

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 7th, 2025

Commissioners Present

Stephanie Wright, Chairwoman
Michael Hurley
Beverly Davis
Cade Surface
Samantha Farah

Staff Present

Max Lester, Zoning Coordinator
Dalton Castle, Planner I
Joshua Cambri, Assistant City Attorney

Absent:

Kurt Neiswender, Vice-Chairman
Megan McAdow

ROLL CALL:

Chairwoman Wright called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

The meeting was held in-person in the Zoning Division Conference Room as well as via Zoom.

Megan McAdow, absent
Beverly Davis, present
Michael Hurley, present
Kurt Neiswender, absent

Stephanie Wright, present
Samantha Farah, present
Cade Surface, present

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Farah made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

M/S – Farah/Surface

The motion carried via voice vote.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meetings of June 25th, 2025 and July 3rd, 2025 were presented.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to accept the minutes of June 25th, 2025 and July 3rd, 2025 as presented. Chairwoman Wright seconded the motion.

M/S – Surface/Wright

The motion carried via voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairwoman Wright opened the floor for public comment.

William Gainey said he has brought up an issue to the Historic District Commission (“HDC”) in the past and is saying it again as there are plenty of new people now involved with the HDC. Mr. Gainey stated that he learned in 2008 that when the City of Flint established the historic districts it did not follow PA 169 of 1970 (Local Historic District Act) which requires the City to register with the Register of Deeds, a notice to the public indicating that individual properties are located within a historic district. Once registered the applicable properties would come up with the local historic designation when someone runs a title search. Mr. Gainey added that staff should be able to take the district descriptions from the local ordinance and file it with a \$30 fee. Joshua Cambri noted that the Legal Department has talked with Mr. Gainey about this and will look into the matter further.

Maurice Davis, President of the Historic Civic Park Preservation Association, spoke about concerns of work being done at the Haskill Center. The residents are not aware of what work is being done but they observe football and pickleball fields being constructed. Mr. Davis requested any information that can be given about these efforts.

Commissioner Surface asked if the work is being done on the property of the Haskill Center or somewhere else in the neighborhood. Max answered that [Basset] Park is partially in the Civic Park local historic district. The field is being constructed within the portion that is within the local historic district. Max stated they were not made aware of the work until very recently and that they were not given many details on the project. Chairwoman Wright recalled previous information about proposed updates to the Haskill Center that were dropped when the lease was ended, however it is unclear if the current work is related because a football field is not a typical amenity of a senior center.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Case No.: *HDC 25-15 (CoA)*
Applicant: *William Gainey*
Property Owner: *William Gainey & Brian Tesler*
Location: *629 Ann Arbor St. (Previously 629 Stockton St.)*
Request: *Removal of black metal fence.*

Mr. Gainey presented his request to remove a black metal fence which he believes was installed sometime around the early 2000s without HDC approval. Mr. Gainey said the fence is historically inappropriate and is too tall. The current fence gives the impression that the front yard is much smaller than it is, now that the western adjoining section of Stockton St. has been vacated and removed. Mr. Gainey asked if removal of parking spaces is under the purview of the HDC, and if so, Mr. Gainey requested adding the removal of a small row of parking and pavement adjacent to the north façade of the house.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the requested Certificate of Appropriateness for HDC 25-15 with the addition of the noted removal of pavement for parking. The work as proposed meets "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," in particular standards one and two.

Commissioner Surface asked the other members of the HDC if there were any concerns about adding an item to the approval without documentation to show the request. Commissioner Hurley said this is a straightforward amendment to the application. Max stated they can work with Mr. Gainey to amend the application with a graphic showing the exact area for pavement removal. Chairwoman Wright confirmed that she can sign the Certificate of Appropriateness after the application has been amended according to the discussion held. Commissioner Hurley stated he has been on the HDC for fifteen years and amending the application requests is common.

Commissioner Farah seconded the motion.

Chairwoman Wright asked for a roll call vote.

Roll Call:	Kurt Neiswender, absent
Megan McAdow, absent	Stephanie Wright, yes
Beverly Davis, yes	Samantha Farah, yes
Michael Hurley, yes	Cade Surface, yes

M/S – Hurley/Farah

The motion carried via roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

By-Laws Update

Max stated there was no update available for this item.

