



LANDMARKS COMMISSION

MINUTES

April 1, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Hybrid – Council Chambers

Approved: May 6, 2026

Call to Order

Chair Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

6:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Camron Settlemier, Chad Robinson, Richard Engeman, Rayne Legras, Mason Cox, Vance McDermott

Members absent: Cathy Winterrowd, Rayne Legras (both excused)

Approval of Minutes for February 4, 2026

6:01 p.m.

Commissioner Settlemier motioned for approval of the February minutes as presented. Commissioner Engeman seconded the motion. All voted for approval 6-0.

Public Comment

6:01 p.m.

Lonna Capaci, Visitor Service/Historic Resources Manager for the Albany Visitors Association (AVA) reviewed the activities that took place in March. She reported that the Walk for the Pioneering Women was a popular event and plans to repeat it for May National Historic Preservation Month. Capaci reported on the first Albany Heritage Group meeting and the topics that were discussed regarding Preservation Month and highlighted the May events planned. She announced the Annual Heritage Conference in Woodburn at the end of April. Additionally, she announced that the AVA is applying for a grant on behalf of the Monteith Historical Society to fund videos showcasing the home tours.

Scheduled Business

6:07 p.m.

HI-02-26, Type III – Quasi-Judicial Process Historic Review of Exterior Alteration and Use of Substitute Materials for construction of deck on the front façade of home at 915 Walnut Street SW.

Chair called the public hearing to order at 6:08 p.m.

Commission Declarations

- No members declared any Conflict of Interest
- No members declared any Ex-Parte Contact
- Commissioners Settlemier, Robinson, and Engeman walked by the home.
- No members abstained from the deliberation.
- There were no public challenges to participation of commission members.

Reading of Hearing Procedures

Planner III, Jennifer Cepello, read the hearing procedures.

Staff Report

6:12 p.m.

Project Planner, Alyssa Schrems, summarized the application and process for Historic Review of Exterior Alterations and Use of Substitute materials on the subject property at 915 Walnut Street SW sharing slides*. Schrems noted that there is a Victorian garden that obstructs its view from the street. She described the Review and Decision Criteria and acknowledged that the structure is considered Historic Contributing. Schrems then posed a question for the Commission whether the Use of Substitute Materials is an appropriate review for this application as there had been an addition done in 2013 and the deck added after that so added to a non-historic addition to the house.

April 1, 2026

Commissioner Settlemier asked staff about the previous decision HI-05-13. He reviewed the decision about the extension of the enclosed porch proposing the stairs be moved to where the door would be located with the handrail style similar to the front porch. But there was no mention of a deck that he found. Schrems answered that the last review was that one in 2013 for the addition. So, the deck was constructed between 2013 and now. Settlemier was unsure of the Commission's ability to review this application as the deck was never approved, and construction deviated from the previous approval. Schrems explained how they can review considering it a violation, which would put it before the commission to determine whether to approve after the fact. Settlemier interpreted that as focusing on surface replacements of the structure rather than a staircase. Schrems explained that they did notice the construction of a porch. Schrems clarified that Commissioners would be doing a first level review of whether the structure should be there.

Applicant Testimony**6:16 p.m.**

Hazel Harrison, property owner, testified that the original porch was built at the same time as the extension on the house, she surmised that the contractor must not have applied for the proper permits, but she was unaware of that until now. The deck was inspected at the time. She wanted to replace the stairs for safety reasons but the only substitute materials she was requesting was for the deck floor.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Settlemier asked if the substitute material is already on the deck. Harrison answered yes but only found out after the fact that the contractor did not get a permit that he had been contracted to get so she was pursuing the permit after the fact. Harrison stated that the door exiting the house would need a deck to provide access.

Commissioner McDermott asked the applicant if she was aware of the required approvals for an exterior alteration. Harrison made an assumption that the contractor would be familiar with that process. When she eventually asked the contractor for the permit and he admitted not applying because he wanted to avoid the process. Commissioner McDermott then asked about information on material costs and who prepared that information. Harrison replied it was the contractor. Harrison is concerned about the unfinished work.

