

MINUTES

BIRMINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION

The Birmingham Planning Commission convened in the City Council Chambers on the Third Floor of Birmingham City Hall on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 8:39 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice-Chairman Michael Morrison, Chairman Pro-Tem Selena Rodgers-Dickerson, Councilor Steven Hoyt (Melva Langford), Dr. Nyesha Black, Devon Sims, Dr. Kathryn Doornbos, Ronald Crenshaw, Haley Colson-Lewis, Mashonda Taylor, and Fred Hawkins (Michael Eddington)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chairman Brian Ruggs, Patty Pilkerton, L'Tryce Slade, Councilor Valerie Abbott, and Kevin Moore

STAFF PRESENT: Tim Gambrel, Chris Hatcher, Michael Ward, Kim Speorl, Tracey Hayes, 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. An update on the Birmingham Xpress Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

Howard Richards, Deputy Director of the City's Capital Projects Management Office, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Richards said the City's Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2013 and the Plan showed some preferred routes for the development of high capacity transit. He stated that the City applied for a \$66.5 million dollar grant to build out the BRT project. He added that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) only awarded \$40 million so the project had to be scaled back to the current 10-mile corridor from Five Points West to Woodlawn.

Mr. Richards mentioned these five transit goals of the BRT project:

1. Connect Birmingham's Neighborhoods to Opportunities
2. Improve Mobility and Access to Jobs and Opportunities for Minority and Low-Income Residents
3. Complement and Encourage Community Reinvestment
4. Improve Birmingham's Public Transportation Network
5. Provide a Foundation for Special Events Transportation including The World Games 2021

Mr. Richards said the BRT will be called the Birmingham Xpress and it is expected to set the stage for light rail in the future. He stated that the BRT will connect 25 of the City's 99 neighborhoods

and 21% of the City's population is within a ½ mile radius of the BRT route. He also stated that of the residents within the BRT Corridor, 33% are low income. He added that the BRT route connects five of the city's largest employers and provides access to 125,000 jobs.

Mr. Richards mentioned that all aspects of the BRT project are currently in the design phase. He also mentioned that the BRT project will have two Community Transfer Stations (one in Five Points West and one in Woodlawn). He hopes to start construction of the BRT project in either late July or early August 2019. He stated that all segments of the BRT project should be under construction in either January or February 2020. He expects BRT to be operational by the 2021 World Games (early summer 2021).

Commissioner Langford asked if Mr. Richards was the project manager and if so, is he using standard project management phases (planning, design, construction, etc.). Mr. Richards said he is the project manager and his office along with the FTA have laid out a project management plan for all phases of the BRT project.

Commissioner Doornbos asked why the BRT doesn't extend to the airport and will the BRT expand to the airport in the future. Mr. Richards said the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority's (BJCTA's) Transit Development Plan contains a MAX route that will bring people from the airport to the Woodlawn Transfer Station.

Commissioner Black asked will the stations have information to let people know when the next bus is coming. Mr. Richards said yes. He added that the BRT buses will be running on 15 minute headways during peak hours.

Commissioner Black asked will there be an app associated with the BRT project. Mr. Richards said yes.

Commissioner Black asked about the cost difference between the Birmingham Xpress and the Magic City Connector. Mr. Richards said the cost will be the same for the passengers of both systems.

Commissioner Black has concerns about transit branding because it appears like we have three different systems (MAX, Magic City Connector, and Birmingham Xpress). Mr. Richards said the BRT will have its own distinct identity and it will be integrated with the existing transit service. He added that the BJCTA will operate the Birmingham Xpress as well as MAX and the Magic City Connector.

Commissioner Langford asked will other cities be able to participate in the future. Mr. Richards said other municipalities, such as Hoover, have discussed future BRT routes with the BJCTA.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked will the BJCTA use the Birmingham Xpress to improve its existing services. Mr. Richards said yes. He added that the BRT is pushing the BJCTA to implement new technology to improve its operations.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 7, 2018

Commissioner Langford made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 7, 2018 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Doornbos and the minutes were approved unanimously.

IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Principal Planner Tim Gambrel mentioned the kickoff meetings for the Northside/Southside Framework Plan. He stated that the kickoff meeting for the Northside Community (Fountain Heights, Druid Hills, Norwood, Evergreen, and Central City Neighborhoods) will be held on February 21st at 5:30 pm at the Fountain Heights Recreation Center. He added that the kickoff meeting for the Southside Community (Five Points South, Glen Iris, and Southside Neighborhoods) was held last week. He mentioned that the Framework Plan's progress can be tracked at www.imaginebham.com.

