

**CITY OF MILWAUKIE
DESIGN AND LANDMARKS COMMITTEE
NOTES**

**(virtual meeting via Zoom)
Monday, August 17, 2020
6:30 PM**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

Cynthia Schuster, Chair
Brett Laurila, Vice Chair
Mary Neustadter
Tracy Orvis

STAFF PARTICIPATING

Brett Kelter, Associate Planner (staff liaison)
Denny Egner, Planning Director

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Elizabeth Decker, JET Planning

MEMBERS ABSENT

Evan Smiley

1.0 Call to Order – Procedural Matters

Chair Cynthia Schuster called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

2.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Notes

2.1 July 20, 2020

Chair Schuster called for any revisions to the meeting notes for the July 20; there were none, and the notes were approved unanimously.

3.0 Information Items

Associate Planner Brett Kelter noted that **Planning Director Denny Egner** was officially retiring at the end of August and would be sorely missed; the group expressed its appreciation and wished him well. **Mr. Egner** reported that approval of the updated Comprehensive Plan by the City Council was anticipated on August 18.

4.0 Audience Participation – None

5.0 Public Meetings – None

6.0 Worksession Items

6.1 Downtown design review process (continued)
Staff People: Brett Kelter, Denny Egner, Elizabeth Decker

Elizabeth Decker again took the lead on the evening's discussion of outstanding questions, noting that the last several meetings had helped address most of the foundational and refinement questions; the focus this evening would be on questions about the guidance piece of the draft code amendments. She pointed out that the current version of the downtown design guidelines expresses many more design concepts than both the existing and proposed design standards in the code, though the sense is that the most essential concepts are represented in the draft amendments. She suggested that the aim of the guidance is to focus more on the desired outcomes of the code rather than specific treatments, which would have the effect of making the code a little more timeless. **Mr. Egner** echoed that perspective, encouraging the group to focus on intent more than on specific numbers.

Chair Schuster asked about the review process, wondering how wide-ranging the discretionary review would be for an applicant that could not meet a standard for a specific design element.

Ms. Decker and **Mr. Egner** indicated that they had an idea for ensuring that the discretion applied to one design element would not affect the overall design where it met the standards for all other design elements. **Chair Schuster** also wondered whether there was a way to ensure that applicants would meet the standards where the design clearly could and not simply opt for discretionary review thinking it would be a way to win approval for an inferior design.

Ms. Decker led the group through the evening's discussion of the proposed guidance, using the discussion guide from the meeting packet to hit on key questions. Key points include the following:

- **Element B (Wall Structure & Building Façade Details)**
 - The guidance should not require tripartite design.
 - The guidance regarding horizontal articulation should be more flexible and open to options. Perhaps add language to suggest that some feature(s) be employed every 25-30 ft to create rhythm.
- **Element C (Exterior Building Materials)**
 - Instead of using the phrase "hierarchy of materials," the guidance should be more flexible and promote compatibility, perhaps pushing for some "logic to the materials."
 - The table of allowable materials does not need to be referenced in the guidance; it is better to allow flexibility, so keep the language about "durable, long-lasting, low-maintenance" materials.
 - Allow for consideration of details about the installation of certain materials (e.g., EIFS or brick veneer).
- **Element E (Doors & Entrance Locations)**
 - The specific guidance about "eyes on the street" (E-3) can be deleted. The more important consideration is people on the street being able to see into a portion of the building, not vice-versa.
 - The guidance for creating separation between the street and building entrances (E-5) does not have to focus on the vertical; other layers of the building could be used for that.
- **Element F (Windows)**
 - The guidance in F-1 to provide a high degree of transparency is fine as is even though it contrasts with the corresponding standard, which focuses more on prohibiting certain non-transparent materials.
 - The intent of F-4 (using window groupings and orientation to create a sense of rhythm and pattern) is to avoid a random-seeming appearance. This is an important outcome, so a corresponding standard needs to be created.
- **Element G (Corners)**
 - There may be some language that could be added to emphasize variety at key corners, while encouraging some consistency. The standards may need to be revised to limit excessive repetition at key Main Street corners. But overall, provide flexibility.

- **Element H (Building Massing & Transitions)**
 - This element could be a point of much discussion in the future, particularly as it relates to the requirement for step-backs. The emphasis should be on ensuring visual access to nearby building occupants.
- **Element J (Roofs & Rooftop Equipment Screening)**
 - For roofline modulation, 50-ft increments may be a more logical figure than a 30-ft distance. And this concept might be better captured in Element H.
- **Element N (Resident Open Space)**
 - In the N-1 phrase, “scaled to maximize usability,” the word “maximize” is problematic. It might be good to establish guidance principles for different types of open space, with an eye on considerations of the overall quantity of space and access to light and air.
- **Element O (Plazas & Usable Open Space)**
 - The list in O-7 is not necessarily a problem, though there may be opportunities to consolidate it somewhat, perhaps with subcategories.
- **Element Q (Outdoor & Exterior Building Lighting)**
 - Points Q-2 and Q-3 do overlap. Q-3 seems redundant and could be deleted, while adjusting Q-2 to emphasize other “architectural” features.

Ms. Decker asked whether any of the group members had other issues or questions they wanted to discuss. **Chair Schuster** asked whether parking garages needed their own standard. **Ms. Decker** suggested that the façade standards of the downtown code and the off-street parking standards probably provided enough oversight. **Mr. Egner** suggested that perhaps a requirement for some glazing or openings might be important for parking garages; **Chair Schuster** noted that garages usually needed to be secured and architecturally screened.

Looking ahead to the next meeting, which would focus on looking at a couple of test cases to see how the current draft would function, **Mr. Kelter** explained that he would provide materials from the recently constructed Axletree and Ledding Library projects. He wondered what might be a good third example, if time allowed. **Chair Schuster** and **Committee Member Tracy Orvis** agreed that some type of infill project might be good to look at, perhaps something from southeast Portland, a tear-down or an add-on to an existing building.

7.0 Other Business/Updates – None

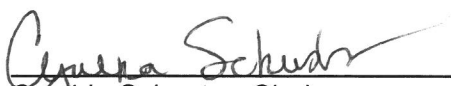
8.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Discussion Items – None

9.0 Forecast for Future Meetings

Sept. 14, 2020	Regular meeting (focus on 2-3 test cases)
Oct. 5, 2020	Regular meeting

Chair Schuster adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brett Kelter, Associate Planner


Cynthia Schuster, Chair