

MINUTES

BIRMINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION

The Birmingham Planning Commission convened in the City Council Chambers on the Third Floor of Birmingham City Hall on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 8:39 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice-Chairman Michael Morrison, Patty Pilkerton, Haley Colson-Lewis, Dr. Kathryn Doornbos, Mashonda Taylor, Brian Gunn, Dr. Victoria Hollis, Councilor Steven Hoyt (Melva Langford), Councilor Valerie Abbott (Beatrice Collins), and Michael Eddington

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Nyesha Black, L'Tryce Slade, Devon Sims, Ronald Crenshaw, and Kevin Moore

STAFF PRESENT: Tim Gambrel, Michael Ward, Kim Speerl, Jason Hjetland, and Roderick Lowe

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairman Morrison. Commissioner Langford made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doornbos and the agenda was approved unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 6, 2019

The minutes from the November 6, 2019 meeting were not ready.

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Chief Planner Tim Gambrel mentioned that the City Center Master Plan will be revealed to the public at noon on December 12, 2019 at the Birmingham Museum of Art. Mr. Gambrel encouraged the Commissioners to attend if they're available.

IV. Resolution of Appreciation for Brian Ruggs

On behalf of the Birmingham Planning Commission, Vice-Chairman Morrison presented Brian Ruggs with a resolution of appreciation for his many years of leadership and service. The resolution reads as follows:

WHEREAS, Brian T. Ruggs has served with distinction on the Birmingham Planning Commission since August 17, 2010; and

WHEREAS, during this over nine-year period of public service he has made significant contributions to a more effective planning program for Birmingham's future through his experience, knowledge and active dedication; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission has greatly benefited from his valuable leadership and guidance as both Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Birmingham Planning Commission and as Chairman of the Zoning Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, his concern for the City of Birmingham and its citizens is further reflected in his previous assistance in the development of the City's first Complete Streets Policy; and

WHEREAS, his concern for the City of Birmingham and its citizens is also further reflected in his active involvement as Chairman of the City's Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee and other civic activities; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Commission hereby recognizes and publicly expresses its appreciation to Brian T. Ruggs for his participation on the Commission and his continuing efforts to improve the public welfare of this community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be incorporated into the permanent minutes of this meeting and that a copy of this resolution be presented to Mr. Ruggs as an expression of this organization's deep affection and esteem.

ADOPTED unanimously this 4th day of December 2019.

Mr. Ruggs thanked the Commission for the Resolution of Appreciation. He expressed appreciation for his time on the Commission and what he learned over the years regarding planning and how it impacts the citizens of Birmingham.

V. CASE NO. ZAC2019-00039

SUBJECT: A request to amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to modify guidelines for mini-storage warehouses and automobile parking structures.

APPLICANT: City of Birmingham

PREMISES: Citywide

Principal Planner, Michael Ward, gave a brief introduction of the case. Mr. Ward mentioned that the City Council had concerns about the growth of mini-storage warehouses within the City's commercial districts and historic districts. He said that the City is trying to increase vibrancy and density within its mixed-use districts and Commercial Revitalization Districts, but mini-storage warehouses don't typically generate a lot of activity. He stated that the Birmingham City Council approved a six-month moratorium on mini-storage warehouses on July 3, 2019.

Mr. Ward said since the moratorium has been in place, planning staff has received feedback from councilors on the Planning & Zoning Committee in order to improve mini-storage warehouse guidelines in the City's Zoning Ordinance. He also said planning staff has reviewed the standards for warehouses, warehouse/offices, and automobile parking structures (parking decks) as well.

Mr. Ward stated that the proposed conditions for mini-storage warehouse, warehouse/office, and automobile parking uses will allow those structures to have some ground floor area (at least 50%) for retail, restaurant or office space. He added that the proposed conditions for mini-storage warehouse, warehouse/office, and automobile parking uses incorporate frontage façade standards from the Character Code that will allow those structures to look like mixed-use buildings.

Tim Gambrel, Chief Planner with the City of Birmingham, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Gambrel said the proposed changes will also encourage buildings and parking decks to be accessed from the alleys.

Commissioner Gunn asked if additional design standards can be included for parking decks, such as murals. Mr. Gambrel said the primary purpose for the proposed parking standards is for those structures to look like buildings. He added that the proposed City Center Master Plan recommends artistic façade screens to cover the facades of some of our existing parking decks.

Commissioner Colson-Lewis asked if the proposed changes are intended to limit automobile parking structures as well as mini-storage warehouses. Mr. Gambrel said we're not necessarily trying to limit those uses, but the intent is to allow those uses to fit into the urban character of our Commercial Revitalization Districts and our mixed-use districts.

Commissioner Doornbos suggested that the phrase pertaining to loading docks or service doors on page 86 (Section 4.c.) should change to "limit disruptions to pedestrian traffic" instead of "limit disruptions to pedestrian and bicycle traffic" for clarity purposes. Mr. Gambrel asked if we can change the language to "limit disruptions to urban, multi-modal traffic". Commissioner Doornbos agreed with the change.

