



CITY OF FLINT

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

MATT TELLIGA, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes
May 20th, 2025

Board Members Present:

Matthew Telliga, Chair
Jerry Kea, Vice-Chair
John Hardy
Ari McCaskill
Ramie Yelle
Willie Buford
Lauren Coney
Derek Dohrman
Carol-Anne Blower, PC Liaison

Board Members Absent:

All present

Staff Present:

Tom Sparrow, Assistant City Attorney
Max Lester, Zoning Coordinator
Dalton Castle, Planner I

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Telliga called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present. The meeting was held in the Dome Auditorium at Flint City Hall as well as via Zoom.

Matthew Telliga, Chair – present
Jerry Kea, Vice-Chair – present
John Hardy – present
Ari McCaskill – present
Ramie Yelle – present

Willie Buford – present
Lauren Coney – present
Derek Dohrman – present
Carol-Anne Blower – present

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner McCaskill made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Coney seconded the motion. Chairman Telliga asked for a voice vote.

M/S – McCaskill/Coney

The motion carried via voice vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The draft minutes of April 15th, 2025 were presented.

Commissioner McCaskill made a motion to approve the minutes of April 15th, 2025 as presented. Commissioner Coney seconded the motion to approve the minutes of April 15th, 2025. Chairman Telliga asked for a voice vote.

M/S – McCaskill/Coney

The motion carried via voice vote.



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PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Telliga opened the public forum. No one spoke.

Chairman Telliga closed the public forum.

REPORTS:

No new reports.

COMMUNICATIONS:

No communications were received.

PUBLIC HEARING:

ZBA 25-05: *Mousa Rishmawi of Holy Sepulcher Travel, LLC. requests a Use Variance to allow a new "Retail Sales, General" use in a TN-2 Traditional Neighborhood Medium Density zone district for the property located at 3631 Miller Rd. (PID # 40-23-305-001).*

Max read from the staff report.

Chairman Telliga stated this location is close to his home and neighbors are happy to see the structure occupied again. Chairman Telliga also stated the property was rezoned in 2022 as has been seen with other properties, and this location is along a busy commerce corridor into Flint Township.

Mousa Rishmawi spoke to his request. Mr. Rishmawi will operate a Total Wireless by Verizon location and has completed renovations on the property.

Chairman Telliga suggested the Board consider setting a condition to limit the use variance request to the cell phone store use, if a motion for approval is made. Vice-Chair Kea agreed with Chairman Telliga and asked how a conditional motion could be worded. Mr. Sparrow responded that the way it was just described is accurate to how the motion can be made. Commissioner McCaskill asked for clarification on the potential motion and the specific "Retail Sales, General" use which is requested. Max responded that the specific motion would depend on what is desired from the Board, but a variance could be granted for the requested use broadly, or a condition can be added which says something to the effect of "limited to the proposed cell phone store use".

Commissioner Yelle asked if the property was purchased before or after the property was rezoned. Chairman Telliga stated he believes the property was purchased after it was rezoned and speculated that the owner would not have known about the rezoning. Chairman Telliga added that he believes the property was improperly rezoned, adding that there are a lot of properties with a similar issue. Mr. Rishmawi stated he purchased the property in February.

Chairman Telliga closed the floor to public comment.



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Commissioner McCaskill made a motion to conditionally approve ZBA 25-05 for the Use Variance requested by Mousa Rishmawi of Holy Sepulcher Travel, LLC., to allow a new “Retail Sales, General” use in a TN-2 Traditional Neighborhood Medium Density zone district for the property located at 3631 Miller Rd. (PID # 40-23-305-001), based on staff materials, the discussion held, and the following findings of fact:

- It complies with **Standard 1** because the condition, location, or situation of the specific property or intended use of the property that creates an unnecessary hardship is unique to that property and the zoning district.
- It complies with **Standard 2** because the land, building, or structure cannot be reasonably used for the permitted uses in the zoning district.
- It complies with **Standard 3** because the need for the variance was not created by the applicant or the applicant’s predecessors in title.
- It complies with **Standard 4** because the use variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood, nor be a detriment to adjacent properties.
- It complies with **Standard 5** because the variance shall be consistent with, and not materially impair, the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner McCaskill added that in order to ensure compliance with these standards, the following condition is made part of the motion:

- The variance shall be limited to the specific [*cell phone store*] use identified in the application.

