



CITY OF FLINT
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MATTHEW TELLIGA, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes
November 18th, 2025

Board Members Present:

Matthew Telliga, Chairman
Jerry Kea, Vice-Chairperson
Lauren Coney
Derek Dohrman
Ramie Yelle
Carol-Anne Blower, PC Liaison

Board Members Absent:

John Hardy
Willie Buford
Ari McCaskill

Staff Present:

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

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Telliga called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers at Flint City Hall as well as via Zoom.

Matthew Telliga, Chairman – present
Jerry Kea, Vice-Chairperson – present
John Hardy – absent
Ari McCaskill – absent
Ramie Yelle – present

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Chairman Telliga noted that because there were six members present, the hearings regarding ZBA 25-11 and ZBA 25-13 for use-variances will be moved to the bottom of the agenda. Additionally, the applicant for ZBA-R 25-04 sent a written request to postpone their review to the next meeting in December.

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

M/S – Coney/Yelle

The motion carried via voice vote.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The draft minutes of October 21st, 2025 were presented.

Vice-Chairperson Kea requested additions on Page 2 to state that he added his two daughters attended Powers, and that Commissioner Coney also went to Powers. Vice-Chairperson Kea requested clarification on the process to rezone a property. Commissioner Blower and Chairman Telliga stated the Planning Commission first hears a request to rezone a parcel; they then make a recommendation to Council for approval or denial; Council then votes on the matter. Vice-Chairperson Kea asked staff to ensure the minutes are all inclusive and accurate.



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Commissioner Coney made a motion to approve the minutes of October 21st, 2025 with the noted corrections. Commissioner Yelle seconded the motion. Chairman Telliga asked for a voice vote.

M/S – Coney/Yelle

The motion carried via voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Telliga opened the public forum.

R.L Mitchell, Ward 3 resident, stated that he was recently informed of this meeting and noted it is important for the people to engage with their government. Mr. Mitchell said that the zoning changes and processes have become confusing for residents. He spoke about recent efforts in New York City regarding the rebuilding of a library, noting that Flint previously received a significant amount of money to address zoning. Mr. Mitchell reiterated that the residents are not comfortable with the status of zoning in Flint and encouraged residents to attend these meetings.

Rodney Harris, Ward 9 resident, began to speak about ZBA 25-13. Chairman Telliga informed Mr. Rodney that there will be a separate time to speak on that specific agenda item and that he can wait to hear the initial details of the request prior to speaking.

Katherine Brooks, Ward 8 resident, spoke about ZBA-R 25-04. Ms. Brooks stated the fence is adjacent to her property and creates a hazard for her getting out of her driveway, especially in the wintertime. Ms. Brooks said she needs to watch for traffic from both sides of Miller Rd. and the Barney Ave. side-street. She added that the fence is an eyesore that has been likened to a prison wall by others. Ms. Brooks does not believe the fence is consistent with other fences in this area and the fence has begun to lean in the rear yard area. She expressed disappointment that the applicant had not spoken with their neighbors previous to erecting the fence.

Chairperson Telliga informed Ms. Brooks that this case is back with the Zoning Board of Appeals because it was remanded by the circuit court. He added that the case has been postponed to the December 16th, 2025 meeting and she is welcome to come back and speak again at that time.

Marc Rideout, Ward 8 resident, spoke about ZBA-R 25-04 and thanked the board for continuing to work on this matter following Judge Christenson's order. Mr. Rideout stated he would save the remainder of his comments until next month when the hearing occurs.

6th Ward Councilwoman Tonya Burns spoke. Councilwoman Burns said she has received calls about the fence subject to ZBA-R 25-04, though this is not within her ward, she still wanted to convey the concerns she received. Residents have raised safety concerns and concerns that the fence was constructed outside of the fencing provisions. She expressed that we should all try to be good neighbors and to follow the ordinances that are established by the people in the City of Flint as well as by City Council. Councilwoman Burns noted that seniors have an especially difficult time backing out. She urged for consistent findings that follow the ordinances to protect the city from litigation and to not encourage others to construct similar fences. She recalled instances where residents were required to take down or modify fences to meet ordinance requirements.



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Chairman Telliga invited Councilwoman Burns to return to the meeting next month when the remanded case is heard, noting that there are additional letters that will be read into the record.

