

FLINT PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2020

Commissioners Present

Robert Wesley, Chair
Elizabeth Jordan, Vice-Chair
Carol-Anne Blower, Secretary
Robert Jewell
Harry Ryan

Staff Present

Suzanne Wilcox, Director - Department of
Planning and Development
Bill Vandercook, Planner I
Reed Eriksson, Assistant City Attorney
Keizy Anpalagan – GIS Technician

Commissioners Not Present

Leora Campbell
April Cook Hawkins

On Tuesday, March 10, 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared a State of Emergency after two individuals were confirmed testing presumptively positive for COVID-19. On Thursday, March 12, 2020, Mayor Sheldon Neeley declared a local State of Emergency to exist in the City of Flint as a result of the threat of COVID-19. On Sunday, March 15, 2020, effective Tuesday, March 17, 2020, Mayor Neeley, based on the COVID-19 public health threat, closed City Hall to the public. As of Sunday, March 22, 2020, Michigan now has 1035 confirmed COVID-19 cases. Based on the White House guidelines issued on March 16, 2020, it is recommended that, over the next 15 days, people not gather in groups larger than 10 in order to “flatten” the curve and slow the spread of the virus. Therefore, in accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order 2020-15 promoting public health, welfare and safety, and allowing for electronic public meetings, the March 24, 2020 Planning Commission meeting is scheduled electronically.

Pursuant to Act 267 of the Public Acts of 1976 (Open Meetings Act), notice was given that the Flint Planning Commission would hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. In accordance with Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order 2020-15 permitting electronic meetings.

ROLL CALL:

Chairperson Wesley called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Under reports change status of Zoning Ordinance to status of draft Zoning Ordinance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

M/S – Jewell/Ryan

Motion to adopt the meeting agenda as revised.

Unanimously carried.

MINUTES:

The minutes of March 10 were postponed until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

M/S – Jewell/Jordan

Motion to postpone the minutes until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Unanimously carried.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Michele Ingram said she was in opposition to allowing any Medical Marihuana Facility to attain a Recreational Marihuana permit, because of their location to residential homes or rental properties within the City of Flint.

Betty Sanne stated she was against any Recreational Marihuana being located next to residential areas.

Kristen Owen said she was under the impression emails sent into the Planning Commission would be read at the meeting. Commissioner Wesley said they will be reading the names of those who sent in emails tonight and dealing with readings at our next regularly scheduled meeting.

Kristen Owens said she was told by City Council that the Planning Commission and City Council would be meeting to refine the Marihuana Ordinance. Ms. Owens asked the Commission when they planned on meeting. Commissioner Wesley said City Council had not brought this to our attention. Commissioner Wesley said City Council would have to send them a referral before they could meet.

Suzanne Wilcox read the names of individuals who had sent in emails at the request of Commissioner Wesley (Reggie Flynn, Tammy Parillo, Jill Hendrix, Stephanie Engel, Douglas Carey, Larry Nestor, Layne Owen, Michael Parillo, April Welch, Nancy Chittle, Julie Taylor, William Mellish, Amanda Butler, Hanna Lesser, Marcey Gazzarari, Julie Broadbent, Arriana Terrian, Bryon Schoolfield, Jody Aquinas, Kristen Owens. Ms. Wilcox said she would supply actual emails for inclusion into the Public Records.

SITE PLAN REVIEW:

SPR 20-930 Townhouses
Applicant: Norstar Development USA, L.P./Clark Commons II LDHA, LLC
Location: See attached list of properties
Contact: Lori Harris and Adam Coppersmith

Lori Harris and Adam Coppersmith presented the application. Ms. Harris said this project is a subset of the project brought before you last summer. Ms. Harris said the 82-unit project related to a variance for a community building in the maintenance garage. Ms. Harris said originally the project was planned as a bond transaction, but with associated cost we reduced the project down to 48 units. Ms. Harris said the next phase will be between 80 – 100 units. Ms. Harris said this phase includes townhouses similar to what is under construction in phase one started in August of 2020.

