

City of Newberg

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2026

1. Call to Order

Chair Bob Woodruff called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Commissioner Bob Woodruff, Commissioner Britta Mansfield, Commissioner Pheonix Lamouche, Commissioner Debbra Buerkel, Councilor Wheatley

Absent: Commissioner Karen Tozer, Commissioner Rylie Wood

A quorum was established.

3. Public Comments

No general public comments were received.

4. Hearing

Chair Woodruff opened the quasi-judicial land use hearing, noting that this type of formal hearing is relatively uncommon for the Commission. He read the required procedural script, opened the public record, and asked all commissioners whether they had any bias, ex parte contact, or jurisdictional objections. None were reported.

a. Rosmarino Proposal

The hearing was convened to consider the Rosmarino Proposal, a request for a historic design review for new construction of a covered outdoor patio structure at a downtown Newberg property on First Street. The subject property is a designated historic landmark site located in the C3 downtown zoning district. The project came before the Historic Preservation Commission because the property carries a historic landmark overlay designation.

b. Staff Report

Staff Planner Jeremiah Cromie presented the staff report. He explained that the current structure on the rear alley-facing portion of the property is a wood-frame patio enclosure constructed during the COVID-19 pandemic which does not meet current building code standards. The applicant is proposing to replace it with a permanent, detached covered patio structure.

Jeremiah Cromie outlined the applicable review criteria under municipal code section 15.344, which governs new construction on historic landmark sites. The key standard requires that new structures be compatible with the existing landmark in terms of size, scale, materials, and character. The code also permits contemporary designs provided they do not destroy historic architectural materials or features. Staff noted that because the new structure faces the alley rather than a street, many of the more stringent façade-oriented design guidelines were less applicable. Staff also noted the importance of the code's requirement that new construction be clearly distinguishable from the historic structure so that future removal would be possible without compromising the landmark's integrity.

Staff recommended approval of Commission Order 2026-001, with an additional finding that the new structure is compatible with the existing landmark site in terms of size, scale, and character.

c–g. Attachments

The application materials, agency comments, public comments, zoning and utility maps, and historic inventory profile were included in the packet and available for Commission review. No issues were raised from agency comments.

h. Order 2026-001

Presentation

The project architect, Daniel, presented via Zoom on behalf of the applicant. He described the proposed structure as a semi-conditioned exterior patio space intended to provide a comfortable dining experience while allowing free airflow. The structure incorporates masonry walls on the east and west sides to meet fire code requirements related to the zero lot line condition on one side, while the north and south sides are constructed more as open fencing to promote ventilation.

Daniel highlighted several design considerations:

Skylights: The approved plans include three discrete fire-rated skylights, which differ from a continuous skylight depicted in earlier renderings. He clarified this discrepancy was the result of fire code compliance requirements.

Detachment from Historic Structure: The new structure is intentionally designed to be free-standing and detached from the original historic building to preserve reversibility—a core principle of historic preservation practice. The only point of contact with any existing structure is where a masonry wall abuts an addition containing the restaurant's existing restrooms, which is not part of the original historic fabric of the building.

Fire Safety: Masonry walls, fire-rated skylights, and a parapet wall on the west property line were all required by fire code due to the zero lot line condition. Daniel noted there may be limited opportunities to appeal certain fire code requirements through the building official, but the parapet on the west side is a firm requirement.

Utilities and Conditioning: The patio space will not share the main building's HVAC system. It will instead use suspended radiant heaters and ceiling fans as spot-conditioning elements. Restroom and kitchen facilities from the existing restaurant will serve the new space, and occupancy calculations have been completed to confirm adequacy.

Security: The structure will be fully enclosed and accessible only during business hours, with emergency exits as required by code.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions regarding the parapet wall on the north elevation, which Chair Woodruff noted visually interrupts the view of the historic building and existing mural from the alley. Daniel confirmed the parapet is a fire code requirement and not a design preference, though he acknowledged the original design had envisioned a co-planar roofline. Chair Woodruff stated this was not a deal-breaker but expressed a personal preference that the wall be minimized if a future code appeal were possible.

Commissioner Mansfield asked whether the building would function as a single structure for code purposes; Daniel confirmed it would, as the patio is dependent on the existing kitchen and restroom facilities.

