

MINUTES

COLUMBIA GATEWAY URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY BOARD MEETING

August 19, 2025

5:30 p.m.

City Hall Council Chambers
313 Court Street, The Dalles, Oregon 97058
Via Zoom / Livestream via City Website

- PRESIDING:** Dan Richardson, Chair (left at 5:33 p.m.)
Ben Wring, Vice Chair
- BOARD PRESENT:** Timothy McGlothlin, Scott Hege, Marcus Swift, Walter Denstedt, Jill Amery, one position vacant.
- BOARD ABSENT:** Kristin Lillvik
- STAFF PRESENT:** Director and Urban Renewal Manager Joshua Chandler, Economic Development Officer Jacob Anderson, City Attorney Jonathan Kara, Administrative Assistant Crystal Sayre

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richardson at 5:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Member McGlothlin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Hege and seconded by Amery to approve the agenda as prepared. The motion carried 7/0; Amery, Denstedt, Hege, McGlothlin, Richardson, Swift, and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Lillvik absent, one position vacant.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair Richardson opened nominations for the vacant Vice Chair position.

It was moved by McGlothlin and seconded by Swift to appoint Wring as Vice Chair. The motion carried 7/0; Amery, Denstedt, Hege, McGlothlin, Richardson, Swift and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Lillvik absent, one position vacant.

Chair Richardson left the meeting at 5:33p.m. after the vote, and Vice Chair Wring presided for the rest of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the May 20, 2025 and July 15, 2025 meetings were considered. After discussion on abstentions and the ability of Board Members to vote if they had reviewed the meeting recordings, it was moved by Hege and seconded by Swift to approve the minutes of both meetings as presented. The motion carried 4/0, Hege, McGlothlin, Swift, and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Denstedt and Amery abstained, Richardson and Lillvik absent, one position vacant.

PRESENTATION

A. The First Street Project

Director Chandler presented a comprehensive overview of the First Street Project, previously shared with City Council in July and scheduled for presentation to the Historic Landmarks Commission.

Chandler described First Street as the City's original commercial corridor, historically home to landmarks such as the Baldwin Saloon, the Wing Hong Hai Company building, and remnants of Chinatown. The corridor also contains one of the City's oldest water lines (1875). He emphasized the historic significance of the street due to its legacy as a commercial and cultural hub, and the urgency of addressing ongoing infrastructure and safety concerns.

Historical Context

- First Street had been raised to mitigate flooding, causing the original first floors to now serve as basements.
- The corridor transitioned from a commercial center to the hub of the Chinese community.
- Mid-20th century fires and demolitions left many vacant lots.
- The project has been contemplated for nearly two decades and reviewed by numerous boards, councilors, mayors, and staff.

Project Evolution

- Initial 2006 scope envisioned an \$8–12 million corridor redesign, including the Washington Street underpass.
- Federal and State funds were secured but later scaled back due to rising costs.
- In 2022, the City mutually ended its agreement with ODOT, saving \$820,000 and regaining local control.
- In 2023, KPFF was re-engaged and the scope was reduced to Union through Laughlin Streets. Walker Macy provided updated design concepts.

Current Conditions

- Hollow sidewalks and vault spaces near the Baldwin Saloon were found structurally unsound, with deteriorating supports, sinking curbs, and visible cracking.
- Engineering analysis determined that simple fill would jeopardize foundations, requiring pier and metal support systems.

- Conditions present significant public safety risks.

Historic and Archeological Coordination

- The project area intersects multiple archeological zones, especially the Chinatown block.
- SHPO confirmed the project would result in “adverse effects,” requiring mitigation.
- Mitigation measures include reinstalling and relocating a trap door, preserving facades, constructing gabion walls with basalt facing, installing interpretive signage and QR codes, and stamping the City’s Chinese name into sidewalks.

Design Approach

- Gabion walls were recommended in the 2021 structural analysis as cost-effective and less intrusive than concrete.
- The dual-basket design provides structural integrity while allowing ornamental basalt stonework.

Cost and Funding

- Estimated subtotal: \$5.96 million.
- With administrative and inspection services: \$6.92 million (5% increase from 2024).
- Fund 18 contained \$3.5 million, with \$3.2 million budgeted.
- Approximately \$1.5 million had already been spent.
- Additional Agency funds will be required once final plans are complete.

Timeline

- Final plans expected in September 2025.
- Bid and award anticipated fall–winter 2025.
- Construction scheduled to begin in early 2026, with a one-year construction period.
- Project will be coordinated with the Federal Street Plaza project.
- Public open house scheduled for October 2025 to address parking and traffic impacts.

Recent Related Investments

- Light Capsule art project.
- Completion of First Street parking lots.
- Federal Street Plaza project – currently underway.

