



Sheldon Neeley
Mayor

CITY OF FLINT

FLINT PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
June 27th, 2023

Commissioners Present

Robert Wesley, Chair
Carol-Anne Blower, Vice-Chair
Harry Ryan
Leora Campbell
Robert Jewell
Mona Munroe-Younis

Staff Present

Joanne Gurley, Assistant City Attorney
William Vandercook, Zoning Coordinator
Max Lester, Int. Zoning Coordinator
Montel Menifee, Marihuana Facilities Licensing Coordinator

Absent:

Lynn Sorenson, Secretary
April Cook-Hawkins

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wesley called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

The meeting was held both in-person in the Council Chambers and via Zoom and phone conferencing as approved.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: appearing in-person	Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent
Commissioner Campbell: appearing in-person	Commissioner Sorenson: absent
Commissioner Blower: appearing in-person	Commissioner Munroe-Younis: appearing in-person
Commissioner Jewell: appearing in-person	Chairperson Wesley: appearing in-person

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Blower requested to add a report from the Director of Planning and Development before F. Public Hearings and to correct the list indexing on the agenda items following F. Public Hearings.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Wesley asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Campbell made a motion to accept the agenda as amended. Commissioner Blower supported the motion.

M/S – Campbell/Blower

Unanimously carried by voice vote



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MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Minutes of June 13th, 2023

Commissioner Jewell noted a grammatical error on Page 5.

Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve the minutes of June 13th, 2023 as corrected.
Commissioner Campbell supported this motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: yes

Commissioner Campbell: yes

Commissioner Blower: abstain

Commissioner Jewell: yes

Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent

Commissioner Sorenson: absent

Commissioner Munroe-Younis: yes

Chairman Wesley: yes

M/S – Jewell/Campbell

5 yes – 0 no – 1 abstain

Unanimously carried by voice vote

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one spoke.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Director Emily Doerr shared her experience working in the Department of Community and Economic Development and previous job experiences and experience as a business owner in Flint. Ms. Doerr discussed new hours of operation, noting the time between 2 PM and 5 PM are available for appointments with staff Monday through Friday, with walk-in meetings being subject to staff discretion. The time between 9 AM and 2 PM are intended to give staff time to complete administrative tasks. Ms. Doerr noted she is prioritizing filling staffing vacancies including an administrative support role that could complete minutes, assist with packet deliveries, etc. for all Commissions and Boards within Planning and Development. Ms. Doerr stated that the information she has regarding ARPA is limited to what is available on the City of Flint website. Ms. Doerr stated she is committed to seeing Redevelopment Ready Communities certification being completed, adding that certification allows for grant opportunities for marketing, environmental assessments, renderings, etc. through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Ms. Doerr is also addressing vacancies and expired terms for Commissions and Boards as well as locating funding for the 10-Year Comprehensive Plan review.



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PUBLIC HEARINGS:

PC 23-7: Alpine Development Group, LLC requests review from the Planning Commission for a Planned Sign Program at 2502 S. Dort Hwy. Flint, MI 48507 (PID # 41-20-278-030).

Max Lester read the staff review and standards checklist for PC 23-7.

Commissioner Blower asked where staff would see the LED façade lighting fitting in under the sign-age types in the Zoning Ordinance. Max answered that staff believes the lighting has the intended effect of advertising and may not fit best under an architectural feature designation. Max added that the Planned Sign Program allows applicants to propose signage that doesn't fit within the strict standards of the Zone District.

Commissioner Jewell asked for the staff recommendation and whether there are any proposed conditions. Max replied that the requested Electronic Message Center (EMC) signage would be no more obtrusive than signage on neighboring properties and noted no issues with the green cross wall signs. Max recommended the Commission consider requiring a semi-transparent material over the LED façade lighting and for the applicant to provide details on the EMC center dimmable technology information. Commissioner Jewell asked if staff would be able to administratively approve the application with the Chair if conditions of staff receiving technical details are met. Max replied that this would be appropriate. Commissioner Jewell asked if Alpine Development Group, LLC is both the property owner and operator of the marijuana licenses on site. Max confirmed.

Berton Brown and Tom Schaffou with Alpine Development Group, LLC and Michael Zacks with 4Tech Signs and Graphics presented for PC 23-7.