Commissioner Lamouche asked about the fire safety measures in greater detail. Jeremiah confirmed that the two-hour fire-rated wall requirement is standard for structures built to a zero lot line, consistent with requirements applied to attached townhomes, and that these determinations are made through the building official rather than the Historic Preservation Commission.

Staff confirmed that the Commission's recommendation for approval included an additional finding specifically addressing compatibility of the new structure with the historic landmark.

Commissioner Buerkel moved to adopt Historic Preservation Commission Order 2026-001, approving the requested historic and design review as presented, including the additional finding recommended by staff that the new structure is compatible with the existing landmark site in regards to size, scale, and character. Commissioner Britta Mansfield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Woodruff congratulated the applicant and thanked the project team for bringing forward a well-considered proposal. He noted informally that the new alley-facing wall presents an attractive opportunity for a future mural.

5. Updates from Staff

a. River Street Update and Historic Districts

City Recorder Rachel Thomas provided an update on the River Street corridor discussion. She clarified that the City of Newberg does not currently have a local historic district designation mechanism, and that getting a historic district designation would require going through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) process. Based on her knowledge of local history and prior experience working with SHPO, she expressed significant doubt that River Street as a whole would qualify for a state historic district designation, given that the street has not been consistently maintained to represent any single historic time period. However, she noted that individual properties along the corridor could potentially be designated by the city.

Rachel Thomas reported that the City Council has formed an ad hoc committee to evaluate design options for River Street, that Commissioner Woodruff is a member of that committee, and that public comment is being accepted at the committee's meetings. She emphasized that no decisions are imminent and that the process will be deliberate and inclusive.

Chair Woodruff used this discussion to raise broader concerns about the historic character of Newberg's south end, noting that it faces increasing redevelopment pressure. He suggested the Commission begin thinking about how it can more proactively advocate for maintaining the historic character of the area, including through potential future correspondence to the City Council. He noted that while he considered a formal letter to council, he felt current advocacy efforts were already sufficient, but encouraged the Commission to continue planting seeds for future action.

Chair Woodruff also brought forward several related topics of personal interest:

Historic Sidewalk Features: He noted that the city has an existing inventory of historic sidewalk features, including stamps, horse rings, and mailbox posts, and that he had written to the City Manager and the Public Works Director requesting a formal policy for preserving and cataloging these features when sidewalks are replaced. He noted that city crews are already informally saving such items and expressed interest in a more systematic approach, potentially including a public display or future museum. He also mentioned that he has been personally developing a KML mapping file to catalog these features with photographs and location data.

Concrete Stamping: He suggested that the city's concrete crew consider using a custom stamp—possibly a camelia to reflect Newberg's "Camelia City" branding—when performing sidewalk work, as a low-cost way to add historic character to new infrastructure.

Heritage Trees: Chair Woodruff introduced the Oregon Travel Information Council's Heritage Tree program and challenged commissioners to identify candidate trees. He noted that eligibility requires a documented connection to national, state, or regional history, tree health, and public visibility. He identified three specific candidates he intends to submit for designation:

- A bicentennial tree in front of the Newberg School District office, planted in 1976 and dedicated to Jesse Edwards;
- A clone of the world's oldest and largest coast redwood, located at Ewing Young Park and donated by the Archangel Ancient Tree Archive;
- A Hiroshima survivor persimmon tree at Chehalem Valley Middle School, propagated from a tree that survived the 1945 atomic bombing.

Rachel Thomas noted that a bicentennial tree formerly at George Fox University was likely removed during recent construction, and that a candidate tree at the pool park may still be standing. The Commission discussed how heritage tree designation can facilitate grant funding for tree preservation and care.

Commissioner Buerkle raised the broader topic of how the Commission might advocate for preserving historic homes and neighborhoods, referencing successful programs she was aware of in Colorado Springs. She noted that Newberg contains significant historic architecture and asked whether the Commission could explore mechanisms—including financial incentives—to encourage preservation during remodeling or redevelopment. She also asked whether "Heritage Gardens" could be a designated category.

