

## BIRMINGHAM PLANNING COMMISSION

### MINUTES

The Birmingham Planning Commission convened in the City Council Chamber on Wednesday, January 4, 2023 at 8:41 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Michael Morrison, Vice-Chairman Dr. Nyesha Black, Chairman Pro-Tem Haley Colson-Lewis, Brian Gunn, Stephen Schrader, J. Charles Jordan II, Sharon Deep-Nelson, Patty A. Pilkerton, Ronald Crenshaw, Michael Eddington, Councilor Valerie Abbott, and Councilor LaTonya Tate

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mashonda Taylor and Chief Chaz Mitchell

**STAFF PRESENT:** Michael Ward, Heather Garrison, Tim Gambrel, Kim Spearl, and Roderick Lowe

#### I. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Morrison. Commissioner Crenshaw made a motion to amend the agenda to have the items heard in reverse order with Case No. PF-1-23 being heard first. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gunn and the amended agenda was approved unanimously.

#### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 7, 2022

Councilor Abbott made a motion to approve the minutes from the Commission's meeting on December 7, 2022. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Dr. Black and the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No Director's Report.

**IV. CASE NO.** PF-1-23

**SUBJECT:** A request by UAB to amend the 2020 Master Plan to Include parcels owned and occupied by Southern Research on Blocks 758, 759, and 762.

**APPLICANT:** Brian Templeton, Director, Planning, Design & Construction at UAB

**PREMISES:** The area is bounded by 8th Court South to the north, 10th Avenue South to the south, 20th Street South to the west, and 22nd Street South to the east.

Senior Planner Heather Garrison introduced the case and Brian Templeton, Director, Planning, Design and Construction at UAB.

Mr. Templeton expressed that they were not doing any development that this would only allow for continuity. He went on to present site plans, layouts, and existing conditions of the Southern Research site.

Chairman Morrison opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Eddington asked if Southern Research would be able to ride UAB transportation. Mr. Templeton responded that he wasn't sure but it is something to work out.

Councilor Abbott asked if Block Number 44 was currently owned by UAB to which Mr. Templeton answered yes.

Commissioner Deep-Nelson made a motion to approve Case No. PF-1-23 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schrader and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

**WHEREAS**, the Birmingham Planning Commission approved the 2020 UAB Campus Master Plan on May 5, 2021 (Case No. PF-3-83G), and

**WHEREAS**, UAB is requesting an amendment to the 2020 Campus Master Plan to include parcels Owned and occupied by Southern Research on Blocks 758, 759, and 762, and

**WHEREAS**, Southern Research parcels were included in previous version of the UAB Campus Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, UAB and its affiliates recognize benefits of having contiguous, affiliated properties Planned, designed, and managed according to the same standardized and established guidelines For the UAB Master Plan campus; and

**WHEREAS**, including these parcels will consolidate and connect the entire Southern Research Campus With the rest of the UAB Master Plan campus; and

**WHEREAS**, including these parcels will allow the Southern Research facilities to be included in future UAB Parking and Transportation Plans; and

**WHEREAS**, the Five Points South Neighborhood reviewed and approved the UAB Campus Master Plan Amendment on Tuesday, December 18, 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the Birmingham Planning Commission has reviewed and carefully evaluated the proposed amendment to the UAB Campus Master Plan; now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Birmingham Planning Commission that said Planning Commission hereby APPROVED an amendment to the 2020 UAB Campus Master Plan, as illustrated within the document entitled "UAB - Southern Research", dated January, 2023.

**V. SUBJECT:** A public hearing to adopt the Smithfield Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) Housing Plan, which includes proposed changes to the City of Birmingham's Land Use Plan that will affect certain properties within the Smithfield (CNI) project area.

**APPLICANT:** City of Birmingham and Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD)

**PREMISES:** The Smithfield Choice Neighborhood project area is

Generally bounded by Interstate 59/20 to the north,  
Interstate 65 to the east, Graymont Avenue to the south, and  
7th Street West to the west.

Senior Planner Heather Garrison introduced the case and Cory Stallworth, Senior Deputy Director of the City's Community Development Department.

