

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 6th, 2025

Commissioners Present:

Stephanie Wright, Chair
Kurt Neiswender, Vice-Chair
Beverly Davis
Cade Surface
Megan McAdow
Samantha Farah

Staff Present:

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

Absent:

Michael Hurley

ROLL CALL:

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked for roll call attendance, which was taken, and a quorum was present. The meeting was held in-person in the City Council Chambers as well as via Zoom as approved.

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

Stephanie Wright, absent (arrived 6:15 pm)
Samantha Farah, present
Cade Surface, present

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Surface made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner McAdow seconded the motion. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked for a voice vote.

M/S – Surface/McAdow

The motion carried via voice vote.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Draft minutes for the meeting of October 2nd, 2025, were presented.
Commissioner Farah made a motion to accept the minutes of October 2nd, 2025, as presented.
Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

M/S – Farah/Davis

The motion carried via voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender opened the floor for public comment.
Derek Dohrman spoke about a chimney at his property that needs immediate attention. He asked if there was a way to have the item reviewed prior to the next meeting. The chimney is not functional and is purely for aesthetics, however, it is not properly secured within the attic and could cause damage if not addressed by rebuilding the chimney. Max suggested that this could be submitted for emergency review.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Case No.: *HDC 25-18 (CoA)*
Applicant: *Peggy Brisbane-Noblitt*
Property Owner: *Peggy Brisbane-Noblitt*
Location: *320 W. Second Ave. (PID # 40-12-477-011)*
Request: *To site a 10 ft. x 12 ft. shed on an existing concrete pad in the rear yard.*

Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt stated the shed is already approved and that she does not need a permit to put the shed up because of the size of the shed. Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt stated she had zoning approval for the shed.

Max clarified that they made a mistake and approved the zoning permit prior to Historic District Commission (HDC) review without appropriate conditions. Max followed up with Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt the next day and informed her that the HDC review was also required.

Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt added that the shed had recently been erected as she was preparing for the approaching winter weather. Commissioner Davis noted that HDC approval is needed prior to completing work. Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt stated that she did not need permits to erect the shed. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender clarified that the property is within a local historic district. Max suggested focusing specifically on the HDC review, as the discussion had veered into the topic of zoning and building permits. Vice-Chairman Neiswender clarified the scope of the HDC.

Commissioner Surface asked for clarification from staff whether a Notice to Proceed was granted in error and how that may impact the HDC's review. Max clarified that they prematurely issued a Zoning Permit, prior to HDC review. Commissioner Surface commented that he has seen the shed and thinks it looks nice, then asked if it is sitting on the ground or if it has a foundation. Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt answered that it is sitting on a cement slab. Commissioner Surface asked if there was a shed here previously. Ms. Brisbane-Noblitt said there was a shed in the rear yard, closer to the eastern property line, but a tree fell on it and caused the structure to sink into the ground. The shed is replacing a hot tub which was formerly on the slab.

Commissioner Surface asked if the method of how a shed is installed, with or without a foundation, anchored or unanchored, impacts whether the HDC has authority to review that shed. Max stated that they believe the size and foundation type will impact how the Building and Safety Inspections Division handles their review, but that it doesn't impact the HDC's authority to review the shed.

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Commissioner Farah made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for HDC 25-18 as submitted and referenced above by Ms. Brisbane-Noblit for 320 W. Second Ave. (PID # 40-12-477-011). The work as proposed meets “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation,” in particular, standard number nine (9). Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

Commissioner McAdow noted that It would be nice to also see photographs of the house to get a better idea of how the shed would appear compared to the main structure. With that in mind, the shed is detached and does not appear to pose any threat to the main house. Commissioner Surface said he did not believe the shed was out of character in passing, though if an influx of similar applications came in he may want to dig deeper into the material choices for items such as the doors to better match the neighborhood. Ms. Brisbane-Noblit stated she does not care and would not have anything other than a steel door due to a home invasion incident. Vice-Chairman Neiswender asked Ms. Brisbane-Noblit to have a more respectful tone and attitude towards staff and the HDC and stated that since she is aware that she is in the Carriage Town district she should ensure that she receives HDC approval even if staff make a mistake. Ms. Brisbane-Noblit stated that she did not realize the HDC was still active once Nancy retired. Vice-Chairman Neiswender clarified that the correct order of operations is to received HDC approval first, then move onto Zoning and Building approvals as needed.

Roll Call:

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

M/S – Farah/Davis

6 yes - 0 no - 0 abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

Case No.:	<i>HDC 25-19 (CoA)</i>
Applicant:	<i>Glenn Wilson of Communities First, Inc.</i>
Property Owner:	<i>Communities First, Inc.</i>
Location:	<i>529 M. L. King Ave., (PID # 40-12-479-001)</i>
Request:	<i>Replace all existing exterior windows; cleaning, repair, and tuck pointing of the existing brick; repair and replacement of existing damaged limestone; repairs and new finish coat to the existing first floor EIFS wall finish; remove existing first floor fabric window awnings and replace with new transom windows; three (3) new exterior doors along M. L. King Ave. within the existing window locations.</i>

Joel Arnold, AICP of Communities First, Inc. spoke about the project, which is a modification of an approval from 2023. Mr. Arnold explained the overall work previously proposed for Marian Hall including renovations in the existing building and the buildout of a new building on the same property. The current request is regarding the specifics for the façade renovations of Marian Hall. These include replacing all exterior windows; cleaning, repairing, and tucking existing brick; repairing and replacement of exiting limestone;

repairs and a new finish coat to the existing first floor; removing existing first floor fabric window awnings to be replaced with transom windows; and three new exterior doors. Raymond Embach, an architect with AMAG, spoke for the request. Mr. Embach stated the windows are proposed to come from Pella and will have an aluminium finish.

