

Design and Landmarks Committee
Meeting Notes
Wednesday, April 27, 2011

Members Present

Greg "Frank" Hemer, Chair
Becky Ives
Patty Wisner
Chantelle Gamba

Members Absent

Jim Perrault, Vice Chair

Staff Present

Li Alligood, Assistant Planner (DLC Liaison)
Katie Mangle, Planning Director
Alicia Stoutenburg, Administrative Specialist II
Alex Campbell, Resource and Economic Development Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Greg Hemer called the Design and Landmarks Committee (DLC) meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. MEETING MINUTES – None

3. INFORMATION ITEMS

Li Alligood, Assistant Planner, introduced **Alicia Stoutenburg, Administrative Specialist II**, from the Planning Department. Ms. Alligood noted that Ms. Stoutenburg would be joining the meetings and preparing the meeting minutes for the next few months. This meeting was for Ms. Stoutenburg to meet the DLC members and become familiar with the group and proceedings.

4. WORKSESSION ITEMS

Chair Hemer noted the order of the agenda had been changed to begin with Item 4.b. Downtown Façade Improvement Program, then move to Item 4.c. Light Rail Project Design Update, and finish with Item 4.a. Bylaws review.

b. Downtown Façade Improvement Program

This item was taken out of order.

Alex Campbell, Economic and Resource Development Specialist, introduced the basics of the Downtown Façade Improvement Program, and reviewed Enclosure 3 of the meeting packet.

- The City was launching a pilot program that would provide matching grants for downtown façade improvements.

- The program would fund up to \$50,000 for improvements. Metro would contribute 50% and the City would contribute 50% from the General Fund.
- It was a grant-based program and the idea was to encourage investments that were not only good for the property owner's specific properties, but also improved the public space and the experience of being downtown.

Mr. Campbell noted the program was presented to City Council and Council felt that the DLC should have an important role in the program. The DLC would be the decision-maker on the applications. The specifics of the program and process were still being worked out, but some additional questions had come up. He reviewed the general chronological process thus far.

- A business owner would first meet with staff to review the eligible uses as well as the design guidelines and standards.
- The applicant would then submit an application that included a photo of the existing building, the proposal including such items as sketches, examples of windows, paint colors, etc.

DLC Member Patty Wisner clarified that there was \$50,000 available, and it was possible there would be more applicants than funding available. She asked how the DLC should respond to applicants who questioned why their application had been denied.

- **Mr. Campbell** suggested the DLC direct those questions to staff.

DLC Member Becky Ives arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Chair Hemer asked if multiple approvable proposals could split the funds if the applicants agreed.

- **Mr. Campbell** stated that although the pot could be split, staff would want to meet with the DLC prior to the meeting to help structure that scenario.
- One reason to set it up as a rolling rather than cumulative application process was to make it a shorter process for the applicant, rather than waiting for 3 months for approval in the case of accumulating applications. There were benefits to both.

Chair Hemer asked if a property owner could apply for grants for multiple properties.

- **Mr. Campbell** stated that from a programmatic standpoint, he would lean away from awarding multiple grants to individual property owners.
- **DLC Member Gamba** felt that the DLC decision should be about a return on investment, not what was best for the individual property owner but what is best for the character of the whole area. The DLC should focus on how the money was best spent, not who was going to benefit.

She noted that if more funds were requested than were available, there would need to be a judgment call regarding those proposals that fall above or below the bar of improving downtown, rather than funding all proposals regardless of the bar.

Ms. Alligood noted that that was the reason for having the DLC involved, to make those judgment calls. It would be a new role for the DLC.

Mr. Campbell asked the Committee to identify criteria against which to review the grant applications. He suggested the DLC use clear terms to define the type of impact they would like to see.

- They could use criteria such as attractive and vibrant downtown, or character and aesthetics. The evaluation was about the experience of being downtown, not just visual aesthetics.
- They should also determine how much impact the projects should have: substantial; significant; noticeable improvement or impact.

The Committee discussed the review and approval process.

Mr. Campbell reviewed the direction he had received from Council regarding maximum grant amount; eligible activities; and application submission on a rolling monthly basis.

Chair Hemer noted that the list of eligible activities included items attached to the building and asked if sidewalks, trees, plants, pots, benches, and such were included in the list.

- **Mr. Campbell** clarified those items would not be on the list because Metro was not interested in funding required improvements, but wanted to incentivize property or business owners to make the downtown more attractive.

