

MINUTES

BIRMINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION

The Birmingham Planning Commission convened in the City Council Chamber on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, at 8:44 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Michael Morrison, Brian Gunn, Stephen Schrader, J. Charles Jordan II, Sharon Deep-Nelson, Patty Pilkerton, Ronald Crenshaw, Mashonda Taylor, Dr. Victoria Hollis, Councilor Valerie Abbott, Councilor LaTonya Tate (Brandon McCray), Chaz Mitchell, and Michael Eddington

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vice-Chairman Dr. Nyesha Black and Chairman Pro-Tem Haley Colson-Lewis

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Ward, Heather Garrison, Jason Hjetland, Tim Gambrel, and Thomas Yuill.

I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morrison. Councilor Abbott made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gunn and the agenda was approved unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 4, 2022

Councilor Abbott made a motion to approve the minutes from the Commission's May 4, 2022, meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hollis and the minutes were approved unanimously.

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No Director's report.

IV. SUBJECT: A public hearing to consider a proposal to amend the Amended Arlington-West End Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan to include an expansion of the Plan's redevelopment boundary area.

APPLICANT: City of Birmingham

PREMISES: The proposed expansion area is generally located within an area extending from around 14th Street Southwest to the east, the alley between Woodland Avenue and Alabama Avenue to the south, 16th Place Southwest to the west, and Valley Creek to the north.

Senior Planner Heather Garrison introduced the Amended Arlington-West End Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan.

Principal Planner Michael Ward made a presentation on the history and the plans adopted for Arlington-West End and explained the boundary expansion, including the addition of the former Larkway Gardens site. After the presentation, Chairman Morrison asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Hollis asked if the same owner still owned the former Larkway Gardens site, what the process to acquire is and if there is a goal date in mind for completion. Principal Planner Michael Ward responded that the city is working with the owner, which is the same owner, and he is not familiar with a goal date at this time.

Councilor Abbott asked if anyone has expressed interest in the former Larkway Gardens site and Mr. Ward expressed that the city is anticipating interest, but the city has not been approached regarding this site.

With no additional questions or comments, Councilor Abbott made a motion to approve the amendments to the Amended Arlington-West End Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan, including the expansion of the Plan's redevelopment boundary area. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jordan and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution Number 1108-79, dated September 11, 1979, did adopt and approve the Community Renewal Plan for the City of Birmingham, identifying areas throughout the city which contain blight or blighting factors and which need renewal and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance and implementation of said Community Renewal Plan, the Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution No. 2167-91, dated October 21, 1991, adopted the Arlington-West End Urban Renewal and Urban Redevelopment Plan, which said Urban Renewal Plan was amended and restated by the adoption of an Amended and Restated Urban Renewal and Urban Redevelopment for Arlington-West End Neighborhood, by Resolution No. 512-03, dated April 8, 2003 (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Arlington-West End Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution Number 1090-03, dated July 15, 2003, adopted and approved an amendment to the Arlington-West End Plan that identified vacant and underutilized properties to promote in-fill housing; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment to the Amended Arlington-West End Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan (“Amended Arlington-West End Plan”) represents a further detailing and refinement of the original Arlington-West End Redevelopment Plan and is compatible with the goals and objectives of said plan and the Community Renewal Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Existing Conditions Study of the Amended Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan for Arlington-West End, attached as an appendix to the Amended Arlington-West End Plan, identifies 50 incidences or examples for blight within the Study Area that falls within at least one of these six blight factors: Dilapidated, Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures, Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements, Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions, Unusual Topography or Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities, Defective or Unusual Conditions of Title, and Buildings that are Unsafe or Unhealthy; and

WHEREAS, the Oakwood Place Neighborhood Association approved the Amended Arlington-West End Plan at its meeting on April 5, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Arlington-West End Neighborhood Association approved the Amended Arlington-West End Plan at its meeting on May 10, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission recognizes that the identified Plan Area/Study Area is presently underutilized and subject to blighting influences and needs revitalization and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the City of Birmingham, in conjunction with existing and potential property owners, undertake specific efforts to facilitate the planning and coordination of future development within the proposed Plan Area/Study Area to bring about such revitalization; and

WHEREAS, the Amended Arlington-West End Plan has been developed pursuant to, and in accordance with, the provisions of Chapters 2 and 3, Title 24, Code of Alabama, 1975 relative to urban renewal and urban redevelopment projects; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission finds that the adoption and implementation of the Amended Arlington-West End Plan is for a City purpose and is in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, said Planning Commission has held a public hearing to allow citizen input and consideration of the proposed Amended Arlington-West End Plan; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Planning Commission does hereby adopt and approve the Amended Arlington-West End Plan, as defined and described in the document entitled “Amendment to the Amended Urban Renewal and

Redevelopment Plan for Arlington-West End,” including all maps, text, and other materials included therewith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said Amended Arlington-West End Plan hereby modifies, supplements, and amends the Community Renewal Plan and the previous Arlington-West End Plan Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan.

