

FLINT HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
6-7-16 Special Meeting

Commissioners Present

Dale Suomela, Chair
Stephanie Wright
Michael Hurley
Maurice Davis
Heather Burnash (present by phone)

Staff Present

Jon Moore, Planning & Devel. Analyst
Claire Nowak-Boyd, Planner I
Angela Wheeler, Staff Attorney

Commissioners Not Present

2 Board member vacant seats
Mildred Smith

ROLL CALL:

Chairman Suomela called the meeting to order at 5:43 p.m. Roll was taken and a quorum was present. The meeting was held in the McKenzie Room.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

M/S - Hurley/Burnash

Motion to adopt agenda as presented.

Unanimously carried.

ADOPTION OF MEETING MINUTES:

M/S - Hurley/Davis

Motion to adopt the previous meeting minutes as presented.

Unanimously carried.

PUBLIC FORUM:

There were no public comments.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS:

Applicant: Wanda K. Williams

Property Owner: Wanda K. Williams

Location: 721 MLK Ave, parcel # 40-12-431-007

Demolition of Structure

Wanda K. Williams spoke to say that the porch of her 1910 home is collapsing and needs to be replaced. She is bringing the house back. She has lived in and been rehabbing the house since May of 2005. She has done extensive renovation and wants the house to be beautified. She has sought help to improve the house.

Commissioner Suomela asked whether the porch is the original design to the best of her knowledge. She stated yes. Commissioner Hurley asked whether she was going to use the historic photo she had provided as a guide for the new porch and she stated yes. She will replace steps and put hand rails where there are not currently rails, to meet code. She does not want to destroy the historic look of the house.

Commissioner Suomela asked how high above the porch is above the ground. The applicant stated that it's exactly 30. Commissioner Wright asked whether she can save the pillars. The applicant stated that the columns are still good, and if she can't save the bases of the columns she will replace them. Commissioner Burnash asked about the dentil molding. The applicant stated it would come out of her pocket and is working with her contractor to figure it out. She noted who ever reroofed the house put the drip area back but did not replace the moldings. Commissioner Hurley asked whether the lattice skirting of the porch would be replaced. The applicant stated yes, and that it would be framed at the bottom in order to provide more support compared to the current design.

Ms. Williams asked whether she'd be able to put up a wrought iron fence. Commissioner Hurley stated that she would potentially be able to, and should bring it before the board.

Commissioner Suomela confirmed whether she would remove the brick piers, and Ms. Williams confirmed yes. She noted that she has repainted the house twice.

Commissioner Suomela asked Ms. Williams for her plan on handrails. She said she would add them. Commissioner Suomela stated that if the porch is measured at 30", it only needs to be a guardrail and not a handrail.

Commissioner Burnash asked whether she'd picked out spindles yet. Ms. Williams stated no, but that she was trying to keep things close to the picture. She didn't want spindles that were too wide or too skinny. Commissioner Burnash noted they look rounded and flared at the bottom. Commissioner Hurley encouraged her to use the picture as a guide—noting that counting the number between columns would potentially serve as a guide.

M/S - Hurley/Wright

Motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness for a demolition of 721 MLK Ave, parcel # 40-12-431-007.

Unanimously Approved

OLD BUSINESS

Officer Elections

Commissioner Suomela handed over the Chair of the meeting to Claire Nowak-Boyd temporarily in order to conduct elections.

M/S Hurley/Wright

Commissioner Hurley motions to nominate Dale Suomela as Chair.

Commissioner Suomela accepted the nomination.

Claire Nowak-Boyd asked whether there were any other nominations. There were not.

Unanimously Approved

M/S Hurley/Davis

Commissioner Hurley motions to nominate Heather Burnash as Vice Chair.

Commissioner Burnash accepted the nomination.

Claire Nowak-Boyd asked whether there were any other nominations. There were not.

Unanimously Approved

Dale Suomela was elected Chair and Heather Burnash was elected Vice-Chair. Claire Nowak-Boyd returned chairing of the meeting to Commissioner Suomela.

Training

Claire Nowak-Boyd stated that she had been in touch with MHPN and is waiting to hear back on dates.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of Denial Letters

Commissioner Suomela stated that he felt the letters were well written and that they covered the point accurately.

Jonathan Moore stated they were related to the City's historic ordinance requirements, which he listed.

Commissioner Hurley, Jonathan Moore, and Angela Wheeler discussed the thinking behind the letters. Commissioner Hurley and Angela Wheeler noted they used to read off the secretary of the interior's standards in the meeting, and that the practice should be restored.

Land Bank Actions

Commissioner Davis asked whether there's a requirement of the City or the Land Bank to secure properties. Commissioner Wright noted she believes they only secure it for access (first floor only), lacking plans to rehab it. Commissioner Hurley stated that it constitutes demolition by neglect. Angela Wheeler noted they will not tarp buildings. Commissioner Burnash noted there should especially be an emphasis on caretaking by the Land Bank of the properties they acquire in historic districts, but there is no enforcement.

Commissioner Hurley requested that Commissioner Davis bring a list of the properties to the next meeting. Commissioners discussed how to best communicate with the Land Bank regarding demolition and mothballing.

Commissioners discussed demolition by neglect, and ways that people are billed for property

negligence. Attorney Wheeler noted that demolition by neglect can even include billing for demolitions that the city is forced to do, but the issue in the past with demolition by neglect has been attorney time to pursue it. Commissioners discussed the Land Bank's mandate and how they gain possession of properties. Jonathan Moore stated that insufficient sources of funding were written into their enabling legislation. Commissioner Wright stated that new construction is much more prevalent than rehab now, and noted the mortgage crisis's effect. Commissioner Davis noted that many Civic Park homeowners have paid off their homes, and stated that it can be nice comparable to other historic parts of the city if it's funded.

Commissioners requested copies of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards at the next meeting. Staff confirmed that they can do so.

M/S Hurley/Burnash

Motion to approve the letters as written and send them out.

Unanimously carried

Commissioners and staff discussed the requirements in the bylaws to remove a member, regarding Mildred Smith who has not attended. Commissioners directed staff to send a certified letter to remove the remaining member correctly. They also directed staff to compose a letter recommending Ryan Eashoo for the Commission. Staff requested that Mr. Eashoo provide a statement of interest and his resume to include with the nomination.

Commissioners discussed the need to renew terms of existing commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S - Burnash/Hurley

Unanimously carried