
**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
PLANNING BOARD AND CITY OF TROY PLANNING COMMISSION
ACTION ITEMS OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2008**

Item	Page
<p>No resolutions were passed.</p> <p>The next joint meeting of these two bodies will be held on Tuesday, December 2 at the City of Troy City Hall at 7:30 p.m. in the lower level conference room.</p>	8

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**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
PLANNING BOARD AND CITY OF TROY PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2008**

Minutes of the joint meeting of the Birmingham Planning Board and Troy Planning Commission held October 29, 2008. Chairman Robin Boyle convened the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Birmingham Planning Board

Present: Board Members Brian Blaesing, Gillian Lazar, Mark Nickita, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams; Student Representative Cole Fredrick

Absent: Chairman Robin Boyle; Board Member Sam Haberman

Birmingham Administration: Matthew Baka, Planning Intern
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Tara Maguire, GIS Coordinator
Jill Robinson, City Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

Troy Planning Commission

Present: Chairman Robert Schultz; Commission Members Michael Hutson, Philip Sanzica, Thomas Strat, John Tagle, Lon Ullmann, Mark Vleck

Absent: Commission Members Mark Maxwell, Wayne Wright

Troy Administration: Zak Branigan, Planning Consultant
Allan Motzny, Asst. City Attorney
Mark Miller, Planning Director
Brent Savidant, Principal Planner

10-193-08

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chairman Robert Schultz welcomed the audience and everyone around the table introduced themselves.

10-194-08

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF
SEPTEMBER 22, 2008**

Mr. Strat:
Pages 1, 5, and 8 twice, correct the spelling of his name.

Mr. Miller:
Page 1, correct spelling of Zak Branigan

**Resolution by Mr. Tagle
Seconded by Mr. Sanzica to approve the Minutes of September 22 as amended.**

VOICE VOTE

Birmingham Planning Board
Yeas: Tagle, Sanzica, Hutson, Schultz, Strat, Ullman, Vleck
Nays: None
Absent: Maxwell, Wright

Troy Planning Commission
Yeas: Blaesing, Lazar, Nickita, Whipple-Boyce, Williams
Nays: None
Absent: Boyle, Haberman

10-195-08

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (no changes)

10-196-08

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (no one spoke)

10-197-08

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED TRANSIT CENTER DISTRICT

- Status of Transit Center funding and support efforts

Ms. Ecker provided an update of events that have taken place since the last meeting. The Planning Departments of both cities have met with the Troy and the Birmingham Chambers. They have also met with Mr. L. Brooks Patterson of Oakland County, and Senators Bishop and Pappageorge. All have agreed to be supportive of the project.

Additionally, L. Brooks Patterson has offered to provide planning support services from Oakland County if they are needed.

In a joint meeting of the Birmingham Planning Board and Birmingham City Commission, the possibility of hiring a project manager was discussed. The City of Birmingham would take the initiative to hire someone and then would enter into a cost sharing arrangement with the City of Troy. That matter will go before the Birmingham City Commission on November 10, 2008 when the top two candidates will be interviewed. The role of the project manager would be to lobby in Lansing and in Washington in an effort to obtain funding for the Transit Center project. The cost ranges anywhere from \$5 - \$10 thousand/month on a month-to-month contract.

Ms. Ecker disclosed that the top two finalists out of four applications that were submitted are North Coast Strategies and Clark Hill.

Mr. Miller indicated there has been no negative response from the Troy City Council in this regard, knowing the matter will have to come back before them for approval.

➤ Opportunities for collaboration

Mr. Miller indicated the challenge is to determine what form joint planning will take. Development review is needed for a whole district which will potentially be in both communities. That development needs to be coordinated with the Transit Center. He felt the process might possibly need a third party facilitator.

Discussion examined why access to trains cannot be provided in Troy. Ms. Ecker noted that after discussions and negotiations with the railroad it was determined that it is not possible for the trains to be switched to the other track in this location. Also, the railroad will not allow an at-grade crossing for pedestrians. Further, they cannot build an above-grade crossing due to the high tension power lines that run through the area. The wires cannot be raised due to the proximity of the Troy Executive Airport. Therefore, they were left with the tunnel scenario to get to the west side of the tracks.

Ms. Ecker advised that from a funding perspective they have been in touch with AMTRAK and CN Railroad officials to work out some funding options that the municipalities otherwise would not be able to get. Mr. Miller added that Mr. Brian Murphy, City of Troy Asst. City Manager for Economic Development, will be meeting with AMTRAK officials in Chicago in November.