Adam Coppersmith, Architect said the project Lori mentioned was originally larger with approximately 87 townhouse units. Mr. Coppersmith said the project now consists of 13 townhouse unit buildings, encompassing 48 total townhouses. Mr. Coppersmith said these range from one-bedroom units up to four bedrooms. Mr. Coppersmith said the idea is to re-infill the existing neighborhood where homes have been lost. Mr. Coppersmith said there are three phases to Clark

Commons, one that's under construction, this phase with 48 units and a third phase which will be much larger.

Commissioner Jewell said he noticed that a landscape plan was not submitted with the site plans. Ms. Harris said that a tax credit application due in April didn't allow them enough time to submit a landscape plan. Ms. Harris said they could put together a landscape plan very quickly.

Ms. Wilcox said part of the process was looking at what was approved as part of their phase one submission, and what needs to be submitted. Ms. Wilcox said because there have been various phases of this project, we looked at what was submitted before. Ms. Wilcox said what had been submitted as a part of phase one was approved with administrative review subject to submission of the landscape plan. Ms. Wilcox said the City of Flint and Norstar are working together to get all the plans together and trying to follow the same process utilized before. Ms. Wilcox said because that was how the first phase was approved, we are seeking the same approval process.

Commissioner Jewell said he would be supportive of staff recommendation, with approval being done administratively in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Commission or his designee.

Commissioner Ryan said he wanted to make sure the Planning Commission was not setting a precedent by allowing Norstar to reduce the amount of buildings in this proceeding. Commissioner Wesley said I think we have done this in phases, phase one and two and don't believe we have shortened or shortcut the plan.

Kristin Stevenson said, "the change that they're mentioning was just an internal change to the plan. This was before the Commission had ever seen phase two so that the comparison is really just between, as far as precedent is concerned, phase one which the commission approved on condition of further Administrative Review. And then now phase two, which is what we're discussing".

Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve SPR 20-930 with the condition the landscape plan be submitted and administratively reviewed with the Chairman of the Planning Commission or his designee.

M/S – Jewell/Ryan

Commissioner Jewell made a motion to approve SPR 20-930 with the condition the landscape plan be administratively reviewed with the Chairman of the Planning Commission or his designee.

Unanimously carried.

CASE REVIEWS:

None

REPORTS:

Status of Marihuana Ordinance:

Mr. Eriksson said the ordinance was moved back to Committee at the last City Council meeting, due to COVID-19. Mr. Eriksson said Council President Galloway contacted him regarding follow up questions based on constituent concerns. Mr. Eriksson said he would continue to work with the Council on any amendments they desire. Mr. Eriksson said the emergency marihuana ordinance expires on April 28 and anticipates we can have the permanent ordinance completed by that time. Mr. Eriksson said he saw no issue with extending the emergency marihuana ordinance due to COVID-19 if it becomes necessary.

Mr. Eriksson said regarding a comment made during the Public Comment period, it was his understanding from the City Council meeting that Council voted to submit a letter to the Planning Commission recommending the Miller case be denied. Mr. Eriksson said he did not believe the Council voted on a joint City Council or Planning Commission meeting.

Status of Zoning Ordinance and Capital Improvement Plan:

Ms. Wilcox said there is some work going on between finance and other departments making some recommended changes to the Capitol Improvement Plan. Ms. Wilcox said her intent was to bring this before the Planning Commission tonight, but COVID-19 has re-directed department heads and staff resources. Ms. Wilcox said she will continue to work with the finance and other departments to present at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Ms. Wilcox said she was hoping to have information regarding the Capital Improvement Plan and then the Draft Zoning ordinance which involves significant public input. Ms. Wilcox said they wanted to give the public the opportunity to comment on the draft Zoning ordinance. Ms. Wilcox said due to the Marihuana Ordinance; we are behind the draft Zoning Code before City Council but hoped to bring before Council in May.

RESOLUTIONS:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Mr. Eriksson informed the Planning Commission he had accepted a position with the State of Michigan, as an Administrative Law Examiner and Friday April 17, would be his last day working for the City. Mr. Eriksson said he enjoyed his time working for the City of Flint. Commissioners congratulated Mr. Erikson.

ADJOURNMENT:

M/S – Jordan/Jewell

Unanimously carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37 pm.