

**FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

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**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:**

Chairperson Wright added an item to New Business to discuss a potential resolution to honor Heather Burnash.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Farah seconded the motion. Chairperson Wright 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 January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, were presented.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to accept the minutes of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, as presented. Vice-Chairperson Neiswender seconded the motion.

***M/S – Surface/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.

## **CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:**

Vice-Chairperson Neiswender recused himself from discussion and voting on HDC 26-1 as he is the architect and agent acting on the applicant's behalf for the request.

**Case No.:** *HDC 26-1*  
**Applicant:** *Glenn Wilson, CEO of Communities First, LLC.*  
**Property Owner:** *Communities First, LLC.*  
**Location:** *755 S. Saginaw St. (PID # 41-18-133-003)*  
**Request:** *Addition of mechanical equipment, decorative steel fencing, and modification of the fire-escape in the rear area of the building.*

Kurt Neiswender, AIA of Urban Collab Architecture, spoke on behalf of the applicant for this request. Mr. Neiswender stated there are ongoing renovation plans for the Masonic Temple, with the bulk of the work focusing on the commercial kitchen in the basement, the dining room, as well as the first-floor auditorium and mezzanine. The work proposed for the exterior of the building is a result of the interior renovations. Upgraded heating, cooling, and ventilation equipment are proposed in the rear yard to support the three levels under renovation. The existing building had a boiler system for heating; however it did not have cooling. Upgraded mechanical equipment is required to meet newer building code standards. The boiler system was in the basement; the new refrigerant and air-based systems require large amounts of fresh air flow that is not available in the basement. Additionally, there is not enough room in the basement to fit all the equipment. Mr. Neiswender continued, stating the roof is a wood-framed barrel-vaulted roof that is not suitable for placing this equipment; the roof has a curve and was not designed to accommodate heavy mechanical equipment. The proposal is to locate the equipment in the rear yard area, currently a part of Brush Alley, enclosed within a decorative metal security fence. Mr. Neiswender said the alley is currently owned by the City, but only in the area directly behind the Masonic Temple. The applicant is in the process of seeking a vacation for the remainder of Brush Alley which would move the property into the applicant's ownership. The biggest piece of equipment is the Dedicated Outside Air System (DOAS) which acts as the lungs of the building to circulate fresh air inside. The Makeup Air Unit (MAU) is required for the commercial kitchen hood. There are six heat pumps for heating and cooling.

In addition, the existing fire escape on the rear of the building is proposed to have additional reinforcement pieces added and to reroute the last rung of stairs that reach the ground to align better with the proposed mechanical units.

Chairperson Wright noted that the applicant will need to acquire the alleyway from the City before the equipment can be placed in rear area of the building. Mr. Neiswender confirmed, noting that the alley vacation process is currently in process. The applicant owns a portion of the parking lot on the other side of the alley, which will ensure the remaining portion of the alley is completely transferred to them.

Commissioner Surface asked if there were any alternative plans explored in case the alley vacation is not approved. Mr. Neiswender stated there is a concrete vault under the alley which was likely used to store fuel for the Masonic Temple. The pavement above the vault is collapsing. At first it was proposed that the City would fill in the vault to make it safe to travel through the alley; this shifted to the City vacating the alley and the property owner handing the vault. Options for placing the equipment inside the building on the upper floors were considered, however this would have required large openings to be cut into the side of the building. The potential openings on the north facade were estimated to need to be around four (4) feet high and sixteen (16) to twenty (20) feet long. This would significantly alter the façade and introduce additional structural challenges.

Commissioner Surface asked if any holes would be cut into the rear of the building for the proposed location. Mr. Neiswender stated that some holes will be cut, but there are existing window openings low to the ground that can be used for some of the equipment. Commissioner Surface noted the proposed design would be less impactful on the building than locating the equipment on the upper floors.

Commissioner Davis asked for more information on the fire escape and how access will be handled with the fence. Mr. Neiswender said the fire escape landing is proposed to turn ninety degrees and exit facing the emergency exit door in the fence.

Commissioner Surface asked if the fence encloses more space than is necessary, though noted a dashed line is shown around the equipment. Mr. Neiswender stated the dashed lines represent required clear areas around the equipment to allow safe operation and maintenance.

Commissioner Davis noted the alley vacation requirement. Mr. Neiswender explained there is positive feedback to the alley vacation request, but the process is lengthy. The request will be heard by the Planning Commission on February 24<sup>th</sup> for a recommendation prior to going to City Council for final action. Chairperson Wright suggested a condition of approval based on the vacation being completed and the property being transferred to the applicant. Mr. Neiswender noted the recommended conditions of approval provided by staff state this in clear language. Max confirmed that staff wrote an optional condition of approval for alley vacation process.