Ms. Ives asked if the applications would be reviewed against the downtown design standards.

- **Ms. Alligood** noted that City staff would review proposals for completeness prior to the DLC receiving it. The grant application review process was not a formal design review, and the design review checklist would not be utilized. The DLC was making a higher level call about whether the project was a good contribution to downtown or not.
- **Katie Mangle, Planning Director**, added that in the design review process the DLC members were in the role of critic, but they would be cheerleaders in the grant application review role. Staff would ensure that the applications were approvable, and the DLC would make the final decision.

Ms. Wisner clarified that maintenance of a building roof or similar nonvisible maintenance activities were not eligible.

- **Ms. Mangle** clarified that the eligible activities should be considered as improvements to the public realm. If you considered Main Street as a room, think about how the proposals would decorate the room.

Ms. Ives asked how the program would be promoted.

- **Mr. Campbell** stated that mailings would be sent to the property owner of record. Staff would also prepare a 1-page description of the program and hand them out to businesses.

Mr. Campbell noted that Metro had also made a small amount of funding available for design assistance for promising buildings. He thanked the DLC for their time.

c. Light Rail Project Design Update

This item was taken out of order.

Ms. Mangle noted that light rail updates would be on the DLC agenda each month for the next several months. There would be updates from consultants and TriMet staff as the project moved forward. She reviewed Enclosure 4 of the meeting packet and an aerial photo of the light rail alignment and project components.

- She was impressed with the work the design team had done, but there were still some things to talk about and choices to be made about materials and design.
- It was a big project with a very limited budget, and it was important for the residents and staff of Milwaukie to be active in this phase of the project design.
- The DLC would be responsible for “big D” Design Review, which was the formal land use process. The DLC would also be responsible for “small d” design review, and would advise staff and decision-makers on project components that were not subject to Design Review, as they had with the Jackson Street Improvement Project’s bus shelters.
- The design consultant would attend the June meeting to describe the design of the retaining walls and fences between Washington St and Harrison St.

Ms. Ives expressed concerns about how the weathered steel of the Kellogg Lake bridge, as well as other project components, would age. She asked for images to illustrate other projects using similar designs and materials.

Ms. Mangle noted that the DLC would meet jointly with the Planning Commission on June 1, and the design consultant would share images and designs at that meeting.

- She reviewed aspects of the project that would benefit from DLC review, including planters, retaining walls outside of the downtown zones, and various other project components.
- As part of the light rail station development, TriMet would be rebuilding some of the public areas. This would require a revision of the Public Area Requirements (PARs), and the DLC would be asked to provide feedback on the revised designs.

Chair Hemer suggested the zoning of the triangle site be changed in order to allow the station building the City wanted to see developed.

- **Ms. Mangle** agreed that changing the zoning of the site was important, but the PARs would need to be revised before the zoning could be addressed. The City had received a grant from Metro that would fund staff review of the existing downtown plan and station area planning. Staff was waiting for Council direction on the project.

Ms. Mangle stated that future monthly light rail meetings would be more focused on policy, and the project design would be part of the monthly DLC meetings. The DLC would likely see more attendees at the monthly meetings.

a. Bylaws

This item was taken out of order.

Ms. Alligood referred to Enclosure 1, Attachments 1 and 2, of the meeting packet, and explained that the DLC's bylaws had last been updated in 2003. The City's municipal code required committees and commissions to review their bylaws each year.

- She noted that the DLC would be doing a lot of design review in the coming year, and the bylaws did not address many questions about meeting and review procedure. The Planning Commission had adopted new bylaws in early 2010, which could serve as a template for the DLC bylaws update.

The Committee reviewed the annotated bylaws and discussed needed updates.

- **Ms. Gamba** stated that she was in favor of being as clear as possible in the language.
- **Ms. Mangle** asked the Committee to review the current and annotated bylaws and let staff know if there were any aspects that they really wanted to retain.

5. Other Business

- a. A joint meeting was scheduled with City Council for July 5, 2011.
- b. **Ms. Alligood** explained that the DLC had elected to receive meeting packets via e-mail several months ago. She noted that there would be some fairly complex land use applications in the next several months, and there may be more members of the public attending the meetings. She asked if the DLC would like to go back to receiving hard copies.
- The DLC determined that they would like to receive the monthly e-packet via e-mail, and would like to receive a hard copy in the mail.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



Greg Hemer, Chair