

FLINT ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2018

Commissioners Present

John Hardy
August Janke
Chris Zuwala
Jacqueline Jordan
Matthew Telliga
Mona Munroe-Younis
Heather Kale
Jerry Kea
Carol-Anne Blower

Staff Present

Kevin Schronce, Lead Planner/ Planner III
Corey Christensen, Zoning Coordinator
Reed Eriksson, Assistant City Attorney
Andy Aamodt, Planner I

Commissioners Not Present

Leon El-Alamin

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Zuwala called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present. The meeting was held in the Dome at the Flint City Hall.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

No additions or changes to the agenda.

M/S – Blower/Telliga

Motion to adopt the meeting agenda.

Unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

M/S – Telliga/Kale

Motion to adopt the minutes from 2-20-18.

Unanimously carried.

REPORTS:

There were no reports.

COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no communications.

PUBLIC HEARING:

ZBA 18-2213: John Davis requests a use variance to allow for a hall for hire at 303 W. Water St. (Parcel # 40-13-229-015)

Corey Christensen presented the staff report.

John Davis and Kevin Kirbitz spoke about the operations. John Davis, the applicant, is a GM real estate representative. Kevin Kirbitz is the operations manager for GM Factory One. Currently, the building is used for GM meetings and as a GM archives. Mr. Kirbitz detailed that the object of the hall for hire use is for public conference and event space. The hall would be able to hold up to 350 guests. The location is ideal for its proximity to the footbridge to downtown, parking, and a park/plaza.

Commissioner Kale asked about security plans. There is a GM security guard there, but the party renting the space can hire their own security as well.

Commissioner Zuwala asked about alcohol on the premises. Alcohol is allowed if the caterer has a liquor license. Commissioner Jordan said she has concerns that the liquor could create a nuisance.

Commissioner Hardy brought up the fact that they will be operating a D-3 use for a D-2 zone. Mr. Davis responded that the core of the use is not for business practice.

Commissioner Hardy asked if parties/events at the facility will negatively affect the neighborhood. Mr. Kirbitz responded they do not envision or support that type of use.

Commissioner Hardy asked how this is an unnecessary hardship. He stated they can still operate the building for private meetings and for the archives.

Commissioner Blower asked if they have had any communication with neighbors and neighborhood associations. Mr. Davis and Mr. Kirbitz responded that they have communicated with Carriage Town Association, and have not received any negative feedback.

Commissioner Zuwala asked about the process for renting the hall for hire. There is a strict application process with a license agreement and insurance requirements. GM will be strict with their admittance for this use.

Commissioner Jordan was curious that there might not be enough parking for large events. She lives in the area, and she is familiar with large events forcing residents/businesses from parking near their residences. Mr. Kirbitz said they will work to improve this situation.

Commissioner Blower asked how many parking spaces there are and if this will be sufficient for their proposed operations. Mr. Kirbitz stated they can hold at most 350 people. There are currently 110 parking spaces.

Commissioner Zuwala asked if the applicants can provide valet parking or strategies to limit the parking. Mr. Davis and Mr. Kirbitz confirmed they can provided in the license application a condition to refrain from parking in the side streets during event time.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition to this case. Staff received no comments.

M/S – Telliga/Blower

Motion to approve ZBA 18-2213 with the conditions that the applicant encourages shuttle service and valet parking in the license application, as well as prohibits side-street parking in the neighborhood during events.

Yes – Blower, Janke, Zuwala, Jordan, Kea, Kale, Telliga, Munroe-Younis

No – Hardy

ZBA 18-2215: Roy Fields requests a use variance to allow for an urban garden at 3618 Brownell Blvd. (Parcel # 46-35-382-002)

Corey Christensen presented the staff report.

Commissioner Telliga stated that when he made a site visit he had communicated with the applicant about trying to understand the project.

Roy Fields spoke about the project. He represents Brownell Boulevard Coalition and Flint City Church. He passed out pamphlets regarding the project. The urban garden will be a learning experience for children and the community. It will be a collaboration of schools, Habitat for Humanity, Mott Foundation, and Eagle's Nest Academy. They already have their funding in place. Overall, the place will be an asset to the community as the neighborhood consists of a lot of vacancy and abandonment.

Commissioner Blower asked if Mr. Fields has communicated with the neighboring properties.

Commissioner Zuwala mentioned the conditions regarding a Land Bank property purchase. Mr. Fields responded that he made sure the Land Bank was aware of this project when he bought the property. He also notified the Land Bank he was going before the ZBA for this. The representative from the Land Bank had no issue with this.

Commissioner Zuwala asked about the soil of the property. The soil is scheduled to be tested.

Commissioner Telliga asked if this will be a non-profit use. Yes, and all the profits from any sales will go back to charity/organizations helping the community's children. Commissioner Zuwala clarified that this aspect has nothing to do with the ZBA case.

Commissioner Kea asked about the size of the hoop house. It will be 25 feet by 30 feet.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition to this case. Staff received no comments.

Commissioner Blower and Commissioner Munroe-Younis commended the project. Commissioner Blower discussed that from a Planning Commission perspective this project is compatible with the future land use plan's vision for use of vacant areas.

M/S – Blower/Telliga

Motion to approve ZBA 18-2215.

Unanimously carried.

ZBA 18-2214: Andrew McDonnell requests a non-use variance to allow for a medical marihuana dispensary at 2020 S. Center Rd. (Parcel # 41-16-482-027)

Brenda Williams, the applicant's attorney, requested a postponement of the hearing.

M/S – Hardy/Jordan

Motion to approve request for postponement of ZBA 18-2214 to the next regularly scheduled meeting, April 17, 2018, with the condition that public will be allowed to comment at that meeting in addition to commenting tonight.

Yes – Hardy, Janke, Zuwala, Jordan, Kea, Kale, Telliga, Munroe-Younis

Abstain – Blower

Five people spoke in opposition to the medical marihuana dispensary: neighborhood residents Carolyn Schannon, Iris Marable, Milton Tucker, and Lance Washington; as well as Sharon Robertson who was there on behalf of her mother, a neighborhood resident.

Corey Christensen presented a letter he received in opposition to the medical marihuana dispensary.

No one spoke in favor of the case. Staff received no comments in favor of the case.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

Reed Eriksson updated the ZBA on the MMFLA draft ordinance. He informed the Board on the upcoming City Council schedule pertinent to the MMFLA draft ordinance- the Council Legislative Committee meeting scheduled for March 22 and the City Council meeting scheduled for March 26.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Kevin Schronce reminded the ZBA on the absence policy. Three consecutive absences can remove a member from the Board.

Election of Officers

Matthew Telliga was elected Vice-Chair by the vote of the Board.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Carolyn Schannon spoke, advocating that the City should focus its economy on building vehicles and military equipment.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Telliga/Blower

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm.

Unanimously carried.