



**Sheldon Neeley
Mayor**

CITY OF FLINT

FLINT PLANNING COMMISSION

**Meeting Minutes
January 9th, 2024**

Commissioners Present

Robert Wesley, Chair
Lynn Sorenson, Secretary
Joshua Brown
Robert Jewell
Mona Munroe-Younis
Jeffrey Curtis Horton

Staff Present

Bennett Bush, Assistant City Attorney
Tyler Bailey, Deputy Director of Business Services
Brian Aceff, Zoning Coordinator
Max Lester, Int. Zoning Coordinator
Dalton Castle, Planner I

Absent:

Carol-Anne Blower, Vice-Chair
Leora Campbell
April Cook-Hawkins

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wesley called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

The meeting was held both in-person in the Dome Auditorium and via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Brown: present
Commissioner Campbell: absent
Commissioner Blower: absent
Commissioner Jewell: present
Commissioner Cook-Hawkins: absent

Commissioner Sorenson: present
Commissioner Munroe-Younis: present
Commissioner Horton: present
Chairperson Wesley: present

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Jewell requested that the Michigan Planner November-December 2023 Issue as well as Staffing Update be added to the Reports section of the meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

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

M/S – Jewell/Munroe-Younis

Unanimously carried by voice vote



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MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

The minutes of December 12th, 2023 were not prepared at this time.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairperson Wesley opened the floor for public forum. No one spoke.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There were no public hearings to review at this time.

SITE PLAN REVIEW:

There were no site plans to review at this time.

CASE REVIEW:

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

Attorney Bush explained there are no updates at this time. Commissioner Jewell expressed his concern that the Commission has not received a written memo regarding the court ruling.

SPR 23-005: 529 ML King Ave. Conditional Approval Status

Commissioner Sorenson asked that the title for agenda items such as this be more specific as to what the project is for inclusivity purposes. Max Lester explained that this item is in regard to the Marian Hall project which received site plan conditional approval awaiting department reviews.

Commissioner Jewell asked which departments have pending reviews for the Marian Hall project. Max said the Fire, Water, and City Engineering departments. Commissioner Jewell expressed concern that the recently retired City Engineer has not yet been replaced.

City Council Action on Planning Commission Recommendations Map and Text Amendments

Max explained the map and text amendments were approved by the City Council on December 20th, 2023. Updating of the Zoning Map and Zoning Code is currently in progress. The West Fifth Avenue rezonings are currently with the City Clerk's Office and their status is unknown at this time.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Max explained the events of the December 19th, 2023 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting and stated that the Planning Commission liaison position, as well as the seats for Wards 1 and 3 are still vacant. There are now seven active members with the Ward 2 representative recently being sworn in. They then explained the voting requirements for the Zoning Board of Appeals to pass Use Variances requires seven concurring votes.

Chairperson Wesley said the Commission should in all likelihood be able to appoint Commissioner Blower to the Liaison position at the next meeting.



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REPORTS:

2023 Annual Report

Max presented the 2023 Annual Report. They made note of the intent to reduce the review period for site plans down to a goal of a maximum 90-day turnaround, as the current review timeline is quite extensive.

Commissioner Jewell expressed his agreement with the sentiment of reducing the length of time it takes to finish review of a site plan. He then asked staff to provide a brief bulleted list of actions staff and the Commission can take to meet the goal of 90 days.

Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC)

No updates at this time.

Planning Commission Expired Terms

Tyler Bailey asked that any Commissioners seeking reappointment email him their resume. Chairperson Wesley asked if their previously submitted resumes are kept on file. Mr. Bailey explained only those who recently were appointed have a resume on file.

5-Year City of Flint Comprehensive Plan Review

Max explained the purpose and intent of the provided Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) checklist for a 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Review, noting that the goal is to determine whether or not an update is needed and not necessarily all items that the update would entail. Additionally, they explained that Jason Ball has provided notes regarding specific checklist items in a memo previously provided.

Commissioner Jewell expressed concern that the checklist is improper due to it using the term “annual review” as opposed to 5-Year review and it does not contain certain topics previously discussed by the Planning Commission. He also made note of the checklist referring to the possibility of joint meetings and public hearings for input on the update. Commissioner Jewell said that someone needs to take the reins of walking the Commission through the checklist and its purpose. Commissioner Jewell said five years ago staff had made a list of items for a similar checklist. Commissioner Munroe-Younis expressed that she believes it would be beneficial to go through the checklist together.

Chairperson Wesley asked staff if they would be guiding the Commission through the checklist or if the intent would be to have the Commission go through the checklist and discuss it themselves. Max said the intent was the latter as the 5-Year review is the role of the Commission. Commissioner Jewell said it is the Planning Commission’s responsibility to conduct the review, but due to their lack of knowledge he believes that staff should provide a bulleted list for each checklist item.