Mr. Stallworth presented the key development sites on a site map within the housing plan. He explained that this would be mixed-income, multigenerational housing with a variety of housing types. These sites are represented by numbers 1-8 and will include the following features:

1. Former JCCEO HQ - senior adaptive reuse and addition, 99 units
2. Smithfield Court and adjacent boulevard sites - mixed-income housing program, 415 units
3. Center Street North and 8th Avenue West - 99 units
4. 2nd Street North and Reverend Abraham Woods Jr. Boulevard - 25 units
5. 421 Reverend Abraham Woods Jr. Boulevard - includes the library and residential with housing options being duplexes, garden style apartments, and townhouses, 50 units
6. Parker High School Surplus - 290 units
7. Graymont and Center Street North - mixed-income housing program, townhouses and multifamily elevator building, 150 units
8. Former Hill Elementary School - multifamily, 50 units

Total Units: 1,125

\* on the site map represents opportunities for home ownership

As Mr. Stallworth presented the housing plan, he showed renderings for how each development site could look, their proposed uses, and the number of residential units for each site. He expressed that the site with the new library would also house a social innovation hub/cultural arts center and they are working with BCRI to create a satellite office for this location. When discussing Site 6, Parker High School Surplus, he explained that the goal was to tie this site to the rest of the community for continuity. Mr. Stallworth then described Site 7, Graymont and Center Street North, with the plan to demolish and redevelop this site.

Mr. Stallworth told the Commission that they met with the Smithfield Community and a lot of people within the Smithfield and College Hills Neighborhoods support the plan. He then explained that the Graymont neighborhood was in support of everything in the plan except the library demolition.

Commissioner Crenshaw asked if the library was in Site 4 to which Mr. Stallworth replied, no, it is in Site 3, very close to the edge of Graymont.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Black asked how they planned to integrate the concerns about the library. Mr. Stallworth explained that they met with the library, they need more space and it is better to rebuild and they still feel that the library demolition and redevelopment is still a viable concept. She then asked if a vote was taken at the neighborhood meetings and explained that she wanted the neighborhood vote counts to be included in the future.

Commissioner Gunn asked how they planned to protect existing residents and what they planned for mixing income. Mr. Stallworth responded that they are rolling out a program to assist with home repairs. He went on to say that outside of the City of Birmingham, they are working with legislation to determine how to protect legacy homes.

Commissioner Gunn then asked what the makeup of the properties was. Mr. Stallworth replied that all the developments were mixed-income with the exception of the Senior Building and this would be completed first to be the off-site housing for seniors.

Principal Planner Michael Ward reported to the Commission that the following vote count was taken for each neighborhood: College Hills - 6 yes, 2 no, Smithfield, 6 yes, 0 no, and Graymont, 1 yes, 3 no (based primarily on concerns regarding the library).

Commissioner Crenshaw mentioned that related to seniors, what was their feedback on the senior housing. Mr. Stallworth said they were very scared and didn't want to be displaced outside of the community. He then explained that they were excited once they saw the plan and realized they would still be living among friends. In addition, Mr. Stallworth said a relocation specialist would assist during this process.

Chairman Pro-Tem Colson-Lewis stated that she thought this was a thoughtful plan and wanted to know about the demolition of the former housing and library and when it was built, wanted to know if there were any concerns regarding asbestos. Mr. Stallworth answered that the housing was built in the 30's and renovated in the 90's and the library was built in the 80's and renovated in the 90's minimizing the concern about asbestos. She then asked if there will be an attempt to minimize the demolition dust. Mr. Stallworth responded they would develop mitigation plans at a later date.

Councilor Abbott wanted to know if a market study was conducted when this plan was being developed. Mr. Stallworth replied they conducted a housing study and a detailed survey on the HABD residents. She then mentioned there were not many opportunities for home ownership. Mr. Stallworth responded that on the site map, the asterisk represented the sites for opportunities for home ownership and there are approximately 65 housing units for home ownership.

Commissioner Pilkerton asked about parking for the senior and multifamily facilities and wanted to know if they all would have off-street parking and how it would be handled. Mr. Stallworth said there will be one parking space per unit and the senior development will be lower due to their lack of driving. She asked if there would be permitted parking. Mr. Stallworth answered that there would be a decal associated with their housing unit and additional visitor parking. Commissioner Pilkerton then asked if the parking was ADA compliant to which Mr. Stallworth replied yes.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Black asked if the renderings being presented were the actual concepts for the development. Mr. Stallworth replied that the multifamily buildings were the actual concepts, but the duplexes and townhouses were a generic concept as they were still working on this to bid. She asked what the market rate would be. Mr. Stallworth responded that 40% of the development would be market rate, \$1,000+ for one bedroom, the subsidized will be less and the focus is affordable workforce housing. Her next question was if they had a timeline and wanted to know how long it would take to complete. Mr. Stallworth stated that HUD would release a short list of recipients, make site visits, go back to the table to make the decision for Fall 2023, and they planned to hit the ground running in 2024. He then said the project would take 8 years with a new development each year.

