

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Draft Meeting Minutes
December 1st, 2022

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Jonathan Mateen, Planner I

Absent:

Heather Burnash, Chair

ROLL CALL:

Vice-Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 5:46 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, absent
Beverly Davis, present in-person
Michael Hurley, present in-person

Kurt Neiswender, present in-person
Joe Schipani, present in-person
Stephanie Wright, present in-person

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

M/S – Schipani/Neiswender

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meeting of November 3rd, were presented.

Commissioner Schipani noted the date needed to be corrected at the top of the minutes.

Commissioner Wright asked if the demolition for Manhattan Place, LLC. garages were approved for Communities First, who owns the property. Commissioner Schipani commented that this was approved for Uptown Reinvestment Corporation. Moses Timlin clarified that URC owns the property through Manhattan Place, LLC.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to accept the minutes of November 3rd, 2022 as amended. Commissioner Wright supported the motion.

M/S – Schipani/Wright

Motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Vice-Chair Davis opened the floor for public comment. No one spoke.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Applicant: DFPH, LLC
Property Owner: DFPH, LLC
Location: 516 N. Grand Traverse St. (PID # 40-12-460-003)

Mr. Timlin stated he supplied the requested letter from a builder regarding 516 N. Grand Traverse St. along with interior photos. Mr. Timlin noted the interior damage from two fire incidents, missing roofing and siding, as well as the builder’s comments on the cracking foundation and water damage.

Commissioner Wright commented on the interior photos, noting that the property appears to be uninhabitable and the cost to rehabilitate the property would be a significant expense.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to approve the application. Commissioner Wright supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner Wright, yes
Commissioner Schipani, yes
Commissioner Neiswender, yes
Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, absent

M/S – Schipani/Wright
Motion carried.

Applicant: Uptown Reinvestment Corporation (URC)
Property Owner: URC FC, LLC
Location: 200 E. First St. (PID # 41-18-126-020)

Joeseph Martin is representing URC with an architecture team from SmithGroup working on the project. Marta Gazda-Auskalnis is a project manager with SmithGroup and is leading the architectural and engineering team for this project. Frank Majewski is an architect and designer. Mr. Martin spoke on Michigan State University occupying the historic Flint Journal building along with 16 residential tenets. Through support from the East-Lansing campus and a gift from the CS Mott Foundation, their public health facility and academic research in Flint will be expanded along with new outreach programs. The College of Human Medicine is looking to establish a Department of Public Health for their Flint extension. Mr. Martin stated there is an expected increase of 150 jobs in addition to the staff they already have. A new building is proposed to be placed adjacent to the Flint Journal building as a part of the expansion.

Ms. Gazda-Auskalnis gave a short presentation on the project, showing the existing elevation photos of the site. Ms. Gazda-Auskalnis showed the south-east facing façade which is the proposed connecting wall between the existing and proposed buildings. The two buildings will be visually distinct and separated by a 2-hour firewall. Two access points between the buildings are proposed on Level 1 and Level 3 of the building, with fire rated doors and shutters. Ms. Gazda-Auskalnis stated the goal of the proposed building was to have a complimentary design with the historic building while not competing with it. Ms. Gazda-Auskalnis stated the façade of the proposed building is setback further than the existing building to further prevent them from competing.

Frank Majewski further expressed the design principles for the proposed building and their attempts to not mimic the historic building. The exterior used brick for warmth and a sense of human scale, a glass curtain wall for transparency and to indicate the point of entry, and simulated wood-grain composite panels. Shades will be placed above windows on the south-east wall for glare protection and to regulate heat in summer months. The proposed primary entrance on the eastern wall has an awning with additional lighting.

Commissioner Wright asked if additional space for the MSU Flint Campus is required. Mr. Martin answered that additional space is needed as they have taken on secondary functions and currently are occupying secondary space in the Capitol Theatre in the meantime. MSU is intended to be the only occupant of the proposed building. Commissioner Wright asked how this will impact the building MSU currently occupies. Mr. Martin answered that MSU will continue to occupy the Flint Journal building as well as the proposed building which represents their expansion space, adding that they will likely consolidate their space in the Capitol Theatre into the proposed building.

