

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes December 4th, 2025

Commissioners Present:

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:

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

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

M/S – Surface/Farah

The motion carried via voice vote.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Draft minutes for the meeting of November 6th, 2025, were presented.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to accept the minutes of November 6th, 2025, as presented. Commissioner McAdow seconded the motion.

M/S – Surface/McAdow

The motion carried via voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender opened the floor for public comment.

No one spoke. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender closed the floor for public comment.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Case No.: *HDC 25-20*
Applicant: *Moses Timlin, Uptown Reinvestment Corporation*
Property Owner: *Friends of the Capitol Theatre, LLC.*
Location: *130 E. Second St. (PID 41-18-129-001)*
Request: *Repair minor damage on the façade at the northeast corner of the building, including masonry patching and stain cleaning.*

Moses Timlin of Uptown Reinvestment Corporation spoke on behalf of the Friends of the Capitol Theatre, LLC. Mr. Timlin thanked staff for providing a thorough staff report; he summarized the situation stating there was a previous commercial tenant that in the process of moving out removed signage without notifying the property owner. The proposed work is to patch up approximately four holes in the brick face as well as any holes in the mortar, as well as to conduct some cleaning where the bricks are stained. Mr. Timlin added that the current tenant will remove their remaining sign to allow repair and cleaning of the bricks and his hope is that the needed repairs are in line with those needed for the east façade.

Commissioner Farah asked how tenants are informed about the process for adding or removing signage. Mr. Timlin responded that it is stated in the lease as well as language regarding the responsibilities of tenants within historic districts to receive approval from the Historic District Commission (HDC). Mr. Timlin added that the former tenant owned the sign hardware and that is within their rights to take their property with them, though he would have preferred to coordinate the removal to avoid mistakes.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked staff if there was any additional information regarding the recommended conditions of approval in the staff report. Max stated that one of the two signs has already been removed but the current tenant decided to wait to remove the second sign as she noted some material loss when the first sign was removed. Max stated they believe the conditions of the façade under the remaining sign will be similar to the conditions of the façade where the first sign was removed, but in case there is more severe damage, staff recommends approval with the condition that “repairs to the north façade may be completed upon confirmation by the Zoning Coordinator or Chairperson that the conditions and needed repairs are the same as those needed for the east-facing façade.” This would allow the repairs on the north-facing façade to continue if there is no significant deviation required from the methods and materials proposed for the east-facing façade, otherwise a new approval would be required.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked for clarification on the work requested in each application. Max stated the current application is for repairs to the east-facing façade as soon as possible and the north-facing façade once the remaining sign is removed. The next application is for the tenant to properly install two hanging signs in the location of the former signs.

Commissioner Surface asked Mr. Timlin if he had any comments about the discussion. Mr. Timlin stated his primary concern is with the façade that has already had the sign removed. The remaining sign hardware is owned by the tenant and it is their responsibility to remove the sign and get the proper approvals. Mr. Timlin added that he believes the north-facing façade will have similar minor damage and can be repaired in the same way as proposed for the east-facing façade.

Commissioner McAdow asked the commissioners if they typically prefer signs to utilize existing drill holes. Commissioner Surface asked if she is speaking to whether new signs should be mounted using holes that have already been drilled where the damage has already been done or if new signs should be moved designed to meet the standards regardless. Commissioner McAdow said yes, and continued the question asking if tenants should be allowed to install their own signage versus the property owner installing a mounting bracket that can be reused by multiple tenants. Mr. Timlin added the property owner does not require tenants to have signage. If tenants choose to have signage the lease states they need to cover the costs and receive approvals from the owner and HDC. Mr. Timlin noted both the current and previous tenant did not follow the lease and put up the signs without approval; he proposed only the repairs to the façade in this application. Mr. Timlin noted the tenant removed their hardware before the property owner could discuss the options for leaving the hardware up or removing the hardware in a coordinated manner. Commissioner McAdow stated the HDC could deny an application for signage if there is another option to consider. Commissioner McAdow questioned how well the repairs will restore the historic appearance versus showing clear areas of repair, and whether having identical hardware to the original signs installed in the existing holes would be a better option.

Mr. Timlin stated that ideally the tenants would not have drilled into the bricks but the damage is present regardless of what will be decided for these applications. Mr. Timlin reiterated that the tenants did not follow the terms of the lease and thus did not install the signs correctly. Given the damage is present, Mr. Timlin would like to repair the holes in the brick.

Commissioner Davis recalled a previous approval for a tenant within the Capitol Theatre building that installed mounting hardware that is interchangeable, allowing new signs to be placed on the hardware without removing the mount itself. Commissioner Davis asked Max to locate the details of that case. Max responded saying they believe she is referring to the sign for Ranesha Cavette, RC Beauty Lounge along Harrison St. Commissioner Davis added that when cleaning stains certain treatments may cause discoloration; she asked that a small portion of the façade is tested with the cleaning solutions. Mr. Timlin noted they are working with an established and experienced contractor that has done all of their masonry repair in Downtown Flint. Mr. Timlin stated the areas being cleaned won't be patched. Max clarified that Commissioner Davis is asking for the cleaning solution to be tested on a small area of the façade on the rear of the building so that if any discoloration occurs the discoloration is not in a prominent location of the building façade. Mr. Timlin agreed to this request.

