

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 2nd, 2023

Commissioners Present

Heather Burnash, Chair
Beverly Davis, Vice-Chair
Michael Hurley
Kurt Neiswender
Megan McAdow

Staff Present

Max Lester, Int. Zoning Coordinator
Tyler Bailey, Deputy Director of Business Services
Dalton Castle, Planner I

Absent:

Stephanie Wright

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Burnash called the meeting to order at 5:48 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
Beverly Davis, present
Michael Hurley, present
McAdow, present

Kurt Neiswender, present
Stephanie Wright, absent

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner McAdow made a motion to adopt the agenda as written. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

M/S – McAdow/Neiswender
Motion carried by voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meetings of 5/4/23 and 6/1/23 were presented.

Commissioner Neiswender made a motion to accept the minutes of 5/4/23 and 6/1/23 as written. Commissioner Hurley supported the motion.

M/S – Neiswender/Hurley
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: *Earl Daup Signs*
Property Owner: *First Baptist Church of Flint/Peoples Plaza*
Location: *503 Garland St. (PID # 40-12-478-026)*
Scope of Work: *Proposing alternative signage for Peoples Plaza, including one kiosk/community board, two flag signs, one water station sign, and two phone charging signs.*

Travis Daup presented on behalf of Earl Daup Signs. Mr. Daup explained the modifications made since the approval of their site plan. They removed the wagon wheel design from the top of the phone charging signs. Additionally, the two flag signs are now smaller and have a new joint system that will attach them to the building without damaging the brick.

Chairperson Burnash asked for the dimensions of the water station sign. Mr. Daup apologized for the lack of clarity on the dimensions, it is 12” by 12”.

Commissioner Neiswender asked what materials the canopy is made out of. Mr. Daup said it will be comprised of steel poles and an aluminum topper.

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

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner McAdow, yes
Commissioner Neiswender, yes
Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, yes

M/S – Hurley/Neiswender
Motion carried.

Applicant: *Raneshia Cavette*
Property Owner: *Friends of the Capitol Theatre, LLC*
Location: *130 E. Second St. (PID # 41-18-129-001)*
Scope of Work: *Installation of a 2’x2’ projecting sign above the suite entrance*

Raneshia Cavette presented. She explained the intent is to create an eye-catching sign that matches with the interior of her business. Additionally, the sign will make it easier for her clients to identify her business, as currently her address is listed at 130 E. Second St., which is a one-way street, but her building faces Garrison Street. Due to her business being appointment-based clients arriving late can have an impact on her scheduling causing her to lose customers.

Chairperson Burnash expressed she thinks the design is appealing but also has concern that the sign would put holes in the bricks. In the event the business vacated the building, damage would remain. Her suggestion was to alter the design such that the bracket and sign were two separate pieces, that way in the event of vacation the sign could slide off and a new business could put their sign on the bracket.

Chairperson Burnash brought up the fact that the sign on the door had not gone before the HDC. She amended the application to include the signage on the door.

Ms. Cavette corrected the application which lists the sign as illuminated when it is not.

Commissioner Neiswender made a motion to approve the application with amendments. Commissioner McAdow supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner McAdow, yes
Commissioner Neiswender, yes

Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, yes

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

Applicant: AMAG, LLC
Property Owner: Communities First, Inc.
Location: 529 Martin Luther King Ave. (PIDs # 40-12-479-001, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007)
Scope of Work: Remodel/reuse of the existing (6) six story Marian Hall building into mixed use, retail, and multi-family housing (approx. 55,500s.f.). Removal of (3) three existing, dilapidated single-story retail spaces (approx. 8,500s.f.), and the construction of a new (5) five-story mixed-use, multi-family housing (approx. 124,000s.f.)

Michael Wright and Ray Embach are presenting on behalf of AMAG, LLC. They discussed the details of the project along with the timeline. Based on their community outreach at the “Better Block” event surrounding Carriage Town, they believe the community will appreciate this additional housing and removal of the blighted vacant buildings.

Commissioner McAdow asked if the intent was to replace the brick and limestone on the Marian Hall building. Mr. Wright clarified that it is not actually limestone, but yes, the intent is to maintain the building as much as possible while connecting it to the additional properties with the exception of a new paint job.

Mr. Wright discussed the design decisions of the new building, they wanted to make it more modern without clashing with the rest of the historic district. The commissioners acknowledged the difficulties of avoiding the “faux historical” look while also avoiding it “looking like a spaceship landed in the historic district”.

Mr. Wright discussed the poor state of the three buildings to be demolished. Chairperson Burnash is confused as one is currently open and occupied by a business, surely it is not in that bad of condition. She then discussed the benefits of a third-party inspection, as AMAG LLC will be biased as they want the demolition to pass. Additionally, the date of constructions of the buildings are not provided making their historic status unclear.

Chairperson Burnash discussed the possibility of breaking up the application or tabling it until next month’s meeting. The application is lending itself to a no vote which could delay development for a year until they can reapply. She went on to discuss the objectives of the Historic District Commission as a whole.

Mr. Wright expressed his frustration that these vacant buildings are taking priority over their new development. A delay in approval could hurt their funding for the project.

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

Mr. Wright discussed the financial benefits of constructing multi-family housing on MLK Ave. He also talked about the support he has gotten from Carriage town.

Chairperson Burnash is confused as they have received no letter and no one from Carriage town is in attendance to speak in favor of the construction, which is odd as they are typically a very engaged community. Mr. Wright claimed he can get a letter of support for the commission.

The commission discussed among themselves their dislike of the cold, modern design of the proposed construction.

Chairperson Burnash apologized that the delay may hurt their funding but said that if a delay would be that hurtful then this proposal really should have come before the commission sooner. Mr. Wright acknowledged this, but then talked about the difficulties of developing in Flint and the benefit of their investment.

Commissioner Hurley explained that it is not the job of the commission to critique and alter the proposed designs. Scale, separations, height, and materials are all up for criticism, but the overall design is the job of the architect.

Commissioner Hurley also described the qualifications for justification of a demolition.

Mr. Wright asked if the project could be approved with the contingency of a third-party inspection suggesting that demolition is appropriate. Commissioner Hurley explained they can not do that. Mr. Wright then asked if a special meeting later this month could be called. Chairperson Burnash acknowledged that as a possibility.

Mr. Wright and Chairperson Burnash discussed scheduling the special meeting. After consultation with the commission, they scheduled it for November 16th at 5:30 p.m.

The commission told AMAG's representatives the types of documentation that would be most helpful in making this decision.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the reuse of Marian Hall and table the three demolitions plus the rebuild for a special meeting on November 16th. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Davis, yes
Commissioner McAdow, yes
Commissioner Neiswender, yes

Commissioner Hurley, yes
Commissioner Burnash, yes

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

OLD BUSINESS:

Legal opinion in progress.

NEW BUSINESS:

Tyler Bailey introduced himself and Dalton Castle, the new Planner I on staff. Additionally, he announced the new appointees to the commission [first name inaudible] Farrah and Cade Surface as well as Commissioner McAdow who was in attendance tonight. He discussed with Chairperson Burnash to forward potential applicants to him.

Chairperson Burnash announced her resignation. Effective after the special meeting November 16th.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Neiswender/Hurley

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Unanimously carried.