

RED MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY MEETING

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

Highland Park Golf Club, 3300 Highland Avenue, Birmingham, AL
In-Person and Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

The Red Mountain Community meeting was held at 6:15 pm on Tuesday, September 10, 2024. The meeting was convened in a hybrid fashion, being held in-person at the Highland Park Golf Club (upstairs) and virtually via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm by Red Mountain Community President Elizabeth Sanfelippo. She asked everyone to please sign the meeting sign-in sheet and for online attendees to sign in in the chat. Sanfelippo shared she was president of the Red Mountain Community and Highland Park Neighborhood. She introduced Jay Smith as Vice President of both Forest Park/South Avondale Neighborhood and Red Mountain Community and Judy Jones as Vice President of Highland Park and Secretary of Red Mountain Community. Sanfelippo said the President of Crestwood Community Elizabeth Murray was also present, adding that the President of the Crestline Community Maria Norton was unable to attend.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

Sanfelippo explained the agenda for the evening. She said she would explain the rules of order, followed by the city staff making their presentation and then a breakout session to view the maps. Sanfelippo said after the breakout session, there would be quick announcements and then adjournment. Elizabeth Murray moved to approve the agenda. Marian Wilson seconded the motion. Sanfelippo took a voice vote. There were no nay votes or abstentions. The motion passed.

Sanfelippo then communicated a few ground rules for the evening stating the meeting would be conducted consistent with Roberts Rules of Order. She said anyone wanting to make comments needed to do so with the microphone. Sanfelippo told the group there was no need to vent to city staff about short term rentals, that there would be another meeting for that the next week, Tuesday September 17 at City Hall in Council Chambers at 6 pm.

CITY PLANNING PRESENTATION.

Sanfelippo introduced Tim Gambrel, the Chief Planner for the City of Birmingham. Gambrel thanked the group for coming out. Gambrel recognized some of the planning staff present: Senior Planners Jess Mays and Donald Wilborn; Planner Christian Togmus; Planning Technician Carter Mathews; Deputy Director Tracy Hayes; Natural Hazards Administrator Kim Speorl; Michael Ward principal planner with the city. Gambrel also recognized Councilor Valorie Abbott and expressed appreciation for her being present.

Gambrel explained that in October 2011, there was a meeting at the Crossplex, a visioning session with about 300 city residents present. Gambrel said they asked attendees what they envisioned the City of Birmingham being 20 years from today, adding it's really important to have an aspirational goal to work towards. Gambrel said they developed a 'comprehensive plan' that was kind of a dissertation, a 400-500 page document, about the city and all of its aspects. He said this 'comprehensive plan' contains goals and

strategies to achieve the vision identified that day. Gambrel said the two principal items the Planning Department was focused on (as a result of the Comprehensive Plan being adopted in 2013 by the Birmingham Planning Commission) was 1) the plan recommendation to re-write the city's zoning ordinance (and to create zoning districts known as mix-ed use districts) and 2) developing framework plans. Gambrel said they divided the city into 9 areas and they developed a framework plan for each of those areas that are based on community boundaries. He said the Southern Area, being discussed today, consists of Crestline, Crestwood, and Red Mountain Park. Gambrel said the idea is that 'this' area of the city is different from another part of the city and to do a deeper dive into issues specific to this area. He said they did this and adopted the Southern Area Framework Plan last year. Gambrel said 'this meeting' was the next step in that process. Gambrel said that when they adopted that plan, they also adopted a 'Future Land Use Plan' and so now they are talking about zoning – as in rezoning all of the city to be consistent with the new zoning ordinance. Gambrel said they have done 12 of the communities previously and they have 11 to go – and three of the 11 are what they are focused on tonight. Gambrel said he'd already mentioned that mixed-use districts is one of the key goals of the rezoning and then also eliminating land use conflicts where they can.

Gambrel said when meeting attendees look at the maps tonight, they will notice some red-boundaries with numbers. He said those areas where zoning is either going up or down in intensity, meaning either more or less uses may be allowed. He said those are really the primary areas where residents want to focus on the zoning maps, that the number on the map corresponds to a number on the side of the map that explains the specifics about what is changing about that area on the map. He said the areas that are not contained by a red-boundary are zoning changes in name only.

Gambrel said the Planning Department perceives these meetings as a conversation, that this is not a 'sell job', that they are here to supply information and data and to present their recommendation for zoning that they think is good. He said they want to hear community voices and have a robust conversation about these maps and any changes residents think are necessary.

Gambrel introduced Senior Planner Jess Mays. Mays introduced herself as the Senior Planner for the Southern Area. Mays shared the Southern Area was comprised of three communities – Crestwood, Crestline and Red Mountain. She said, in these three communities, there are seven different neighborhoods. Mays explained that the Southern Area was one of the nine framework plan areas. She explained the Framework Plan lays out the goals and strategies specific to the Southern area. She said they are using the Comprehensive Plan as a guiding document when they propose these rezoning recommendations.

