



City of Portland Historic Landmarks Commission

Briefing

SUMMARY MEMO

Date: December 26, 2023
To: Nicholas Morell and Bryan Poole, PBOT
From: Hillary Adam, Design / Historic Review
hillary.adam@portlandoregon.gov, 503-823-8953
Re: Briefing on Johnson-Kearney Belgian Block Deployment
Summary of December 11, 2023 Historic Landmarks Commission Briefing

Thank you for taking advantage of the opportunity to hold a preliminary briefing with the Historic Landmarks Commission regarding your project. I hope you find it informative and valuable as you continue with your project development. Attached is a brief summary of the comments provided by the Historic Landmarks Commission at the December 11, 2023 Briefing. This summary was generated from notes taken at the public meeting and a subsequent review of the public meeting recordings. To review those recordings, please visit:
<https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/record/16345526>.

These Historic Landmarks Commission comments are intended to guide you in further design exploration of your project. These comments may also inform City staff when giving guidance over the course of future related land use reviews. It should be understood that these comments address the project as presented on December 11, 2023. As the project design evolves, the comments, too, may evolve or may no longer be pertinent. Additionally, the Commission's role in this Briefing was to approve the proposed deployment request, per City Council ordinances #139670 and #141548.

Preliminary briefings are not intended to substitute for other Code-required land use or legislative procedures.

Encl:
Summary Memo

Cc: Historic Landmarks Commission

This memo summarizes **Landmarks Commission** comments provided on December 11, 2023.

Commissioners in attendance on December 11, 2023 include: Smith, Moreland, Roman, Foty, Moretti, Davis, Agosto

All comments:

- Commissioners thanked the project team for coming before the Commission, for proposing the use of Belgian Blocks in this area, and for doing it well.
- Commissioners thought the proposal was an appropriate and great use of Belgian Blocks and voted unanimously to support the deployment of Belgian Blocks in this area.
- One Commissioner noted it was possible that they were in this location at one time. Other Commissioners noted that the blocks will be an asset to Broadway Corridor and appreciated the introduction of these historic elements into the future development area, suggesting it might help influence future design.
- One Commissioner noted the blocks will provide a textural interest to NW Johnson and appreciated the design of the parking area with its continuous line. One Commissioner expressed a desire to see more blocks, noting it was a beautiful textured way of showing what the city once was. One Commissioner noted that it was smart to use the blocks along a “special” pedestrian-focused street, suggesting that this could be modeled in other parts of the city.
- One Commissioner noted that because such a large area of blocks is proposed, but there is still a desire to see more, perhaps more blocks could be installed in smaller finites areas nearby such as around trees as a decorative feature. Commissioners noted that the accessibility concerns are real so keeping the blocks out of movement zones is smart.
- Commissioners noted that it seems wise to put in the infrastructure early to entice development and hoped it wouldn't need to be torn up when the adjacent developments are constructed.
- Commissioners supported the idea of blocks being reinstalled when removed for utility work, rather than replaced with asphalt, such as at NW Kearney a few blocks to the west.
- One Commissioner noted that the blocks often aren't used because of the cost of removing the old mortar so the fact that the City is using the blocks in this location could be a good demonstration project to show others how interesting it can be and hopefully inspire others to do the same.
- The Commission encouraged PBOT to come forward with additional opportunities for deployment of Belgian Blocks if projects that fit the approval criteria can be identified.

Files related to this Briefing can be found here: <https://efiles.portlandoregon.gov/Record/16498335/>.

Please contact me with any questions.