

**Design and Landmarks Committee  
Meeting Notes  
Wednesday, September 22, 2010**

**Members Present**

Becky Ives, Chair  
Patty Wisner  
Greg "Frank" Hemer  
Jim Perrault

**Members Absent**

None

**Staff Present**

Li Alligood, Assistant Planner (DLC Liaison)  
Katie Mangle, Planning Director  
JoAnn Herrigel, Community Services Director

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**Chair Ives** called the Design and Landmarks Committee (DLC) meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. MEETING NOTES**

**a. July 28, 2010**

**DLC Member Hemer** moved to approve the July 28, 2010, DLC meeting notes as presented. **DLC Member Wisner** seconded the motion. The notes were approved unanimously.

**3. INFORMATION ITEMS**

**a. New DLC Member**

Recently appointed DLC Member Jim Perrault introduced himself. He has lived in Milwaukie for 12 years and worked with Pella Industries to assist with projects from conception to completion. He was familiar with all stages of residential and commercial development.

**4. WORKSESSION ITEMS**

**a. Riverfront Park discussion**

**JoAnn Herrigel, Community Services Director**, introduced **David Green, Chair of the Riverfront Advisory Board (RAB)**. Mr. Green had served on the RAB since 1990. The City was the applicant for the Riverfront Park land use application.

**Ms. Herrigel** provided an overview of past DLC discussions about Riverfront Park.

- The DLC heard and approved the Riverfront Park application (DR-09-01) on November 9, 2009; the Planning Commission heard and approved the application on May 25, 2010; and the City expected the joint permit from the Department of State Lands (DSL) and the US Army Corps of Engineers to be final in December 2010.

- At the November 9, 2009, DLC hearing, the DLC approved the application with a number of conditions.
- The design was still at 70% completion; before finalizing the design, the City was seeking input from the DLC and other involved parties.

**Mr. Green** stated that the RAB had discussed the DLC's conditions of approval with the designer, Gil Kelley of David Evans and Associates (DEA) and the presentation was the outcome of those discussions.

**Ms. Herrigel** stated that she would review the 7 conditions of approval. The first condition was to explore ways to manage stormwater from the roof of the restroom building. The construction of the roofline should take into consideration the location of plants beneath it.

**Ms. Herrigel** discussed the second condition of approval: the inclusion of natural materials and designs in the water feature. She noted that the DLC had been concerned about the angular, hard-edged nature of the water feature design.

- **Mr. Green** added that a great deal of thought had been given to the design of the water feature, and that the RAB was very supportive of the existing design and was concerned about changes to it. He suggested that the design of the fountain was ultimately a matter of opinion.
- **Ms. Herrigel** noted that the RAB had been looking at different options and materials, including aesthetic gratings, curved lines, adding planters and boulders to the plaza, and potentially adding "tributaries" to the straight line between sections of the water feature. She underscored that there were many opinions about the design of the water feature.

**Ms. Herrigel** moved on to the third condition, which was to include the history of Milwaukie in the design and features of the park. She discussed the industrial history of the waterfront and described the way the proposed materials reflected that history.

- The design group had chosen a palette of metal, cedar or ipe wood, concrete, and basalt. Basalt was naturally occurring throughout the Willamette River valley. The design of the overlook railings was very similar to the Oregon City waterfront park.
- The applicant intended to include interpretive signage throughout the park to represent important historical and natural features. She described various elements that could be programmed with interpretive signage.

**The DLC** asked general questions about the sign at the park entrance.

**Ms. Wisner** stated that she still had issues with the design of the water feature.

- She suggested that a female perspective was missing from the design.
- She felt that the straight perpendicular line of the water feature was not necessary to indicate entrance to the park. The straight lines of the park were rigid; irregular lines created less tension visually and permitted people to relax.
- She would be extremely disappointed if the water feature retained the current design.

**DLC Member Perrault** stated that he felt the basalt of the water feature referenced the basalt river valley of the Willamette River, such as the High Rocks area, and was appropriate for the location.

**Ms. Wisner** agreed that basalt was common throughout the Willamette River valley, but it was not visible in Milwaukie. She suggested that a talented designer would be able to design a water feature that referenced Milwaukie's water and that the current water feature missed the mark of what it could be.

**Chair Ives** noted that the DLC was concerned that the proposed water feature would resemble the Ira Keller fountain in downtown Portland.

**Ms. Wisner** suggested that the design of the fountain could be located anywhere in the country, and did not respond to the unique waters of Milwaukie.

**Chair Ives** suggested that the role of the DLC may be to push back on the design to make sure that it reflected the city.