Certified Local Government Program – SHPO

Max stated that they have created a draft revised version of the historic district ordinance to comply with the CLG Program requirements, but they want to have it reviewed first by SHPO staff before proceeding. Max noted that they do not have an expected timeline for this due to the recent developments around national historic preservation funding.

Historic Civic Park – Signs Erected w/o HDC Review

Mr. Cambri indicated that he has been working on this matter and there is a tentative plan to have the signs go through formal review. Commissioner Surface asked if staff were able to determine who put the signs up. Mr. Cambri answered that it is believed that a nonprofit entity was the primary funder and a City staff member helped to coordinate their efforts with the City.

NEW BUSINESS:

Historic Civic Park Neighborhood Discussion – Genesee County Land Bank Authority (“GCLBA”) and HDC

Teresa Gillotti appeared on behalf of the GCLBA. Chairwoman Wright recalled the previous discussion ended with some thoughts about potential ways the GCLBA could support or provide assistance in relation to historic properties, especially those in the historic boundaries of Civic Park. Ms. Gillotti added that she recalls questions about what the GCLBA does with rehabilitation properties and marketing efforts. Ms. Gillotti estimates there are sixty-four properties in Civic Park with structures, of which the GCLBA owns thirty-four. One property that had been marketed through the Ready for Rehab program is 2326 Humboldt Ave. This specific property had no interest during the open house on July 24th, but more open houses will be held. In addition, after reviewing their list of properties it was determined that 2239 Delmar Ave. could be reclassified as ready for rehab. Chairwoman Wright asked if the GCLBA has requirements for prospective buyers to purchase a property. Ms. Gillotti confirmed, adding that they ask about their plans for a property as well as financing to implement their plan.

Ms. Gillotti referred to the informational handout she brought. The most recent private home sale in Civic Park was in 2024 for 2306 Forest Hill Ave. Only four have been sold since 2010. Chairwoman Wright discussed the potential reasons people may not be interested in these homes such as the lack of defining features, older floor plans, and the amount of work needed for rehabilitation. Ms. Gillotti said the GCLBA currently does not put up for sale signs in front of homes, but this could be explored if the residents of Civic Park were receptive to the idea. Chairwoman Wright said this would likely not drive additional sales and make the homes targets for vandalism.

Commissioner Surface thanked Ms. Gillotti and the GCLBA and reiterated that he is sympathetic to the challenges that the GCLBA faces and how those challenges intersect with the responsibilities of the HDC. He continued, stating that he believes it is important for residents and organizations to understand that the approval to demolish a structure in a historic district is not, and should not, be an easy request. Commissioner Surface recalled his efforts to consider this issue and said he was given a comparison to an individualized education plan, where there may be separate policies, criteria, or support for the GCLBA properties in historic districts. He also spoke on the benefits of working with the State Historic Preservation Office to learn more ways to help address this issue.

Ms. Gillotti informed the commissioners that the GCLBA would not be reapplying for demolition of the homes that were denied. Chairwoman Wright stated the GCLBA could reapply with additional information and that their decision should not be taken as a hard no, but rather as a denial of the application as presented. She stated that the denials were primarily based on missing or unclear information.

Ms. Gillotti asked if there were any ways to help steer interested people towards these homes, such as working with the neighborhood association. The GCLBA will hold multiple showings for each home but they cannot drive enough interest on their own. Commissioner Farah considered a potential partnership with the City to focus resources in the Civic Park area.

Commissioner Davis asked if the GCLBA could invest in Civic Park at the same level as Carriage Town. Ms. Gillotti said she cannot speak about this authoritatively, but she does not recall Civic Park being identified as a reinvestment area in the comprehensive planning process to the same degree as Carriage Town, which also has far more investment from third-party entities and is closely situated to the downtown area.

Ms. Gillotti said the Land Bank may have up to seven homes per year targeted for rehabilitation as part of the MI Neighborhood program which requires reapplication each year. Available demolition funds are starting to go away such as ARPA money and due to the changes within the Federal government. Ms. Gillotti considered whether there may be money available to those who purchase a home in Civic Park for rehabilitation but added that she is not sure if available funding sources would allow this.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Hurley motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

M/S – Hurley/Surface

The motion carried via voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.