Commissioner McCaskill asked for clarification if the motion is to limit the use from the broad “Retail Sales, General” to the cell phone store use is legal. Max responded that the municipality chooses to provide use variances and the TN-2 zone district does not permit commercial uses in any form, thus reasonable conditional approval is warranted.

Commissioner Yelle seconded the motion.

Chairman Telliga called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Hardy, yes
Commissioner Buford, yes
Commissioner Yelle, yes
Commissioner Dohrman, yes
Commissioner Kea, yes

Commissioner McCaskill, yes
Commissioner Coney, yes
Commissioner Blower, yes
Commissioner Telliga, yes

M/S – McCaskill/Yelle

9 – yes, 0 – no, 0 – abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.



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ZBA 25-06: Jamal Safiedine of Family Fuels, LLC. requests a Use Variance to allow the addition of a new “Vehicle Repair and Services” use to the existing “Auto Supply/Accessory Sales” use in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district for the property located at 2833 S. Dort Hwy. (PID # 41-21-151-019).

Chairman Telliga noted for reference that this is the former location of Duke’s Stereo on Dort Hwy.

Max read from the staff report.

Chairman Telliga stated he spoke with Max earlier in the day and asked if anyone looked at many of these properties before they were rezoned and asked Max to give their prior answer. Max responded that the 2013 Imagine Flint Plan includes a Future Land Use Map which shows how properties can change zoning designation over the next twenty years based on the predictions and goals of the Plan. When the Zoning Ordinance update was approved in 2022, the Future Land Use Map was used as the new Zoning Map. Max stated some targeted corrections were made and others may come in the future, however, with other ordinance updates waiting for approval by the City Council it is not known when these may move forward. Commissioner Blower referenced Mr. Bailey’s comments at the previous meeting, adding that this is why it is important for the Council to be on board with the Comprehensive Plan update. Commissioner McCaskill inquired about the cause of the current hold-up in City Council. Chairman Telliga stated City Council has challenges getting through their agendas without losing quorum.

Jamal Safiedine of Family Fuels, LLC. spoke on his request via Zoom. Mr. Safiedine purchased the old Duke’s location which previously worked in automobile parts. Mr. Safiedine plans to use the location for automobile tire work but there are situations where an automobile cannot be permitted to leave the property if it is safe. The requested use variance is to allow the addition of the “Vehicle Repair and Services” for any work that needs to be completed to the brakes, tie rods, etc. to release an unsafe vehicle.

Chairman Telliga opened the floor to public comment.

An unidentified speaker asked what ward the location was in and who the Council Member is of that ward. Charman Telliga stated this is likely in the ninth ward which is represented by Jonathan Jarrett. The speaker asked if he was President. Chairman Telliga said he was a councilman. The speaker stated the name of an apartment complex was changed and asked for the Council President’s information. The speaker confirmed that he is speaking on King’s Lane Apartments. Chairman Telliga informed the speaker that these apartments are in Burton.

Mr. Safiedine added that he has other shops, including two in Wayne County and one in Oakland County, that he believes Flint is a nice city, and this is a good investment spot. Yousef Beydoun was present on behalf of the applicant and spoke. Mr. Beydoun stated the building is 7,500 s.f. and there is plenty of room to work within this building. Mr. Beydoun believes occupying the structure will be of benefit to the city.

Chairman Telliga closed the floor to public comment.