Commissioner Mansfield raised the question of expanding the historic resource inventory beyond buildings to include sites or other resources, and asked how people could voluntarily opt in. Rachel Thomas confirmed that property owners can apply at any time to have their property added to the historic resource inventory, that there is currently no application fee for designation, and that such applications would come before the Commission for review and decision. She noted the city's downtown district has already received preliminary state approval for consideration as a formal historic district whenever the city chooses to move forward with outreach to property owners and council approval.

Discussion arose about whether property owners are adequately notified when their property already carries a historic overlay designation. It was noted that the historic inventory was originally compiled in the 1980s and 1990s, and that there is no current mechanism—such as a title record notation—that automatically informs buyers of the historic overlay. Staff explained that the primary trigger point is when a property owner applies for a building or demolition permit, at which point the overlay would be identified. The Commission acknowledged this is an imperfect system and expressed interest in exploring improvements, including potential outreach or notification strategies.

b. CLG Grant Progress

Rachel Thomas reported that the Certified Local Government (CLG) grant the city applied for has been awarded, but that efforts to hire a qualified historian or architectural historian to conduct the mid-century survey work have encountered significant challenges. Of six vendors contacted through a Request for Proposals, two declined outright (one due to workload, one due to budget concerns), and four had not yet responded. Rachel Thomas noted that candidates must meet specific federal professional qualification standards, which limits the pool of eligible contractors. She indicated she will continue outreach, is open

to reducing the scope of work if necessary to fit within the available budget, and may seek additional vendor recommendations from SHPO. She expressed hope that a qualified contractor can be identified.

6. New Business

a. Review of Historic Preservation Code

Rachel Thomas led the Commission through an introductory overview of the city's Historic Preservation Code (municipal code section 15.344) and the commission's own governing code (section 2.55), with the intent of familiarizing commissioners with the tools and authority available to them.

Key points discussed included:

Commission Authority: The Commission's enabling code grants it authority to identify and evaluate historic resources, make recommendations to City Council, review and act upon landmark applications, comment on local, state, and federal laws relating to historic preservation, and develop written and graphic guidelines to clarify the criteria in the landmark subdistrict code. Commissioners can also draft formal recommendations to Council to amend the code.

Landmark Designation Process: Property owners initiate landmark designation by submitting an application to the Director of Community Development at no fee. Applications must include site plans, architectural elevations, and historical documentation. The Commission then reviews the application against the designation criteria and makes a determination. The criteria are modeled closely on the National Register of Historic Places standards and include factors such as association with significant history or events, architectural distinctiveness, master craftsmanship, and contribution to neighborhood character. Rachel Thomas emphasized that age alone is not sufficient for designation—historic significance must be clearly demonstrated.

Tribal Consultation: Jeremiah noted that beginning January 1, 2027, the city will be required by state law to notify relevant tribal governments at the outset of land use application processes. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) is providing cities with a list of tribes to be notified for their specific jurisdictions. The notification triggers a comment period of approximately 15 days. Jeremiah acknowledged ongoing uncertainty about how to handle situations in which a tribe raises a concern close to the city's 120-day decision deadline, and noted that conversations with the state are ongoing.

Removal of Designation: The code includes a provision allowing the City or Commission to require repayment of any previously waived fees if a property owner seeks to remove a historic designation. In addition, the current fee for removal of designation is just over \$2000.

Interior vs. Exterior Alterations: The historic preservation code generally applies to exterior alterations rather than interior changes. Minor exterior alterations are reviewed by staff administratively, while significant alterations and new construction on historic sites come before the Commission.

Housing Law: Jeremiah noted that recent state housing legislation prohibits historic preservation regulations from being used to prevent the addition of housing units (e.g., a duplex) on a historically designated property.

Due to the time, the Commission agreed to continue this code review at the next meeting. Commissioners were encouraged to read through the eight-page code, note any suggested changes or areas for improvement, and share feedback with Rachel Thomas in advance of the next meeting. The Commission may consider drafting formal recommendations to Council for code amendments based on this review.

7. Adjournment

Chair Woodruff thanked all commissioners, staff, and attendees for their participation and adjourned the meeting.

Attested by:

Bob Woodruff
Bob Woodruff (Jun 2, 2026 10:07:49 PDT)

Bob Woodruff, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission

Rachel Thomas

Rachel Thomas, City Recorder

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Final Audit Report

2026-06-02

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