

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2021

Commissioners Present

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

Staff Present

Bill Vandercook, Zoning Coordinator
Keizzy Anpalagan, GIS Technician
Joanne Gurley, Assistant City Attorney
Jonathon Mateen, Planner I

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Burnash called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

The meeting was via Zoom and phone conferencing as approved.

Mrs. Gurley 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, remotely – City of Flint
Joe Schipani, remotely – City of Flint
Stephanie Wright, remotely – City of Flint

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Commissioner Neiswender asked to review updated drawings for 103 and 104 Sanford Place under Old Business.

Chairperson Burnash asked to add an update on the bricks on Saginaw Street and an update on Communities First Georgia Manor under Old Business.

Voice Vote

Motion to adopt the meeting agenda with additions.

M/S – Schipani/Hurley
Unanimously carried.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND DISPOSAL:

Minutes for the meeting of April 7, 2021 were presented.

Voice Vote

Motion to approve the minutes of April 7, 2021 as presented.

M/S – Schipani/Wright
Unanimously carried.

Final

PUBLIC FORUM:

No one spoke.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS/NOTICES TO PROCEED:

Applicant: Whaley Children's Center

Property Owner: Whaley Children's Center

Location: 307 University Avenue Flint, MI 48503

Installation of custom steel doors and window screens

The applicant was not in attendance. Chairperson Burnash opened the floor to Commissioners for discussion. Commissioner Schipani stated that the installation of custom steel doors and window screens was not appropriate based on the fact that the metal window covering will take away the historic character of the house.

Chairperson Burnash shared that Mindy Williams, Executive Director of Whaley Children's Center, stated that the installation of the steel door is a requirement from the insurance company and will only be installed while the property is vacant. Chairperson Burnash would like to know how long the property will be vacant.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to postpone the application and contact the applicant.

M/S – Hurley/Davis

Motion carries 5 yes – 1 no

Applicant: Creekwood Architecture

Property Owner: Voices for Children

Location: 515 East Street Flint, MI 48503

Addition to rear of existing structure, new roof, and new sign

Claudnyse Holloman, President and CEO of Voices for Children, and Bruce Calhoun, Creekwood Architecture, presented the application.

Mr. Calhoun stated that a 2,892 square foot addition was added to the rear of the existing structure to expand the current use of the Child Advocacy Center. There is a 10-foot-wide connection at the rear of the building that joins the two buildings together. The existing building is two stories and the addition is 1 & ½ stories. Additionally, Mr. Calhoun stated that they are adding a sign to the side of the building facing the parking lot in the gable. The parking lot has been expanded and the garage that was in place of the new addition has been relocated. The building was painted to match the new vinyl shapes that were placed on the addition. The shingles were replaced on the building to match the new structure.

Mr. Calhoun stated that they were not aware of the requirement to get approval from the Historic District Commission for the project. Mr. Vandercook stated he had been told by Claudnyse Holloman that they were aware the property was within a Historic District. Ms. Holloman shared that a conversation was held about the requirement for Historic District review and approval if the property was in the Flint Historic District, however, the applicant was not officially informed.

Final

Ms. Holloman stated that the need for the Child Advocacy Center has increased which led to them making the decision to expand. Ms. Holloman stated that the addition in the rear of the property maintained the character of the front of the property. Additionally, Ms. Holloman stated that the roof was replaced after a tree fell on it.

Mr. Vandercook shared that the property was not flagged as a Historic District Property in the Building Department system, which is why the building permits were pulled prior to Flint Historic District Commission review and approval.

Chairperson Burnash asked what wood was replaced in the front of the property. Ms. Holloman stated that the rotted wood was replaced around the windows. After the wood was replaced, aluminum was installed around the windows to prevent the wood from rotting as quickly in the future. Ms. Holloman stated that the wood shake on the original structure has not changed.

Chairperson Burnash asked if the sign has been added to the property and if it will be illuminated. Ms. Holloman stated that the sign has not been added to the property nor will it be illuminated.

Commissioner Hurley asked for guidance on how to move forward with the application due to the project being done prior to Historic District Commission review. Chairperson Burnash stated a Notice to Proceed may be more appropriate than a Certificate of Appropriateness to indicate that the project was done before review and approval. Commissioner Hurley noted that the Notice to Proceed should include language to reference that the application was not properly reviewed by the Historic District Commission.

Commissioner Neiswender stated that if any exterior work needed to be done in the future, the applicant would need to have the plans reviewed by the Historic District Commission.

Commissioner Hurley asked Mr. Vandercook if the property has been properly flagged in the Building Department system at the City of Flint. Mr. Vandercook stated that the property has been properly flagged. Chairperson Burnash stated that updating the system to reflect current historic district properties should be done to prevent this from occurring in the future.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to issue a Notice to Proceed acknowledging that there was a clerical error at the City of Flint that prevented the site from being flagged as a Historic District property.

