

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
January 07, 2021

Commissioners Present

Heather Burnash, Chair
Beverly Davis, Vice Chair
Michael Hurley
Joe Schipani
Stephanie Wright

Staff Present

Bill Vandercook, Zoning Coordinator
Keizy Anpalagan, GIS Technician
Kelly Thompson, Assistant City Attorney
Jeff Schiffman, Planner

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Burnash called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

The meeting was via Zoom and phone conferencing as approved.

Mrs. Thompson read the Amendment to the Open Meeting Act, adopted in Senate Bill 1108 as passed on October 13, 2020, and signed into law on October 16, 2020.

Heather Burnash, remotely – City of Flint
Beverly Davis, remotely – City of Flint
Michael Hurley, remotely – City of Flint

Kurt Neiswender, Absent
Joe Schipani, remotely – City of Flint
Stephanie Wright – absent for roll call

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Voice Vote

Motion to adopt the meeting agenda with an amendment of moving old business item of Saginaw Street Bricks to be discussed before Certificates of Appropriateness.

M/S – Schipani/Hurley

Motion carried.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meeting of Nov 5, 2020, were presented.

Voice Vote

Motion to approve the minutes of Nov 5, 2020, as presented.

M/S – Hurley/Davis

Unanimously carried.

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one spoke.

Final

Saginaw Street Bricks:

Kevin Cook, Civil Engineer with Wade Trim introduced himself as the Project Manager for the Saginaw Street Brick repair/ replacement project. He shared his screen and showed the current plan of removing the 5 lanes of brick, repairing the road base underneath, and then redoing the middle, north, and south lanes with brick, with the turn and bike lanes being some form of concrete. There is not enough brick to replace all 5 lanes with brick, as they currently are. Kevin also noted that accent colors are being considered for each intersection as well.

Discussion ensued about a previous time when the road was repaired, and bricks were removed but never replaced. The bricks are assumed to be lost or inaccessible, and the commissioners raised concerns about this happening again and losing bricks for the road. Kevin assured the commissioners that the bricks that are still useable will be used towards the project, an estimated 60% of the current bricks. The other bricks that are too damaged for further use will be taken to the landfill.

Commissioners asked about whether recent patch jobs in front of the dorms at U of M-Flint, Churchill's and Huntington Bank would be included in this project. Kevin said yes this would be included into the project as well, resulting in the 3 lanes of brick. It was also clarified that all intersections will have the same design with possible color variations based on if it's including the historic brick. It was also noted that side streets will only be dug up about 20 – 30ft for the intersections, and useable bricks may be salvaged there as well. Mark Adas noted that there are 8 or more types of bricks within the city, at least 3 different kinds on Saginaw St itself. If there are any usable bricks within the city's inventory those can be used as well.

The current timeline is spring of 2022. Discussion ensued about the next steps including the application process and the certification.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Applicant: Genesee County Land Bank Property

Owner: Same

Location: 109 W. 5th Avenue

Demolition of Structure

Mr. Michael Freeman and Mr. Timlin presented the application. This property was the victim of arson and burned down to the foundation, exposing the rest of remains. This poses a safety and health risk.

Letters of support were read from Nancy Sinclair, John Mason, and Jack Stock from Kettering University all confirming that demolition is the best course of action.

Commissioners asked about the future plans after demolition and Mr. Freeman indicated that the plan, in partnership with Carriage Town District and redevelopers, is for infill housing, sometimes multi-family housing to redevelop the area.

M/S – Schipani/Hurley

Discussion

Final

Joe Martin from Uptown Reinvestment Corporation spoke to say that URC is excited to be partnering with the Land Bank for this redevelopment project. The intention is to demolish the unsafe vacant houses that cannot be renovated or restored, and to restore the historic houses they can.

Cade Surface, Vice President of Clear Stone Historic Neighborhoods Association and resident of that area spoke to say that he is excited to hear about this project and that the unsafe properties will be demolished while the ones that can be saved will be restored.

Motion to approve.

Motion carried.

Applicant: Genesee County Land Bank Property

Owner: Same

Location: 510 Lyon Street

Demolition of Structure

The applicant noted that there are foundational issues with this property, specifically in the basement where you can see daylight coming in, per the photos provided. The property has been vacant for roughly 15 years and runoff water runs into the basement. Windows and doors are missing, cracks throughout the foundation with soil erosion filling part of the basement; rot was found on the roof along with cracks and holes.

M/S – Schipani/Wright

Discussion

Nick Kedovory, President of the Neighborhood Association spoke in favor of this project as a whole and supports the demolition for all of the properties on the agenda, as part of the neighborhood strategy with the Land Bank and URC.

Motion to approve

Motion carried.

Applicant: Genesee County Land Bank Property

Owner: Same

Location: 434 W. Fourth Avenue

Demolition of Structure

Mr. Timlin presented the application. The addition onto the back of the house has been removed. Parts of the foundation have been removed/ damaged with this removal as well. There is fire damage on the left side going up to the second floor. Lastly, the rear addition is being upheld by one steel stilt at the time being. This property is not viable for renovation as it is unsafe.

Final

Commissioners noted that the second floor is exposed to the elements. No interior pictures were presented as it was cantilevered over a hole and deemed unsafe to enter. Roughly 50% of the foundation was removed/ destroyed.

M/S – Schipani/Wright

Motion to approve
Motion carried.

Applicant: Genesee County Land Bank Property
Owner: Same
Location: 427 W. Second Avenue
Demolition of Structure

Mr. Timlin presented this application. Noted issues include a 5ft hole in the roof, the addition to the home has become unattached, water damage coming down from the 2nd floor, and foundational insecurities including leaning to the left and crumbling bricks. This property was not deemed viable for renovation.

Mr. Timlin noted that the neighborhood strategy, in collaboration with the neighborhood association and URC, is to improve the overall housing stock of the neighborhood. They are hoping to have the approval by the end of March and intend demolition to take place during July 2021 to align with grant deadlines, with rehabilitation taking place in September. Façade repairs should take place by the end of the year in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity.

M/S – Hurley/Schipani
Motion to approve with conditions
Motion carried.

Mr. Freeman noted that he hopes the Land Bank is able to find new and creative solutions so that historic homes can have longer or different financing options for renovation instead of things leading to neglect and demolition, as these properties have. His intent is to preserve as many historical homes as possible within the historic district. The commissioners said they are happy to have a like-minded partner with the Land Bank.

OLD BUSINESS:

Capitol Theatre Signage:

Mrs. Thompson addressed the Commission. Mrs. Thompson said she had talked to Mike Reiter earlier in the day and he indicated that he would be issuing violations that week for the Capital Theatre Signage. Previously violations have always been issued to the landlord, which is currently Uptown. The commission agreed that this was the right course of action to prevent future tenants from violations as well.

Updating Historical Documents:

Final

Mrs. Thompson said that this is on her and Bill's radar to update ordinances and the like. There are similar things going on with marihuana zoning codes and they are working through those as well. She indicated that the binders will be updated for all commissioners too.

Historic Preservation Courses:

Commissioner Burnash suggested scheduling some virtual courses with Michigan Historic Preservation Network soon, during the normal meeting time as agenda items have been slow recently. The commission was in agreement to pursue details on this.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pet Dens on West side of Mason St – Commissioner Schipani reminded the Commission of this issue and suggested they revisit it, as the fencing within the driveway is not allowable within the historic district.

Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Credits – Commissioner Hurley suggested that this topic be added into the upcoming trainings, as it was recently added back in (Senate Bill 54).

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Davis/Hurley

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Unanimously carried.