



CITY OF FLINT
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MATTHEW TELLIGA, CHAIRMAN

Meeting Minutes
December 16th, 2025

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

John Hardy

Staff Present:

Max Lester, Zoning Coordinator
Dalton Castle, Planner I
Glenn Steffens, Assistant City Attorney

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Telliga called the meeting to order at 6:06 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-Chairman – present
John Hardy – absent
Ari McCaskill – present
Ramie Yelle – present

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Chairman Telliga announced that ZBA-R 25-04 is postponed to the next meeting to allow the attorneys for the applicant and the City to discuss the ordinance language further; he added that those attending for this case may speak during the general public forum.

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 November 18th, 2025 were presented.

Vice-Chairman Kea asked staff to confirm the specific wording used by Donna K. Holmes, regarding the term “Flintstone” on Page 5. He also requested a change on Page 5, to remove “to” in the sentence “*Ms. Holmes thanked the Board for listening to and considering the request.*” Vice-Chairman Kea asked for two corrections on Page 6. First, a spelling correction for “tenants.” Second, to start a new sentence after “... *the non-profit will still own the site and individual units.*” Vice-Chairman Kea asked for the term “senior” to be used on Page 7.



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Vice-Chairman Kea made a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

Commissioner McCaskill seconded the motion.

M/S – Kea/McCaskill

The motion carried via voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairman Telliga opened the public forum. Commissioner Coney read the Rules of the Public Forum.

Marc Rideout, a resident in Ward 8, spoke regarding the postponed case ZBA-R 25-04. Mr. Rideout said that the number of residents in attendance for this item has decreased as the case has been subsequently postponed. He acknowledged that the applicant has the right to postpone but noted that the concerned residents have less flexibility to continually attend to provide their input.

Chairman Telliga noted that all letters and communications received by staff will be incorporated into the case record.

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 25-13: *Harjit Mahal of Mahal Transport, LLC requests a use variance to allow an “Other Storage & Equipment Yards” use for semis and semi-trailers on the property located at 2701 Camden Ave. (PID # 41-19-176-011) in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district.*

Max gave a summary of the staff report, noting that the property is vacant and the former structure was demolished sometime between 2012-2014. Max described the adjacent uses surrounding the subject property. Max stated that staff did not find sufficient evidence that there is a unique circumstance applying to the property, that a substantial detriment may be created by diverting semi-truck traffic down a residential street, and that the request may impair the purpose and intent of the Imagine Flint Plan and Zoning Ordinance by allowing an incompatible use in a residential zone district.

Attorney Rick Hetherington representing Mahal Transport, LLC. spoke on this request. The applicant Harjit Mahal was also in attendance. Mr. Hetherington stated that the subject property has been commercial in nature for the entirety of its life. He stated the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act indicated there are only a couple of ways for a nonconforming use to be abandoned, such as the government purchasing the property or the owner abandons the use of their own volition. Mr. Hetherington added that the passage of time is not enough to abandon a use. He



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stated there are commercial uses near to the subject property, the subject property is located towards the edge of a residential neighborhood, and five residential properties are located across the street. Mr. Hetherington stated that the property is and has been commercial in nature; he does not believe that the installation of a storage facility for semi-trailers would be a change of use and that the use should be grandfathered. Mr. Hetherington asked the Board to consider the use of the property, the prior use of the property, and eligible case law. He stated that non-use does not indicate that the property has lost its grandfathered status as a commercial property.

Chairman Telliga opened the floor to public comment.

Rodney Harris, a resident in Ward 9, spoke in opposition. Mr. Harris played an audio recording of semi-truck traffic. Mr. Harris expressed concern for the safety of children in the neighborhood as there is a bus stop near the entrances to the subject property. Mr. Harris also noted concerns of noise and air pollution. He acknowledged that the property was labeled as commercial and specified that it is light-industry which he believes does not permit semi-truck traffic; he added that the proposed use is classified as heavy industry. Mr. Harris stated the property was listed with example uses along the lines of a recycling center, food distribution, etc. Mr. Harris does not believe that noise from passing semi-trucks can be mitigated. He added that the streets in this neighborhood are small and narrow. Mr. Harris asked how many semis are planned to be stored at this location and how the site would be accessed.