Vice-Chairperson Kea asked for clarification if the property subject to ZBA-R 25-04 is not within the boundaries of the 6th Ward. Chairman Telliga confirmed it is not in the 6th Ward.

No one else spoke. Chairman Telliga closed the public forum.

REPORTS:

There was no new information to report for this meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no communications received for this meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING:

ZBA 25-10: Eric Carmona of Tower Street Development, LLC requests a non-use variance to provide relief from the sidewalk construction requirement of §50-68 along Tower St. for the property located at 920 Tower St. (PID # 41-16-101-027) in a CE Commerce and Employment zone district.

Max read from the staff report, noting that a similar request was made to the ZBA on January 16th, 2024 which was not approved. At that time, the applicants proposed a 12,000 sq.ft. building extension from the north end of the building. The expansion plan has since changed to instead come off the western portion of the building. This portion of Tower St. services multiple light-industrial uses and there are no sidewalks present. Max read staff findings from the variance standards section.

Hunter Gailbraith, Project Manager with Designhaus Architecture, spoke. Mr. Galbraith stated the reasons for requesting this variance are that this site is just short of being an industrial site with large trucks, buses, workloads, and other equipment circulating around. Additionally, due to the existing front yard setback along Tower St. and landscaping requirements the sidewalk would need to be located within the right-of-way strip. Since the first previous request in 2024, the property owners have acquired additional parcels which front Dort Hwy.; future expansions are planned which may shift the frontage towards Dort Hwy. Mr. Galbraith said the adjacent properties on either side do not have sidewalks.

Eric Carmona of Tower Street Development, LLC. spoke. Mr. Carmona pointed out there is a transformer box along the front façade. He confirmed that they have acquired additional properties and they plan to expand in the future. Mr. Carmona agreed with the Imagine Flint Plan's goal to make the City walkable, but is not sure that making the city walkable in this light-industrial area would be safe. He added that the retail location adjacent to the north has a four (4) foot tall retaining wall where the right-of-way strip abuts their property line; he does not believe there will be continuity in future sidewalk expansions unless they are placed within the right-of-way strip. Mr. Carmona added that the conditions of approval from planning include a four (4) foot wide landscape area along the front façade. Mr. Carmona stated they will have an ADA parking space and three (3) other parking spaces on the right-of-way strip.



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Vice-Chairperson Kea asked for clarification that the building expansion will extend west from the current building towards Dort Hwy., and that the request is not to put a sidewalk along the Dort Hwy. frontage. Chairman Telliga corrected him, stating the request is to not put the sidewalk along the Tower St. frontage. Board members discussed the location of the additional parcels and the planned expansion in relation to the current building.

Chairman Telliga asked Commissioner Yelle if this property is in his ward. Commissioner Yelle stated he believes it is and questioned if this request came about because additional parcels were acquired. Chairman Telliga stated the applicant has the right to reapply after a year or after substantially modifying the request. The sidewalk in question is required to be placed on the eastern property line along Tower St.

Vice-Chairperson Kea said the zoning ordinance requires sidewalks to be provided for new developments and asked staff for confirmation. Max added that the requirement is to provide sidewalks along all frontages for new developments.

Chairman Telliga opened the floor to public comment.

R.L. Mitchell, Ward 3 resident, spoke about the discussion regarding Dort Hwy., and the distance of sidewalks from the Dort Hwy. right-of-way where cars are traveling at high speeds. Mr. Mitchell expressed that the people in Flint are unaware of the zoning changes occurring.

Chairman Telliga closed the floor to public comment.

Commissioner Yelle made a motion to approve ZBA 25-10 for the non-use variance to provide relief from the sidewalk construction requirement of §50-68 along Tower St. for the property located at 920 Tower St. (PID # 41-16-101-027) in a CE Commerce and Employment zone district., based on staff materials, the discussion held, and the following findings of fact:

- It complies with **Standard 1** because compliance with the strict letter of the Zoning Ordinance governing area, setback, frontage, height, bulk, lot coverage, density or other dimensional standards will unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose or will render conformity with such restrictions unnecessarily burdensome.
- It complies with **Standard 2** because the plight is due to unique circumstances of the property and does not apply generally to the same zone district or to general neighborhood conditions .
- 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 variance shall 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 Coney seconded the motion.



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Chairman Telliga asked for a roll call vote.