With no additional questions or comments, Commissioner Langford made a motion to approve Case Number ZAC2019-00039. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Collins and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS, the Birmingham City Council had concerns about the growth of mini-storage warehouses within the City's commercial districts and historic districts; and

WHEREAS, mini-storage warehouses don't typically generate a lot of activity within the City's mixed-use districts and Commercial Revitalization Districts; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham City Council approved a six-month moratorium on mini-storage warehouses on July 3, 2019; and

WHEREAS, planning staff has received feedback from councilors on the Planning & Zoning Committee in order to improve mini-storage warehouse guidelines as well as guidelines for warehouses, warehouse/offices, and automobile parking structures in the City's Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the proposed conditions for mini-storage warehouse, warehouse/office, and automobile parking uses will allow those structures to have some ground floor area (at least 50%) for retail, restaurant or office space; and

WHEREAS, the proposed conditions for mini-storage warehouse, warehouse/office, and automobile parking uses will incorporate frontage façade standards from the Character Code that will allow those structures to look like mixed-use buildings; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Planning Commission hereby **RECOMMENDS** to the Council of the City of Birmingham that the City's Zoning Ordinance be amended to incorporate the text changes as set forth in the document entitled "Proposed Amendments to the City of Birmingham's Zoning Ordinance" dated, November 27, 2019, subject to:

1. Within the sections referencing loading docks or service doors, change the phrase within the sections from "limit disruptions to pedestrian and bicycle traffic" to "limit disruptions to urban, multi-modal traffic."

2. Create a new Section E.b. on page 79 and add "The loading docks or service doors shall be designed to limit disruptions to urban, multi-modal traffic and be located at the rear of the building that abuts the alley or as near to the alley as possible at an existing curb cut or as determined by the Department of Transportation."

3. Create a new Section 2.b. on page 81 and add "The loading docks or service doors shall be designed to limit disruptions to urban, multi-modal traffic and be located at the rear of the building that abuts the alley or as near to the alley as possible at an existing curb cut or as determined by the Department of Transportation."

4. Create a new Section 3.c. on page 85 and add "The loading docks or service doors shall be designed to limit disruptions to urban, multi-modal traffic and be located at the rear of the building that abuts the alley or as near to the alley as possible at an existing curb cut or as determined by the Department of Transportation."

5. Create a new Section 4.c. on page 112 and add "The loading docks or service doors shall be designed to limit disruptions to urban, multi-modal traffic and be located at the rear of the

building that abuts the alley or as near to the alley as possible at an existing curb cut or as determined by the Department of Transportation.”

6. Create a new Section 4.d. on page 112 and add “The warehouse use must be located at the rear of the building and the office use at the principal frontage.”

7. Create a new Section 6.d. on page 114 and add “The warehouse use must be located at the rear of the building and the office use at the principal frontage.”

VI. Election of Commission Officers and Members of the Zoning Advisory and Subdivision Committees

Principal Planner, Michael Ward, gave a brief introduction of the item. Mr. Ward mentioned that Commissioner Pilkerton, Commissioner Black, and Commissioner Gunn were approved to be a part of the Nominating Committee by the Planning Commission on November 6, 2019. He added that during the month of November, the Nominating Committee received feedback from Commissioners and has developed a slate of officers as well as the membership of the Zoning Advisory and Subdivision Committees.

Mr. Ward noted that the Commissioners have a copy of the recommendations from the Nominating Committee in their packets. He stated that the elected members of the Executive Committee and the two standing committees will serve for a period of two years, beginning on January 1, 2020.

With no questions or comments from the Commissioners, Commissioner Taylor made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee’s recommendations for Commission officers and members of the Zoning Advisory and Subdivision Committees. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gunn and the following recommendations from the Nominating Committee were approved unanimously:

RECOMMENDED MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION’S STANDING COMMITTEES for 2020-21

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN:	MICHAEL MORRISON
VICE-CHAIRMAN:	NYESHA BLACK
CHAIRMAN PRO-TEMPORE:	HALEY COLSON LEWIS
MEMBER AT LARGE:	PATTY PILKERTON
CHAIR, COUNCIL’S PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE,	COUNCILOR STEVEN HOYT

2. ZONING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NYESHA BLACK
RONALD CRENSHAW
VICTORIA HOLLIS
HALEY COLSON LEWIS
PATTY PILKERTON
L'TRYCE SLADE
(Vacant)

3. SUBDIVISION COMMITTEE

KATHRYN DOORNBOS
BRIAN GUNN
MICHAEL MORRISON
DEVON SIMS
MASHONDA TAYLOR

VII. Reschedule the January 1, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting to January 8, 2020

Commissioner Langford made a motion to reschedule the January 1, 2020 Planning Commission meeting to January 8, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor and the motion was approved unanimously.

VIII. Other Business and Communications

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:08 a.m.