Commissioner Surface commented that the request itself is simple to agree to but noted additional context makes the conversation more complex. Commissioner Surface asked if the property owner has any processes to hold tenants responsible when they make a mistake. Mr. Timlin reiterated that the requirements are made clear in the lease for approval of signs and approvals within historic districts; tenants are not required to have signage but if they do it is their cost to bear. Mr. Timlin stated the requirements for tenants is made clear and the tenants did not follow through; as a result, the property owner would like to repair the damage to the bricks caused by the improperly installed signs. Commissioner McAdow clarified the question, asking what repercussions a tenant incurs when they do not follow their lease agreement. Mr. Timlin stated that the property owner can choose to bill a portion or the full cost of the repairs to the tenant. Mr. Timlin noted that Max has coordinated with himself and the tenant over the past two months to ensure this situation is resolved appropriately. He added that the effort of the tenant to remove the signs and go through the appropriate review process is another factor of that solution. Commissioner Farah considered whether the property owner should provide interchangeable sign hardware instead of allowing the tenants to arrange their own signage. Mr. Timlin said it is something to consider, but he believes the discussion does not pertain to the repair work he is requesting at this time. Commissioner McAdow

again questioned what a better solution would be to allow signage and avoid the issue of tenants not following through on their responsibilities to obtain approval first. Mr. Timlin noted that the signs in question have already been paid for by the tenants.

Commissioner Farah made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions for HDC 25-20 as submitted and referenced above by Mr. Timlin for 130 E. Second St. (PID # 41-18-129-001). The work as proposed meets "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation," in particular, standard numbers six (6) and seven (7). The following condition is included:

- Repairs to the north façade may be completed upon confirmation by the Zoning Coordinator or Chairperson that the conditions and needed repairs are the same as those needed for the east-facing façade.

Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

Commissioner McAdow said she is comfortable supporting the motion as presented with the added condition but added that she thinks the commission needs to have a serious discussion about the continuation of how items are approved for temporary tenants; how the commission approved signage will likely be under the next application.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender said he does not recall any tenants at the Capitol Theatre who have appropriately applied for signage whether it is a mounted sign or vinyl decals. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender discussed stewardship of historic landmarks and the responsibilities of property owners to maintain these buildings; he encouraged the development of a stronger policy or firmer language with tenants about the proper process for installing signage. Commissioner McAdow and Commissioner Davis agreed with Vice-Chairperson Neiswender's comments. Commissioner Davis spoke about interchangeable mounting hardware and her belief that a previous requirement or discussion involved the hardware remaining for future tenants. Mr. Timlin stated he understood the discussion and reiterated that the hardware for the previous signage was the property of that tenant; the tenant removed their hardware without notifying the property owner and he is here to request repair of the resulting minor damage on the façade. Commissioner McAdow said she believes the lease should be changed to be more clear on the required approval processes, to potentially require existing holes to be reused, or for the property owner to provide the bracket. Mr. Timlin stated they instruct all tenants to drill into the mortar and that he is requesting to repair the holes currently in the brick face to preserve the building. He added that he does not want a new sign to go into the holes drilled into the brick face and would rather the repairs be completed and the signs correctly installed.

Commissioner McAdow asked if the commission can approve a request from a lease and not the property owner. Max stated that staff requires tenants to have signed property owner permission to make an application to the HDC or Zoning Board of Appeals. Max added that work being completed without approval is not unique to historic properties and that a significant amount of staff time is spent addressed work completed without approval. Max also clarified that in this case, the former tenant SHIFT had improperly installed the signs and the HDC voted to allow those signs to remain as is. The current tenant originally used the same mounting brackets but the former tenants reclaimed their hardware. The current tenant then installed similar mounting brackets within the same holes, unaware that the nonconforming right to the improperly placed hardware was abandoned because of its removal.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Farah/Surface

5 yes - 0 no - 0 abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

Case No.:	<i>HDC 25-21 (CoA)</i>
Applicant:	<i>Kara Dahlberg, 810hm Massage & Co.</i>
Property Owner:	<i>Friends of the Capitol Theatre, LLC.</i>
Location:	<i>130 E. Second St. (PID 41-18-129-001)</i>
Request:	<i>Add two new hanging signs on the northeast corner of the building, one facing Second St. and the other facing Harrison St.</i>

The applicant was not present to speak on this application. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked if the commission could postpone the application. Max confirmed that the commission may postpone the application or review it if they think there is sufficient information to make a decision.

