

**CITY OF WEST LINN
HISTORIC RESOURCES ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

JULY 7, 2009

Members Present: Chair Gail Holmes, Vice Chair Sandy Carter, Charles Awalt, Midge Pierce and Tom Neff. Members Absent: None

[TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE: RECORDING BEGAN AFTER ROLL CALL]

Staff Present: Tom Soppe, Staff Liaison/Associate Planner; and Peter Spir, Associate Planner

Agenda Topics: Business Items: Minutes; Willamette Historic District Code Update; CLG Grant Updates; Willamette Historic District National Register Nomination Update; Goal 5 Notification

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. in the Willamette Room of City Hall, 22500 Salamo Road, West Linn, Oregon.

2. BUSINESS ITEMS

2.a. MINUTES

The **Minutes of June 2, 2009** were edited and **approved** by unanimous vote.

2.b. WILLAMETTE HISTORIC DISTRICT CODE UPDATE

Peter Spir presented the staff report (see Staff Memorandum, "CDC-09-01 Revised Staff Report," dated June 25, 2009). He highlighted aspects of the proposed code: It placed tighter limits on the resulting size of remodeling projects; put more controls on accessory structures and accessory dwelling units; addressed lot coverage; and allowed permeable surfaces. He hoped the tables and other features in the proposed code would make it easier to read and understand.

During the ensuing discussion Board members discussed the Purpose section. They wanted to see a reference to sustainability there. They wanted language the staff proposed to strike to be restored. It would help readers understand the intent, philosophy and justification for the regulations before they read them. Awalt stressed that a national historic district did have a "social" and "political" context because preservation codes resolved use conflicts. He said he wanted to stop development in the historic district, and he said he believed allowing alterations posed a significant danger to the district.

Members discussed the exemptions section. They were reluctant to exempt windows from the design standards because they wanted the local code to reflect national standards. The draft proposed to allow the Planning Director to exempt certain improvements if they had limited impact. But the board wanted "the chair of the HRAB or his/her designee" to have that authority and to base the decision on national standards. At some point in the future when there was a trained, historic preservation officer on staff that person could have that authority. The group was not inclined to allow

alterations to the rear of houses to be exempt from the standards, but they might agree to exempt a low deck behind the house if the staff or the HRAB agreed to the design.

The proposed exemptions section allowed demolition of “non-contributing” structures. Awalt did not support that. He related that he had been advised that the code could prohibit both new construction and demolition in a national register district if there was nothing else in the rest of the City code that said someone could build on that lot, and if there was an avenue of appeal. He suggested the appeal should be to the HRAB. Members observed those restrictions would effectively prevent the owner of a specific double lot they were aware of from dividing it. When asked why he wanted to prevent new construction that might fit the district, Awalt clarified that he wanted to maintain its big lot character. When asked why include non-contributing structures he observed that all the structures ever built in the district were still standing and it was just a matter of time before some of them were old enough to qualify to be considered contributing structures. To protect them would keep the entire architectural history of the district’s history intact. That was worth attempting.

The Board recalled their consultant had recommended using the terms “contributing” and “non-contributing” instead of “primary” and “secondary” structures. They read the provision that allowed remodels of non-contributing homes to be consistent with their own specific architectural style. They noted that would mean, for example, that a 1960s house would not have to be remodeled to reflect an older style. A mixture of eras was not a bad thing.

The group agreed to restore language in the Decision Making Body section that would allow the Clackamas County Historic Review Board to review alterations. That section also specified that the City Council was to appoint two members who not only had an interest in historic preservation, but had related experience and/or knowledge. Spir advised that his experience was that it was beneficial to have architects and builders on the HRAB who knew how to help an applicant improve the design and could help them save money. Awalt wanted the HRAB to be the decision-making body for historic district boundary changes. The staff advised the HRAB was legally an advisory body and it was the Planning Commission who had the authority to hear the matter and make a recommendation to the City Council, which made the final decision.

The groups examined the application process section. Awalt said he did not support the requirement for a pre-application conference. He held that everything should be done across the [Planning Department] counter. The staff clarified that an applicant was to meet with the affected neighborhood association and then participate in a preapplication conference with the Planning Director. The applicant paid for the conference.

The board observed the staff proposed to replace the formula for averaging the front setback on adjacent properties with a set distance. However, they thought the averaging formula resulted in better visual variety along the street. Awalt observed that Approval Criteria setback provisions that would control how far a porch could protrude needed to be further refined. Members noted that Historic District requirements listed in Table 25-1 showed allowable lot coverage was 50%. However that included coverage by the house and all accessory structures and ADUs. Spir explained ridgeline orientation requirements were to avoid allowing a long, monolithic roofline along the street. The Board wanted the staff to insert language to assure that a developer could not manipulate the grade of a site in order to manipulate the structure’s height.

The proposed code was scheduled to be considered by the Clackamas County HRAB the following Thursday. The local board needed more time to examine the draft code and submit comments to Spir. They asked Spir to present it to the county board as a "work in progress." Awalt said the Board should add one more property to the District: "Marge's House."

2.c. 2009-11 CLG GRANT UPDATE

This discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

2.d. 2008-09 CLG GRANT UPDATE

Soppe reported that the consultant planned to email the Holly Grove materials to him and each board member so they would have it by the August meeting. After they ratified it he would send it to the state to show SHPO what they did with their CLG grant. He reported there would be grant money left over. He asked if the HRAB wanted to use it to survey Buck Street or to have the consultant fashion guidelines for the Willamette District.

_____ **moved** to use the remaining CLG grant money to fashion Willamette District guidelines. _____ **seconded** the motion and it **passed** 4:0. Awalt abstained. Soppe was to ask the state agency to allow the board to amend the grant so they could do that.

2.e Willamette Historic District National Register Nomination Update

This discussion was postponed until the August meeting.

2.f Goal 5 / Chapter 26 Notification

This discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

3. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Board asked Spir to look into whether the School District was protecting the old Fields House foundation and the 1850s brick well.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Holmes adjourned the meeting at 9:04 pm

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF JULY 7, 2009

Agenda Item	Title	Doc Date	Document Description	Document Number

MINUTES APPROVED:

Gail Holmes, Chair

Date