Mr. Nickita pointed out that beyond the Transit Center there are a number of other areas of concern that should be planned collectively from a vehicular and pedestrian standpoint for the ultimate benefit of both communities.

Chairman Schultz agreed. The two communities share a huge number of borders, especially along Maple Rd. and Coolidge, and cooperation in those areas should be looked at.

Mr. Hutson did not think it would be feasible to create a new joint planning committee. Given the time frame available to get the project underway, it would be a waste of time to try and comply with the Joint Planning Commission Act. Ms. Ecker pointed out this group is together to discuss the impact of the Transit Center on the surrounding area, and meeting the 2010 deadline for construction of the Transit Center is not within that purview. There is another group that is dealing with that. If it can be shown that the two cities are working collaboratively, it assists in convincing the State and Federal governments that the communities are serious and they understand what can come of this area.

Mr. Vleck suggested creating a joint planning body that would not relate to zoning. Each of the cities could still retain its own zoning authority. Of course, it would be up to the two city councils to make the ultimate decision. However, a recommendation from both planning boards could carry a lot of political weight with the Birmingham City Commission and the Troy City Council.

Mr. Motzny explained the provisions of the 2003 Joint Planning Commission Act are not specific. There is lots of room for creativity.

- Joint Planning Commission Act, 2003

Authorizes the creation of joint planning commissions.

- Urban Cooperation Act – 1967

Provides a wide range of authority to joint entities. The appropriate legislation will be determined once the responsibilities of the joint planning commission are determined.

- Joint Planning.

Ms. Ecker said that from staff's standpoint joint planning consists of defining the area where they know the Transit Center will have an impact, and coming up with mutually agreeable standards for the development of that area. Then the joint board would review the site plans for any proposed projects within that area using the transit-oriented development standards that would be put in place.

Mr. Schultz thought that both communities will retain their individualities. Mr. Vleck agreed that from a zoning standpoint each city is already committed. But there must be a joint agreement that from a site plan standpoint whatever is built in the area of the Transit Center will stay.

Mr. Nickita said just having the communication and then a recommendation that can go back to each individual commission or council to actually implement, along the guidelines of a joint agreement or a joint recommendation, seems to be a process that he thinks could work. He feels the planners can receive strong support from their

individual communities without getting bogged down in creating something that would be very challenging to implement.

Mr. Savidant noted there is a parcel that is controlled by one developer where a portion lies in the City of Birmingham and a portion lies in the City of Troy. If that property were to be developed today, each city would apply its own standards. Birmingham would probably apply the MX Zoning District and Troy would probably apply the Planned Unit Development “PUD” District. He sees a practical difficulty with the different regulations of the different bodies. One of the challenges is going to be how to get that property developed in a coordinated, integrated fashion. Ms. Ecker said the owner of that parcel has approached the Cities of Birmingham and Troy on numerous occasions with a development plan that would be wholly inconsistent with what the cities would want around the Transit Center.

- Introduction to Joint Planning Commissions

Ms. Ecker summed up the discussion so far by saying the group probably doesn’t want to go ahead and have a joint zoning authority but they may want to have a joint planning authority. That may be in the form of a joint planning body, or collective agreement on standards that the cities would each individually adopt.

Chairman Schultz thought the parcel referred to earlier may require a joint planning authority that would do the planning and any re-zoning or planned unit development could go through the individual commission or council. Mr. Vleck added that if the developer has to go through two planning processes in two different communities the chances of a project happening are diminished. Doing something that is coordinated will make the project much more likely to happen.

- Multi-jurisdictional case studies

Ms. Robinson explained what Traverse City has done. The region includes 93 different municipalities. They have enacted different design standards and it is up to each municipality then to adopt them for themselves.

- Transit Center District

Mr. Miller explained the City of Troy has recently adopted a Master Plan. In the Master Plan there is a Transit Center District. In that Transit Center District there are certain general design directions and also policy directions which include collaboration with the City of Birmingham. The adopted plan dictates what they would want to see in the area, giving guidance to changing the Zoning Ordinance to allow for that to be resolved. Presently there are no zoning districts in place to implement the Master Plan.

- Proposed boundaries

It was discussed that Troy's Master Plan includes the airport and it includes standards that encourage mixed-use development and conversion of the industrial buildings along Coolidge where possible.

