

FLINT ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
August 20, 2019

Board Members Present

Matthew Telliga, Chair
Jerry Kea, Vice-Chair
John Hardy
Ari McCaskill
Karl Collyer
Jacqueline Jordan
Heather Kale
Carol-Anne Blower

Staff Present

Suzanne Wilcox, Director of Planning and
Development
Andy Aamodt, Zoning Coordinator
Andy Fedewa, Planner I
Reed Eriksson, Assistant City Attorney
Kristin Stevenson, CNI Planner

Board Members Not Present

Lauren Coney (excused)

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Telliga called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present. The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers, Third Floor, Flint City Hall.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

M/S – Kale/Blower

Motion to adopt the meeting agenda.

Unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Board reviewed the minutes of 7-16-19.

M/S – Kea/Blower

Motion to postpone the minutes of 7-16-19.

Unanimously carried

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one spoke at Public Forum.

REPORTS:

There were no reports.

COMMUNICATIONS:

There were no communications.

PUBLIC HEARING:

ZBA 19-2227: Lynn M. Sorenson requests a non-use variance to exceed the eight feet maximum of a porch by four feet and to encroach one foot into the front yard setback at 1702 Kenwood Ave. (PID # 40-23-278-009)

Freeman Greer, architect, presented application. The subject house is on a corner lot and near both streets. Options for a porch are limited by when the house was built, prior to the current zoning ordinance's lot standards. Applicant, Lynn M. Sorenson spoke on application.

Mr. Sorenson spoke in favor. No one spoke in opposition. Staff confirmed no other feedback was received.

Commissioner Blower asked if the porch would be a standard porch or would there be special or ornamental materials used. Mr. Greer spoke in more detail, it will be an open area porch, just railing and a roof pagoda.

M/S – McCaskill/Kale

Motion to approve ZBA 19-2227: Lynn M. Sorenson requests a non-use variance to exceed the eight feet maximum of a porch by four feet and to encroach one foot into the front yard setback at 1702 Kenwood Ave. (PID # 40-23-278-009)

Approved unanimously

ZBA 19-2228: Communities First, Inc. requests a use variance to permit multi-family residential at 422 W University Ave. (PID #40-12-457-008)

Kurt Neiswender, architect, presented application. This project for multi-use, multi-family has been presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals before for a non-use variance. Changes have been made since then. This project no longer requests a height variance. The applicants have undergone meetings with the neighborhood group of Carriage Town for design input. This project went before the City of Flint Historic District Commission August 1, 2019 and got approval for materials and massing as new construction in a historic district. Additionally, this project would be permitted-by-right under the draft zoning code, but since the ordinance has not been passed yet, there is a hardship. The large lot size would not properly fit a single-family residence or duplex, all that is allowed under the current zoning code. The original project building has been broken up into four smaller buildings to be more aligned with the character of the neighborhood rather than the original single large building.

Board Member Telliga inquired what the estimated cost of the project is. Glenn Wilson, CEO and President of Communities First, Inc answered about \$18 million.

Mr. Wilson spoke further on some of the concerns that have been brought up about this project. Communities First have created plans with Hurley Hospital and Kettering University to create an improved greenspace on the vacant land between Atwood Stadium and Hurley Hospital. 422 W University Ave. is not officially a park. The passive greenspace was created only as a placeholder until development plans were made.

Mike Wright, of Communities First, Inc. passed a handout of the area of the future improved greenspace to Board Members. Mr. Wright spoke on the conditions that make 422 W University Ave a part of a key intersection in the neighborhood and its condition as a vacant lot does not utilize it to its fullest economic potential. Mr. Wright stated that at least forty houses have been demolished in the neighborhood and this project would bring 48 new dwelling units back to the area. He stated the 7' setback creates a traffic calming measure and adds "eyes on the street".

Board Member McCaskill questioned if a traffic study was conducted. Mr. Wilson replied no, not at this site, but one was conducted nearer to the Communities First headquarters, less than a mile away. Communities First stated quality multi-family dwelling units are needed in the City. One, two, and three bedroom units would be created through this project.

Board Member McCaskill asked what the income composition would be for the rentals. Mr. Wright answered 85% would be 'affordable', 15% market rate, but in Flint 80% of area median income, is near the market rate rent prices.

Fredrick Jones spoke in favor.

Nancy Sinclair spoke in opposition.

Ray Sinclair spoke in opposition.

Ken Van Wagoner spoke in opposition.

Ron Luczak spoke in opposition.

Angela Kinsey-Herring spoke in opposition.

Troy Hemstreet spoke in opposition.

Paul Herring spoke in opposition.

Kurt Neiswender, Mike Wright, Glenn Wilson addressed comments made during the Public Hearing to the Board.

