

CAB Report

04-17-2023

1. Senior Planner from PEP (didn't catch his name):

Gave everyone a 20–30-page report which shows the proposed changes to parking requirements for new properties. He was seeking a recommendation (presumably of support) for the draft changes to parking requirements.

The proposed changes would require instead a parking minimum (new business must provide 20 spaces) to a parking maximum (new business must provide at least 10 spaces) Under these proposed changes, the developer would have more leeway, but they will be required to show a site plan to the city and prove that they are meeting the parking needs of said business.

Also, a certain number of bike parking spaces would now be required.

They believe these changes will be beneficial in the following ways:

- a. Less space used for concrete parking spaces means less stormwater runoff.
- b. Less space used for concrete parking spaces means cooler air and will mitigate the “heat-island effect.”
- c. It will make development more affordable since the cost of providing parking can be as much as 17% of the cost of starting a business.
- d. It will help the PEP administratively since they get lots of requests for variances to not have to fulfil the current parking requirements.

The following questions were asked:

- 1. What is the timeline? A: Hoping to get it in front of the City Council by June 20.
- 2. How long has this draft been completed? A: One year
- 3. Does this comply with “Complete Streets” plan? A: He didn’t know the answer – will get back.
- 4. Is this only new buildings/developments? A: Yes
- 5. I asked for an example of minimum vs. maximum requirements. A: It was still confusing so can’t report. I followed up with the question: Sounds like the current parking requirements are based on downtown and are not necessarily appropriate for other areas of the city? A: Yes
- 6. I asked how it compared to what other cities were doing? A: He said as many as 100 cities (I believe nationwide) were trying to implement these kinds of changes and added that we needed to quit addressing parking from a 1950’s mindset.
- 7. Woodlawn President said this was a common issue for them with businesses requesting support from the neighborhood for a variance for the parking requirement – will these draft changes address this issue? A: Yes

In the end, a motion was passed to give the CAB members more time to study the document and the issue and that the proposed changes not be advanced to the City Council until the CAB has had a chance to deliberate on it. The motion was passed unanimously.

2. Metro-Changers:

This is a religious (Christian-based) organization which helps Birmingham city residents with house repairs. They use only volunteers (except for roofing – insurance won't cover people on the roof, so they use contractors). Formed in 2007 they are mostly funded by the City of Birmingham. Help with roofs, exterior painting, decks, and ramps. You have to be the homeowner and be at or below the poverty level. Can do up to \$25,000 in repairs. www.metrochangers.org and 205-902-0331

3. Dora Sims, board member of NUSA:

She gave an update on NUSA – there are currently about 400 total people attending and 90 from Birmingham. Birmingham Community Development staff are requesting to attend so they can be present to help with issues that arise with Birmingham NUSA attendees.

4. No City Council representatives were present

5. President of Pine Knoll Vista Neighborhood Association (didn't catch her name)

Said they have requested help on a project since 1985 and it looks like it has stalled again. She is asking the CAB to help.

6. Alice Williams, Deputy Director at Community Development

She announced the following events:

1. Parliamentary Procedures Conference for neighborhood leaders will be at Lawson State on April 29, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. (8:30 registration) [I recommend this Frank – the people leading it were at the officers' training and were excellent. I am going to try to attend]
2. Neighborhood Association Presidents' training on April 25 with three timeslots from which to choose 9-10, 1-2, or 5:30-6:30. Melony Martin will be teaching it.
3. Renovation at Council chambers will move the location of CAB (and City Council – they will meet in Boutwell) for up to four months. Discussion of temporary location of CAB meetings is still being discussed.
4. Juneteenth City Hall will be closed – CAB might want to change the meeting date.

There was more discussion of the Glen Iris election issue. Mrs. Williams said that Doug Edmonson is the VP even though he did not have the most votes due to the other candidate not providing a valid ID. Lots of back and forth. For e.g. How was she on the ballot if she didn't have proper i.d? Answer:

The Declaration of Candidacy forms do not require it and our signature on it means we swear we fulfil the requirements to run. Mrs. Williams, clearly frustrated, said she followed the guidelines of the CP Plan. It felt like the room was partial to her and that the folks in opposition were beating a dead horse. (I'm not saying this is correct but my sense of how people were feeling in the moment) Bottom line (to me) is that we need to clarify these guidelines in the CP Plan to avoid this ever happening again.

7. Hope Inspire Ministries:

Another faith-based group which provides workforce training and career coaching to people in need. He came to make of aware of the work they do. www.hopeinspireministries.org and 205-202-6305

8. Alice Speake:

Had signed up to speak. She made the point that she was allowed to make changes when her information was not correct when she ran for Neighborhood Association office. Her point being they were not consistent in their treatment with the person who got disqualified. And asked why couldn't they have given her time to resolve the issue with the I.D. requirement? No real response – I think we were all tired at this point.

9. Barbara Thomas: President of Norwood

Stood up in response. Said they had a president who had been serving for thirty years get disqualified (she didn't say why?) and made the point that he stepped down without complaint.

The meeting was adjourned.