget that relates to the Amphitheater construction and the parking deck that is part of the amphitheater site. This will continue to refine until the actual public bidding of the work. When the bids are opened, the actual price of the project will be confirmed. Another exhibit to the agreement is the contracts that have already been entered into. They date back as far as the end of 2022, which includes engaging a program manager, when the six in authority actually purchased the amphitheater property from Northside Redevelopment, LLC. Several of the contracts include utility relocation and demolition. The next significant steps should occur during the months of February through May 2024. The Design Development Set was completed in December 2022. The utility relocations are largely finished with AT&T being the last remaining utility. That work should be completed by January 29, 2024. There are still supply chain issues on large, specialized equipment. The electrical switch gear is the longest lead item for the project, which is approximately 52 weeks. An enabling bid will go out in February to be able to purchase the materials. The overall grading and reworking of the site to prepare for construction will occur in February 2024. The bid will go out on February 15, 2024. A ground-breaking activity will occur around the time of the bidding process. With the completion of the 100%'s CD set (construction document set) in May, is when the balance of the work is publicly bid and in accordance with Public Works Act of the State of Alabama. All the key project milestones are still on track to be able to have the first event in May 2025. The last bid will be the overall general works project, which will be everything past the point of grading of the site. This should occur in May 2024.

**Action Taken:**

**No Action - Information Only.**

6. **Citizen's Participation Plan Update- Attorney Beverly Scruggs, Office of the City Attorney**

Attorney Scruggs informed the Council that there is a matter pending litigation regarding this item and recommended the Council enter into an Executive Session for further discussion.

**Executive Session**

**Action Taken:**

**Councilor Abbott Motioned for the Council to go into Executive Session.**

**Councilor Smitherman Seconded the Motion.**

**Executive Session Approved.**

**Meeting Reconvened**

**The being no further discussion, a motion was made to adjourn.**

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7. **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Councilor Alexander Motioned to Adjourn.**  
**Councilor Abbott Seconded the Motion.**  
**Meeting Adjourned.**