Mr. Zacks stated the channel letter on the building and the refacing of the existing pylon sign were approved in 2022. The request per the pylon sign is to add an EMC center cabinet under the existing cabinet. Advertisements would be limited to product and applicants offered screen access to the City for emergency alerts. Mr. Zachs stated he felt the LED lighting and green crosses were architectural rather than signage. Mr. Zachs added that the EMC center sign has automatic dimming technology based on ambient light and applicants will follow Ordinance requirements regarding scrolling messages and interval times.

Commissioner Jewell asked if technical information could be provided to staff. Mr. Zachs stated it can be. Commissioner Jewell noted his intention may be to have the information provided for an administrative approval.

Commissioner Blower referenced Mr. Zacks belief that the façade lighting was an architectural feature, asking if this was part of the original site plan. Mr. Schaffou stated it was not on the original plan and he was not aware an approval was needed. Commissioner Blower noted Commissioners have heard from residents previously that signage along Dort Highway is distracting and offensive, and asked the applicants to express if they envision their signage to add or not add to existing distracting signage.



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Mr. Brown stated that they have improved the property over the past six years from a blighted status and built reputation with community members in the area. Mr. Brown noted the overall increased lighting is beneficial to safety in the area, noting there is a marketability aspect. Mr. Brown stated he has not heard negative feedback regarding the building appearance. Mr. Schaffou reiterated the points of fixing up the property and lighting the area.

Commissioner Campbell expressed appreciation that the blighted properties were cleaned up. Commissioner Campbell asked for clarification on the number of buildings on the property. Mr. Brown stated there are three buildings on the site from three parcels that were combined. Mr. Schaffou clarified that the proposed signage is for a single building, which represents the entire property which contains three buildings. Chairperson Wesley asked if the green crosses will be on each building. Mr. Schaffou answered only the one building. Chairperson Wesley noted a concern that the LED lights may be distracting. Mr. Vandercook added that with the upcoming Site Plan Review, a photometric plan will be included which can also show lighting on the property per ordinance standards.

Commissioner Ryan asked staff if they have seen the lighting at night. Max answered that they have. Commissioner Blower stated she has seen the property at night.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis asked if this scenario has happened previously with building façade lighting. Commissioner Blower noted some signage was previously approved, but applicants are now requesting additional signage, some of which was added prior to permitting.

Attorney Gurley requested the applicants respond to Administrative Rule 420.507 as it relates to marketing and advertising. Mr. Zachs noted they stated they would comply with City regulations for advertising. Attorney Gurley noted this rule is a State law. Mr. Brown stated they will be in compliance with the noted rule. Attorney Gurley noted advertising for adult recreational products should include a disclaimer to the effect that no one under the age of 21 would be permitted to purchase the product.

Chairperson Wesley opened the floor to Public Comment.

No one spoke. Chairperson Wesley closed the floor to Public Comment.

Commissioner Jewell asked if there have been any other communications regarding this case. Max answered that staff did not receive additional communications.

Commissioner Jewell recommended a statement from the applicants that all local ordinances and State laws will be followed should be provide to staff, as stated in the meeting.

Commissioner Blower noted the large property and multiple buildings on site presents a unique aspect to the property.

Commissioner Ryan asked if the application complies with Standard 1. Chairperson Wesley stated he believed it complies with Standard 1.



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Commissioner Blower made a motion for conditional approval of PC 23-7: Alpine Development Group, LLC requests review from the Planning Commission for a Planned Sign Program at 2502 S. Dort Hwy. Flint, MI 48507 (PID # 41-20-278-030) with the following findings of fact:

Complies with Standard 2 because the applicant’s property is unique compared to other parcels in the same zone district and in the same vicinity.

Complies with Standard 3 because the proposed plan is consistent with the purposes and intent of Section 50-178 and Article 15;

Complies with Standard 4 because the proposed plan will not create a danger to public safety.

Complies with Standard 5 because the approval of the Planned Sign Program will not have an adverse impact on property in the vicinity.

Complies with Standard 6 because the proposed signs are compatible with surrounding buildings as well as the building on site.

Complies with Standard 7 because the proposed signs will be constructed out of high-quality material.

Commissioner Blower added the condition of an administrative review of the LED technology for the EMC cabinet and façade lighting and receipt of a statement that local ordinances and state law will be followed.

Commissioner Campbell supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: yes
Commissioner Campbell: yes
Commissioner Blower: yes
Commissioner Jewell: yes

Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent
Commissioner Sorenson: absent
Commissioner Munroe-Younis: yes
Chairman Wesley: yes

M/S – Blower/Campbell

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

The motion carried.

