



Sheldon Neeley
Mayor

CITY OF FLINT

FLINT PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
August 22, 2023

Commissioners Present

Robert Wesley, Chair
Carol-Anne Blower, Vice-Chair
Harry Ryan
Robert Jewell
Mona Munroe-Younis
Jeffrey Curtis Horton

Staff Present

Joanne Gurley, Assistant City Attorney
Max Lester, Int. Zoning Coordinator

Absent:

Lynn Sorenson, Secretary
Leora Campbell
April Cook-Hawkins

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wesley called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

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

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: present in-person
Commissioner Horton: present in-person
Commissioner Campbell: absent
Commissioner Blower: present in-person
Commissioner Jewell: present in-person

Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent
Commissioner Sorenson: absent
Commissioner Munroe-Younis: present in-person
Chairperson Wesley: present in-person

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Chairman Wesley added an item of a new Planning Commissioner for Ward 2
Max added an item of a new Deputy Director of Community Services

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Wesley asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Blower motioned to accept the agenda as amended. Commissioner Munroe-Younis seconded the motion.

M/S – Blower/Munroe-Younis
Unanimously carried by voice vote



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Chairman Wesley moved the New Business items to the this point of the meeting. Chairman Wesley asked Commissioners to introduce themselves to the new Ward 2 Commissioner, Jeffrey Curtis Horton. Commissioners welcomed Commissioner Horton and introduced themselves.

Commissioner Horton expressed thanks to everyone and his excitement to get started.

Ashly Harris introduced herself and briefly explained her role overseeing the Economic Development team within Planning and Development.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

The draft minuted of August 8th, 2023 were not ready for this meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one spoke.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

PC 23-9: VJG Investments, LLC/Applicant Green Bean Company, Inc. located at 1609 W. Atherton Rd. AKA 1625 W. Atherton Rd. Flint, MI 48507 (PID # 40-25-201-056) requests a Marijuana Facilities Location Variance waiver of 407.4 feet from the 1000- foot setback requirement from schools.

Max stated the applicants requested this case be postponed so that it may be heard on the same agenda as their Group E Special Regulated Use Permit application. The SRU application is not complete at this time.

Commissioner Jewell asked about a potential process where a location variance is not granted, what would happen with the Group E SRU permit application. Max stated that the application would then not be compliant with location standards.

Zoning Code Text Amendments

Max read the staff report items for proposed changes to Article 11 and described the amendment process.

Commissioner Jewell asked what the generic intent of the amendments are. Max stated the intent is to make the application process for simple changes of use easier and less costly for applicants, clarify landscaping waivers and applicability standards, provide a waiver for landscaping through the Planning Commission, and to add more language for the use of planter boxes in meeting landscaping requirements.



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Max stated there have been no communications received prior to the meeting on this item. Max read a memo from ROWE explaining the issues identified and proposed solutions. Chairman Wesley asked for further explanation for item 1. Max responded that as currently written, if someone wishes to change the use of a structure and requires more than nine parking spaces, they need to come into conformance with applicable landscaping sections of Article 13. Rather than base the need for landscaping on parking, the proposal is for all properties to comply with landscaping to a degree based on the zoning district. Chairman Wesley mentioned trying to think of the change in context of previous decisions and how those would be impacted. Max stated that from their experience, applicants tend to want to apply for a variance from landscaping or do not continue with their project. Commissioner Jewell asked what the benefit of this change would be. Max stated a full site plan would not be required due to the landscaping requirement, which is a reduced burden on applicants, and also for staff who review these applications. Commissioner Jewell asked if there are downsides. Max stated they don't believe there are any downsides for the applicants, and staff would just need to ensure they are requesting the correct documentation needed to make a decision on an application review. No downsides are expected for the Planning Commission as these application are more likely to be a Zoning Coordinator Review.

Commissioner Ryan asked if the proposed amendments would go to Council after approval. Max responded that in most cases these applications would be approved administratively, or by the Planning Commission if part of a larger development (*staff misheard the question*). Commissioner Ryan asked if the example shown in the materials applies to the current ordinance language, Max confirmed. Commissioner Ryan asked if the new proposed amendment standards would go into effect after the proper approval process is followed, Max confirmed.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis noted concern with language that requires less overall conformance for Neighborhood Center and Downtown Core zoning districts. Max stated this language can be removed if desired.

Chairman Wesley opened the floor to public comment. No one spoke.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis discussed her prior concerns further. Max added that this language would apply to changes of use only, not new developments or requirements due to expansions.

Commissioner Ryan asked about the applicability standards for setbacks related to building foundation zone landscaping. Max responded that this standard is found in the current Zoning Ordinance and does not require building foundation zone landscaping for buildings with a setback of less than ten feet. The table being discussed references existing sections in the code as well as proposed language.

Commissioner Blower discussed the draw between the need for these processes to not be overly complicated, but also not to prioritize development over environment.



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Max asked if the only sticking point on the first item is reduced compliance language for NC and DC districts, would the other proposed waivers and changes make up for removing the reduced compliance language.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis discussed removing the table in 50-139 B. 2. defining the Neighborhood Center and Downtown Core zoning districts as requiring less overall landscaping compliance to be removed. Commissioner Munroe-Younis also discussed moving 50-158 7. to 50-139. Max noted that Article 11 deals with non-conforming uses, lots, buildings, etc, and the proposed language in 50-158 7. makes more sense where it is currently located. 50-139 B. 2. may need to be reworded to accommodate a change to 50-150 C.

Commissioner Blower asked if these changes would cause any further burden on staff or any other downfalls from removing the table in 50-139 B. 2. Max stated they do not see any further burden, however, 50-139 B. 2. iv. may want to be discussed further to remain in the code, rather than being removed.

