

Design and Landmarks Committee

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Members Present

Becky Ives, Chair
Patty Wisner
Greg "Frank" Hemer

Members Absent

Sarah Knaup

Staff Present

Li Alligood, Assistant Planner (DLC Liaison)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Becky Ives called the Design and Landmarks Committee (DLC) meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

2. MEETING NOTES—NONE

3. INFORMATION ITEMS—NONE

4. WORKSESSION ITEMS

a. Main Street Milwaukie Survey Overview

Li Alligood, Assistant Planner, introduced the Main Street Milwaukie reconnaissance-level survey of downtown. Milwaukie became an "Exploring Main Street" community in early 2009. As part of the program, the Clackamas County Main Street Program, Oregon Main Street Program, and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) sponsored a reconnaissance-level survey of downtown Milwaukie in April 2009. The boundaries were Hwy 224 to the north, the railroad right-of-way to the east, the Willamette River to the west, and Adams St to the south.

- The last historic inventory of the City was conducted in 1988, and the 2009 survey captured many potentially historic buildings that were not included in the historic inventory.
- The 1988 historic inventory would likely be updated during periodic review of the Comprehensive Plan, but that process was dependent on State funding.
- The Main Street survey recommended pursuing two historic districts: one in the Historic Milwaukie neighborhood and one downtown. Those designations would require additional surveys and significant community support and involvement.
- She explained the designation process and guidelines and the difference between "Eligible/Contributing," "Not Eligible/Strong Potential," and "Not Eligible/Out of Period." Generally, buildings that are older than 50 years are identified as Eligible/Contributing if they have retained architectural integrity. Buildings that are older than 50 years are identified as Not Eligible/Strong Potential if they have been

altered with changes that can be reversed. Buildings that are newer than 50 years are identified as Not Eligible/Out of Period.

Discussion followed of Milwaukie history, various significant and historic buildings in Milwaukie, and potential for National Register designation of specific buildings.

b. Milwaukie Character Discussion

Ms. Alligood introduced a “mind mapping” exercise to refine the Downtown Design Guidelines definition of “Milwaukie Character.” She asked DLC members to share what they felt made Milwaukie a special place.

The Committee mentioned Lake Oswego, OR; Camas, WA; and Fort Collins, CO, as examples of appealing communities similar in size to Milwaukie, and discussed the following downtown Milwaukie qualities:

- **Accessibility:** The city was pedestrian and bike-friendly due to its connected street grid and compact size. Its proximity to Portland was an amenity.
- **Network of nature and green spaces:** The city offered proximity to wildlife (ducks, geese, etc.) and natural areas. The springs, creeks, and lakes of the city were a very unique and beautiful resource, and the city had abundant green spaces such as Scott Park, Kronberg Park, and the future Riverfront Park.
- **Family-friendly:** Milwaukie had many established, traditional residential neighborhoods. Young families were attracted to the schools and affordable homes.
- **Unique and eclectic:** The city was built over time with a mixture of modern and traditional architecture and contains examples of progressive architecture from many periods. It had a unique horticultural history and a small-town feel with the advantage of proximity to Portland.
- **Historic:** Milwaukie was part of the westward expansion and the Oregon Trail. There was a substantial amount of Native American history, though it was not well-documented. The community had been the center of lumber, milling, and agricultural production, and the Willamette River had long been the lifeblood of the community.
- **Architectural touchstones:** The city had unique examples of many different architectural eras, such as St. John the Baptist Catholic Church on 25th (1960s) and the Masonic Temple at Main and Harrison (1930s). The Kellogg Creek railroad trestle was an identifiable structure when entering the city from the south.

DLC Member Patty Wisner suggested that permanence and quality could be expressed through quality design and materials, including use of natural materials such as brick, wood, and stone. She wanted developers and architects to respect the city through attractive design and materials.

The Committee agreed that new development should have architectural interest—including varied materials, rooflines, and decorative details—and should focus on improving the pedestrian experience through planters, flowers, benches, and ground-floor architectural interest.

- Milwaukie was distinct from Portland, and was a small town with soft edges.
- The city should capitalize on its history as a river city and existing and future network of natural green spaces.

- New development should reference the natural environment through fountains, natural building materials, and public art referencing the wildlife and other unique aspects of Milwaukie.
- New buildings should reference traditional architectural forms but should also reflect current design. An example given was the Willamette Christian Church in West Linn, which was designed by Myhre Architects, the designers of the North Main project.
- The city should allow and encourage residents and visitors to feel a part of nature.

DLC Member Greg Hemer suggested a meeting between the Committee and the “Group of Nine,” the group that had been working on the South Downtown concept. He suggested inviting Leah Robbins, Eastside Coordinator for TriMet, and Wendy Hemmen, the City’s Light Rail Design Coordinator, to the meeting.

He expressed concern that some people working on downtown projects would feel left out of the process and potential developers would receive confusing and contradictory information from the various groups working in downtown.

Chair Ives agreed, and added that all of the groups working downtown (Celebrate Milwaukie, Milwaukie Main Street, DLC, Milwaukie Downtown Development Association, Historic Milwaukie, etc.) should meet to discuss what projects are underway and where collaborations could be created.

Ms. Alligood summarized the discussion and asked DLC members to contact her if they thought of other important characteristics of downtown Milwaukie.

5. APPLICATION REVIEW ITEMS—NONE

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Meeting Location

Ms. Alligood asked if the Committee was satisfied with the current meeting location at the Public Safety Building. **The Committee** stated that they were.

b. Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 28, and would include the election of a Vice Chair to replace former Vice Chair Siri Bernard. The role of the Vice Chair was to conduct the meeting when the Chair was not available. Committee members would also keep an eye out for potential members to fill the current vacancy on the Committee.

Ms. Alligood asked the Committee to continue to take photos of buildings and details that reflect Milwaukie Character.

c. Police Department Appreciation

Mr. Hemer stated that Milwaukie Lumber, his employer, had been robbed the previous weekend and he was very impressed with the response of the Milwaukie Police Department. He thanked the Police Department for their hard work and their assistance in recovering much of the merchandise that was taken.

7. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Becky Ives", written in dark ink.

Becky Ives, Chair