Chairperson Wright asked if there were changes from the first review, and what may have changed. Mr. Arnold clarified that the overall development is being split into phases to account for the various funding streams involved in the project. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked if the proposal is for divided-lights or no divided-lights. Mr. Embach stated the plan is not to include divided-lights due to recent follow-up from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) which recommended the change to better match the building's character. Mr. Arnold explained that when they first sent the application in the divided-lights were planned, but the SHPO review came back earlier this week which prompted the change. The awnings were also originally planned to remain, until interior demolitions showed existing transom window spaces. Commissioner Surface compared the proposed rendering to the postcard image in the materials. Mr. Arnold stated their goal is to allow as much light into the building as possible using the covered window openings.

Commissioner Davis asked what the plan is for the attached buildings. Mr. Arnold responded that as part of phase 2, the plan is to demolish the smaller storefronts and replace them with a new five-story mixed-use building.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked if the plan is to clad over existing EFIS. Mr. Embach responded that the plan is to make repairs to the existing EFIS and apply a finish coat on top to give the appearance of limestone. Mr. Embach stated they did some exploration work and found damaged yellow smooth-faced block behind the EFIS. The damage consists of holes, likely from anchoring hardware. Without further demolition, it is not clear if any original material remains further back behind the yellow block material or behind other areas of the EFIS.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender noted that the windows incorporate upgraded mechanical system exhaust and intake points for the upstairs units. Mr. Embach acknowledged this, stating that rather than creating two or four holes to the façade for every unit, the HVAC systems were integrated into the window frames with louvers, which has been reviewed by the National Parks Service (NPS). Commissioner Surface noted appreciation for the pedestrian level details and suggested more consideration of the design if original materials are discovered behind the EFIS once it has been removed for repairs.

Chairperson Wright made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for HDC 25-19 as submitted and referenced above by Glenn Wilson of Communities First, Inc. for 529 M. L. King Ave. (PID # 40-12-479-001). The work as proposed meets "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," in particular, standard number two (2). Commissioner Farah seconded the motion.

Commissioner Farah asked if any test patch exploration was done on the existing EFIS. Mr. Embach stated they did cut some holes and did not see anything historic, mainly just the yellow block.

Commissioner McAdow noted the 1984 Carriage Town Master Plan calls for fabric awnings in the "Neon District", and asked what consideration was made when deciding to not include fabric awnings in the new design. Mr. Embach stated that the discovery of the transom window locations on Marian Hall and the lack

of similar windows on buildings like the Durant were primarily considered, thus not including fabric awnings is not believed to have a major impact on the district. Commissioner McAdow replied that the two are not necessarily incompatible. She continued, stating the new windows seem to have a more contemporary feel and awnings would add a more historic aesthetic.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender noted that items like signage and security cameras will need to come to the HDC if proposed in the future.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Wright/Farah

6 yes - 0 no - 0 abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

By-Laws Update

Max generally explained the updates within the draft changes.

Commissioner Surface asked if the current attendance requirements allow a member to miss an unspecified number of meetings so long as they inform the chair. Chairperson Wright said that as written that it is true. Commissioner Farah asked if that was something he would like to change. Max confirmed that the attendance rules are open to modification by the commission. Max added that language that declares a seat vacant after three absences may need to be reviewed further, as that may require a decision from the commission or the mayor.

Discussion was held on the Open Meetings Act, remote participation, and the proposed updated language that would allow remote participation in the event it is allowed by the Open Meetings Act.

Discussion was held regarding adding language for conflicts of interest and the removal of language referencing the former Standards of Conduct Board.

Certified Local Government Program – SHPO - Draft Update to Article XIX. §2–141 through §2–161

Max gave an overview of the prior SHPO review and the changes that were made. Max is waiting for the follow-up review from SHPO staff. The goal of these updates is to bring the ordinance into alignment with the Local Historic Districts Act.

NEW BUSINESS:

Design Principles

Commissioner McAdow spoke on a trend she has noticed where it seems that applicants feel they need to design new features or buildings to be modern rather than using stylings that draw from the significant historic period of the district. She posed the question to the commission whether they feel new work needs to be more modern in design. [Comments from Chairperson Wright could not be heard.] Vice-Chairperson Neiswender said that the approach an architect takes will depend on the specific scope of work for each project and how they relate to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. He added that in his work he tries to avoid mimicking historic resources in new material. Massing, placement, sizing are additional things to consider when adding onto a historic building. Commissioner McAdow agreed with those points and clarified that she does not think all new work needs to fit a modern or contemporary design aesthetic. New work can evoke similar themes or vibes without mimicking the exact materials found on old buildings.

Historic District Mapping

Max shared that their efforts to map the local historic districts in Flint are complete and the data is visible on the Flint Parcel Hub. Max cautioned that this data is for general use only and the overlay likely will not show the exact boundaries for the districts and individual resources. The data was created by cross-referencing plat maps and the legal descriptions found in the historic district ordinance. Max is working on a pamphlet that can be sent out to all historic properties.

Commissioner Surface asked if Mr. Gainey's comment from a previous meeting regarding the need to record historic districts with the Genesee County Clerk is related to this effort. Joshua Cambri said he was not yet able to get in touch with the county clerk.

Flint Central High School

Commissioner Farah asked as a follow-up to the last meeting if it would be appropriate for the commission, or the individual members, to send a letter to the school board regarding the redevelopment of the Flint Central High School. Mr. Cambri said he has not had a chance to look into this yet but will have an answer for the next meeting. Commissioners McAdow spoke in favor of sending a letter that requests the historic preservation aspect of the redevelopment to be considered, even if it is not required.

Commissioner Farah made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner McAdow seconded the motion.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Farah/McAdow

The motion carried via voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.