

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

**(virtual meeting via Webex)
Monday, June 15, 2020
6:30 PM**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING

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

STAFF PARTICIPATING

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

OTHERS PARTICIPATING

Elizabeth Decker, JET Planning

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

1.0 Call to Order – Procedural Matters

Chair Cynthia Schuster called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Notes

2.1 June 1, 2020

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

3.0 Information Items – None

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

Associate Planner Brett Kelter reviewed the agenda for the evening, explaining that, with the standard committee business out of the way, the group would dive into a discussion about the latest version of the draft downtown design review materials. Elizabeth Decker, the consultant on this project, would take a half hour to give an overview of key points from each design element. That would be followed by a discussion of the group's responses to the questions in the discussion guide provided with the meeting packet. He acknowledged that there would likely not be enough time this evening to get through all the discussion questions, so the effort would be to cover as many as reasonable and return to finish them at the next meeting on July 6. He asked the group to hold off on questions and discussion until Elizabeth could get through her overview, promising to leave time at the end of the meeting to allow the members to ask any questions or raise issues that did not come up.

Elizabeth Decker addressed each of the design elements and noted some of the key aspects or changes that were being proposed. She pointed out a few areas where the staff team was recommending something a little different from what the group had suggested and indicated that some further conversation was warranted to clarify and resolve those issues. Once she

concluded her overview, she led the group through the questions listed in the discussion guide. A summary of key points follows:

- **Element B (Wall Structure & Building Façade Details)**
 - The requirement for “heavier” materials at the lowest level (the bulkhead) was to promote durability. There was not a great concern that designers might try to extend those heavier materials higher up on the building, but it might be worth cross-checking this with the base materials required by Element C.
 - It was allowable to reduce the significant breaks proposed for horizontal articulation (20 ft deep and 15 ft wide) and important to look at establishing more tools to achieve the desired effect.
- **Element C (Exterior Building Materials)**
 - For non-street-facing façades, it is important to have some standard in order to avoid a “theme park” type of effect where front façade materials do not wrap around other façades. Elizabeth will draft some language related to requiring secondary materials and then will look to the group for guidance on identifying specific materials.
 - The group preferred not to prohibit any specific materials but to instead allow the Planning Director to make an official determination as needed. Avoiding prohibition language would preserve the option for seeking a variance.
- **Element E (Doors & Entrance Locations)**
 - The group preferred the current draft’s flexibility in allowing corner lots with frontage on Main Street to choose which street to face the primary entrance.
 - For residential-only buildings with frontage on Main Street, at least one primary entrance should face Main Street; otherwise, it was fine to allow flexibility.
- **Element F (Windows)**
 - The group originally proposed removing a minimum standard for visible transmittance to avoid potential conflicts with the energy code and other building codes; it might be useful to look at the energy code for some additional insight or guidance. Perhaps the new draft could include a note or reference to the energy code.
 - The trend in design is to provide larger windows (which tend to be wider than tall), so it does not seem necessary to require vertical orientation.
 - Question: Is there another way to generate transparency, some way that can be measured and quantified?
- **Element G (Corners)**
 - The question of whether to prioritize some corners for open or closed treatments needs more thought and discussion. It may be helpful to visualize certain corners on Main Street and determine whether some locations need special consideration.

With an eye on the time, **Mr. Kelter** asked whether any members had specific questions or thoughts to share as the discussion wrapped up for the evening. **Committee Member Tracy Orvis** spoke about the importance of finding the right balance to give people some parameters for design without limiting their creativity. **Committee Member Mary Neustadter** noted that the current draft is sometimes unclear with respect to applicability and whether the standards apply only to new buildings or to existing buildings as well. **Planning Director Denny Egner**

encouraged everyone to review the guidance language for all of the elements, as the focus to date has been primarily on the standards but the guidance needs to tie in. **Mr. Kelter** asked the members to send him any questions they might have, whether on the larger “foundational” issues or the more specific “refinement” issues, as well as any feedback on how to facilitate the ongoing discussion in advance of the next meeting.

7.0 Other Business/Updates

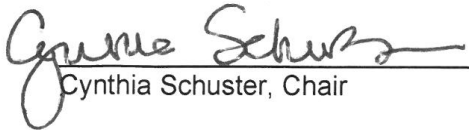
Mr. Egner noted that the City Council would be opening a series of public hearings in June on the proposed new comprehensive plan, starting on June 2. He encouraged the members to tune in and participate if they were interested, as the hearings were expected to continue on June 9, June 16, and June 30. He also noted that the Planning Commission would be considering a height variance request for a proposed four-story mixed use building on 32nd Avenue on June 23.

8.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Discussion Items – None

9.0 Forecast for Future Meetings

July 6, 2020	Regular meeting
July 20, 2020	Special meeting
August 3, 2020	Regular meeting

Chair Schuster adjourned the meeting at 8:27 p.m.


Cynthia Schuster, Chair

Respectfully submitted,
Brett Kelter, Associate Planner