Leroy Harris, a resident in Ward 9, spoke in opposition. Mr. Harris asked the Board to think about their homes, children, pets, and neighbors; he asked whether they would want this use in their neighborhood. Mr. Harris stated his concern over noise and decreasing property values. He believes heavy vehicle traffic would pose a danger to children playing in the neighborhood.

Chairman Telliga closed the floor to public comment.

Max read a letter of opposition from Keana J. She expressed that semi-truck traffic would disrupt the neighborhood and pose a danger to children who play in the neighborhood. She noted that if the variance is approved, truck traffic should be required to access the site from Bloor Ave.

Max read a letter of opposition from Joanna Jackson. Ms. Jackson expressed concerns regarding safety, infrastructure wear and tear, noise and quality of life, and environmental impacts. Ms. Jackson stated that if the variance is approved, she believes semi-truck traffic should access the site from Bloor Ave.

Max read a letter of opposition from Eliane Reiley and Willis Williams. Ms. Reiley and Mr. Williams expressed concerns relating to the appearance of a semi-trailer parking lot, the sound of semi-truck traffic, and the smell of the semi-trailer parking lot and passing semi-trucks. They write that if the variance is approved, semi-trucks should access the site from Bloor Ave.

Angela Thomas, a resident of Ward 9, appearing online, typed into the Zoom chat that she is opposed to the variance request because many residents in this area are older with health issues.

Chairman Telliga stated he is familiar with this area and believes this is the former location of Standard Cotton Products which has been vacant for decades; he added that to his understanding this is not under continuous use.



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Chairman Telliga asked staff if this property was with the Land Bank. Max answered that the property was owned by the Land bank and recently sold. He asked staff if the property was recently rezoned. Max confirmed, noting it

has been about three years since the property was rezoned. Chairman Telliga asked Mr. Hetherington if he misheard that the property has been under continuous use. Mr. Hetherington stated that the property has been vacant, but the mere non-use or rezoning of the property does not eliminate the commercial nature of the property; he added that the owner has to intentionally change the use of the property which has not occurred. Chairman Telliga asked the Assistant City Attorney if he had any input. Mr. Steffans responded that he would need to do more research to give an answer on this topic.

Commissioner McCaskill asked about the history of the zoning of this parcel. Chairman Telliga stated the property was developed in the 1920s when there was no zoning. The property was originally used to manufacture cotton stuffed seats in support of the Fisher Body Plant. Chairman Telliga asked Max if the property was rezoned in conjunction with the zoning ordinance update. Max confirmed, stating the effective date was October 29th, 2022. Chairman Telliga asked if the property is a vacant property that was owned by the Land Bank and whether the applicant has purchased the property or is in the process of purchasing the property. Max confirmed. Chairman Telliga asked if the applicant has a purchase agreement or if he already owns the property. Mr. Hetherington stated the applicant purchased the property in September 2025.

Commissioner McCaskill stated that municipalities have the power to set zoning standards as granted by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. He noted that nonconforming uses run with buildings and land, but there is no building or continuous use present. Mr. Hetherington responded that the city can set zoning standards but a nonconforming use does not automatically stop as a result of changes to the zoning designation of a property. Max stated that there is no single standard that determines the status of a nonconforming use; they added that there is a list of potential standards that need to be evaluated with the facts of the property such as whether utilities were disconnected, were there structures, were the structures important to the use, was there evidence of a 'going out of business sale', etc. Max said the ordinance lists various factors to consider in §50-137.

