

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
January 8th, 2026

Commissioners Present:

Stephanie Wright, Chair
Kurt Neiswender, Vice-Chair
Michael Hurley
Beverly Davis
Cade Surface
Samantha Farah

Staff Present:

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

Absent:

Megan McAdow

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wright 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, excused absence
Beverly Davis, present
Michael Hurley, present
Kurt Neiswender, present

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Davis asked to add an item to acknowledge Attorney Heather Burnash after the adoption of the agenda.

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

M/S – Surface/Neiswender

The motion carried via voice vote.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ATTORNEY HEATHER BURNASH:

Chairperson Wright spoke about Heather Burnash's recent passing and her diligence and advocacy as the former Chairperson of the Historic District Commission (HDC). Heather served for over fifteen years on the HDC.

Commissioner Davis spoke about Heather's strict attitude towards historic preservation and how appreciative she was to know Heather was on the HDC. Commissioner Davis also spoke about Heather's positive reputation as an attorney in the City of Flint.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Draft minutes for the meeting of December 4th, 2025, were presented.

Commissioner Farah made a motion to accept the minutes of December 4th, 2025, as presented. Commissioner Neiswender seconded the motion.

M/S – Farah/Neiswender

The motion carried via voice vote.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Chairperson Wright opened the floor for public comment.

No one spoke. Chairperson Wright closed the floor for public comment.

OLD BUSINESS:

Letter from the HDC re: Flint Central High School

Commissioner Farah introduced the draft letter to the Flint Board of Education (FBOE), including the information presented to the community at a previous FBOE meeting. Commissioner Surface further specified the various design options that were proposed and the design that was selected by the FBOE.

Commissioner Hurley asked if there have already been opportunities for public input. Commissioner Surface said there was a quick engagement period with the Central Park neighborhood and a survey that did not receive much participation. Commissioner Surface noted the meeting where the design was decided was not held or announced in a typical way.

Commissioner Farah explained the various options proposed by the FBOE, noting Scenario 1 was the most favored of the options presented. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender noted there is a pause in the process following the selection. Commissioner Surface said their plan appears to be to begin demolition in early 2026.

Chairperson Wright made a motion to accept the letter with the addition of Scenario 1 as the preferred option of the HDC. Commissioner Neiswender supported the motion.

M/S – Wright/Neiswender

The motion carried via voice vote.

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CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Case No.: *HDC 25-21*
Applicant: *Kara Dahlberg, 810hm Massage + Co.*
Property Owner: *Friends of the Capitol Theatre, LLC.*
Location: *130 E. Second St. (PID 41-18-129-001)*
Request: *Installation of two (2) hanging signs.*

Kara Dahlberg spoke to her request. She recounted that when she took over the former SHIFT retail space, she was informed that she needed to change the signs but did not realize that the signs included the hardware. She replaced the signs on the original hardware but put up new hardware when SHIFT took their hardware down. There are holes in the building that were reused when the new hardware was put up. Mrs. Dahlberg has since submitted the HDC and Sign Permit applications with modifications to have the anchor holes drilled into the mortar instead of the brick.

Commissioner Hurley spoke about an interchangeable mounting bracket that was approved for another unit at the same property. He asked if the HDC can require mounting hardware that allows for interchangeable signage. Max stated that they believe the HDC would need to develop a set of standards and have those standards reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Max noted that when SHIFT originally put their signs up it was done without approval. The HDC approved the signs as is, but when the signs were removed that nonconformity was lost, causing the need to have the bricks repaired and the signs properly installed.

Commissioner Surface asked if the brackets are similar to those that were there previously. Mrs. Dahlberg stated the brackets are the same size as the ones from SHIFT but her brackets will not have a light.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions for HDC 25-21 as submitted and referenced above by Kara Dahlberg 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 nine (9) and ten (10). The following condition is included:

- The signs may be installed upon confirmation by the Zoning Coordinator that the façade repairs approved in HDC 25-21 are completed.

Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender asked Mrs. Dahlberg if she was told by her landlord that she needed to come to the Historic District Commission for any signage approvals. Mrs. Dahlberg stated that she was told to contact the Historic District Society. She contacted the Genesee County Historical Society, but after not receiving a response for some time she went ahead and installed the signs on the SHIFT brackets. Mrs. Dahlberg added that she was given something and told what to do, but this being her first brick and mortar business, the process was not entirely followed in the proper way.

Commissioner Surface asked if HDC approval would be needed for the brackets to be taken down. Max stated they do not believe approval is needed unless removal causes damage or some other issue. Max suggested considering standards that require anchor holes to be filled when a sign is removed, though minor repair does not usually need to come before the HDC anyway.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Hurley/Surface

6 yes - 0 no - 0 abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS (cont.):

By-Laws Update

Max stated they made a minor change to Article IV on Page 3 to add details for administrative review. This change is to comply with the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act which requires administrative review procedures to be documented. Previous draft edits include corrected section references, corrected references to enabling legislation, and updates to remote participation language.

Max noted that the proposed changes do not include language regarding conflicts of interest, which were briefly discussed at a prior meeting. The Commission discussed whether to approve the proposed changes or come back with further changes. Commissioner Hurley asked about the existing language regarding the Canon of Ethics. Max stated they were not able to find the referenced Canon of Ethics previously, but they would look again. Max said that if the Canon of Ethics cannot be located, the section can be replaced with a new language.

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

Max stated that staff from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the second draft of the ordinance and confirmed that it is now in compliance with the Michigan Local Historic Districts Act. The changes include significant updates to definitions, new language for processes, and updates reflecting previous amendments to the Carriage Town district boundaries. Max read a proposed section regarding the powers of the HDC to address violations, which comes from the Local Historic District Act.

Commissioner Farah made a motion to recommend approval of the draft Historic District ordinance to City Council. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

M/S – Farah/Neiswender

6 yes - 0 no - 0 abstain

The motion carried via roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Certified Local Government Program (cont.)

Max noted that they are in contact with SHPO staff members regarding upcoming community visits. Max will arrange to have a representative from the HDC available if a meeting is set.

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

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Farah/Surface

The motion carried via voice vote.

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