

MINUTES

Historic Landmarks Commission Meeting

August 27, 2025

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**MINUTES**

**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETING**

August 27, 2025

4:00 p.m.

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon 97058  
Via Zoom / Livestream via City Website

**PRESIDING:** Bob McNary, Chair

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Forust Ercole, Eric Gleason, and Victor Johnson

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Tom Giamei

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Museum Commission Representative Julie Reynolds, City Councilor Scott Randall, and KPFF Engineer Paul Schmidke

**STAFF PRESENT:** Director Joshua Chandler, Senior Planner Sandy Freund, and Administrative Assistant Crystal Sayre

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair McNary at 4:01 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Johnson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved by McNary to approve the agenda as presented. The motion carried 4/0, Ercole, Gleason, Johnson, and McNary voting in favor, none opposed, Giamei absent.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Ercole noted a correction regarding Councilor Randall's attendance. Randall confirmed he had been absent.

It was moved by Ercole and seconded by Johnson to approve the minutes of June 25, 2025 as amended. The motion carried 4/0, Ercole, Gleason, Johnson, and McNary voting in favor, none opposed, Giamei absent.

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chair McNary explained that he had spoken with the Mayor and intended to step down due to health concerns. He expressed his willingness to continue serving as a member but felt it was time for new leadership.

It was moved by Gleason and seconded by Johnson to elect Ercole as Chair, and to elect McNary as Vice Chair. The motion carried 4/0, Ercole, Gleason, Johnson, and McNary voting in favor, none opposed, Giamei absent.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Carolyn Wood, *1709 Liberty Way The Dalles*, shared updates from the Discovery Center and provided historical context regarding the Downtown Transportation Center, historic lantern collections, fundraising bricks, and archives from the former Downtown Development Association. Commissioners expressed appreciation for the historical information.

### **PRESENTATION**

#### The First Street Project

Director Chandler gave an overview of the First Street Project, noting it has been in planning for nearly two decades and carries forward past efforts to improve connections between downtown and the riverfront. He explained that First Street was originally the City's commercial corridor and later home to The Dalles' Chinese community. Today, the street contains one of the City's oldest water lines (dating to 1875), deteriorating retaining walls, and hollow sidewalk vaults near the Baldwin Saloon that have become safety hazards.

Chandler described the current project scope, which extends from Union Street to Laughlin Street. Planned improvements include new sidewalks, landscaping, bike facilities, stormwater upgrades, and realignment of parking. He noted that the project is designed to coordinate with the Federal Street Plaza for consistency. Renderings showed redesigned intersections at Court and Washington Streets and streetscape upgrades intended to reduce blight and improve accessibility.

He explained that archaeological review determined the project will have an adverse effect on historic resources, and the City is working with SHPO on mitigation measures. These include preserving certain façade remnants, salvaging materials, installing interpretive signage with QR codes, and stamping The Dalles' Chinese name into new sidewalks.

Chandler stated that structural engineers concluded the historic basalt walls could not be retained and will be replaced with gabion basket walls faced with basalt to reflect historic character. He also noted that salvaged wall rock may be stored or repurposed by the City.

The estimated cost of the project is \$6.92 million, with funding from both City reserves and Urban Renewal. Chandler emphasized that the project must be completed to satisfy the 2009 bond obligation. Final design completion is expected in fall 2025, with bidding and award later

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this year. Construction is planned to begin in winter and continue for about one year, requiring full closure of First Street. The City has coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce, Pacific Coast Producers, and others to manage event and business impacts.

Engineer Paul Schmidtke from KPFF assisted with technical questions regarding bike lane design, wall durability, and construction methods.

Chair McNary raised concerns about community perception of project costs, long-term maintenance, and historic preservation. He recalled salvaged basalt stone from past projects that might be reused.

Commissioner Johnson questioned the design of the bike lanes, emphasizing that the plan labeled them “protected” but showed no vertical separation. He argued that true protected lanes are critical for cyclist safety and tourism, noting their potential to attract cycling visitors. He also described the project as an opportunity to reconnect The Dalles to the riverfront, aligning with past Blue Zones community values.

Commissioner Randall stressed the project’s role in improving connections to the riverfront and enhancing community pride.

Commissioner Reynolds inquired about SHPO coordination and expressed interest in the durability of gabion walls in wet climates. She also raised questions about the historic waterline replacement and SHPO staffing changes.

Commissioner Ercole asked whether Cherry Festival parking would be impacted. He later voiced concerns about the longevity of gabion walls compared to traditional stonework.

Commissioner Gleason provided historical context, noting he had served on the 2006 advisory committee. He expressed disappointment that the project had not involved the Historical Landmarks Commission earlier, particularly regarding the decision to replace historic stone walls with gabion baskets. He emphasized that gabion baskets were not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for historic preservation and lamented the permanent loss of original walls.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

Senior Planner Freund sought Commission input regarding whether replacement of deteriorating decks and railings on a non-contributing multifamily home in the Trevitt’s Addition could be processed as a minor alteration.

Commissioner Johnson asked clarifying questions about location and safety issues.

Commissioner Gleason supported treating it as a minor alteration since the building was non-contributing and the replacement would be in-kind.

Chair McNary and other commissioners generally agreed. Consensus was reached that staff could process the request as a minor alteration.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

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*Meeting conducted in a room in compliance with ADA standards.*

Submitted by/  
Crystal Sayre, Administrative Assistant  
Community Development Department

SIGNED:



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Forust Ercole, Chair

ATTEST:



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Crystal Sayre, Administrative Assistant  
Community Development Department