BE IT ALSO FURTHER RESOLVED by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Planning Commission recommends to the City Council of the City of Birmingham, that the City Council approve and adopt the hereinabove described Amended Arlington-West End Plan.

V. SUBJECT: A public hearing to consider a proposal to amend the Amended Downtown West Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan.

APPLICANT: City of Birmingham

PREMISES: The Plan Area is generally defined as mostly along 18th Street North to the east, the CSX Railroad tracks to the south, mostly along 9th Street North to the west, and mostly along 3rd Avenue Alley to the north.

Senior Planner Heather Garrison introduced the Amended Downtown West Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan.

Principal Planner Michael Ward made a presentation on the history and the plans adopted for the Downtown West area and the timeline for adoption moving forward. Chairman Morrison opened the floor asking if there were any questions.

Commissioner Gunn asked what the city currently has in place to address and/or prevent blight. Mr. Ward explained that the city takes complaints and addresses them as they come in. Chief Planner Tim Gambrel mentioned that we have code enforcement in place to address violations within the city.

Commissioner Schrader asked about the long-term effects of a demolition lien and how it works. Principal Planner Michael Ward introduced Jim Stanley from the Office of the City Attorney. Mr. Stanley explained that demolition liens tend to be an impediment to development and there is not really an effective way in Alabama to enforce the various liens – mortgage, demolition. Mr. Stanley then expressed that with Urban Renewal Plans, a demolition lien can go away, which incentivizes the developer to redevelop and allows the city to aid in housing. Mr. Ward added that our plan is to eventually work with developers to redevelop these areas.

There being no further questions or comments, Councilor Abbott made a motion to approve the amendments to the Amended Downtown West Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hollis and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution Number 1108-79, dated September 11, 1979, did adopt and approve the Community Renewal Plan for the City of Birmingham, identifying areas throughout the city which contain blight or blighting factors and which need renewal and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, said City Council, by Resolution No. 530-81, dated May 5, 1981, adopted and approved the Downtown Master Plan, said Plan being further amended and restated by the City Center Master Plan, adopted by the Council of the City of Birmingham on October 29, 1991 by Resolution No. 2166-91; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance and implementation of the hereinabove cited plans, the City Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution No. 1842-93, dated September 28, 1993, adopted and approved the Downtown West Urban Renewal and Urban Redevelopment Plan (the "Downtown West Plan"); and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution No. 1677-02, dated October 15, 2002, adopted and approved an amendment to the Downtown West Plan to establish an overlay to the Downtown West Project Area known as the "Entrepreneurial District" as a means to encourage developing technology businesses to remain within the immediate area, while encouraging other established technology-oriented businesses to relocate to the "Entrepreneurial District"; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Birmingham, by Resolution No. 193-16, dated February 9, 2016, adopted and approved an amendment to the Downtown West Plan to rename the Entrepreneurial District overlay to the Innovation District; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment to the Amended Downtown West Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan ("Amended Downtown West Plan") has been developed pursuant to, and in accordance with, the provisions of Chapters 2 and 3, Title 24, Code of Alabama, 1975 relative to urban renewal and urban redevelopment projects; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission recognizes that the identified Plan Area is presently underutilized and subject to blighting influences and needs revitalization and redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable that the City of Birmingham, in conjunction with existing and potential property owners, undertake specific efforts to facilitate the planning and coordination of future development within the Plan Area to bring about such revitalization; and

WHEREAS, the Birmingham Planning Commission finds that the adoption and implementation of the Amended Downtown West Plan is for a City purpose and is in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, said Planning Commission has held a public hearing to allow citizen input and consideration of the proposed Amended Downtown West Plan; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Planning Commission does hereby adopt and approve the Amended Downtown West Plan, as defined and described in the document entitled “Amendment to the Amended Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan for Downtown West,” including all maps, text, and other materials included therewith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that said Amended Downtown West Plan hereby modifies, supplements, and amends the Community Renewal Plan and the previous Downtown West Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Plan.

BE IT ALSO FURTHER RESOLVED by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Planning Commission recommends to the City Council of the City of Birmingham, that the City Council approve and adopt the hereinabove described Amended Downtown West Plan.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Principal Planner Michael Ward informed the Commission that the city is cancelling meetings being held during the World Games in July.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.