Commissioner Schrader stated that he asked for street standards and the public realm, but that he still wasn't seeing this information. Mr. Stallworth responded that the plan contained minimum things for the grant application but would continue working through the designs and hold more charrettes on site.

Commissioner Pilkerton expressed that she felt that all of the multifamily buildings look like LEGO architecture and that she would like to see something influenced by Birmingham. Mr. Stallworth replied thank you and that he would take it back to the architects.

Councilor Abbott explained that she had a deep interest in historic preservation and wanted to know if the plan was sensitive to the fact that this is a historic neighborhood. Mr. Stallworth answered that this area is a special place and they were focusing on how they could build upon the historic context and they are working in consultation with the Birmingham Planning Commission and the Historical Society.

Commissioner Deep-Nelson mentioned that the same thing happened on the edge of Highland Park on the Southside and that she would hate to see if happen here.

Chairman Morrison asked if additional review was required for the project. Chief Planner Tim Gambrel answered they would have to go before the Design Review Committee. He then asked if there was a public safety component. Mr. Stallworth responded that they are working with the Birmingham Police Department and addressing lighting and additional safety concerns. Chairman Morrison asked if they had a management plan scheme. Mr. Stallworth answered that the developer, Integral, would conduct more studies to determine the type of retail needed and they needed a grocery store. He went on to say there is a whole social support component to the plan regarding financial literacy, workforce development, and additional programs. His next concern was if the seniors at Smithfield Court were being relocated outside of the neighborhood. Mr. Stallworth replied that this was a non-negotiable, they would remain in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Pilkerton asked what entity was responsible for the additional review of the project. Chief Planner Tim Gambrel stated they would go before the Design Review Committee and Karla Calvert would assist in this process. She then asked if they could make the entire area historic. Mr. Gambrel explained that this would require a process but that it could be started.

Chairman Morrison asked if we could look into an overlay as a possibility. Mr. Gambrel responded that we could look into an overlay as a possibility.

Chairman Morrison opened the public hearing and there being no one present, the public hearing was closed.

Councilor Tate made a motion to approve the housing plan, including land use changes for the key catalyst sites as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crenshaw and the following resolution was approved unanimously:

**WHEREAS**, the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) and the City of Birmingham have partnered to pursue a Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant for Smithfield; and

**WHEREAS**, the Smithfield Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant proposal includes strategies to implement public housing redevelopment, the coordination and design of supportive services for residents, and neighborhood-level planning to enhance neighborhood assets; and

**WHEREAS**, the CNI grant proposal also includes a Housing Plan that contains proposed land use and zoning changes to accommodate the redevelopment of the Smithfield public housing community and other key sites within the Smithfield CNI project area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Smithfield CNI project area is generally bounded by Interstate 59/20 to the north, Interstate 65 to the east, Graymont Avenue to the south, and 7th Street West to the west; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan proposed the redevelopment of the 30-acre Smithfield Court site into a modernized, mixed-use, mixed-income community; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan also proposes several key sites for redevelopment in addition to the Smithfield Court public housing site, which would be catalysts for the reimagination and revitalization of the entire Smithfield community; and

**WHEREAS**, to achieve the goals of this plan, it is recommended that the Land Use Plan for several key development sites should be changed to Mixed-Use Medium - Medium Density (M-UM) to reinforce Reverend Abraham Woods Jr. Boulevard as a key commercial corridor and Center Street as an essential North-South connection; and

**WHEREAS**, it is recommended for the other redevelopment sites that the Land Use Plan should be changed to Residential High to allow for a mix of appropriately scaled residential development sites throughout the neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS**, this combination of land use changes and future rezoning of the redevelopment sites will provide opportunities for community use as well as potential retail commercial uses that enhance the existing character and will address the unmet needs of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Smithfield Community reviewed and approved the plan on Thursday, December 8, 2022; and now therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Birmingham Planning Commission that the request to amend the City of Birmingham's Land Use Plan by adopting the recommended land use plan for the Smithfield CNI project area is hereby APPROVED as illustrated in the document entitled "Smithfield: A Choice Neighborhood - Honoring the Past, Envisioning the Future".

Along with approval of the Smithfield Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant proposal, Mr. Stallworth asked the Commission if they would send a letter of support upon the approval. After discussing the question, it was determined that a letter would be drafted and Chairman Morrison, Vice-Chairman Dr. Black, and Chairman Pro-Tem Hailey Colson Lewis would provide signatures representing the support of the Commission as a whole.

Chairman Pro-Tem Colson-Lewis made a motion to approve the letter of support for the Smithfield Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) grant proposal. Commissioner Gunn seconded the motion and the letter of support was approved unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:39 a.m.