M/S – Hurley/Schipani
Unanimously carried

Applicant: Genesee County Land Bank
Property Owner: Genesee County Land Bank
Location: 309 W. Fifth Avenue Flint, MI 48503
Demolition

Moses Timlin, Genesee County Land Bank, presented the application. Mr. Timlin stated that the property being demolished was received through a tax foreclosure process. The property was a historic structure that burned to the foundation. The property is currently exposed and collecting trash.

Final

Mr. Timlin shared that the property burned down in December 2019. Commissioner Schipani noted that there is nothing left of the property and made a motion to approve the demolition.

M/S - Schipani/Neiswender

Unanimously carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Updated Drawing for 103 and 104 Sanford Place

Kurt Neiswender presented a drawing of 103 and 104 Sanford Place. The porch maintains the character of foursquare houses and many of the houses in the Flint Historic District. The new design meets building code requirements regarding the height of the handrail and spacing of the balusters. The porch uses a paint grade wood that will match the color scheme of the house.

Commissioner Hurley asked if this was an amendment to the previous application. Mr. Neiswender stated that this information was required from the previous application.

Commissioner Hurley made a motion to approve the application with the additional information provided.

M/S - Hurley/Schipani

Unanimously carried by voice vote.

Michigan Historic Preservation Network Training

Chairperson Burnash stated that there have been no updates regarding a future training or training topics.

Communities First Georgia Manor

Chairperson Burnash shared that neighbors of Georgia Manor have made complaints about the property. Communities First originally presented the application to the Historic District Commission on March 27, 2019. The application was approved during the meeting and expired after one year. Chairperson Burnash noted that if work has started before the expiration date, there is no need for an applicant to renew.

Commissioner Hurley asked what the concerns were that residents have shared. Chairperson Burnash shared that the residents asked when the Certificate of Appropriateness expired.

Cade Surface, a resident of Carriage Town, noted that internal work may have started before the March 2020 expiration date.

Chairperson Burnash shared that the applicant stated there would be no new construction, additions, or structural changes. Chairperson Burnash stated that residents have reported structural changes to the property as well as fencing and lighting that were not included in the application. Another issue shared is the flooring of the balconies, as residents believe a modern material is being used. Chairperson Burnash noted that the property is a non-contributing structure, which lowers the level of scrutiny as compared to contributing structures.

Commissioner Wright stated that the applicant shared the type of railing to be used for the balconies but confirmed that the applicant did not share details of the flooring.

Final

Nick Kedovary, Carriage Town resident, shared that residents have an issue with Communities First not being scrutinized for using composite decking as the residents want to use the same material due to its lower levels of maintenance. Chairperson Burnash noted that historic buildings are held to a higher standard.

Mr. Vandercook shared an update on when the first building permit was pulled, which was August 19, 2020.

Chairperson Burnash noted that Communities First will need to come back to renew the application considering the fact the history of building permits indicate that work was started after the expiration date. Additionally, if there has been any work done that was not discussed or approved, Communities First will need to include this in the application.

Commissioner Schipani shared that a resident noted brick was removed from the side of the building for the heating and cooling structure. Cade Surface, resident of Carriage Town, confirmed that there are new openings in the walls.

Commissioner Schipani made a motion to have Communities First renew the application for Georgia Manor and present any changes that have been made.

M/S – Schipani/Wright
Unanimously carried

Bricks on Saginaw Street

Chairperson Burnash shared details of an MLive article that stated Congressman Dan Kildee has secured funding to replace 700,00 bricks on Saginaw Street. Chairperson Burnash noted a previous Historic District Commission meeting in which the appropriate parties involved in the project stated that only bricks that were whole would be recovered and used in the project, which accounts for roughly 70% of the bricks that are currently on the ground. The applicants stated that for the remaining 30% of the space left over from the broken bricks that could not be replaced, the plan was to lay cement for a bike lane, parking lanes, and crosswalks.

Chairperson Burnash confirmed that Mark Adas, City of Flint Engineer, submitted the request to Congressman Dan Kildee and included the number of 700,000 bricks. Additionally, Chairperson Burnash shared that Mr. Adas had been in contact with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) instead of the Flint Historic District Commission. Chairperson Burnash shared an email from SHPO to Congressman Kildee which stated that cement could not be used to fill in the remaining 30% of space because it is a historic district. The new plan is to purchase reclaimed historic brick and use it for the project.

Chairperson Burnash noted that there may need to be communication made to the City of Flint and SHPO to inform them of the requirement to involve the Flint Historic District in any further decision making.

Commissioner Hurley noted that the decision to use cement in the remaining 30% of space was due to financial constraints of the project. Additionally, Commissioner Hurley stated that the applicant will need to return to the Flint Historic District Commission before the project starts. Chairperson Burnash concurred and added that the Flint Historic District Commission is the authority that approves projects.

Final

Commissioner Hurley asked who the appropriate staff person should be to reach out to Mr. Adas. Mr. Vandercook shared that he will be able to write a letter on behalf of Chairperson Burnash.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Wright/Schipani

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Unanimously carried.