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

Commissioner McCaskill, absent
Commissioner Coney, yes
Commissioner Blower, no
Commissioner Telliga, no

M/S – Yelle/Coney

2 – yes, 4 – no, 0 – abstain

The motion failed via roll call vote.

ZBA 25-12: *Donna Holmes of Innovative Housing Solutions requests a non-use variance to provide relief from the maximum principal structure limit in §50-53(B) to allow four (4) detached single-family homes on a single property located at 319 E. York Ave. (PID # 46-25-202-022) in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district.*

Donna Holmes, Executive Director of Innovative Housing Solutions, spoke for her request. She is a resident of the City of Flint, born and raised within the City, and she is requesting the variance for a property she purchased. The property is currently used as a child care development center. Ms. Holmes would like to use the existing buildings as single-family residential homes for single women and their children. The property does not currently meet zoning requirements and attempting to split the parcel into individual parcels would create new incompatibilities with the ordinance as it relates to setbacks, area, and parking. Ms. Holmes stated she does not want to make exterior changes and would instead like to rehabilitate the units while leaving the shared parking arrangement as is.

Max read from the staff report, noting there are a handful of similar properties in Flint but these are not common. The proposed variance would allow four single-family homes, which on their own are a permitted use in the GN-1 zone district, without needing to apply for a multitude of variances regarding bulk standards for each individual parcel. Max read staff findings from the variance standards section.

Chairman Telliga opened the floor to public comment.

Toni [surname unclear], Ward 5 resident, spoke in favor of the requested variance, stating she was a single mom for twenty-two years and she believes this will greatly benefit single women and mothers.

R.L. Mitchell, Ward 3 resident, spoke about a Presbyterian Church on York St. that was moved to Delaware St. Mr. Mitchell expressed that people in Flint do not know when to come to meetings and when to speak.

Chairman Telliga closed the floor to public comment.

Ms. Holmes thanked the Board for listening and considering the request. She noted that as is the property is sitting mostly unused and is an eyesore. Utilizing the units for homes would help underserved individuals.



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Chairman Telliga spoke about how the process to split the parcel into individual parcels would require multiple variances for each property to be utilized for the permitted single-family residential use.

Commissioner Blower asked Ms. Holmes if the variance is approved, would she retain ownership of the individual units. Additionally, she asked for more information about her non-profit organization, such as if she has existing partnerships and how residents would be situated. Ms. Holmes stated that there are connections to services to assist families with obtaining their GED, securing employment, and to have access to addiction support services. The goal of Innovative Housing Solutions is to ensure residents come to a stable situation and eventually move into a permanent residence of their own. Ms. Holmes intends for these homes to remain as rentals units. Commissioner Blower asked if she has a standard rental period in mind. Ms. Holmes has an outline to help tenants reach stability within 24-months.

Commissioner Yelle asked whether the tenants will be paying dues to the non-profit or if money will be generated elsewhere. Chairman Telliga cautioned the question may not be relevant to the request at hand. Commissioner Yelle clarified that the amount of taxes that are collected may be different than if the units were on separate parcels. Commissioner Yelle asked for clarification that if the request was denied tonight, the applicant would then need to separate the parcels. Chairman Telliga confirmed and added that each parcel would individually need multiple variances to be created.

Chairman Telliga believes this is an appropriate request that will allow four vacant units to be utilized as homes for a worthy cause.

Vice-Chairperson Kea asked for clarification that the non-profit will still own the site and individual units. The units will be rented out, and the desired rental period is up to 24-months. Chairman Telliga confirmed. Vice-Chairperson Kea said that to follow the ordinance the property would need to be divided into four (4) parcels, which would not leave them enough space to meet ordinance requirements and require multiple variances for each property. He stated that this can represent a hardship. Commissioner Blower added that because these units are proposed to remain as rental homes, under the ownership of the non-profit, allowing them to remain on one parcel is not likely to cause issues, whereas if the applicant's intent was to sell the homes there may be more consideration needed.

Vice-Chairperson Kea made a motion to approve ZBA 25-12 for the non-use variance to provide relief from the maximum principal structure limit in §50-53(B) to allow four (4) detached single-family homes on a single property located at 319 E. York Ave. (PID # 46-25-202-022) in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district., based on staff materials, the discussion held, and the following findings of fact:

- It complies with **Standard 1** because compliance with the strict letter of the Zoning Ordinance governing area, setback, frontage, height, bulk, lot coverage, density or other dimensional standards will unreasonably prevent the owner from using the property for a permitted purpose or will render conformity with such restrictions unnecessarily burdensome.
- It complies with **Standard 2** because the plight is due to unique circumstances of the property and does not apply generally to the same zone district or to general neighborhood conditions .