Director Chandler concluded that the project fulfills the Agency’s mission by removing blight, enhancing property values, honoring bond obligations, avoiding further cost escalation, and achieving the long-standing vision of downtown revitalization.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ACTION ITEM

A. Resolution No. 25-005, A Resolution Adopting the Agency's Public Records Policy (effective August 20, 2025) and Establishing A New Fee

City Attorney Kara presented a resolution adopting a Public Records Policy for the Agency, modeled on the City of The Dalles' policy. He explained that state law required transparency in defining public records and processes for handling requests. The resolution established a fee of \$25/hour for staff time, consistent with City practice. While not a public hearing, state law required an opportunity for public comment due to the establishment of a new fee. No public comment was offered.

It was moved by Hege and seconded by McGlothlin to approve Resolution No. 25-005 as submitted. The motion carried 7/0; Amery, Denstedt, Hege, McGlothlin, Richardson, Swift, and Wring voting in favor, none opposed, Lillvik absent, one position vacant.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Consideration of Ownership Transfer – First Street Parking Lots

Economic Development Officer Anderson, attending remotely, and Director Chandler introduced discussion on two Agency-owned parking lots. Lot A, approximately 14,000 square feet in size, was leased to the Commodore II for \$1 per year until 2053. Under the lease, the Agency remained responsible for approximately \$2,000 annually in property taxes, although tenant use of the lot was minimal. Lot B had no lease restrictions.

Chandler noted that City-owned parking lots along First Street were maintained and regulated by the City, including issuance of overnight parking passes. In contrast, the Agency-owned lots lacked those provisions. He emphasized that the Agency had been working to phase itself out of property management, citing prior experience with the Tony's building, and posed the question of whether the Board wished to continue maintaining these lots or consider transferring ownership to the City. Chandler also reminded the Board that all Agency-owned property would automatically transfer to the City when the Agency sunsets in 2029.

Vice Chair Wring stated that it made sense to transfer ownership to the City now, especially since the City would assume management in 2029 and in light of upcoming First Street maintenance projects.

Board Member Hege confirmed there were two lots separated by Eric Gleason's building and asked whether one was leased to the Commodore. Anderson confirmed the lease was for exclusive use, though Chandler noted the public commonly parked there and only five or six Commodore tenants typically used the spaces. The lease reserved 38 spaces for Commodore tenants, but these were rarely filled or enforced.

Hege questioned the fairness of the \$1/year lease, pointing out that it created an ongoing tax burden. Chandler explained the agreement originally contemplated Commodore maintenance responsibilities that had not been met, leaving the Agency with annual tax liability. He agreed that, at minimum, the Commodore should cover those costs.

Hege asked if Urban Renewal was paying the taxes; Chandler confirmed it was. Hege also asked about improvements; Chandler reported that the Agency had resurfaced and striped the

lots using City crews at reduced cost. Board Member McGlothlin praised the quality of the improvements.

McGlothlin also inquired about signage removed from the Sawyer parking lot. Board Member Amery confirmed that the signs had been transferred to the Neon Sign Museum, and Chandler added that the City would remove the remaining posts.

Amery advised that ownership by the City would not automatically exempt the lots from taxation if private use continued. She recommended further research into liability allocation, possible partial exemptions based on square footage, and statutory requirements. Wring asked if the lots could simply be converted to public parking like other downtown lots; Chandler replied that public lots were not taxed, though Amery emphasized that multiple-use arrangements could create complications.

Hege asked about the lease term. City Attorney Kara clarified it ran from June 1, 2003 through December 31, 2053, a 50-year agreement. Hege asked whether there were default or nonpayment provisions, and Chandler confirmed such language existed but said details needed further review.

Hege observed there was little justification for Urban Renewal to own or operate parking lots when the City already did so, and Amery noted it was unusual that the Agency, rather than the tenant, was paying taxes.

The Board agreed that transferring the lots to the City was the appropriate course, rather than continuing Agency ownership and management.

Staff were directed to research tax implications, lease obligations, and legal requirements, and to return with options.

No formal action was taken.

BOARD AND STAFF COMMENTS

McGlothlin inquired about pending easement issues. City Attorney Kara reported all but one had been resolved, with the final notarized easement expected by mail.

Director Chandler reported the exclusive negotiating agreement for redevelopment of the Tony's building site (Fermentation Hub) had expired. The developer failed to secure grant funding and missed deliverables; no communication had been received. The Agency was no longer bound to exclusivity and could consider other proposals.

Hege asked whether the Agency had received communication from the applicant regarding next steps. Chandler explained that staff had been working with the applicant, but several meetings had been canceled and deliverables were not provided. He further noted that the project's application for a Main Street Grant of approximately \$400,000 had not been successful, which appeared to have been a significant financial setback. As a result, the project had largely stalled, and staff had not received any recent communication.

Anderson confirmed there had been no updates in the past three weeks.

Amery added there may be extenuating circumstances affecting the applicant.

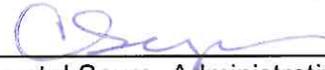
ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Meeting conducted in a room in compliance with ADA standards.

Submitted by/
Crystal Sayre, Administrative Assistant
Community Development Department

SIGNED: 
~~Ben Wring, Vice Chair~~
Dan Richardson, Chair

ATTEST: 
Crystal Sayre, Administrative Assistant
Community Development Department