

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Draft Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2022

Commissioners Present

Heather Burnash, Chair
Beverly Davis, Vice-Chair
Joe Schipani
Stephanie Wright
Michael Hurley
Kurt Neiswender

Staff Present

William Vandercook, Zoning Coordinator
Max Lester, Planner I

Absent:

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Burnash called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

The meeting was held in-person as well as via Zoom and phone conferencing as approved.

Heather Burnash, present in-person
Beverly Davis, present in-person
Michael Hurley, present in-person
Kurt Neiswender, present in-person

Joe Schipani, appearing online via Zoom
conferencing
Stephanie Wright, present in-person

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Davis made a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

M/S – Davis/Neiswender

Motion carried by voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meeting of September 1, 2022 were presented.

Commissioner Davis asked if it was Commissioner Wright who asked why there was no City attorney present in the New Business section of the minutes. Commissioner Wright said she believed Commissioner Davis said this. This change was made to the previous minutes.

Commissioner Wright asked if the People's Church of Flint needed to come back with cost information. Chairperson Burnash said that if they want to do anything apart from what was approved, they will need to come back.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to accept the minutes of September 1, 2022 as corrected. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

M/S – Schipani/Neiswender

Motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairperson Burnash opened the floor for public comment. No one spoke.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Applicant: *DFPH, LLC*

Property Owner: *DFPH, LLC*

Location: *510 N. Grand Traverse St. (PID # 40-12-460-004)*

Moses Timlin spoke on behalf of DFPH, LLC, stating it is in extreme disrepair and there are significant structural problems, in addition to being used by unhoused people. Mr. Timlin stated the contractors that were brought in said they could not be paid to work on the property and noted safety concerns for people entering the structure. Mr. Timlin added that the property is not economically feasible to repair and that it would likely need to be taken down to the foundation and rebuilt.

Commissioner Neiswender asked if the original plan was to rehabilitate the building. Mr. Timlin confirmed and said it was one of their targeted properties before the inside was thoroughly inspected. Chairperson Burnash asked for the name of one of the builders who inspected the property. Mr. Timlin said John Mason worked with them on rehabilitation projects in the area and said he could not be paid to work on the property. Mr. Timlin noted the basement floor can be seen from the whole in the living room floor.

Commissioner Wright noted that it appeared the structure had been boarded up and removed, adding that with no light someone could walk in and fall through the floor. Mr. Timlin added that they had been boarding up the property before they had purchased it and the property has remained a nuisance since.

Commissioner Schipani stated he is familiar with this building and it has been a nuisance for a while, adding that he believes the roof has blown off and has been boarded for a few years and multiple people have been asked to leave the structure over that time. Commissioner Schipani noted it as a safety hazard from the times he has visited and boarded up the property.

Commissioner Hurley asked if the property sold for \$70,000 on October 11th as reported on Zillow. Mr. Timlin said the property was purchased on September 28th and stated he could not discuss the sale price. Chairperson Burnash asked if there were plans for the site. Mr. Timlin stated he could not answer that.

Commissioner Neiswender asked if the plan was to demolish the entire structure or just down to the foundation. Mr. Timlin stated the foundation would only be left if they were to completely rebuild the house. Chairperson Burnash said that if they wish to redevelop with a new development on the site the foundation would need to be removed. Mr. Timlin confirmed they are seeking a complete demolition.

Commissioner Davis asked which company Mr. Timlin is with. Mr. Timlin replied with Uptown Reinvestment Corporation. Chairperson Burnash asked what DFPH stands for. Mr. Timlin replied that he does not know what the acronym stands for, but they hold a few properties under this LLC.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to approve the application for demolition. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner Wright, yes
Commissioner Schipani, yes

Commissioner Neiswender, yes
Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, yes

M/S – Schipani/Neiswender

6 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain – 0 absent

The motion carried.

Applicant: DFPH, LLC

Property Owner: DFPH, LLC

Location: 516 N. Grand Traverse St. (PID # 40-12-460-003)

Mr. Timlin spoke on behalf of DFPH, LLC, noting that he does not have a letter for this property. Mr. Timlin stated this property has had two fire incidents in the past year. Mr. Timlin also said that he does not have interior photos as the builder on the project had instructed Mr. Timlin not to enter alone as squatters frequenting this building. Mr. Timlin noted the pictures showing a hole in the roof and the attached structure coming undone.

Commissioner Neiswender asked if this property was purchased recently as well. Mr. Timlin answered that it was purchased the same day.