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- 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 variance shall 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.

Chairman Telliga asked for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Hardy, absent

Commissioner Buford, absent

Commissioner Yelle, yes

Commissioner Dohrman, yes

Commissioner Kea, yes

Commissioner McCaskill, absent

Commissioner Coney, yes

Commissioner Blower, yes

Commissioner Telliga, yes

M/S – Kea/Yelle

6 – yes, 0 – no, 0 – abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

Chairman Telliga called for a brief recess to call Commissioner McCaskill and determine his location, as there were not enough members present at this time to vote on the use variance requests.

Chairman Telliga called the meeting back to order. Due to the absence of three members, the requests for ZBA 25-11 and ZBA 25-13 will be postponed to the December meeting.

A resident present to speak on ZBA 25-13 with another member of his household asked if the case will be re-noticed and details of the request given prior to the vote. Chairman Telliga confirmed that the case will be re-noticed at least fifteen (15) days in the local paper, online, and via mailers as it was for this meeting. Vice-Chairperson Kea clarified to staff that the resident was asking if ZBA 25-13 can be first on the agenda in December as they are seniors and have a difficult time sitting in the audience for an extended period. Chairman Telliga said the order is based on how staff intakes and lists the cases for review. Max answered that this is a reasonable request that staff can provide accommodation for.

A question was raised whether residents could speak on the postponed cases at this meeting. Chairman Telliga asked Attorney Sparrow if he was prevented from opening a public hearing when there was not enough members to act on the case. Attorney Sparrow confirmed. Commissioner Blower added that the public was informed they should hold their comments about specific cases rather than speak in the general public forum, but now those cases will not be heard at this meeting. Chairman Telliga clarified that he said they can hold their comments, and that was said when the use variance requests were presumed to be heard that same meeting.



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CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

Tom Sparrow, Assistant City Attorney, had no information to report.

OLD BUSINESS:

By-Laws Review – This topic was postponed to the next meeting.

529 Harrison St., Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Landscaping Update

Max stated that they verified the landscaping along E. Second St. has been installed according to the landscaping plan approved by the Planning Commission. Chairman Telliga noted the present landscaping doesn't extend across the entire façade. Max clarified that landscaping is not required to extend across an entire façade and the MSU landscaping meets the plan approved by the Planning Commission.

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Dohrman asked in general if the board has the power to call a special meeting. Max answered that the board can call special meetings so long as there is sufficient time for staff to provide the required fifteen (15) day notices. Chairman Telliga asked if it only required the request of two board members to call a special meeting. Max said they believe so, but they can review the bylaws to be sure. Commissioner Dohrman clarified that his question is for applications that have already been processed and are ready for review. Max added that Planning Commission is held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month and a special meeting would need to avoid conflicts with the Planning Commission meetings. Chairman Telliga asked Attorney Sparrow for an answer to this question. Attorney Sparrow stated he would respond with an answer next week.

Vice-Chairperson Kea referenced the by-laws review. Vice-Chairperson Kea noted his concern that the recommendation for changes includes correcting some of the verbiage that is used, more specifically that the term Chairperson should be used instead of Chairman. Vice-Chairperson Kea stated that Robert's Rules of Order calls for the term Chairperson. Chairman Telliga stated they would look into this further.

Commissioner Dohrman suggested looking into whether other options are available to the board and the public, to avoid a situation where members of the public decide not to speak in the general public forum, but then the case they attended for is postponed. Max noted that the meeting materials are posted online and members of the public can contact staff to provide their comments if they cannot attend a future meeting for a postponed case. Commissioner Dohrman asked if they could open a case to hear public comments and then postpone the case. Chairman Telliga confirmed this can be done.

Commissioner Yelle asked for clarification on the number of meetings a member can miss. Chairman Telliga stated he believes it is three (3) consecutive meetings. He added that Commissioner McCaskill is on his way but was caught up in traffic.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Dohrman made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Coney seconded the motion.

M/S – Dohrman/Coney

The motion carried via voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.