The minutes from the November 7th Planning Commission meeting was mentioned by Vice-Chairman Morrison and Commissioner Black asked for an update to see if the City started enforcing illegal parking on and around St. Vincent's campus. Mr. Gambrel said he believes parking enforcement is occurring in that area, but he will contact James Fowler, Director of the City's Department of Transportation, to verify that.

Commissioner Doornbos asked for a status update to see if St. Vincent's installed the controlled-access gate at the fire lane. Mr. Gambrel said that he will have to check and report back to the Commission.

V. CASE NO. PF-1-19

SUBJECT: A request for approval of the location, character, and extent of improvements associated with the Phase II construction of 64 apartment units at the Loveman Village Housing Community, which will be renamed the Villas at Titusville.

APPLICANT: Marcella Roberts, Vice-President of Development at Hollyhand Development, LLC; acting as agent for the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD).

PREMISES: 1200 Goldwire Court in the Titusville Community.

Senior Planner, Michael Ward, gave a brief introduction of the case. Mr. Ward said the Planning Commission approved Phase I of this redevelopment project on October 4, 2017 (Case Number PF-18-17) and that phase involved the demolition of 220 units with the replacement of 100 units in 15 buildings. He stated that the second and final phase will demolish the remaining 280 units and replace them with 64 units. He mentioned that a community building, playground, fitness

center, and a mail center will be included in this phase of the project. He added that most of the buildings will be two-story, brick structures with fiber cement siding.

Marcella Roberts, Vice-President of Development at Hollyhand Development, addressed the Planning Commission. Mrs. Roberts mentioned that Loveman Village was originally built in the 1950's and the development was old and obsolete. She said the HABD and her organization worked together to redevelop Loveman Village.

Mrs. Roberts stated that Loveman Village redevelopment actually started offsite with the construction of a 120-unit residential project called the Park at Sydney Drive and some former Loveman Village residents chose to relocate there. She added that the Park at Sydney Drive is 100% occupied.

Mrs. Roberts mentioned that the next phase is under construction right now that will provide 100 units onsite. She stated that this is the final phase of the project, which will provide 64 units onsite.

Vice-Chairman Morrison asked if there were any deviations from the site plan or the project since the previous Planning Commission case. Mrs. Roberts said no.

Vice-Chairman Morrison asked if site access from Martin Luther King Drive is a part of the final project phase. Mrs. Roberts said yes.

Commissioner Langford asked if there was a high number of Loveman Village residents who want to return to the new, onsite units. Mrs. Roberts said quite a few of the Loveman Village residents chose to relocate to the Park at Sydney Drive. She added that a number of Loveman Village residents prefer to stay on the site and some chose to use their voucher to relocate to an apartment complex that will accept their vouchers.

Commissioner Black asked Mrs. Roberts to explain how vouchers work. Mrs. Roberts said vouchers are issued to families by the HABD and they're based on income. She added that a family can take the voucher to find an apartment and the family will pay a portion of the rent and the HABD will pay the remaining portion of the rent.

Commissioner Black asked about the number of residents staying versus the number moving to the Park at Sydney Drive and those using the vouchers. Mrs. Roberts said they do have those numbers, but she doesn't have them with her today.

Commissioner Black asked of the 500 units, how many people lived there before the redevelopment. Mrs. Roberts said she doesn't know the exact number of people, but she knows that Loveman Village was 87% occupied prior to the redevelopment.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked is this a mixed-use development or is it only for low-income residents. Mrs. Roberts said the development is considered a tax credit property, which means that individuals that have incomes of 60% or below the City's median income can live there.

Vice-Chairman Morrison asked will there be a police substation on the site. Mrs. Roberts said the HABD has a plan for public safety, but she hasn't heard any discussion about placing a police substation on the site.

There being no additional comments or questions, Commissioner Taylor made a motion to approve Case Number PF-1-19. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Langford and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS, the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) recognizes that Loveman Village, constructed in 1952, is in need of revitalization and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the HABD, in conjunction with Hollyhand Development and the City of Birmingham, undertake special efforts to facilitate the planning and coordination of future development to bring about such revitalization; and

WHEREAS, the overall project will promote and encourage growth in the Titusville Community; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission approved Phase I of this redevelopment project on October 4, 2017 (Case Number PF-18-17) that consisted of the demolition of 220 obsolete units and replacing them with 100 units within 15 groups of buildings; and

WHEREAS, the second and final phase of the project will demolish the remaining 280 obsolete units and replace them with 64 units; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission finds that the implementation of the overall project would benefit the public health and welfare of the residents of the City of Birmingham by stimulating quality housing opportunities; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Birmingham Planning Commission that the location, character, and extent for the hereinabove described property is hereby APPROVED as illustrated on the site plan entitled "The Villas at Titusville II" dated December 1, 2018, Case No. PF-1-19".