For the sake of example, Commissioner Jewell read aloud a checklist item referring to whether or not projects involving major redevelopment are upcoming. He then said that he would like staff to be able to refer to specific examples of this to justify the criteria being met.



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Mr. Bailey explained two examples of major developments, the first being the Ascension Living Facility expansion which will provide free healthcare to individuals 65 and older and is projected to create 200 new jobs. The second being the Buick City site development on the third largest brownfield in the City. He then said that he was prepared to answer any questions regarding specific checklist items.

Chairperson Wesley expressed his belief that the checklist is meant to be more of a tool as opposed to strict guidelines. He discussed the possibility of having bullet points for each checklist item submitted by staff for review at the next meeting.

Mr. Bailey explained that community engagement sessions related to the Comprehensive Plan update would require a third party as staff do not have the capacity to hold these events themselves. He then referred back to the site plan review timeline being far more extensive than it should be. Mr. Bailey explained that staff already has a hefty workload and would advise against creating additional work if not necessary.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis again suggested the Commission go through the checklist and then have staff fill in the gaps where they lack knowledge. Commissioner Jewell said he would support that idea if he were more prepared. Chairperson Wesley began to review the checklist items. Commissioner Jewell said he is unprepared to discuss the topic as he does not have materials from staff regarding the topic.

The second item asked whether the Zoning Ordinance is aligned with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Jewell assumed the answer is that it does not, based on the fact the Zoning Ordinance has required alterations. He then reiterated his desire to have staff submit specific examples.

Max explained that the current Comprehensive Plan outlines the intent to have a form-based Zoning Code, yet the Code adopted in 2022 is not form-based.

The third item asked if there have been any major changes or developments in the city. Commissioner Sorenson referred to the Ascension Living Facility expansion Mr. Bailey had explained, commenting that she had not been informed about this prior. Mr. Bailey explained that the project has not reached the stage of coming before the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis discussed the updated water lines as a major change in the City. Commissioner Sorenson said she wants to be more quickly informed about projects like the Ascension expansion. Mr. Bailey explained that due to staff capacity it would not necessarily be reasonable to inform the Commission of every site plan when it is first submitted considering the number of variables involved for staff to get plans prepared for the Commission to review.

Chairperson Wesley asked the Commission if they would like to continue going through the checklist. Commissioner Sorenson asked how she is expected to do so when she does not have a copy of the Comprehensive Plan in front of her. Chairperson Wesley said the Comprehensive Plan is a large document, to read through it during the meeting would not be feasible.



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Commissioner Brown acknowledged that he is a newer member of the Commission and is still learning and went on to express his concern that the Comprehensive Plan update process is becoming stagnant.

Chairperson Wesley read a note from Mr. Ball discussing the significant population decline in the City. He then said the Commission can review the checklist at the next meeting after reviewing it on their own time. Commissioner Sorenson asked how she is supposed to understand the vision and intent of the authors of the existing Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Munroe-Younis mentioned the unforeseen impacts of the water crisis and how they shifted the City's goals.

Commissioner Jewell encouraged staff to create an itemized list for the next meeting to go alongside the checklist. Max referred back to the memorandum provided by Mr. Ball which lists several large factors that indicate an update is needed. Max added that the next meeting will have several site plans and public hearings and there will likely not be enough time to review the checklist. Brian Acheff asked the Commissioners to go through the checklists at their own pace and bring them back to the first meeting in February.

Mr. Bailey explained that staffing for Planning Commission meetings will be reduced from current levels. Commissioner Munroe-Younis asked if meetings can be scheduled for Commissioners to come in and read the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Bailey explained that would be fine, and they may also view it digitally. For budgetary reasons staff cannot print copies for every Commissioner.

Commissioner Jewell said that City of Flint is legally required to provide copies of the Comprehensive Plan to the Commissioners and asked Attorney Bush to confirm if the statement is correct. Attorney Bush said that the methods of availability described by Mr. Bailey are sufficient.

Equity in Zoning Policy Guide

No updates at this time

Michigan Planner December 2023

The issue was provided to the Commissioners for general informational purposes.

Staffing Update - Bios

Mr. Bailey said he struggles to ask staff to shift day-to-day priorities to write bios given the heavy workload. Commissioner Jewell asked if the Commission can be provided copies of the staff's resumes. Mr. Bailey said that he can talk to staff but that is at their discretion. Commissioner Jewell stated that the Commissioners have provided their resumes to Council for appointments and reappointments. Chairperson Wesley said the Commission is not the Human Resources department and is not involved with reviewing backgrounds of staff.

RESOLUTIONS:

No resolutions at this time.



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OLD BUSINESS:

Status of PC-ZBA Liaison

Commissioner Blower, the intended representative, is not present. Chairperson Wesley noted the matter would be resolved to the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Sorenson/Brown

Unanimously carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.