SITE PLAN REVIEW:

None.



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CASE REVIEW:

Green Skies Healing Tree, LLC – 3401 Corunna Rd. – Court Ruling

Attorney Gurley stated she corresponded with Green Skies Healing and is waiting for a reply based on the minor deficiencies that need to be addressed. Commissioner Jewell asked if this is in relationship to the inquiries she made previously on the same minor deficiencies. Attorney Gurley confirmed.

City Council Action on Planning Commission Recommendations

Max noted there were none at this time, however, a previous approval for PC 23-5 for Club Medz at 2838 E. Court St. would not need to go to City Council as a resolution and could be approved administratively so long as conditions set by the Commission are followed. Commissioner Jewell asked if this had been done or was still in progress. Mr. Menifee stated an updated agreement was received, noting Mr. Lane had begun payments and this was being factored into the agreement. Commissioner Jewell rephrased, asking if the administrative meeting had been held with the Chair. Mr. Vandercook stated the meeting has occurred.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Max stated ZBA 23-8: 205 Flintstones, LLC/Mark Johnson requests a Non-Use Variance from Zoning Code Sections 50-155, 50-156, and 50-157 at 927 S. Saginaw St. Flint, MI 48504 (PID 41-18-180-009) was conditionally approved with a vote of 6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions. Conditions set were that applicants must follow the alternative landscaping plan supplied to the Board.

REPORTS:

American Rescue Plan/Capital Improvement Plan – (ARP and CIP)

Jason Ball, ROWE PSC, spoke on ARP and the CIP. Mr. Ball stated he agrees with the comments made by Ms. Doerr earlier that staff and ROWE do not have a lot of information available on how CIP expenditures are funded related to the ARP. Mr. Ball stated the role of the Planning Commission is to evaluate the CIP projects and determine if they consistent with the current City of Flint Master Plan. Mr. Ball asked if there was any additional information that could be provided to help the Commissioners with that task. Commissioner Blower asked if a previously requested map showing where funded projects are located can be added. Mr. Ball stated a map can be drafted and brought back. Commissioner Jewell stated the request was in the meeting minutes and asked Mr. Ball if the previous request to the CFO and others for specifics on the allocation of ARP dollars to the Master Plan and CIP categories has not been received. Mr. Ball confirmed that this information was not given to ROWE. Chairperson Wesley noted Ms. Doerr referenced a report on the City website listing ARP funding categories and stated he was not sure what other information the Commission could receive.

Mr. Ball explained that a map will need to fit on an 8.5 by 11-inch page and there are 47 pages of projects. Mr. Ball stated they may break maps up by category and projects will be represented by lines and dots depending on the project. Some sections may need to be broken up over two maps. Commissioner Blower stated her idea of the maps is not to provide detailed information but rather to see how projects are broadly spread out over the city. Mr. Ball asked how a division of the city into equal sections would be best handled. Chairperson Wesley stated he believed the Mayor was



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addressing the city in quadrants rather than wards. Mr. Ball added that how a map like this is presented could inaccurately communicate the reality of how the City is spending funds as Capital Improvement is one aspect of the city budget. Mr. Ball suggested the detailed version because it sticks only to projects within the CIP without placing a value assessment on who is “winning” or “losing”. Commissioner Blower accepted Mr. Ball’s suggestion.

Commissioner Jewell asked for Commissioners to receive copies of the previously mentioned ARP report, noting he does not believe this includes the comprehensive information previously requested.

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC)

Mr. Ball stated the Commission has previously reviewed the Public Participation Plan (PPP) and Guide to Development (GtD) and requested edits were made. Mr. Ball suggested a formal motion for acceptance is made if no further edits were needed.

Commissioner Blower noted Suzanne Wilcox is still listed as Director of Planning and Development. Chairperson Wesley noted Max’s title has changed from Zoning Support Planner to Interim Zoning Coordinator.

Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve the Guide to Development with the noted changes for staff information. Commissioner Blower supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: yes	Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent
Commissioner Campbell: yes	Commissioner Sorenson: absent
Commissioner Blower: yes	Commissioner Munroe-Younis: yes
Commissioner Jewell: yes	Chairman Wesley: yes

M/S – Jewell/Blower

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

The motion carried.