Attorney Gurley noted that once the Commission has made final decisions, a report will be forwarded to City Council for final review at their first meeting in the fourth week. Max stated staff can draft the requested changes and bring them back before final approval.

Commissioner Blower made a motion on proposed amendments to Article 11, for staff to rewrite 50-139 B. 2. to flow with the requested changes to this section, to leave in 50-139 B. 2. iv. rather than remove it, remove the proposed table in 50-139 B. 2., and to accept the proposed changes to 50-139 C. 4., with the intent that these changes are drafted and brought back for review on September 12th, 2023. Commissioner Munroe-Younis supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: yes
Commissioner Horton: yes
Commissioner Campbell: absent
Commissioner Blower: yes
Commissioner Jewell: yes

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

M/S – Blower/Munroe-Younis

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

The motion carried.



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Max read the staff report items for proposed changes to Article 13. A table is proposed to list existing and proposed waivers and applicability standards, a waiver is proposed for landscaping through the Planning Commission, and language is proposed to further specify planting beds may be used to meet landscaping requirements in some circumstances.

Chairman Wesley opened the floor to public comment. No one spoke.

Max suggested altering the mention of Change in Use in the proposed table for Article 13 to specify 50-139 B. iv.

Commissioner Blower made a motion on proposed changes to Article 13, to revise the proposed table for Article 13 to specify 50-139 B. iv. with the intent that these changes are drafted and brought back for review on September 12th, 2023. Commissioner Munroe-Younis supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Ryan: yes

Commissioner Horton: yes

Commissioner Campbell: absent

Commissioner Blower: yes

Commissioner Jewell: yes

Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent

Commissioner Sorenson: absent

Commissioner Munroe-Younis: yes

Chairman Wesley: yes

M/S – Blower/Munroe-Younis

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

The motion carried.

Max read the staff report items for proposed amendments to Article 17. Part of section 50-186 D. 2. ii. a. is proposed to be removed to allow changes of use requiring additional parking or landscaping conformance to be reviewed under the Zoning Permit procedure, rather than as a Zoning Coordinator Review.

Chairman Wesley opened the floor to public comment. No one spoke.



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Commissioner Blower made a motion on the proposed amendment to Article 17, to bring the proposed change back for review on September 12th, 2023 as presented. Commissioner Munroe-Younis supported the motion.

Roll Call:

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

M/S – Blower/Munroe-Younis

6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain

The motion carried.

Commissioner Jewell asked if the requested amendment relates to other amendments, or if requesting the line of text that is shown as crossed out is the only proposed change. Max confirmed the only change for Article 17 is the line of text that is crossed out.

SITE PLAN REVIEW:

N/A

CASE REVIEW:

Green Skies Healing Tree, LLC – 3401 Corunna Rd.

Attorney Gurley stated there is not an update at this time as the applicant has not submitted the requested documents still needed. Commissioner Jewell asked Attorney Gurley if she met with the applicants as indicated at the previous meeting. Attorney Gurley responded that she has spoken with the applicants and their attorney over the phone multiple times. Commissioner Jewell asked if a timeline for submission was given to the applicants. Attorney Gurley stated she was told they would be in soon, but she will contact them again to push for receiving materials in time for the September 12th meeting. Commissioner Jewell asked if the applicants are unable to proceed with business operations until these materials are received and reviewed. Attorney Gurley confirmed this is true.

PC 23-7: Alpine Development Group, LLC – 2502 S. Dort Hwy.

Max stated they are still waiting for a photometric plan before proceeding with a final review. Commissioner Blower asked when their current use of the LED lighting on the building façade is not in compliance as they applied after installing them. Max responded that they are not in compliance at this time, which could impact other applications or approvals if they are not approved and brought into compliance.

City Council Action on Planning Commission Recommendations

None.



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Zoning Board of Appeals

Max stated an update will be given at the meeting on September 12th, 2023 as the regular Zoning Board of Appeals meeting was rescheduled to August 29th.

REPORTS:

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC)

Max stated they believe the last remaining item is to hold a joint meeting of commissions and boards. Staff met with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to discuss the Joint Meeting requirements.

Commissioner Jewell asked if the first meeting will go over roles and responsibilities of the boards and commissions. Commissioner Jewell asked that information be provided at a later date on who the MEDC is, what their roles and responsibilities are, and what their intentions are in assisting with the Joint Meeting.

Planning Commission vacancies and Expired Terms

Max welcomed Commissioner Horton to the Planning Commission, noting they reviewed the Planning Commission binder with him and discussed general roles and responsibilities as well as the current commission members.

10-Year City of Flint Comprehensive Plan Review

Max stated they do not have any updates at this time. Chairman Wesley stated he will work on getting the appropriate people together.

Staffing Update

Max reported that the Lead Planner has moved to a new position within Planning and Development, leaving the Lead Planner role vacant. This is expected to be posted.

Commissioner Jewell asked on the status of the second Zoning Coordinator position. Max stated this had to be reposed as previous applicants did not meet the minimum criteria. Commissioner Jewell asked on the status of the Planner I position. Max stated this was posted. Commissioner Jewell asked on the status of temporary support. Max stated there was someone for temporary support, but it was not a good fit, there is no Administrative Assistant position posted at this time.

Upcoming Public Hearing on Proposed Map Amendments

Staff are working with ROWE to prepare proposed map amendments, which will be packets with relevant information attached.



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Education Opportunity

A webinar is being held the next day titled “Catalyst Communities Series – How to Incorporate Non-Motorized Transportation/Complete Streets into Planning” hosted by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

RESOLUTIONS:

N/A

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

N/A

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Ryan/Blower

Unanimously carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.