Commissioner Yelle asked if the applicant had purchased the property eight years ago, prior to the Imagine Flint Plan, and continued to operate under the previous use, would the request be needed. Max responded that the previous use of the property appears to have been for Allen Moving and Storage Company in the 2000s. Max stated non-use on its own does not necessarily release nonconforming use rights but could with consideration of other factors. Max stated they are not sure how the Allen Moving and Storage Co. operated the business on the property. Vice-Chairman Kea asked if the property was purchased after the rezoning of the property. Commissioner McCaskill confirmed it was purchased after the rezoning. Mr. Hetherington stated that the nonconforming use runs with the land until completely banned. Chairman Telliga stated the property was rezoned five years ago. Mr. Hetherington countered that the rezoning is not relevant to the nonconforming use. Commissioner Dohrman asked what is currently being done on the property now and whether the property is being maintained. Mr. Hetherington stated the applicant recently purchased the property and intends to clean it up for the intended use. Commissioner Dohrman asked if people were using the property to dump garbage. Mr. Hetherington confirmed people have dumped garbage on the property. Commissioner Dohrman asked if the commercial property adjacent to the subject property has semi-truck traffic. Mr. Hetherington confirmed there is some semi-truck traffic to the adjacent use.



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Commissioner Yelle expressed concerns with diesel vehicles frequently traveling through a residential neighborhood because diesel is toxic. Commissioner McCaskill stated that the board is imbued with the duty of preserving the integrity of neighborhoods, including the safety and well-being of everyone.

Commissioner Blower asked staff what the previous zoning was for this property. Max answered that it was zoned F – Intermediate Manufacturing District. Chairman Telliga asked if this use would be permitted under the previous zoning ordinance. Commissioner Dohrman noted there are old railroad tracks running behind the property. He added that he believes the intention is for that land to become the Grand Traverse Greenway. Max responded to Chairman Telliga’s question, stating that under the F – Intermediate Manufacturing district, non-manufacturing uses including freight terminals were allowed “...provided, that the premises is at least 200 feet from any residence district and subject to approval by the traffic engineer.” Commissioner McCaskill asked if there is a residence within 200 feet. Max confirmed.

Commissioner McCaskill made a motion to deny ZBA 25-13, being the use variance requested by Harjit Mahal of Mahal Transport, LLC. to allow an “Other Storage & Equipment Yards” use for semis and semi-trailers in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district property located at 2701 Camden Ave. (PID # 41-19-176-011), based on staff materials, the discussion held, and the following findings of fact:

- It does not comply with **Standard 1** because the property can be reasonably used and/or can yield a reasonable return for the purposes permitted in that zone district.
- It does not comply with **Standard 2** because the plight is not due to unique circumstances of the property and it applies generally to the same zone district or to general neighborhood conditions.
- It does not comply with **Standard 3** because the need for the variance was not created by the applicant or the applicant’s predecessors in title.
- It does not comply with **Standard 4** because the variance will alter the essential character of the neighborhood and be a detriment to adjacent properties.
- It does not comply with **Standard 5** because the variance will not be consistent with, and will materially impair the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Coney seconded the motion.

Chairman Telliga asked for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Hardy, absent
 Commissioner Buford, yes
 Commissioner Yelle, yes
 Commissioner Dohrman, yes
 Vice-Chairman Kea, yes

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

M/S – McCaskill/Coney
8 – yes, 0 – no, 0 – abstain
The motion carried via roll call vote.



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ZBA 25-11: *Erin Eveland of Eveland Syrups, LLC requests a use variance to provide relief from §50-99(N)(4) and allow a home occupation to make syrups for the property located at 1315 Poplar St. (PID # 41-07-283-011) in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district.*

Max read from the staff report, noting that the ordinance does not permit food-preparation home businesses unless they operate under the Michigan Cottage Food Law; Max noted that syrup and honey products are regulated similarly to products under the Cottage Food Law, but are not specifically covered under said law. One difference is that under Michigan law, honey and syrup product producers are not limited to direct sales. Max added that apiaries are permitted as accessory uses in most residential zone districts and surplus honey and beeswax may be sold on site. Additionally, orchards with ten or less trees are permitted as accessory uses without condition; the sale of produce on site within a stand is also permitted when related to an orchard. The applicant proposes to use the downstairs unit kitchen as it currently exists and she will primarily live in the upstairs unit. No direct sales are proposed on-site and the use would follow the requirements for home occupations.

