

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 2, 2023

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Max Lester, Planner I

Absent:

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Burnash called the meeting to order at 5:31 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, present in-person
Stephanie Wright, present in-person

MEMBER REMOTE ANNOUNCEMENT – OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Max Lester noted that staff had received communication from the City Attorney regarding Open Meetings, stating Commissioners need to meet in-person with the status of ADA being uncertain. Chairperson Burnash asked if this applies even though the HDC By-Laws permit it. Max clarified that this was an opinion from the City Attorney. Commissioner Hurley stated that traditionally up to one Commissioner could call in if needed even before Covid. Chair. Burnash asked if Max had a copy of the opinion. Max stated they could send a copy, noting it is an internal communication. Commissioner Wright added that the By-Laws were previously approved and allowed for remotely meeting for one person. The Commissioners discussed potentially moving forward as usual until a clear directive comes in.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Schipani added his resignation following the next meeting under New Business.

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

M/S – Hurley/Neiswender

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meeting of December 1st, 2022 were presented.

Commissioner Neiswender made a motion to accept the minutes of December 1st, 2022. Commissioner Schipani supported the motion.

M/S – Neiswender/Schipani
The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

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

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Applicant: Jerrid Heidel

Property Owner: FRIENDS OF THE CAPITOL THEATRE, LLC

Location: 130 E. Second St.

Phil Shaltz is speaking on behalf of his partner Jerrid Heidel due to unforeseen family emergency. His latest venture is a business in the Capitol Theatre building in the previous location of The Ebersson named Pop Rox. Mr. Shaltz drew attention to the picture of vinyl window stickers in the application. Mr. Shaltz added another request to add downcast light by means of a bracket mounted to the roof, avoiding the parapet and façade. The need for lighting was identified recently, with Mr. Shaltz noting the building in this area is pitch black when it gets dark. Mr. Shaltz showed a concept picture, adding colors could be coordinated based on time of season and to match the Mott Foundation Building. The lighting color and intensity could be adjusted based on feedback. Commissioner Schipani asked for more clarification on the mounting method. Mr. Shaltz stated he has not been to the roof in a long time, but he imagines mounting a plate to the roof and then cantilevering a bracket to hang the light over the side. Commissioner Hurley asked Mr. Shaltz if he would like the application amended to add the lighting. Mr. Shaltz confirmed. Chairperson Burnash asked how many lights they were expecting. Mr. Shaltz answered three. Commissioner Neiswender noted that the HDC can vote on the lighting, but there may be lighting restrictions in the new Zoning Code. Mr. Shaltz suggested conditioning the lighting on Planning approval in the motion. Chairperson Burnash noted the HDC is concerned with the building being highlighted rather than overshadowed by a neon or blinking type of lighting. Mr. Shaltz stated it would be soft muted lighting, adding that even with the marquee on the building is very dark and difficult to navigate. Commissioner Neiswender noted concern that the rest of the building along Harrison St. would look odd without consistent lighting. Mr. Shaltz stated that they do not own the building, but he might know people who would get excited about lighting the rest of the building. Chairperson Burnash noted the HDC is looking for uniformity. Mr. Shaltz said they would like the lighting to complement the colors of the marquee as it changes weekly. Chairperson Burnash stated it is important that the hardware used for the building looks like it goes with the signage, such as the same material and color. Mr. Shaltz offered to come back to the Commission if there is uncertainty with the design.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to approve the signage with the addition of the lighting, minimum of three lights over Pop Rox, contingent on Zoning approval.

Mr. Shaltz added that he will discuss adding lighting around the building with URC and will ensure all lighting is uniform.

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 absent
The motion carried.

Applicant: Emily Doerr
Property Owner: Berridge Place, LLC
Location: 421 Garland St.

Emily Doerr spoke on the vinyl window sticker request and her plans to open in April. The vinyl stickers will indicate the business is opening soon. Commissioner Schipani asked if the Coming Soon stickers would be swapped out after opening. Ms. Doerr said her next question was whether she would need to come back to the HDC whenever she wished to swap the sticker out with a new temporary sign. Commissioner Schipani clarified asking if the white stickers would stay the same, with the Coming Soon sign being the only one to change. Ms. Doerr confirmed, adding that the main difference between the replacement signs would be the short message, such as “Retail and Sit-Down” or “Brunch – Saturdays and Sundays 10 – 2.” Ms. Doerr said her intention is to have professional looking signage that does not need to be permanent. Chairperson Burnash said if Ms. Doerr plans on sticking to the same shape, size, and font it may be able to be approved as more of a blanket, unless a replacement sign differs significantly from this template. Ms. Doerr confirmed the wording in the middle would be the only thing to change.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to accept the application as presented with the amended application language that the shape, size, and font type are approved and the wording in the middle may be changed without further HDC approval. 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/Schipani
6 yes, 0 no, 0 absent
The motion carried.

Applicant: Daniel Crannie/Signs by Crannie
Property Owner: Riverside Tabernacle
Location: 429 NB Chavez Dr.

Nick Treffon from Signs by Crannie spoke on the requested sign, with the Pastor of the church also present. Mr. Treffon passed an example letter from the proposed sign for review. The sign consists of channel letters lit with LEDs behind an acrylic diffuser. The size and area are similar to the existing wall sign. There is a changeable copy sign below that is also lit and the large cross will be unaffected. Commissioner Neiswender asked staff if the size of the sign is allowable under the ordinance. Max responded that this would likely be considered a reface or replacement of an existing sign. Chairperson Burnash noted the building is a non-contributing structure.

Commissioner Schpani 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, yes

M/S – Schipani/Wright
6 yes, 0 no, 0 absent
The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

Wade Trim - Riverbank Park

Max Lester read an email received January 12th, 2023, regarding Halprin Fountain from Wade Trim. Work on the State Park will destroy parts of Halprin Fountain. Because federal funding is involved and the fountain is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places, the HDC is being notified. A memorandum of agreement is being drafted detailing mitigation steps. Max added that they will reach out to Wade Trim for more information.

The Commissioners discussed the location of the fountain. Commissioner Neiswender discussed Lawrence Halprin and the Brutalist style of the park's architecture. Portions of the park have already been removed. Chairperson Burnash noted the significance of moving water features in strong downtowns.

Commissioner Schipani Resigning

Commissioner Schipani stated he will be resigning from the HDC after the next meeting and will be moving. Chairperson Burnash noted we will need to fill vacant seats. Commissioner Schipani said he John Mason, a builder who lives in Carriage Town, would be interested in joining the HDC.

Commissioner Wright noted that it is odd that participants may join the meetings via Zoom but the Commissions supposedly cannot. Commissioner Schipani said there may have been a Covid related law that expired regarding the Open Meetings Act.

Max notified the Commissioners that Jonathon Mateen is no longer working for the City of Flint.

Chairperson Burnash noted that the Saginaw Street Bricks Certificate of Appropriateness will be expiring soon.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Schipani/Neiswender

The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.
Unanimously carried by voice vote.