



Sheldon Neeley
Mayor

CITY OF FLINT

FLINT PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
February 13th, 2024

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

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

Absent:

Joshua Brown
Leora Campbell
April Cook-Hawkins
Lynn Sorenson, Secretary

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wesley called the meeting to order at 5:44 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present. The meeting was held both in-person in the Dome Auditorium and via Zoom conferencing as approved.

Roll Call:

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

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

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

There were no alterations to the agenda.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

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

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



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MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Minutes of January 9th, 2024.

Commissioners Jewell and Munroe-Younis noted minor grammar corrections on Pages 3, and 5, as well as requesting a rewording of the Zoning Board of Appeals report on Page 2.

Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve the minutes of January 9th, 2024 as corrected. Commissioner Munroe-Younis seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Jewell/Munroe-Younis

5 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain

Unanimously carried by voice vote

Minutes of January 23rd, 2024.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis noted minor grammar corrections on Pages 4 and 5, as well as additional context on Page 5. That the optional request for landscaping was referencing the facility improvements to Berston Fieldhouse across the street.

Commissioner Blower made a motion to approve the minutes of January 23rd, 2024 as corrected. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Blower/Horton

5 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain

Unanimously carried by voice vote

PUBLIC FORUM:

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



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PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There were no public hearings.

SITE PLAN REVIEW:

There were no site plan reviews.

CASE REVIEW:

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

Attorney Bush explained there is no update at this time as he was still waiting for communications from Montel Menifee, the City's Marihuana Facilities Licensing Coordinator.

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

Brian Acheff explained the application is still pending approval from the Fire, Water, and City Engineering Departments.

Commissioner Jewell asked if there were any communications regarding an expected timeline of the departmental reviews and the parcel combination application.

Brian explained that Zoning staff is working to facilitate the departmental reviews but there is no clear timeline.

PC 24-01 3711 Gorey Ave. Conditional Approval Status

Brian explained the application is still pending approval from the Fire, Water, and City Engineering Departments.

Chairperson Wesley asked if there were any issues routing site plans to other departments.

Brian explained there were no issues delivering the site plans to other departments in a timely manner, but he cannot speak on behalf of other departments regarding their timelines or priorities.

SPR 24-02 3501 N Saginaw Conditional Approval Status

Brian explained the application is still pending approval from the Fire, Water, and City Engineering Departments.

SPR-03 2112 Davison Rd Conditional Approval Status

Brian explained the application is still pending approval from the Fire, Water, and City Engineering Departments as well as receipt of parcel combination.



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CITY COUNCIL ACTION ON PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:

Brian explained the West Fifth Avenue rezonings are currently being processed by the City Clerk's Office. Once completed they will be scheduled for a hearing before the City Council.

Commissioner Jewell asked staff for clarification on whether the West Fifth Avenue development had two separate resolutions sent to the City Council. Max explained that an unrelated resolution to approve a brownfield redevelopment plan from the Genesee County Land Bank must be seen by City Council prior to them reviewing the resolution for the West Fifth Avenue rezonings, and is not a part of the Zoning process through staff.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS:

Max said the next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on February 20th, 2024. Max explained that after Commissioner Blower was appointed to the role of ZBA Liaison at the January 26th, 2024 Planning Commission meeting a resolution was sent to the City Clerk's Office, but the resolution did not make it onto the most recent City Council agenda.

REPORTS:

Redevelopment Ready Communities

Max explained there are several outstanding requirements for RRC certification such as completion of the 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Review and an updated Capital Improvement Plan. Additional outstanding requirements include internal review processes, finalized credit card payments, add/create recruitment processes, expectations and interest for prospective Commission members, orientation materials, and a record of bylaws.

Tyler Bailey explained that while the City is still seeking RRC certification they are working with the MEDC to create a new redevelopment certification class for cities like Flint. He noted that RRC certification was developed with a focus on suburban growth making certain benchmarks for qualification unfeasible for a city such as Flint.

Planning Commission Expired Terms

Max explained that the resolution for Commissioner Blower's ZBA appointment has been sent out as well as the resolution for the new Ward 7 candidate for the Planning Commission.

Tyler explained that Commissioner Munroe-Younis' reappointment was on the City Council's February 12th agenda, but at this time it is uncertain whether or not the City Council acted on it.