Commissioner McAdow questioned if the hardware for the proposed signs allows for interchangeable signage. Max stated the supporting arm appears to be fully attached to the wall plate, but the sign that hangs from it can be removed. Commissioner McAdow said the tenant could remove the hardware in the future because it is their property.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked if the new signs are already on the building. Max clarified that the sign that is still on the building was installed after SHIFT had removed their hardware. The proposal is to include new mounting hardware for the two proposed signs that align with the mortar spacing. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender noted the staff provided photographs. Max stated the photographs show that one of the signs has already been removed. The remaining sign will also be removed, and two signs will be installed with new mounting hardware. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked if the approved sign that was previously mentioned was a small round wall sign. Max confirmed. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender stated that the tenant in that case was required to install a bracket that allowed interchangeable signage. Max confirmed, adding that at the same time she is still able to remove that bracket if she leaves the space.

Commissioner Farah considered whether the commission could deny the application with feedback that the property owner must install mounting hardware that they property owner owns. Commissioner McAdow suggested the property owner could purchase the sign hardware from the tenant if it has already been purchased. Commissioner Surface asked if this was within the scope of the Commission. Max answered that they believe for now the commission must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards; the commission can develop additional standards but until such time the Secretary of the Interior's Standards likely does allow for the proposed work.

Commissioner McAdow asked if the commission should hear applications from tenants or only from the property owner. Max stated the issue at hand comes about when people do work without seeking any approvals in the first place. Max noted that sign companies should know to confirm with property owners and obtain municipal permits prior to installing or modifying signs. They added that a large hurdle is informing everyone what the proper processes and procedures are. Commissioner Surface asked if the commissioners would be satisfied if this application is approved, the damage is repaired, and future tenants moving forward reuse the holes that are to be drilled in the mortar. Commissioner McAdow noted that holes can only be reused so many times before needing patching. Commissioner McAdow added that she is not sure if the commission should review applications from anyone other than the property owner. Commissioner Surface asked if the Assistant City Attorney had any comments. Assistant City Attorney Joshua Cambri stated he agreed with Max that if a tenant modifies a property without the permission of the property owner it would be up to the property owner to follow-up with any legal remedy available to them against the tenant for breaching the terms of their lease. Commissioner McAdow suggested a signature from the property owner should be required. Max stated there is already a page in the application for this, though they noted that on this request this space is currently incomplete because they asked the applicant to complete the current application after she submitted an out-of-date version; the confirmation page was misplaced in this transfer, though Max has been working with both the property owner and applicant closely on this matter. The commissioners discussed who may be responsible for unpermitted work and the proper enforcement procedure. Mr. Cambri stated he could look into this further and that he may need to also check with the zoning and building codes for how these all may interact.

Max suggested the commission can postpone the application to allow the applicant to update the application. Commissioner Farah asked if it would be better to deny the application and have them reapply with feedback in mind. Max stated that the commission can postpone an application with those same reasons, whereas a denial would require the applicant to repay the application fee. Commissioner McAdow asked if postponing the application for a month would cause any significant issues for the applicant such as with the sign company. Max stated they are not sure if another month will cause issues for the applicant but stressed that the review should be focused on application and not the tenant's lease terms or their relationship with the property owner.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to postpone HDC 25-21 as submitted and referenced above by Kara Dahlberg of 810hm Massage & Co. for 130 E. Second St. (PID # 41-18-129-001) to the next available meeting to allow the applicant time to provide the owner confirmation signature and affidavit and make any other needed changes. Commissioner Farah seconded the motion.

M/S – Surface/Farah

The motion carried via voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

By-Laws Update

Max stated they have not had time to run the draft by-laws past Legal and would like to have them reviewed prior to any vote.

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

Max is waiting for the follow-up review from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff.

NEW BUSINESS:

Flint Central High School

Commissioner Farah asked Mr. Cambri if he had any updates to the discussion on whether the commission can send a letter regarding the Flint Central development. Mr. Cambri stated he does not have a formal opinion ready. From what he has gathered the school board is exempt from the historic district requirements; the commission can send a letter so long as it is included on the agenda and the contents of the letter are discussed publicly.

Mr. Cambri and the commission discussed several potential methods of introducing and approving a letter from the commission. Mr. Cambri noted he may need to simplify the process and come back with a formal response.

Certified Local Government Program (cont.)

Commissioner Davis asked if the language that is being reviewed by SHPO would apply statewide or just within the city. Max answered that it would only apply to the city historic district ordinance language. Commissioner Surface asked if this is to bring the local ordinance in compliance with the state act. Max confirmed the updated language is to align the local ordinance with the state act.

The commission noted that the first Thursday of January is New Year's Day. Max recommended setting a special meeting for January 8th, 2026.

Commissioner Farah made a motion to set a special meeting for January 8th, 2026.
Commissioner McAdow seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Farah/McAdow

4 yes - 0 no - 1 abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Surface/Farah

The motion carried via voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.