

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 7, 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
Dalton Castle, Planner I

Absent:

Megan McAdow

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wright called the meeting to order at 5:37 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.

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:

Commissioner Neiswender requested that the demolition of the Freeman Dairy building and review of the replacement bricks for the conditional approval of the 655 S. Saginaw St. Certificate of Appropriateness be discussed under Old Business.

Commissioner Surface requested that the Commission discuss the Historic Districts; Creation; Boundaries ordinance text provided by staff under New Business.

Commissioner Farah made a motion to adopt the agenda with the requested additions. Commissioner Neiswender seconded the motion.

M/S – Farah/Neiswender

Motion carried by voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes of February 1st, 2024

Chairperson Wright asked if there were any corrections for the minutes of February 1st, 2024. No corrections were requested.

Commissioner Davis made a motion to accept the minutes of February 1st, 2024, as presented. Commissioner Farah seconded the motion.

M/S – Davis/Farah

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:* Martin Burnash
- Property Owner:* Brenda Brocket
- Location:* 617 Lyon Pl (PID# 40-12-476-020)
- Scope of Work:* Demolition of structure with fire damage, including asbestos removal.

Karen Rankin presented on behalf of the applicant. She discussed the severity of the fire damage and cited the emergency demolition notice issued by the City of Flint for the property.

Commissioner Hurley commented that the photographs provided by the applicant make clear the damage done to the structure.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve Martin Burnash’s application for a Notice to Proceed with the demolition of the structure located at 617 Lyon Pl. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

Commissioner Neiswender asked if the building has already been demolished. Ms. Rankin said it has not yet been demolished.

Commissioner Surface commended the applicant for the work they had put into the building prior to the fire.

Roll Call:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Megan McAdow, absent | Stephanie Wright, yes |
| Beverly Davis, yes | Samantha Farah, yes |
| Michael Hurley, yes | Cade Surface, yes |
| Kurt Neiswender, yes | |

M/S – Hurley/Davis
6 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain
The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

655 S Saginaw St - Conditional Approval Status

Commissioner Neiswender presented the options for replacement bricks for the cornice work being done at the Patterson Building. He explained that the exact brick is no longer manufactured and the new brick would be slightly different in color and texture. He said their intent is to intertwine the salvaged brick with the replacement to minimize the effect on the aesthetic. He said that they will be using 5000 replacement bricks.

Commissioner Surface explained that Chairperson Wright would need to sign off on the replacement bricks.

Commissioner Neiswender said the intent was to begin construction on March 20th, 2024, which is projected to last 3 months.

Demolition of the Freeman Dairy Building

Commissioner Neiswender said that the Historic District Commission had only approved the demolition of half of the building yet the whole building has been demolished.

Chairperson Wright asked if the applicants should be brought back before the Commission to discuss the demolition.

Commissioner Farah speculated that the building conditions may have changed resulting in the additional demolition.

Max said that they cannot speak on behalf of the Building Department, but to their recollection it had been determined the other half of the building was too dangerous to be left standing and full demolition was approved for the property owner.

Commissioner Surface commented that he is not surprised that the applicants would use the fire as an excuse to demolish the entire building as that was their initial goal.

Commissioner Hurley read from an article by MLive which quoted Emily Doer, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Flint, saying “Although the HDC only granted permission to demolish one of two parcels, it would not have been safe to demolish only half, so the demolition permit will apply to the whole building.”

Commissioner Surface said that this case was the reason he asked his City Council representative to appoint him to the Historic District Commission. He added that when he argued against allowing the demolition one of their main concerns was the property owners track record of neglecting historic resources. He went on to discuss the decisions made by the property owner regarding the Freeman Dairy Building and how they ultimately led to the demolition. Lastly, he stated that he will be keeping this case in consideration when reviewing future applications submitted by that owner.

Chairperson Wright commented that it is hard for the Commission to speak on decisions made for safety purposes and it is within the City’s right to override them under certain circumstances.

NEW BUSINESS:

Historic Districts; Creation; Boundaries Ordinance Text Discussion

Commissioner Surface said that the purpose of this discussion was to get more clarity on what properties are labeled historic. He asked staff if they would be able to provide a visualization such as a map showing the historic designated properties.

Commissioner Davis asked Max if the provided ordinance has been updated or if it is the same as the copy in their manual.

Max explained that there was an update in 2015 that reduced the Northern Carriage Town boundaries. Max said they would also like a map of Historic Districts but the resources to create it are not currently identified.

Commissioner Hurley asked if staff had checked the reports from the creation of the historic districts as they likely contain a map. Max explained that city staff has not been able to go through all of the old files to locate that.

Commissioner Hurley discussed the process to amend the historic districts.

Commissioner Davis asked if the original Civic Park boundaries have been changed. Max explained that even though there was interest in altering the boundaries, it would appear no changes had been made. Commissioner Davis said that she had heard the boundaries had been altered and several houses had been demolished without Historic District Commission approval.

Chairperson Wright discussed a situation in which the Genesee County Land Bank requested Civic Park boundaries be altered to allow for several demolitions.

Commissioner Surface clarified with Max that based on discussion with the Assistant City Attorney the provided ordinance is the most up to date version available. Max said that it is. Commissioner Surface requested an update in the future on the creation of a map of historic district boundaries.

Max announced that the Comprehensive Plan update process has begun with the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Neiswender/Davis

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Unanimously carried.