Ms. Ecker explained the goal of this joint body is to assume that the communities will develop the Transit Center and look at what impact the Transit Center will have on the land development around the area. That is where the cities are jointly collaborating. There is nothing that says the cities have to come up with the exact same standards and rules that will apply for the first quarter mile, half mile, or three-quarters of a mile. However, there is a generally an accepted standard that for any property that is within a walkable distance of a transit center the property values go up and different development patterns will emerge. Diverse development patterns are desirable in order to support a transit center district.

The group considered boundaries for the Transit Center district. Moving further out in the district, development standards will change.

For the Birmingham Planning Board, Mr. Williams thought that including the Birmingham single-family residences in the district is a positive, because it will provide them the opportunity to participate in the development process. Mr. Blaesing agreed. Mr. Nickita thought that the triangular area to the north might benefit by inclusion in the district. Ms. Whipple-Boyce liked the south boundary. Ms. Lazar thought that any further north or south would muddy the waters.

With respect to the Troy Planning Commission, Chairman Schultz did not think there is any residential development in the district except for Midtown Square Condominiums. The majority of it is zoned industrial. The City of Troy needs to address the re-zoning of industrial. He felt that extending to the east boundary of the airport is reasonable because it doesn't affect residential properties. Mr. Tagle agreed with the district boundary on the Troy side. Mr. Miller added the district should include the northeast corner of Maple Rd. and Coolidge at the location of Whole Foods. Mr. Vleck supported the existing boundaries. It would be beneficial for both Birmingham and Troy to down the road include the other industrial areas on the north side of Maple Rd. as far as some sort of easier pedestrian access.

- Existing zoning

Mr. Vleck observed they are looking for a connection across the railroad track that will support both communities. There is a developer that is looking to redevelop a piece of property that is very close to the Transit Center. Currently it is not zoned in the type of zoning that either community is looking for and the zoning does not support the surrounding developments. From a joint planning standpoint this body must figure out

how to connect the developer's parcels so they conform to what both cities are looking for.

10-198-08

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Ms. Dorothy Conrad from Birmingham pointed out that Birmingham will be affected more by the impact on single-family residential. She wants to see some discussion on how traffic will be handled. It needs to be considered before something is in place. Secondly, if the Troy planners want to see more pedestrians flowing into the area they should take a look at the unfriendly intersection of Maple Rd. and Coolidge. As far as the parcels that are under the control of one developer, she asked the group to keep in mind that big box stores will not compliment the Transit Center, her neighborhood or her city.

Mr. Mike Robenski who lives on Bowers St. in Birmingham indicated that he and his wife are frequent users of AMTRAK. They will greatly appreciate seeing the Transit Center develop into something better than the current bus stop that is there now. He explained why CN Railroad does not want to be involved with constructing a turn-out so that the access to the train could be on the Troy side. Secondly, the planners need to consider the possibility that the double track situation may change to single track in the future because the double track may not be needed. AMTRAK and the CN host railroad don't always get along real well because CN doesn't like the nuisance factor. Lastly, Mr. Robenski questioned whether the pedestrian tunnel could serve as a vehicular tunnel as well.

Ms. Barb Quincy from Midtown Square Condominiums expressed her concern about the traffic and safety along Doyle St. In answer to her question about the location of the Transit Center, Ms. Ecker verified it will be positioned behind the existing Kroger store.

Another audience member asked about what amenities might be included in the Transit Center building and Mr. Miller answered that the facility will be manned and climate controlled. Private transit options will be available.

On the subject of pedestrian access to the Transit Center, Mr. Nickita noticed that the traffic light at the corner of Maple Rd. and Doyle St. seems to be designated specifically for cars and not pedestrians. There is a long wait for the pedestrian sign to cross. The challenge is to form a balance between pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the area of the Transit Center. These are subtle changes that can have quite an impact on the way people utilize the area and feel comfortable.

Chairman Schultz said he anticipates that the pedestrian access points and control points will be totally reviewed as part of the development of the Transit Plan.

Ms. Conrad did not feel there is a comfortable place for a pedestrian to get from Birmingham to Troy along Coolidge.

The next joint meeting of these two bodies will be held on Tuesday, December 2 in the City of Troy City Hall at 7:30 p.m. in the lower level conference room.

10-199-08

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jana Ecker
Planning Director
City of Birmingham

Mark Miller
Planning Director
City of Troy