Chairman Telliga asked if the staff report indicates that there is unlikely to be an impact on neighboring properties. Max confirmed, adding that if approved, the use would likely be similar to that of the permitted home occupations.

Erin Eveland, owner of Eveland Syrups, LLC., spoke to her request. Ms. Eveland stated she primarily creates shagbark hickory syrup as well as floral syrups that she hand bottles. Ms. Eveland stated she operates solely under the Michigan Cottage Law, and her business is not applicable under any maple syrup or honey laws. Her plan of operation is to utilize one of the two existing kitchens within the home. Ms. Eveland stated that under the Michigan Cottage Food Law, the maximum gross income allowance is \$25,000 a year; she noted that this is gross income and not net capital. Ms. Eveland stated that the Michigan Cottage Food Law already limits her to direct sales only. She added that the time to make each batch of syrup can take days, which makes renting a commercial kitchen non-viable. Ms. Eveland said she supports the purpose of the GN-1 zone district and does not want any evidence of her business on the property or any increase in traffic. She said that she has received positive support from her neighbors.

Chairman Telliga asked staff if any communications were received regarding this case. Max stated they did not receive any communications.

Chairman Telliga opened the floor to public comment. No one spoke.

Chairman Telliga closed the floor to public comment.

Chairman Telliga asked staff if any other uses would be permitted if this variance is approved, or if the request is limited to syrup products as a home occupation. Max stated they believe the request would pertain only to syrup products as a home occupation.

Commissioner Yelle asked staff if the need for the variance was because of the commercial kitchen aspect of the use. Max responded that their understanding is that the State treats syrup and honey products separately from the Cottage Food Law. They added that the ordinance generally states food processing is not a permitted home



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occupation unless it is conducted under the Cottage Food Law. Chairman Telliga commented that the difference is unlikely to be noticeable to anyone outside the home.

Commissioner Dohrman made a motion regarding ZBA 25-11 to approve the use variance requested by Erin Eveland of Eveland Syrups, LLC., to provide relief from §50-99(N)(4) and allow a home occupation to make syrup products in a GN-1 Green Neighborhood Low Density zone district for the property located at 1315 Poplar St. (PID # 41-07-283-011), based on staff materials, the discussion held, and the following findings of fact:

- It complies with **Standard 1** because the property cannot be reasonably used or cannot yield a reasonable return for the purposes permitted in that zone district.
- 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 McCaskill seconded the motion.

Chairman Telliga asked for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Hardy, absent
Commissioner Buford, yes
Commissioner Yelle, yes
Commissioner Dohrman, yes
Vice-Chairman Kea, yes

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

M/S – Dohrman/McCaskill
8 – yes, 0 – no, 0 – abstain
The motion carried via roll call vote.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

Glenn Steffens, Assistant City Attorney, introduced himself and explained he has been assigned to the Zoning Board of Appeals. He said he looks forward to working with the Board and complemented staff for their work.

OLD BUSINESS:

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



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Commissioner McCaskill requested that previous zoning information be provided for cases like ZBA 25-13. Chairman Telliga asked that previous permitted uses be provided as well. Max stated they can provide this information but cautioned that in many cases it likely will not be relevant to the decision. Chairman Telliga asked that staff have the information available at a minimum.

NEW BUSINESS:

Max said there was no new business but offered to gather more information on nonconforming uses in the meantime.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

M/S – Dohrman/Coney

The motion carried via voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.