Public Testimony

None.

Waiver

Chair asked if the applicant wished to waive the 7-day waiting period for submitting additional written arguments. Harrison agreed to waive the waiting period.

Prior to deliberation, Schrems clarified that anything that isn't a freestanding new structure will have a historic Review for Exterior Alterations which the applicant has applied for.

Chair Robinson called the public hearing closed at 6:24 p.m.**Commission Deliberation**

Commissioner Settlemier summarized the proposal indicating that the applicant originally applied to extend the enclosed porch and then put in a stairway aligned with the door with handrail to match the front porch approved in 2013. Then the deck was built later that doesn't match the approval so it's a compliance issue. He didn't have a concern with the Substitute Materials but did for the deck itself, rather than an enclosed porch. Settlemier continued that the styling of the deck is completely contemporary not matching the house or district. He commiserated with the applicant's position but didn't see a solution.

Commissioner Robinson agreed, adding that if this was purely a staircase to provide safe access to the door but not additional space to be used, they would have to discuss how much discretion they had in granting something for accessibility. But this was constructed last year and without approvals indicating contractor negligence. Robinson emphasized that they had to decide this in line with code.

April 1, 2026

Commissioner Cox shared his confusion but did concur and was concerned with the matching styles.

Commissioner Settlemier understood that there was a deck done in 2013 with the original addition but then expanded out last fall (2025) not matching what had been approved in 2013.

Commissioner Robinson surmised that in effect it is a completely new structure and he could only support denial.

Commissioner McDermott concurred with the other commissioners. He empathized with the homeowner but unfortunately, they have to apply the code uniformly. He also noted that the information provided is incomplete. McDermott offered that the applicant should have the contract and work reviewed to determine how to move forward.

Commissioner Cox asked in the event of a denial what happens to the work, whether it reverts back to the 2013 approval.

Commissioner Robinson praised the landowner for asking for the proper process now but expressed that their hands are tied.

Motion: Commissioner Settlemier moved to deny the exterior alterations and use of substitute materials as detailed in planning file number HI-02-26. This motion is based on the findings and conclusions made by the Landmarks Commission during deliberations on this matter in particular finding that the proposal is not compliant with Albany Development Code 7.150 b. Alterations compatible with historic characteristics of the area with the existing structure in matching size, scale, materials and architectural features. Commissioner McDermott seconded the Motion for Denial.

Roll call vote was called. Vote to deny the application. (6-0)

The Chair called for a recess at 6:35 p.m.

Business from the Commission

6:40 p.m.

Commissioner Engeman announced that the Albany Public Library Foundation is encouraging the city to address ADA Accessibility and to establish a Historic Preservation bookshelf/Study Center.

Preservation Month Activities

Schrems shared that Commissioner Settlemier would be doing another version of his If Walls Could Talk on May 13, 2026, at the Albany Museum at noon. Commissioner Robinson put in a request to add a history sip in the evening as well as many can't attend during the day. Settlemier will look into it.

Staff is working with AVA on an event with Matika Wilbur, a Native American photographer/educator to present her Project 562, a multi-year effort to photograph and share stories from indigenous communities.

Commissioner McDermott offered that he had spoken to Rebecca Bond about doing a window workshop in May but hadn't committed to anything yet as AVA hasn't come up with a venue yet. Schrems offered that a Farmer's Market demonstration may be an option. Commissioner Robinson noted it would be good outreach and volunteered to help. McDermott wanted to add that on May 9, 2026, there is a Window Workshop happening in Salem so to avoid that date.

Commissioner Cox recalled suggesting previously that perhaps University of Oregon (U of O) graduate students might be interested in presenting on historic inventory, or similar topics, he offered to lead that. Schrems shared that professors were very interested, but they were in the midst of moving that program from Portland State University to U of O so administratively too much to organize at this time.

Business from Staff

Schrems noted that they are working on the contract with Marika's presentation on May 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Linn-Benton Community College.

April 1, 2026

Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file

Susan Muniz
Recorder

Reviewed by,

Signature on file

Alyssa Schrems
Planner II

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cdaa@albanyoregon.gov.*