Due to shortness of time, **Ms. Herrigel** quickly reviewed the final 4 conditions:

- Moving the restroom building closer to the playground area. This was under consideration and would require changes to many different areas of the design.
- Design for the view from outside of the park as well as within the park. The planter strip on McLoughlin Blvd would remain; view sheds from outside of the park were being considered, but the focus was on the experience within the park.
- Reduce the cold feeling of concrete throughout. The design team planned to extend the cedar siding of the restroom building further down the concrete base of the building, and was looking into options for stamped or stained concrete for the base of the building. The base was required to be concrete because the building was located within the flood plain.
- Reduce size of restroom building wings. The design team was considering this request. Reduction of the size of the "wings" would necessitate design changes in other parts of the building.

**Ms. Herrigel** noted that the DLC would need to review and approve the final design before permits were issued for development.

#### **b. Design Review procedures discussion**

**Katie Mangle, Planning Director**, provided an overview of the DLC over the past decade. The DLC began as the Historic Review Commission, then became the Design and Landmarks Commission, and was currently a sub-committee of the Planning Commission.

- Staff and DLC members had spent a lot of time in the past couple of years training and learning how to review applications, and the group had become much stronger as an institution.
- City staff was currently "tuning up" the City's development review procedures, including the design review process. The strengths of the DLC, such as general feedback about design, had resulted in improved projects downtown. The parts of design review that were not working included duplication of staff efforts to write 2 sets of staff reports and findings, and that the DLC was not used to running public hearings and required a great deal of staff report.
- There were currently no public notification procedures for DLC hearings; design review findings were essentially adopted by the time the application went to the Planning Commission.

- Staff was not comfortable reigning in the creativity of the DLC during a land use hearing, but it was necessary in order to adopt the findings to be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

**Ms. Mangle** explained that staff had been reviewing the design review procedures, and proposed that the DLC become an advisory group to the Planning Director.

- The DLC would no longer hold hearings, but would hold public meetings earlier in the land use process. The Planning Director would integrate DLC and public comments into the staff report to the Planning Commission.
- Many design review applications would still need to be heard by the Planning Commission because they included other types of applications.
- She clarified that the motivation for the recommendation was to make sure staff was being most effective with their time, coming to the best outcomes, and adding flexibility and predictability to the design review process.

**Ms. Wisner** stated that she had concerns about the DLC becoming an advisory committee. She had been on the DLC since 1997, when it had decision-making powers for historic resource applications.

- She was very much in favor of hearing applications earlier in the process, but saw it as staff redefining the role of the DLC and pushing it further into the background of the city review process.
- Had always been an advocate for restoring commission status to the DLC. Proposed changes were based on making things easier for staff rather than serving the interests of the committee or the City.

**Mr. Hemer** noted that the Planning Commission did not generally review DLC recommendations and tended to adopt them as proposed. He felt that the DLC could have a larger impact on projects if they were involved earlier in the process.

**Chair Ives** stated that the wording of the revised role of the DLC would be critical to ensure that its input was taken seriously by applicants. The DLC had a good relationship with the Planning Commission.

**Ms. Wisner** urged the DLC members to request commission status from City Council in order to make sure that staff was doing their best work to improve the city. The Planning Commission did not have to listen to the DLC; if the DLC was a commission it could speak directly to City Council.

**Ms. Mangle** clarified that a design review application would only go before the City Council if it was appealed.

**The DLC** agreed that a DLC member should continue to attend Planning Commission hearings on design review applications to explain the DLC's recommendations and concerns.

**Ms. Mangle** noted that it was easier to get the DLC involved earlier in the process if it was not within the framework of a land use decision. By removing the DLC from the land use decision process, members could make more opinion-based comments and potentially have more impact on the project.

- What the DLC offered was valuable, and some of it was outside of the land use decision process. Recent projects had been much improved by DLC comments and input.

- The issue was not with the DLC itself but the procedures that guide the City's design review hearings and land use decisions.
- Staff was working to put together a system that best utilized limited City resources, built on the strengths of the DLC, and minimized the weaknesses.

**Mr. Hemer** noted that there were many planning projects taking place in the downtown area, such as the South Downtown Plan and the light rail line. The DLC would have a stronger voice earlier in the process than at the end of the process.

**Ms. Wisner** needed to leave the meeting.

- **The DLC** agreed to meet for coffee the following week to continue the discussion.

**Ms. Wisner** left the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

**Ms. Mangle** stated that staff had considered recommending that the DLC be established as a commission, but that status would require a higher level of organization and commitment from the members than was currently present, and would challenge City budget and staff resources.

**Ms. Alligood** distributed update pages and copies of the 2009-2010 DLC work plan for the DLC notebooks.

## **5. APPLICATION REVIEW ITEMS—NONE**


## **6. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a. Next meeting**

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, October 27, 2010.

## **7. ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

  
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Becky Ives, Chair