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Vice-Chair Kea expressed that conditional approval may be an appropriate action. Commissioner Blower asked if adding the “Vehicle Repairs and Services” use to the existing “Auto Supply/Accessory Sales” use would alter the overall request. Max suggested that it could be specified that the requested use is accessory to the existing use, but this would depend on the kind of work the applicant wants to do and what the Board approves. Chairman Telliga asked Mr. Safiedine to restate the kind of work he would like to do at his business. Mr. Safiedine stated that he is not saying that he wants to do full collision work or major work such as engine repairs. Mr. Safiedine added that it is hard to be specific, but he intends for lower body work such as to the axle or tie rods.

Commissioner McCaskill asked if the requested use or any other type of heavy automotive repair would have been permitted under the previous ordinance. Max responded that they believe it would have been permitted under the previous ordinance. Vice-Chair Kea stated the application reads as the applicant wants the ability to complete repairs related to their work of tire sales. Commissioner Blower agreed with Vice-Chair Kea’s assessment. Chairman Telliga asked what activities could be performed at the property if a broad variance is granted. Max responded that a broad variance would allow the applicant to only perform vehicle repair and service work at the location and that the work would not be limited to any certain vehicles or type of work. Vice-Chair Kea stated that he sees a mismatch between the request and the use described in the application. Chairman Telliga noted that the examples of work given by the applicant were some examples from a multitude of repairs that may need to be performed. Commissioner Yelle asked if cars could be sold from the location. Chairman Telliga responded that they could not, and outdoor storage will require approval from staff.

Commissioner McCaskill made a motion to approve ZBA 25-06 for the Use Variance requested by Jamal Safiedine of Family Fuels, LLC., to allow the addition of a new “Vehicle Repair and Services” use to the existing “Auto Supply/Accessory Sales” use in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district for the property located at 2833 S. Dort Hwy. (PID # 41-21-151-019), based on staff materials, the discussion held, and the following findings of fact:

- It complies with **Standard 1** because the condition, location, or situation of the specific property or intended use of the property that creates an unnecessary hardship is unique to that property and the zoning district.
- It complies with **Standard 2** because the land, building, or structure cannot be reasonably used for the permitted uses in the zoning district.
- It complies with **Standard 3** because the need for the variance was not created by the applicant or the applicant’s predecessors in title.
- It complies with **Standard 4** because the use variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood, nor be a detriment to adjacent properties.
- It complies with **Standard 5** because the variance shall be consistent with, and not materially impair, the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Yelle seconded the motion.



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Chairman Telliga called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Hardy, yes
Commissioner Buford, yes
Commissioner Yelle, yes
Commissioner Dohrman, yes
Commissioner Kea, no

Commissioner McCaskill, yes
Commissioner Coney, yes
Commissioner Blower, yes
Commissioner Telliga, yes

M/S – McCaskill/Yelle

8 – yes, 1 – no, 0 – abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

Assistant City Attorney Sparrow stated there was no new information to report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Follow-Up re: ZBA 23-21 and ZBA 23-22: Two Non-Use Variances requested by CitySwitch II, LLC., representing CSX Transportation Inc., for a parcel along Douglas Ave. with no address, identified by PID # 41-04-153-015.

Chairman Telliga stated this is in relation to two cases where an applicant withdrew and the cases are now sitting waiting for final action. Chairman Telliga suggests sending a letter to the applicant which states the applications will be closed in ninety days unless they reapply with no charge. Max added that the applicant asked for the requests to be tabled prior to any vote. Max agreed that they believe sending a letter to the applicant with a timeline to select a new meeting date is a good option. Commissioner McCaskill asked if this was the general protocol for situations like this. Chairman Telliga stated typically an applicant has two meetings to come back, but it may not be specifically written anywhere. Vice-Chair Kea asked what the process was to clarify the Board's responsibility. Chairman Telliga stated he believes the typical protocol does not seem to be written down and staff are checking in with the ZBA and the Assistant City Attorney to clarify how the cases should proceed. Commissioner Blower suggested that at a future time the ZBA should discuss and add procedures in the by-laws for abandoned and/or tabled cases.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Yelle made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Coney supported the motion.

M/S – Yelle/Coney

The motion carried via voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.