Commissioner Surface noted that he generally does not like it when the City privatizes public rights-of-way but acknowledged that this is not a part of this review. He commented that the proposed plan appears to impact the structure the least. Commissioner Surface asked if there was any possibility of shifting the equipment and fence further north to allow more distance from the sidewalk. Mr. Neiswender stated that he believes this request may be possible to accommodate and that he will need to discuss this with the contractors first. Commissioner Surface asked what is located on the other side of the wall. Mr. Neiswender answered that it is the backstage area.

Max noted there is a second optional condition listed that would allow staff to approve a shorter fence if the proposed nine (9) foot tall fence does not receive a waiver. Commissioner Farah asked if the proposed fence height is for security reasons. Mr. Neiswender said the tallest piece of equipment is around five feet tall and each one will be on a platform of around one to two feet tall. The fence height is based on a maximum seven-foot-tall piece of equipment on a maximum 2-foot-tall slab. He added that the alley is sloped and the proposed height would prevent the equipment from peaking over the fence.

Commissioner Surface asked if the equipment could be located on the flat bump out sections on the rear façade. Mr. Neiswender stated this was explored as an option but there is not enough room for all the equipment and railing would be required per safety code.

***(continued on next page)***

Chairperson Wright made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions for HDC 26-1 as submitted and referenced above by Glenn Wilson of Communities First, Inc. for 755 S. Saginaw St. (PID # 41-18-133-003). The work as proposed meets “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation,” in particular, standard number ten (10). The following conditions are included:

- The proposed work receives all necessary approvals from the Zoning Division and City to build within the alleyway;
- The fence may be administratively modified up to eight (8) feet tall if necessary to comply with the Zoning Ordinance; and
- The transfer of property from the City of Flint to Communities First, Inc.

Commissioner Farah seconded the motion.

Commissioner Surface stated that he would like to see the enclosed area moved further back from the sidewalk if possible. Chairperson Wright asked staff how to include this in the motion. Max stated the Commission can amend the motion with a separate motion and vote.

Commissioner Surface made a motion to amend the previous motion by including the following condition of approval: *The architect shall explore and implement any feasible options to move the fence further north as is possible to reduce the visual impact on the structure. This modification may be reviewed by City staff.*

Commissioner Farah seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

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

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

**M/S – Surface/Farah**

5 yes - 0 no - 1 abstain

***The motion carried via roll call vote.***

The original motion as amended reads “*Chairperson Wright made a motion to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions for HDC 26-1 as submitted and referenced above by Glenn Wilson of Communities First, Inc. for 755 S. Saginaw St. (PID # 41-18-133-003). The work as proposed meets “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation,” in particular, standard number ten (10). The following conditions are included:*

- *The proposed work receives all necessary approvals from the Zoning Division and City to build within the alleyway;*
- *The fence may be administratively modified up to eight (8) feet tall if necessary to comply with the Zoning Ordinance;*
- *The transfer of property from the City of Flint to Communities First, Inc.; and*
- *The architect shall explore and implement any feasible options to move the fence further north as is possible to reduce the visual impact on the structure. This modification may be reviewed by City staff.”*

Roll Call:

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

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

***M/S – Wright/Farah***

5 yes - 0 no - 1 abstain

***The motion carried via roll call vote.***

**OLD BUSINESS:**

***Letter from the HDC re: Flint Central High School***

Chairperson Wright noted the letter that the HDC members drafted has been moved to the Commission letterhead and has been signed. Max said the Adobe eSigned letter did not format properly; Max has a copy to be signed in-person that night which will be sent the next day.

***By-Laws Update***

Max stated the by-laws are currently pending review by the City Attorney.

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

Max stated the draft ordinance update is currently pending review by the City Attorney.

***HDC 25-20 & 25-21***

Max stated there are no updates available at this time for these cases; they said the weather has likely been too erratic to allow the repairs to commence.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***Meeting with SHPO Staff***

Max stated that a meeting is planned between City staff and SHPO staff. The meeting is set for Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm in the South Building Conference Room. Max stated their plan was to have two members of the HDC attend with the decision on who will attend being up to the Commission. Max said the South Building is along Seventh St./Stevens St.; they added that the bridge is closed and the building can be accessed from the Dome Auditorium entrance. Commissioner Surface and Vice-Chairperson Neiswender noted their interest in attending.

***Resolution for Heather Burnash***

Chairperson Wright discussed Commissioner McAdow's request to explore the possibility of drafting a letter to recognize and honor Heather Burnash. Max clarified that Commissioner McAdow spoke about a resolution that could be moved to City Council for adoption. Max said they can draft the resolution into the format that City Council will accept, but they will need the information that will be included. The Commissioners discussed the timeline and whether this will come too late if they work on the resolution at the next meeting. Max stated that a resolution requires a minimum of three weeks to be reviewed and that such a longer timeline should be expected anyway. Chairperson Wright asked if Max wanted the Commissioners to come up with a draft in the meantime for discussion at the next meeting. Max discussed potentially receiving the language to include and drafting it into the resolution template.

Chairperson Wright made a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Surface seconded the motion.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

***M/S – Wright/Surface***

***The motion carried via voice vote.***

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.