Commissioner Blower noted the change from Master Plan to Comprehensive Plan moving in the Public Participation Plan, Commissioner Jewell requested further language noting this is how it is defined in the City Charter.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis drew attention to the use of “citizen” in the document and asked if this wording can be changed or a mention added that the word citizen is not meant in an exclusive way, rather being inclusive of all residents. Mr. Ball stated this can be noted in the document that the specific language is mandated from Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Commissioner Munroe-Younis noted this has been a topic of discussion in the city recently.



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Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve the Public Participation Plan with the changes of a note about the use of the word “citizen” and the change from “Master Plan” to “Comprehensive Plan” as noted by the City Charter. Commissioner Blower supported the motion.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis recommended adding language regarding making reasonable accessibility efforts for residents with limited English proficiency, such as publishing documents with around a 5th Grade reading level. Mr. Ball suggested adding this in the introduction or on Page 13, noting that specifying a specific grade level will be difficult for staff to meet that standard as Word tools will be skewed with words like “Comprehensive Plan” and certain processes need to be written in a certain way to comply with State law. Mr. Ball suggested the Flint and Genesee Literacy Network could be added to the list of resources for interpreters and other accessibility services. Commissioner Munroe-Younis agreed, adding the language for content could say something similar to keeping documents as simplified as possible and written for a general community audience. Mr. Ball noted this document is meant to guide the department and does not impact other departments within the City.

Additional language requested includes:

- Addressing the use of the word “citizen” as HUD defined language.
- Changing the terms “master Plan” to “Comprehensive Plan”.
- Addressing residents with limited English proficiency by committing to writing documents with the general community audience in mind and adding Flint and Genesee Literacy Network to the list of interpreter and accessibility services.

Commissioner Jewell amended the motion to include the above additional language. Commissioner Blower supported the amended motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: yes

Commissioner Campbell: yes

Commissioner Blower: yes

Commissioner Jewell: yes

Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent

Commissioner Sorenson: absent

Commissioner Munroe-Younis: yes

Chairman Wesley: yes

M/S – Jewell/Blower

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

The motion carried.

Mr. Ball discussed the binder, noting this has been transferred over to staff who can make further changes when needed. Max drew attention to the Binder Updates memo and the attachment to the memo.

Commissioner Jewell stated his understanding is that staff would review the materials to be updated with Mr. Ball, swap out materials in the binders to be brought back to the Commission, and then there would be a binder walkthrough. Commissioner Jewell noted that Max did not take binders back at the



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previous meeting because larger binders would be ordered. Max stated all of the Commissioner's binders, with the possible exception of one Commissioner, have been updated with the previously requested updates. Max noted the organizational chart had an error that was recently corrected and presented with the memo. Commissioner Jewell requested his binder be taken back as he had not received any of the additions. Max stated the requested updates are already in the binder. Mr. Vandercook stated that when Ms. Marshall previously presented for ROWE she was just going to go over the Table of Contents to show which items were being updated and in the meantime staff received the binders, updated the information, and gave the binders back to Commissioners. Commissioner Jewell asked why the Commission was told to hold onto the binders and that larger binders were being purchased. Max stated that with the updated and additional documents the previous binders are now too small to fit all the contents, staff noted larger binders would be ordered but did not know when the new binders would be purchased and received. Commissioner Jewell expressed his confusion over his understanding of previous discussions on the binder process.

Commissioner Blower requested the walkthrough be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Max stated this would fall under the RRC item of the agenda, but this can be done at the next meeting.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis asked why the CIP lists the Utah Dam project several times with different funding amounts. Mr. Ball stated ROWE asked that same question and were informed that those were separate line items for different things.

Chairperson Wesley noted *Planning Commission Vacancies and Expired Terms, 10-Year City of Flint Comprehensive Plan Review, and Staffing Update* were addressed earlier by Ms. Doerr.

Mr. Vandercook asked the *Educational Topic, Zoning Coordinator Review and Site Plan Review Discussion, and Ordinance Text Review Update (Old Business)* be addressed at the next meeting. Ordinance Text Review Update will be added to the Education Topic item.

Max stated the only items under Educational Topics for this meeting was information for a few upcoming educational sessions as noted on the back of the memo.

RESOLUTIONS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

Remote Meetings Follow-up and Status

Attorney Gurley stated there was no update available for this item. Chairperson Wesley stated this item will be removed from the agenda until a change is noted.

Mr. Vandercook stated he made a mistake previously during the Case Reviews section, stating Chairperson Wesley signed off on the administrative review. Mr. Vandercook stated the document is ready to be signed after the meeting but had not yet been signed.



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NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Campbell/Blower

Unanimously carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 PM.