

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024

Commissioners Present

Stephanie Wright, Chair
Kurt Neiswender, Vice-Chair
Michael Hurley
Beverly Davis
Cade Surface
Samantha Farah

Staff Present

Max Lester, Int. Zoning Coordinator
Brian Acheff, Zoning Coordinator
Dequan Allen, Planner II
Dalton Castle, Planner I

Absent:

Megan McAdow

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wright called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

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

Megan McAdow, absent

Beverly Davis, present

Michael Hurley, present

Kurt Neiswender, present

Stephanie Wright, present

Samantha Farah, present

Cade Surface, present

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Max Lester requested a report of an emergency Certificate of Appropriateness application for 307 Mason St. be added to the agenda.

Commissioner Neiswender made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

M/S – Neiswender/Surface

Motion carried by voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meeting of November 16th, 2023, were presented.

Commissioner Davis corrected that Chairperson Burnash did not call the meeting to order as she was absent from that meeting, Commissioner Davis was the one to call the meeting to order.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to accept the minutes of November 16th, 2023, as amended.

Commissioner Neiswender seconded the motion.

M/S – Surface/Neiswender

Motion carried by voice vote.

Minutes for the meeting of December 7th, 2023, were presented.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to accept the minutes of December 7th, 2023 as presented. Commissioner Neiswender seconded the motion.

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

PUBLIC FORUM:

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

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Applicant: Kurt Neiswender, AIA
Property Owner: Communities First, Inc.
Location: 655 S Saginaw St. (PID # 41-18-117-011)
Scope of work: Restoration and repair of the cornice and brickwork at the top of the walls facing Saginaw Street and East Third Street. At least 50% of the existing brick can be salvaged. New brick will be used that matches the same color and texture.

Commissioner Neiswender announced that he will be abstaining from voting on this case as he is the applicant. Mr. Neiswender explained that his application tonight is a follow up to the partial demolition he had submitted an application for in December 2023. The proposed design is based on the findings of the partial demolition and will maintain as much of the original brick as possible. New bricks will be selected with the intent of matching the color and texture of the preexisting brick. Mr. Neiswender explained that the cast stone atop the building is completely unsalvageable.

Chairperson Wright asked for clarification on which sections of the building will require bricks to be replaced. Commissioner Neiswender explained the locations of structural issues where bricks were integrated with the cast stone.

Commissioner Hurley recalled a similar project which used a rubber membrane material in the reconstruction, he asked if that would be visible. Commissioner Neiswender explained that the material would not be visible.

Commissioner Surface clarified with Commissioner Neiswender that there is no example of the replacement brick available and then asked if the roof area below the flagpole is being replaced. Commissioner Neiswender explained the roof is in good condition and will not require replacement, though the pole itself may need to be replaced.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the application as submitted with the condition that an example of the replacement brick is provided and deemed satisfactory. Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Megan McAdow, absent
Beverly Davis, yes
Michael Hurley, yes
Kurt Neiswender, abstain

Stephanie Wright, yes
Samantha Farah, yes
Cade Surface, yes

M/S – Hurley/Surface
Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

The requested legal opinion is still pending.

NEW BUSINESS:

Civic Park Historic District – Staff Presentation

Dequan Allen explained the history of the Civic Park Historic District and his experience with its maintenance. He has worked with students from the Michigan State Urban and Regional Planning School in order to create an implementation strategy to address the needs of Civic Park with a focus on housing stock and helping residents secure funds to address property repairs. Dequan explained the results of the survey sent out to residents of Civic Park.

Commissioner Davis asked if one of their goals will be to preserve historic structures within Civic Park. Dequan explained that would be one of their goals, though noted resident feedback would be considered. Commissioner Davis commented that the historic designated section of Civic Park has shrunk, she then asked where the funding will come from. Dequan said they had not determined that as of yet, the current plan is to have the Department of Research at Michigan State University provide them with options. Commissioner Davis noted that brownfield funding exists for historical structures and is worth looking into.

Commissioner Surface asked if part of their plan is to encourage and/or incentivize preservation within the Civic Park Historic District. Joseph Allen, a student at Michigan State University, explained that part of their plan is housing revitalization.

Chairperson Wright expressed concern with the amount of demolition and empty lots currently existing within Civic Park. She also noted that several homes towards the edge of the district are at a point where restoration is not a realistic option. Mr. Allen said they intend to meet with the Genessee County Land Bank to discuss if there is any intent to demolish the houses on the outskirts of Civic Park.

Commissioner Neiswender recommended cross checking what the Land Bank reports with the buildings on the Building Board of Appeals demolition list.

Ann Dully, a student at Michigan State University, asked how brownfield designations and funding work. Commissioner Surface explained receiving brownfield designation is relatively easy for any abandoned or old structure but will require approval by City Council. Commissioner Neiswender clarified that depending on who they request funding from it may be more difficult as certain departments require up to a phase two environmental study for approval.

Commissioner Surface asked if they had a timeline put together. Mr. Allen explained their drafts for their plan will be soon completed and otherwise an exact timeline is unknown, but they hope the plan can proceed in a timely manner.

Chairperson Wright said they are welcome to return with questions at any time.

Emergency Certificate of Appropriateness 307 Mason St.

Chairperson Wright noted that the applicant was not able to wait to appear in person at this meeting as their roof was actively leaking causing the need for immediate repair to prevent further damage. Commissioner Neiswender agreed that this was an appropriate measure to prevent additional water damage and is consistent with the Commission's past actions.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Farah/Neiswender

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Unanimously carried.