

Design Commission Meeting
Zoom
Gresham City Hall
March 15, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

I. Opening/Citizen Comment

A regular session of the Gresham Design Commission was called to order on the **15th of March 2023** at 6:31 p.m. (VIRTUAL), located at 1333 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham Oregon. The meeting was recorded and scribed by Carrie Osborn.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Matthew Sugarbaker
Pat Lando
Brent Shelby
Sean Newberry
Mike McKeel

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Robert Hayden
Tom Orth

STAFF: Josh Willaim, Senior Planner
Carrie Osborn, Planning Technician
Helen Toloza, City Attorney

Chair Sugarbaker introduced staff and members of the Commission that were present and opened the agenda items, East County Library, Design Consult application DA-23-00138.

II. East County Library (DA-23-00138) (1297 NW Eastman Pkwy)

Discussion Topic: questions and responses

4.1250.B.5.S6.a – Transparency

Due to the elevation change, will Design Commission accept reduced “ground floor” transparency at the south and east facades where the ground floor is 4 feet above grade?

The Design Commission expressed no concerns with the reduced transparency (approx. 40% provided versus 60% required) along the ground floor street facing facades.

Wind Study and Mitigations

The Commission was comfortable with the wind study findings and mitigations to reduce the impact of wind on the Library’s outdoor spaces.

General Feedback

The Commission responded to the request for general design feedback, addressing whether the project is moving in the right direction. The commission touched on several topics in their feedback:

- Wayfinding to entry locations. The Commissioners expressed a desire to see some form of wayfinding, specifically at the Eastman and Division corner of the site, to help pedestrians identify what the building is and where to enter. The connection to the south entry from that corner needed to be made clearer.
- Eastman Landscaping. The Commissioners discussed how the landscaping along the Eastman frontage does not fully support the story being told about the understory and forest above. The scale of the trees shown along the frontage were too short in comparison to the height of the building. Layering of the different landscape elements to achieve variation in height was one idea that was discussed. The Commissioners also discussed having the landscape theme spill over the sidewalk into the landscape strip between the curb and the sidewalk (“walking through the forest”). A sidewalk (or path) that meanders along the Eastman frontage could also help to support the story of the forest.
- Materials. The Commissioners discussed the exterior wood materials and how that material would last over the lifetime of the building. They discussed the challenge of providing a long-lasting wood composite material that did not appear “plasticky”.
- Division Frontage. The Commissioners were concerned about the project feeling hostile toward Division and Eastman. Specifically, the Commissioners focused on the south plaza frontage as an area that could be opened up better, engaging Division Street, and ensuring that it does not feel walled off along that entire street edge. While the plaza opens to Ava Ln very well, the applicant should seek to create better engagement with Division.

III. Design Commission Workplan 2023

The purpose of the work plan is to guide the work of the Planning Commission and come committees and align that work with the City Council’s strategic plan to that end. The Design Commission assists in the development and application of the guidelines and standards in the city’s centers. They hold work sessions with applicants and conduct quasi-judicial hearings as needed to ensure proposed development projects meet the design standards.

IV. Other Commission Business

No meetings are on the schedule for the next three weeks. Staff will notify Commission of any changes.

V. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm.

Chair

Recording Secretary

Date

Date

For more information and to view the meeting recordings, please visit:

www.GreshamOregon.gov/DesignCommission