Mays gave an overview of the rezoning process saying first they start with meetings like 'this' to obtain resident feedback. She said they will incorporate comments, feedback and come back to the group with a second meeting hopefully in October with a revised recommendation that reflects the feedback. She said after the public meetings they go to the Zoning Advisory Committee (a sub-committee of the Birmingham Planning Commission) and they make a recommendation to the City Council on the proposed re-zoning. Mays said then they go to the Planning and Committee and this is a sub-committee of the Birmingham City Council and they will also be also be making a recommendation to the full City Council. Mays said their last 'stop' is the full city council which has the final deciding vote in whether this re-zoning get passed. Mays said they hope to be before the full city council in January.

Mays said she wanted to go into each zoning district saying the brochures on the table near the entrance explain the zoning districts. She referred residents to large maps on display, explaining the dwelling districts (D3) were the yellow districts on the map. May said these are the typical single-family neighborhoods with a typical suburban neighborhood development pattern and most of the uses are single family homes, schools,

churches, and parks. Mays explained D4 – also a dwelling district, small multi-family dwelling allowing for a mix of housing types, single family and duplexes. She said permitted uses for D4 are similar to D3 with single family dwellings, 2-family dwellings, cottages, townhomes, schools, churches and parks.

Mays explained the purpose of the newest zoning district, Urban Neighborhood (UN) was to be compact and walkable so everything is close together and easy to walk to. Mays said they will be implementing this within a half mile of transit corridors and it is very street-focused as in buildings will face the street and have easy pedestrian access. Permitted uses in Zone UN are small lot single families, duplexes, tri-plexes, quad-plexes, townhomes, cottage developments and multi-plexes (up to 12 units). Mays said a small amount of commercial uses will be permitted only by special exception – bakeries retail shops, restaurants and urban grocery stores. Mays said a special exception is that if someone wanted to open a bakery, they would have to file with the zoning board of adjustment for a special exception and that would have to go through the neighborhood approval process and then back to the zoning board of adjustment to receive that special exception.

Mays said D-5 is the multi-family district that allows for multi-family apartments and condos that have 13 or more units. Permitted uses are apartments and condos, townhouses and larger developments, mid-rise and high-rise buildings, schools and churches.

Mays said Mixed-Use Low is meant to be compact and walkable with a ‘main street’ feel. She said it will typically have 2-3 story buildings with residential and commercial faces and they can be side by side or stacked. Permitted uses are multi-family apartments, townhomes, cottages, small lot single family and neighborhood serving shops, services, offices and restaurants.

Mays explained Mixed-Use Medium, which she said, is similar to Mixed Use Low, but more dense. She said you would have a 65 -foot height cap on the buildings, larger family residential and a mix of commercial uses.

Mays said Mixed-Use High which will support concentrated development with a mix of office, residential and specialized manufacturing, adding it should be transit accessible and at transit-ready locations. She said ground floor uses are encouraged on pedestrian heavy streets. She said permitted uses are concentrated multi-family housing, condos, lofts, townhomes and live/work and then commercial with retail offices, hotels, restaurants, small specialized manufacturing, and entertainment districts.

Mays said C-1 is the neighborhood commercial district and represents only a name change from B-1 to C-1. She said the purpose of this district is it serves the daily needs of residents and workers within a half-mile or within a one mile radius. She said it is designed for both car access and pedestrian and bicycle access. Permitted uses are small grocery stores, banks, restaurants, personal care services, small to medium scale office buildings, schools, churches and other small neighborhood serving public uses.

Mays said they have General Commercial which is C-2, which serves the city-wide and regional trade area with a variety of shopping and will be accessible primarily by car. She said permitted uses will be the large big box supermarkets like Target or Walmart, movie theatres, other leisure entertainment venues, and it will support retail services.

Mays said I-1 is Light Manufacturing which will support light manufacturing and office uses that are in a business park setting. She said this district will be near major transportation routes and no residential uses are

allowed. Permitted uses are warehouses, urban agriculture, and supporting retail and services for the primary uses.

Mays said there is the Health and Institutional District, supporting the development for campuses like UAB or large hospital settings. She said permitted uses are professional health care providers and large institutions of higher learning.

Mays said this was what Gambrel was talking about earlier when he said many of the district were changing in 'name only'. She showed an example on the map, explaining that the old R-3 was just becoming D-3, with no use changes, it is remaining the same single-family zoning district.

Mays shared some zoning groups that were being eliminated, noting that one is R-4-A. She noted that Highland Park has a lot of R-4-A and that most of those will become either D-4 or U-N.

Mays said for the 2nd follow-up meeting, they will incorporate resident comments and come back and re-present to residents. Mays shared a QR code where residents can vote their choice of dates for this next meeting.

The meeting broke up into an open session to allow residents to review the new zoning maps and ask questions of the city staff present.

ADJOURNMENT

The Red Mountain Community meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Jones
Secretary, Red Mountain Community