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5-year City of Flint Comprehensive Plan Review

Max explained they may review the provided RRC checklist and make a motion based on their findings to either update the Comprehensive Plan, create a new one, or determine no update is needed. The motion may be conditioned on staff providing a proposed timeline for public engagement.

The Planning Commission began review of the provided RRC Master Plan Update Review Checklist.

1: Have development patterns changed significantly since the plan was written and adopted?

Commissioner Munroe-Younis noted how helpful the memo from ROWE is in conducting this review. She cited a statistic from the memo referring to the 20% decrease in the City of Flint's population since the creation of the Comprehensive Plan in 2013. She also noted the negative effect the Flint Water Crisis had on development.

2: Does the adopted zoning ordinance align with the goals of the plan?

Commissioner Jewell noted that the zoning ordinance has been updated several times since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Max pointed out that in the Comprehensive Plan it states the city will adopt a form-based zoning code which has not happened.

3: Have there been any major changes such as utility lines, major road improvements, large development approvals, etc.?

Commissioner Blower said that the Flint Water Crisis led to the replacement of much of the City's water lines.

Chairperson Wesley noted the Ashley Capital and Buick City developments. Commissioner Munroe-Younis emphasized that the water crisis was not and could not have been foreseen during the development of the current Comprehensive Plan.

4: Have there been instances when the Planning Commission or elected body has departed from the plan?

Commissioner Blower said different departments and bodies use the current plan to different degrees and the zoning ordinance updates are one example of a departure. She then went on to discuss the high turnover rates in the city, discussing how an updated Master plan may help to keep everyone on the same page.



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5: Are the goals and priorities of the plan in sync with the goals and priorities of appointed and elected officials?

Commissioner Munroe-Younis said the question is somewhat flawed and should also refer to the goals and priorities of the community. She pointed out that again the water crisis had a large impact on everyone's goals and priorities.

6: Does the plan address the location and types of land uses frequently requested?

Commissioner Blower recalled that during the drafting of the current plan there was a large amount of discussion regarding chicken coops, which today are exceedingly rare. Additionally, the plan makes no reference to marihuana, which has been a quickly growing industry.

7: Have there been other studies completed that change the relevancy of the plan?

Commissioner Blower referred back to the water crisis and population decline. She also noted the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis mentioned the Choice Neighborhood Plan and how it has affected North-East and South-East Flint.

8: Have community goals or vision changed since the plan was written?

Chairperson Wesley reiterated the large impacts created by the water crisis and COVID-19 pandemic.

9: Are recent best practices integrated? (i.e. Complete Streets, Placemaking, Sustainability, Missing Middle Housing, local Food)

Commissioner Blower said she believes the City did a good job of addressing the issues of ten years ago but raised concern that there may be better methods with which to address those same issues today as well as the possibility of new issues that are currently unaddressed.

Chairperson Wesley said the community engagement sessions they would theoretically conduct if an update were to happen may shed light on the issues facing the City of Flint today.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis read from the ROWE memo a section on how housing has evolved over time. The current plan identifies an action item to support development of quality housing to balance out demolition. She then noted the impacts the water crisis has had on how the city views water usage and urban gardens.

10: Is the background data relevant and reference the most recent decennial census data and up-to-date local data?



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The commission agreed the census data and local data are not up to date.

11: Is it use-friendly with clear organization and graphics?

Commissioner Blower pointed out that the plan being designed 11x17 is not user friendly, but otherwise the look and feel of the plan are strengths of the current plan.

Commissioner Jewell said he is in favor of making the plan as user-friendly as possible. He noted having a font that is of reasonable size to read.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis noted how hard it is to view the plan on a smart phone which is how many users will access it.

Commissioners Jewell and Blower discussed the benefits of having clear visual components such as charts and pictures within the plan.

Commissioner Horton clarified that the Comprehensive Plan before them is the same version available online. Commissioner Munroe-Younis explained that it is, but you can additionally find online an 8x11 general overview of the plan.

Commissioner Horton asked to have the community engagement in the Comprehensive Plan update, noting how many people he speaks with do not know about the Comprehensive Plan and the update process. Chairperson Wesley clarified that they are not currently at the stage in which they plan community engagement sessions.

12: Does it reference goals and objectives for a downtown area?

Commissioner Blower said that she believes that is one of the greatest strengths of the current plan.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis questioned how similar the current Comprehensive Plan's vision for downtown compares to the Downtown Gameplan.