VI. CASE NO.	PF-2-19
SUBJECT:	An amendment to the 2015 UAB Campus Master Plan for the approval of the demolition of the vacant 106,800 sf UAB Town House building and the construction of a temporary greenspace that will be the future site of an UAB medical facility.
APPLICANT:	Geoff Boyd, Interim Director of Planning, Design & Construction at the University of Alabama at Birmingham
PREMISES:	2000 University Boulevard; the northeast corner of 20 th Street South and University Boulevard

Mr. Ward gave a brief introduction of the case. Mr. Ward said the Town House was constructed in 1951 as a private residential apartment building with multiple ground floor tenants. He stated that UAB acquired the facility in 1985 and has utilized it as affordable temporary housing options for patients and their families who require daily care for extended periods of time. He added that UAB has incorporated those services within the adjacent Hilton Birmingham at UAB Hotel.

Mr. Ward said that the building has become prohibitively expensive for UAB Medicine to operate and maintain due to the age, condition, and configuration of the structure. He stated that UAB leaders decided that it would be best to demolish the UAB Town House building.

Mr. Ward noted that the space will be used as a temporary greenspace once the demolition is complete. He added that the long-term plan for this site will include a UAB medical facility and the Master Plan will reflect the long-term strategy for the site.

Mr. Ward mentioned that the City's Design Review Committee reviewed and approved the project on Wednesday, January 23, 2019. He also mentioned that the Five Points South Neighborhood Association reviewed and approved the project on Monday January 28, 2019.

Geoff Boyd, Interim Director of Planning, Design and Construction with UAB, addressed the Planning Commission. Mr. Boyd said they hope to start demolition either this April or May. He stated that he hopes to have the temporary open space installed by this September. He mentioned that UAB will house a medical building on the site after they acquire all of the property on that block. He noted that the Master Plan amendment also calls for the future removal of the current UAB Administration Building so UAB administration can relocate to a more central campus location in the future.

Vice-Chairman Morrison asked where the Sitar Restaurant is going to be relocated. Mr. Boyd said Sitar Restaurant will be relocated to the ground floor of the 4th Avenue South Parking Deck.

Commissioner Eddington asked how many times have the UAB Master Plan been amended in the last 12 months. Mr. Boyd said the UAB Master Plan was updated in 2015 and it has been amended a few times since then.

Vice-Chairman Morrison asked will the replacement facility be a large structure since the site is very prominent. Mr. Boyd said yes. He added that the last few UAB medical buildings have been rather large in terms of height and volume.

With no additional questions or comments, Commissioner Langford made a motion to approve Case Number PF-2-19. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sims and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS; the Town House was constructed in 1951 as a private residential apartment building with multiple ground floor tenants; and

WHEREAS; UAB acquired the facility in 1985 and has utilized it as affordable temporary

housing options for patients and their families who require daily care for extended periods of time; and

WHEREAS, UAB has incorporated affordable temporary housing services within the adjacent Hilton Birmingham at UAB Hotel so the UAB Town House building is vacant; and

WHEREAS, the condition and configuration of the UAB Town House building don't meet the quality standards of UAB Medicine and has become prohibitively expensive to maintain; and

WHEREAS, UAB leaders decided that it would be best to demolish the UAB Town House building; and

WHEREAS, the space will be used as a temporary greenspace after the demolition is complete; and

WHEREAS, the long-term plan for this site includes a future UAB Medicine facility; and

WHEREAS, the City's Design Review Committee reviewed and approved the project on Wednesday, January 23, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Five Points South Neighborhood Association reviewed and approved the project on Monday January 28, 2019; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Birmingham Planning Commission that the request to amend the UAB Master Plan for approval of the improvements on the hereinabove described property is hereby **APPROVED** as illustrated in the document entitled "Birmingham Planning Commission—Town House Demolition" dated January 22, 2019, Case No. PF-2-19.

VII. Other Business and Communications

Mr. Gambrel reported that Mr. Fowler responded to his email and the City has been patrolling and issuing tickets in and around the St. Vincent's campus. Mr. Gambrel also noted that Elizabeth Sanfelippo, President of the Highland Park Neighborhood, responded to his email and the gate has been installed at the fire lane.

On behalf of the Birmingham Planning Commission, Vice-Chairman Morrison expressed to Commissioner Langford that she has been in our thoughts and prayers (her husband, former Birmingham Mayor Larry Langford passed away on January 8th). He added that he is glad to see her today and it is a pleasure to serve with her.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.