Staff received one letter in support, and four letters in opposition.

M/S – Kea/Jordan

Motion to approve ZBA 19-2228: Communities First, Inc. request for a use variance to permit multi-family residential at 422 W University Ave. (PID #40-12-457-008) as presented.

Yes: Kea, Jordan, McCaskill, Kale, Blower, Telliga, Collyer

No: Hardy

Motion approved

ZBA 19-2229: Norstar Development USA, L.P., on behalf of Clark Commons II, requests a use variance to permit multi-family residential at 1519 Avenue B, Avenue B, and 1529 Avenue B (PID # 40-12-206-049, 40-12-206-048, and 40-12-206-047)

Lori Harris of Norstar Development presented application with representatives of architect Fusco, Shaffer & Pappas, Inc. This request is for a four-unit multi-family apartment, as current zoning allows for a two-family dwelling. All or part of three parcels are being combined for this building.

Board Member Telliga asked how many units total would be created through Clark Commons II. Ms. Harris responded 193 units. Board Member Telliga asked what would be the cost of the development. Ms. Harris responded \$70 million.

Shannon Lacey spoke on concerns she has for the neighborhood.

Ms. Harris addressed comments made during the Public Hearing to the Board.

Commissioner Blower asked if the proposed combinations have been applied for. Staff confirmed this combination has been applied for.

Board Member Collyer asked if any of these parcels are brownfields. Ms. Harris responded that a property swap between the Genesee County Land Bank and the City of Flint has gone through to make sure buildings are not going to be on a brownfield.

No one spoke in favor, no one spoke in opposition. Staff confirmed no other feedback was received.

M/S – McCaskill/Blower

Motion to approve ZBA 19-2229: Norstar Development USA, L.P., on behalf of Clark Commons II, request for a use variance to permit multi-family residential at 1519 Avenue B, Avenue B, and 1529 Avenue B (PID # 40-12-206-049, 40-12-206-048, and 40-12-206-047)

Approved unanimously

Board Member Kale left the meeting.

ZBA 19-2230: Norstar Development USA, L.P., on behalf of Clark Commons II, requests a non-use variance to reduce the on-site parking space requirement by 15 spaces (from 19 to 4) for a community building at 457 E. Wood St., 463 E. Wood St., and 1517 Avenue A (Parcel ID # 40-12-230-037, 40-12-230-035, and 40-12-230-034)

Lori Harris presented the application with representatives of the architect, Fusco, Shaffer & Pappas, Inc. Ms. Harris stated they are looking for this reduction in parking because they anticipate most of the visitors to this community building will be from the immediate neighborhood and Clark Commons development. Commissioner Blower asked if there are plans for bike racks or alternative transportation support facilities. Ms. Harris replied they were not part of the original drawings but they will be added. Ms. Harris stated this space is targeted toward children and the residents nearby and they do not anticipate much driving to the site.

Board Member Kea asked how the parking requirement is calculated. Staff responded this is considered an assembly area and based on the 1900 sq. feet.

Board Member Collyer asked why only four spaces are created. Fusco, Shaffer, & Pappas responded they are restricted by site conditions. Board Member Collyer asked what other kind of gatherings will the building host. Ms. Harris responded at other complexes they have created they use community space to hold programming, trainings, or meetings from a third party that are of interest to the neighborhood residents.

Commissioner Blower asked for details on how overflow parking would be handled if there was a training. Mr. Harris responded that strictly this is not a public building for city-wide type gatherings, but to support area residents and the neighborhood. There is a building on Saginaw St. that would be an alternative for parking if it was needed. Commissioner Blower asked if there is on-street parking here. Ms. Harris replied affirmatively.

Board Member Kea expressed concern on the large reduction of parking spaces from the requirement.

M/S – McCaskill/Jordan

Motion to approve ZBA 19-2230: Norstar Development USA, L.P., on behalf of Clark Commons II, requests a non-use variance to reduce the on-site parking space requirement by 15 spaces (from 19 to 4) for a community building at 457 E. Wood St., 463 E. Wood St., and 1517 Avenue A (Parcel ID # 40-12-230-037, 40-12-230-035, and 40-12-230-034)

Yes: McCaskill, Jordan, Telliga, Kea, Hardy, Blower

No: Collyer

Motion approved

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

There was no city attorney report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Draft Zoning Code Update

Director of the Department of Planning and Development Suzanne Wilcox spoke on the process staff is taking to bring the Draft Zoning Code to City Council while five community meetings were held during early August.

Revision of Zoning Board of Appeals by-laws

Revising the by-laws in regards to how voting is conducted was discussed. These rules are written in the Zoning Ordinance and thus would have to be changed before the by-laws.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Blower/Kea

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm

Unanimously carried.