

**CITY OF MILWAUKIE  
DESIGN AND LANDMARKS COMMITTEE  
NOTES  
Milwaukie City Hall  
10722 SE Main St  
Wednesday, April 12, 2017  
6:30 PM**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Lauren Loosveldt, Chair  
Scott Jones, Vice Chair  
Michael Corrente  
Cynthia Schuster

**STAFF PRESENT**

Brett Kelper, Associate Planner (staff liaison)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**1.0 Call to Order – Procedural Matters**

**Chair Lauren Loosveldt** called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

**2.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Notes**

2.1 March 13, 2017

**Chair Loosveldt** called for any revisions to the notes from the March meeting. There were none, and the notes were approved unanimously.

**3.0 Information Items**

**Vice Chair Scott Jones** announced that he had been appointed to the Planning Commission (to be officialized on April 18) and would be resigning from the Committee, effective as of tonight's meeting. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be involved in the group's work over the past 3 years and was excited to transition onto the Planning Commission. He indicated that he would not be able to stay for the entire meeting, and **Associate Planner Brett Kelper** asked if he would share any thoughts about the future direction of the group's work to update the Downtown Design Guidelines (DDG)—his comments and the rest of that conversation are noted under Item 6.1, below.

**4.0 Audience Participation – None**

**5.0 Public Meetings – None**

**6.0 Worksession Items**

6.1 Downtown Design Guidelines Update, cont.  
Staff Person: Brett Kelper, Associate Planner

**Vice Chair Jones** suggested it would be ideal to preserve the group's valuable work-to-date on the DDG while finding a way to more efficiently use the Committee's time on the project. **Member Cynthia Schuster** agreed that it was important to take a step back and figure out what the design guidelines need to be. She liked the idea of there being some sort of semi-subjective guide (rather than just codified rules) for downtown development that presents some design details and tries to fill in the gaps about elements like materials (type and quality). Based on her read of the design review process, she thinks the guidelines will still be a key part of the process, as she doesn't believe very many projects will be able to use the more clear and objective Type II review option and so will be pushed into the more discretionary Type III review process.

**Chair Loosveldt** countered that, while she agrees that the DDG should be a reference document, she thinks it should be more prescriptive and/or more specific than the current version of the DDG, which was not set up that way and is too subjective. She thinks that more specific design standards should be codified and is concerned that there may be several important development projects in the meantime that do not get adequate review against the DDG and so need some standards to be codified. **Member Schuster** wondered if an aggressive workplan for the update could be established. She referenced the City of Portland's Main Street guideline document as an example of what she's suggesting, and she offered to send a link to members.

There was some discussion about the challenge of keeping standards relevant if certain specifics are codified. **Mr. Kelper** attempted to clarify the difference in the perspectives of Member Schuster and Chair Loosveldt (flexibility versus codification); the two agreed that the DDG needed to live on and to be an effective tool for producing quality projects. **Chair Loosveldt** suggested that the group might be more helpful in a role of assisting a consultant, as a reviewer of materials rather than a producer (as the group has been). She asked about the availability of funding for a consultant.

**Mr. Kelper** first indicated that Vice Chair Jones should feel free to leave the meeting whenever he felt he needed and then confirmed that the Planning Director does have funding available for a consultant. The idea was to move as quickly as possible to devise a scope of work, and then have the consultant use its time to assess the problems and gaps identified by the Committee and Planning Commission and develop proposed revisions and new materials for the Committee to review and respond to. It would be ideal if a preliminary scope of work could be available for the group to review at the next meeting on May 1.

Once Vice Chair Jones left (shortly before 7:00 p.m.), as a more formal transition into Item 6.1 from the initial conversation begun under Item 3.0, **Mr. Kelper** asked whether the members had any follow-up questions from the March 28 worksession with the Planning Commission. **Chair Loosveldt** reiterated that the DDG needs to be improved and the design review process needs to give them more teeth. Noting the outdated feeling of some items in the current DDG, she suggested finding ways to make ongoing maintenance of the document less necessary. She also noted gaps in the code itself, as well as outdated references to things like the list of allowed exterior building materials (in MMC 19.508) that need to be revisited and addressed. There was some concern that the current standards for the Type II process might result in new buildings looking more like one another than what was intended.

