

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

**(virtual meeting via Zoom)  
Monday, September 14, 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)  
Leila Aman, Community Development Director  
Alison Wicks, Development Project Manager

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Evan Smiley

**OTHERS PARTICIPATING**

Elizabeth Decker, JET Planning

**1.0 Call to Order – Procedural Matters**

**Chair Cynthia Schuster** called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Introductions were made all around.

**2.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Notes**

2.1 August 17, 2020

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

**3.0 Information Items**

**Associate Planner Brett Kelter** noted that Laura Weigel was starting this week as the new Planning Manager (the newly renamed Planning Director position). The current poor air quality conditions had made bumped her starting day from today to tomorrow (August 18) so she was unable to join the meeting for a quick introduction but would do so at the next opportunity.

**Community Development Director Leila Aman** shared a little more background about Ms. Weigel's work history, including her most recent position as the head of long-range planning efforts with the City of Hillsboro. She was excited to have the Planning Department back at full staffing strength.

**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, Elizabeth Decker

**Elizabeth Decker** reintroduced the topic and made a few comments about the latest draft of the proposed code amendments. She explained how she had incorporated feedback from the group's recent discussions, noting that the draft maintained a two-track review format (clear and objective versus discretionary review). She pointed to the "catch all" component that allowed a chance to consider overall compatibility of design in the discretionary review track and then noted a few other specific touches made to certain design elements. In response to a call for

further discussion or questions from the group, the members indicated that the changes and explanations all seemed to make sense.

Leading into the test-case review activity and to gauge how best to structure the discussion, **Mr. Kelter** asked the members how much of the material they had been able to get through. All were at least somewhat familiar with both the Axletree and Ledding Library projects, and there was an observation that the library seemed tougher a tougher case to use as a test for the draft code—as a public building with a very different use than a typical residential or mixed-use building, it was not clear that the design elements were as relevant. **Mr. Kelter** suggested that the discussion should focus on the Axletree test case and move on to the library if time allowed—the group agreed.

**Mr. Kelter** asked whether the group generally agreed with the evaluation he had made of the Axletree project, including notations of where it seemed like the project did not meet the relevant standards and would need to be reviewed against the guidelines. The group agreed, and **Committee Member Tracy Orvis** reported that she found it fairly easy to apply the standards. **Mr. Kelter** asked whether the standards seemed to perform well and had the desired effect. **Ms. Orvis** said that wood might need another look with respect to materiality, as the current draft only allows it as an accent material. **Vice Chair Brett Laurila** suggested that there may be rules about construction in downtowns or perhaps fire district standards that might discourage the use of wood as a primary material. **Ms. Orvis** agreed that it might be more useful to consider the question of using wood as a material in the context of fire and safety than the issue of it as a sustainable material.

The group then worked through the evaluation sheet and discussed questions for various design elements:

- **Element A (Site Frontage)**
  - There may be a need to allow small setbacks of 0 to 3 ft.
  - Reminder that it can be difficult to confirm the active ground space standard.
- **Element B (Wall Structure & Building Façade Details)**
  - The rhythm and pattern of the Axletree design were very busy. **Chair Schuster** and **Vice Chair Laurila** agreed that the building elevations and the hand drawings were very different, which presented some confusion about what the building would actually look like. **Vice Chair Laurila** thought a three dimensional view would make it easier to confirm whether the standard was met.
- **Element E (Doors & Entrance Locations)**
  - Lighting information would have been helpful to determine whether entrances were adequately lit.
- **Element F (Windows)**
  - The standard requiring a 4-inch reveal or recess may be more prescriptive than necessary. Perhaps it should only apply to the ground floor (street level).
- **Element G (Corners)**
  - No changes to suggest to the draft. **Ms. Orvis** thought the building may actually meet the corner standard, when you look at the entrance locations.

- **Element H (Building Massing & Transitions)**

- **Vice Chair Laurila** thought it was significant that many of the upper-story balconies were removed from the final design (from initial drawings). **Chair Schuster** agreed that there was no real variation in height, though she did feel that the new proposed standards are better than before.

- **Element N (Resident Open Space)**

- **Vice Chair Laurila** reiterated his opinion that there should be an option to reduce the requirement for resident open space where a project was adjacent to a park, which would allow more site space to be used for housing.

For the October 5 meeting, the discussion can focus on the question of applicability.

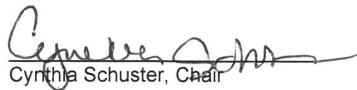
**7.0 Other Business/Updates – None**

**8.0 Design and Landmarks Committee Discussion Items – None**

**9.0 Forecast for Future Meetings**

Oct. 5, 2020	Regular meeting
Oct. 20, 2020	Annual joint meeting with City Council
Nov. 2, 2020	Regular meeting

**Chair Schuster** adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

  
Cynthia Schuster, Chair

Respectfully submitted,  
Brett Kelter, Associate Planner