Commissioner Schipani asked if the proposed building would connect with the non-historically contributing addition of the Flint Journal building rather than the historically contributing part of the building. Ms. Gazda-Auskalnis confirmed.

The commissioners discussed the history of the building, including the addition from the 60s.

Commissioner Schipani noted the design does not attempt to recreate history.

Commissioner Davis asked why the bricks are so different between the existing and the proposed buildings. Mr. Martin said they had explored brick options that more closely matched the existing building, but they believed in showing a complementary addition that is not mimicking the past.

Commissioner Schipani added that new construction should not give a false sense of history per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Commissioner Neiswender asked if there is a reason the exterior element that connects from the ground and wraps around the top of the building sticks out past the Flint Journal building. Ms. Gazda-Auskalnis answered that the design ties in with the firewall rating and noted there is difficulty in aligning buildings with two different materials, as this ties with the firewall, the element needed to be push forward rather than back.

Commissioner Wright reviewed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

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

Roll Call:

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

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

***M/S – Schipani/Neiswender
Motion carried.***

Applicant: H2A Architects
Property Owner: UNIV OF MICH REGENTS FLINT
Location: 432 N. Saginaw St. (PID # 41-07-354-026)

Jackie Hoist from H2A Architects is speaking on this project. Ms. Hoist spoke of the multi-story windows along the two facades that are in poor condition. The windows were last worked on 1985 where they are rehabilitated along 2nd Ave and altered along Saginaw St. In 1985 the first eight feet of windows were replaced with insulated glass in the frame. Commissioner Schipani noted the application lists 2nd St, not 2nd Ave which is the correct road. Ms. Hoist noted some of the windows are in good shape and can be rehabilitated again and some are in rough shape. Ms. Hoist noted they have not yet locked down a replacement material, but the intention is to replace with historically accurate windows where needed and refurbish where possible. Additionally, the scope of the project will depend on the University of Michigan's budget for the project.

Commissioner Schipani asked if the windows would be replaced with like materials. Ms. Hoist said they would be a similar profile to what is existing, and they will still use a metal window frame, but it will be aluminum. Ms. Hoist added that the metal panels under the windows on Saginaw St. will be a part of the project. Commissioner Wright asked if the windows can be opened. Ms. Hoist commented that at one point they could be opened but they have not been operational for a long time and are now fixed. Ms. Hoist noted heat loss is controlled with interior storm windows, adding that these will be used wherever they are refurbishing windows.

Commissioner Hurley asked about the previous changes. Ms. Hoist stated the areas where windows were altered the lower 8 feet of the window sash was cut out and replaced with insulated windows, adding that it is noticeable in person. Commissioner Hurley asked for their approach to the big windows. Ms. Hoist answered that the intention is to match the windows that were originally there, not what is there now. Ms. Hoist noted that where there is now half and half original and newer materials, the full windows will need to be replaced as the altered sections are aging poorly.

Commissioner Wright asked if the University was allowing the architects to prioritize windows as the budget may not allow them to do every window. Ms. Hoist stated on the south elevation, most of the windows only need to be prepped, painted, and caulked.

Commissioner Neiswender asked if the replacement would include the structural steel on the multi-story windows along Saginaw St. Ms. Hoist confirmed.

Commissioner Hurley asked how someone would be able to tell between the old and new material. Ms. Hoist answered that the new material will be insulated glass, where the refurbished glass will be single paned with storm windows on the inside. The metal frame will be black aluminum on the replacement windows and black steel on the original windows. Commissioner Hurley asked if the frame shape and profiles will be similar. Ms. Hoist confirmed that there are still companies making frames in this shape and do historic replica windows that they are working with.

Commissioner Hurley noted any approvals expire after a year of work is not significantly started.

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

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Neiswender/Schipani
Motion carried.

Ms. Hoist noted the building has a façade easement with the Genesee County Historical Society, who will also be reviewing the documents for appropriateness.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Schipani/Neiswender

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Unanimously carried by voice vote