**Mr. Kelper** reiterated that the intent of the change to the design review process was to provide a simpler track for developers to use if desired. While the result might be that the Type II process is not utilized as much as anticipated, especially if developers want to be more creative than the Type II process allows, the Type III process is still available as an option. His impression of the intent of the change to the process was not to prescribe a specific design or look for new buildings, certainly not to the degree that might happen in a place like Lake Oswego or Sisters. It remains to be seen whether the Type II process is as effective as hoped at streamlining the process without resulting in same-looking buildings.

**Chair Loosveldt** noted several open-ended questions that came out of the March 28 worksession: (1) Is it legal to subject an application to the entirety of the DDG, if an applicant chooses to go through Type III review? (2) What is involved in the code amendment process? (3) What things can the group do to prioritize actions to be most effective? (4) When does a design review application get locked in to a particular set of regulations?

**Mr. Kelper** responded to the last question first, that whatever standards are in place at the time an application is submitted are the ones that apply throughout the review process. He explained that the code amendment process is not normally a quick or simple one—proposed amendments must go to both the Planning Commission and City Council for approval, and there are usually worksessions with

one or both groups as well as time-intensive preparation and analysis involved. However, perhaps a few key adjustments to the current code could be identified as an effective short-term fix. To get at her first question, he suggested it might be most effective to do the assessment exercise suggested in the staff report for this item, with the group working to determine how many of the design guidelines would be applicable in a Type III review. **Chair Loosveldt** recommended that the Planning Director and the Planning Commission be kept apprised of the group's efforts, to stay coordinated and avoid the Committee spending more time working in an inefficient or unproductive manner.

With that, the group turned to one of the matrices included in the meeting packet, to compare the design standards of Milwaukie Municipal Code (MMC) Section 19.508 with the various guidelines in the DDG. The exercise was to consider the purpose statement of each design standard and determine which guidelines could reasonably be considered applicable. Focusing first on the Milwaukie Character guidelines, the members had a long discussion about the methodology and how deeply to dive into the text and Recommended/Not Recommended points provided in the DDG. With group consensus, they indicated on the matrix which guidelines appeared to clearly be applicable, which not, and which needed further consideration.

After approximately 90 minutes of work with the matrix, **Chair Loosveldt** suggested that the slow pace of the exercise might be accelerated if the members could spend some time in advance of the next meeting to fill in the matrix on their own. Then the group could spend its time discussing any points of disagreement or uncertainty instead of grinding through the initial answers. **Member Michael Corrente** suggested posting the matrix to an online space where they could work on it between meetings and see each other's answers, and he offered to modify the existing spreadsheet to be shareable in this way. There was general agreement that this might be a way to continue the discussion more productively at the next meeting.

Whatever shape a revised DDG ends up taking, **Member Schuster** suggested that the group consider establishing a sort of "design enhancement guide" that would serve as a reference to developers, suggesting ideas for architectural, lighting, and signage designs beyond the minimum requirements of the code.

## 7.0 Other Business/Updates

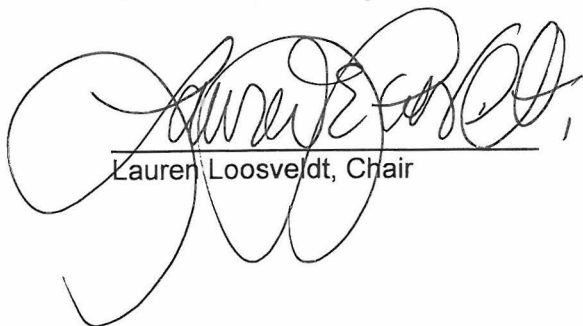
**Mr. Kelder** noted that the Committee would hold a public hearing at the May 1 meeting to consider a request to demolish a house on the City's Historic Resources Property List, and he handed out some general information related to the Committee's role in historic resource review. The planner assigned to the case (Vera Koliass) will make a presentation to explain the nature of the request, and the applicant will likely be on hand as well. The Committee will be asked to make a recommendation to the Planning Commission for a final decision. The process will be made more clear at the May 1 meeting.

## 8.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Discussion Items – None

## 9.0 Forecast for Future Meetings:

May 1, 2017	Recommendation hearing (demo of historic house), DDG revisions
June 5, 2017	TBD

**Chair Loosveldt** adjourned the meeting at 9:02 p.m.



Lauren Loosveldt, Chair

Respectfully submitted,  
 Brett Kelder, Associate Planner