Commissioner Schipani said he was familiar with this property and that it has fallen into disrepair since the previous owner passed away, confirming that it has caught fire a couple times.

Mr. Timlin added that the house has been boarded up several times but there is still a lot of activity inside the structure. Mr. Timlin also noted that the situation is at a point where the cost to repair the structure is over the point of potential resale value or through rental income.

Commissioner Schipani noted the front porch is near the point of collapsing. Commissioner Schipani also said that the last fire did a significant amount of damage and people are going in and out of the structure frequently, adding that he believes the structure is too far gone.

Chairperson Burnash asked if John Mason inspected this property as well. Mr. Timlin confirmed that Mr. Mason had inspected this property and that he was the one boarding it up.

Mr. Timlin said that they had paid for landscaping in the spring and summer and there were many wild grown trees that were falling on the property.

Commissioner Hurley asked if there were additional pictures of the property, noting there is a high bar for demolitions. Mr. Timlin said that there was not as someone is currently staying in the structure.

Mr. Timlin added that the gas is still active on the property which led to the two recent fire incidents. Chairperson Burnash noted that any water used to put out the fire that occurred in the winter would have frozen, causing more damage.

Commissioner Hurley expressed concern that there is a high bar for demolitions and that materials should be consistent for all applicants.

Commissioner Schipani said there were two additions to the house and the inside is trashed from exposure to the elements and the fires. Chairperson Burnash asked Commissioner Schipani if he had been inside the structure and what the condition is. Commissioner Schipani replied that he had sometime around June during a cleanup effort and to board the property, adding that he does not know how anyone could live in the structure. Commissioner Schipani added that he loved the house and if he thought it was savable, he would fight for it, adding that there was two of this style of house in the neighborhood and the other burned down around 2009-2010.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to approve the application for demolition.

Commissioner Wright reiterated Commissioner Hurley's comments on the documentation needed for demolitions. Chairperson Burnash suggested tabling this application to received additional documentation. Commissioner Hurley asked if the motion is continued and does not pass what the next step would be. Chairperson Burnash said he would need to wait another year and have changed in condition. Commissioner Hurley asked about tabling this application. Chairperson Burnash noted there was a motion on the floor. Commissioner Wright said she would support the motion, noting that Commissioner Schipani has seen the inside of the property and the information given.

Commissioner Schipani amended the motion table the application to the December meeting to allow the property owner to supply the supporting documentation of a letter from a builder including details of the cost to repair and the value of the property. Commissioner Wright supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes

Commissioner Neiswender, yes

Commissioner Wright, yes

Commissioner Hurley, yes

Commissioner Schipani, yes

Commissioner Burnash, yes

M/S – Schipani/Wright

6 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain – 0 absent

The motion carried.

Applicant: *Flint Manhattan Place, LLC*

Property Owner: *Flint Manhattan Place, LLC*

Location: *Garland St. (PID # 40-12-484-016)*

& W. Second Ave (PID # 40-12-484-018)

Mr. Timlin spoke on behalf of Flint Manhattan Place, LLC, stating that he would speak on both Garland St. and Second Ave. in the same context as the subject garages are located on the two parcels. Mr. Timlin stated these are not historically contributing structures and they were built in the 1980s. Mr. Timlin said that because the property is walled in, there is drug activity and people squatting in the garages, even after the garage doors were removed. Mr. Timlin noted someone had survived an overdose on the property the past Friday. Commissioner Hurley asked if there were any plans for this site. Mr. Timlin also stated that the garages are not tied to the apartment building parcel, but they are exploring options to bring the apartments up to code and receive a Certificate of Occupancy, noting that the structure is currently not built to Code. Mr. Timlin said that cars have been left and striped for parts on the property.

Commissioner Hurley asked for an explanation of the garages and parcels. Mr. Timlin answered that the entire site consists of four parcels two of which contain the garages. Mr. Timlin said that they were not applying for fencing and that they just want to remove the garages to open sight lines to the parcels. Commissioner Schipani explained that the garages are in the back half of the property, the garages are all identical, and are located on two separate parcels that are adjacent to each other.

Chairperson Burnash noted that the application for *W. Second Ave (PID # 40-12-484-018)* is to be considered along with the application for Garland St, which is for the four non-contributing garages.

Commissioner Hurley asked if the fencing was included in the demolition. Mr. Timlin said the fencing should have been included as they want to open sight lines on the property.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the demolition of the Manhattan Place garages with the addendum of also approving demolition of the fencing. Commissioner Davis supported the motion.