Tyler explained that the downtown study conducted to draft the Downtown Gameplan did not find the sections on the downtown area in the current Comprehensive Plan to be of much use.

13: Is there an implementation plan including a CIP plan?

Chairperson Wesley said they initially had a CIP. Commissioner Blower added they had recently passed one.

Commissioner Jewell said that the specifics of the CIP were not communicated well between departments and bodies.



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Commissioner Munroe-Younis said she hoped to have a more simplified goals as the previous plan contained 300 plus action strategies. She believes the current implementation plan needs to be refined.

14: Are a zoning plan and zoning objectives included?

Chairperson Wesley said that the current plan does not include a zoning plan. He referenced the ROWE memo which said the intent at the time of drafting the current Comprehensive Plan was to adopt an entirely new zoning ordinance which has since been done.

Commissioner Blower questioned how well the Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan complement each other.

Commissioner Jewell discussed the issue of both documents not fully addressing marihuana.

15: Is a redevelopment strategy provided?

Chairperson Wesley said the current plan includes an economic development chapter which references several other plans. He said many of those plans either have been or likely would need to be updated.

16: Are priority sites for redevelopment and a strategy for implementation included?

Chairperson Wesley said these aspects are included in the plan.

Commissioner Blower said that the intent of the plan was to keep small brownfields, which to an extent has been done, but not nearly to the degree which the plan states.

17: Have there been changes along the community borders?

Chairperson Wesley cited many developments along the edge of the city.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis read from ROWE's memo which explains commercial corridors in surrounding communities have experienced a decline.

18: Is there any upcoming major (re)development (corridor, transportation, university/hospital, utility, vacated sites, or industrial)?

Commissioner Blower cited the Ashley Capital and Buick City development.

Commissioner Jewell said it would be helpful to at some point have input from Kettering as they acquired a cross section of parcels they have yet to develop. He went on to discuss how the current Comprehensive Plan has little reference towards development outside of the downtown area.



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Commissioner Munroe-Younis discussed equity in investment in Flint, citing the impacts of redlining.

19: Do policy and recommendations support a safe, efficient multi-modal transportation system?

Commissioner Blower said the plan did well at the time but in recent years there has been a push for better walkability and bike paths.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis discussed the growing pains of updated transportation, referring to her experience of seeing people park in newly drawn bike lanes.

Commissioner Jewell discussed how the population decline has affected the needs for transportation.

20: Do permitted uses support the job market and reflect the local talent pool?

Commissioner Blower discussed the diversity of talent in the City of Flint, she went on to discuss the subjective nature of the question.

Commissioner Munroe-Younis cited the memo from ROWE which discussed the prevalence of Green Neighborhood designations restricting the opportunity for development in key corridors.

Commissioner Blower discussed the confusing nature of the “green job” designation and how it today may be confused with marihuana. She then asked staff if the Commission were to make a motion of intent to plan would they be waiting on funding sources or move forward without.

Tyler explained they would move forward without. He does not feel comfortable applying for funding without certainty of what the funding would be used for.

Chairperson Wesley asked about a timeline for the Comprehensive Plan update process. Tyler explained staff had already created a timeline, but it was based on the assumption an intent to plan would be made in November of 2023 and would need to be updated.

Commissioner Jewell expressed concern the Commission may be looking too far ahead discussing a timeline prior to the motion that an update to the Comprehensive Plan is needed.

Commissioner Jewell consulted with staff on how to properly format the motions.



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Commissioner Jewell made a motion of recommendation to commence the procedures to amend the 2013 Imagine Flint Master Plan based upon the Planning Commission’s discussion of and related to the RRC Master Plan Update Review Checklist. Commissioner Blower seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Jewell/Blower

5 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain

Unanimously carried by voice vote

Commissioner Jewell made a motion of recommendation to have staff prepare and present a proposed process, timeline, and resources to amend the 2013 Imagine Flint Master Plan. Commissioner Bower seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Jewell/Blower

5 yes – 0 no – 0 abstain

Unanimously carried by voice vote

Equity in Zoning Policy Guide

Max said their intent is to have this presentation prepared for the next Planning Commission meeting on February 27th, 2024.



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RESOLUTIONS:

No resolutions at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Blower/Munroe-Younis

Unanimously carried by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.