Commissioner Neiswender expressed concern that the garages do not appear structurally deficient, adding that the fact the garages were not built at the same time as the original structure does not necessarily mean they are non-contributing. Commissioner Neiswender also expressed concern with using safety as a reason for demolition in a historic district over other means of addressing the issue. Commissioner Neiswender prompted for more discussion on whether the garages are non-contributing. Commissioner Schipani replied that the Secretary of Interior Standards defines a contributing resource as a structure that was built within the period of all other structures when the neighborhood was built, in the case of Carriage Town this is 1870-1929. Commissioner Schipani noted that the garages were an attempt to recreate history by matching the contributing building on the site. Commissioner Hurley added that he made the motion because it appears to be a modern building. Chairperson Burnash noted that she believed the qualifying factor for a contributing resource is 50 years, adding that each historic area preserves a certain architectural style. Discussion was held on the architectural style of Carriage Town and the reason for designating the area as historic. Commissioner Hurley posed the question would the Manhattan Place Apartments be less than without the garages and would there be a loss of the history or significance of the building, saying these are points to consider.

Commissioner Hurley amended the motion to approve the demolition of the Manhattan Place garages with the addendum of also approving demolition of the fencing, giving the reasoning that these are not considered a contributing resource for the historic district. Commissioner Schipani supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner Wright, yes
Commissioner Schipani, yes

Commissioner Neiswender, yes
Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, yes

M/S – Hurley/Davis

6 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain – 0 absent

The motion carried.

Mr. Timlin noted that coming in for demolition requests are bittersweet and that he hoped he showed sensitivity when applying for these demolitions. Commissioner Wright said the presentations have a lot of helpful information on the conditions of the properties and that concerns of documentation are to remain consistent across applicants. Commissioner Wright said that a letter from a builder showing an estimate

for cost of repair will bring more needed information before a vote and that interior pictures will be helpful, but he should also not enter an unsafe area. Mr. Timlin said he understood and added that they received full offers on the Sanford rehabilitations.

Applicant: *Kim Stoddard/CS Mott Foundation*
Property Owner: *CS Mott Foundation*
Location: *503 S. Saginaw St. (PID # 41-18-114-001)*

Chairperson Burnash said in the alley behind the building limestone panels had been cut into and removed and metal panels are now covering these sections. This work had already started before a Stop Work Order was placed on the property. Commissioner Hurley asked if the blocks were new. Mr. Vandercook stated he went to the site with the Building Official Mike Reiter to speak to Kim Stoddard and there was structural work that needed to be done. Mr. Vandercook said there was structural steel that was compromised. Commissioner Hurley asked if the images provided are what the wall looked like with the panels removed. Chairperson Burnash said these looked like the original brick. Commissioner Wright read from the application that the limestone panels are supported by a steel beam. Commissioner Wright noted the application does not list the name of the company doing restoration work. Commissioner Davis asked if they are seeking to restore the façade to what it looked like previously. Chairperson Burnash confirmed.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Davis supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner Wright, yes
Commissioner Schipani, yes

Commissioner Neiswender, yes
Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, yes

M/S – Hurley/Davis

6 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain – 0 absent

The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Emergency CoA – 519 Mason St. (PID # 40-12-460-017)

Chairperson Burnash stated she approved this CoA to prevent water damage in the meantime between meetings. Commissioner Wright noted the application states they are replacing the shingles with similar material.

NEW BUSINESS:

Recent Articles - Patterson Building

Commissioner Neiswender noted the Patterson Building is in a precarious position. Chairperson Burnash said the building is tied up in the courts with the previous owner requesting ownership be reverted back to him. Chairperson Burnash added that she was contacted someone she believes is in charge of building maintenance for the Patterson Building and that he asked if the Commission would be amenable to removing the parapet entirely, in which she said no as a cap was approved at a previous meeting. Commissioner Hurley brought up that the previous owner has made claims that the Patterson Building is not in a historic district. Commissioner Neiswender asked if there was an idea of how long the issue of the building would be in the courts. Commissioner Wright answered that it can take a long time because if the building was purchased on a land contract and payments were accepted, the previous owner needs to

show that owners are in 100% default. Chairperson Burnash said that it will hopefully be resolved quickly as water is still pouring into the building and the parapet will continue to degrade.

Recent Articles – Saginaw Street Bricks

The Commissioners discussed the delay in the Saginaw Street Bricks project until the spring to coincide with work to replace the water main under the street. Chairperson Burnash noted that it may need to come back to the Commission if the approval expires before the spring.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Neiswender/Wright

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Unanimously carried.