City of Portland, Oregon
Portland Permitting & Development
Building Permit Inspections

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River Community Advisory Committee
Thursday March 12th 2026, 11am-12pm
Meeting Minutes

Agenda

11:00 am	**Call to Order, Roll Call, Zoom Housekeeping**	**Kelly Holtz, Chair**
11:05 am	**Approve 12/4/25 minutes with quorum; summarize key points of prior meeting**	**Kelly Holtz, Chair**
11:10 am	**Float definitions and 50% rule:** **- identify confusing language** **- review code & track changes for future code cleanup**	**Dan Comfort**
11:20 am	**Title 28 brochure development; summarize highlights** **- "Float Smart Portland" and "Living on Water: What You Need to Know"; good pieces – what is best outreach?**	**Dan Comfort** **Ken Ray**
11:30 am	**Review Ken's draft and similar City brochures**	**RCAC**
11:45 am	**Education and outreach; QR postcard/simple handouts to FL moorages**	**RCAC**
11:50 am	**Action items recap**	**RCAC**
11:55 am	**Set future meeting date/time**	**RCAC**
12:00 pm	**Adjourn**	**Kelly Holtz, Chair**

Attendees

RCAC Members
Kelly Holtz
Dan Comfort
Sarah Ross

PPD Employees
David Tebeau
Ken Ray
Jason Buerkle
Sean Whalen
Casandra O'Dell

Minutes

- Meeting begins at 11:07am

- Pre-meeting, Ken starts covering the ideas behind his website draft, with plans to speak more on it during his section of the meeting.

- At meeting start, quorum not met while waiting for more attendees, will delay approval of meeting minutes if/until quorum met.

- Float definitions – Dan worried about ambiguity; what is the 50% especially re: stringers. Kelly suggests diving deeper into the wording of the existing Title. Float is comprised of different components, which are defined by Title EXCEPT decking. Ambiguity is on the "floatation device" aspect – which would be foam blocks per Dan, but since they are easily replaceable they shouldn't qualify as the 50%. Dave suggests it leaves room depending on which method is used for buoyancy, to avoid restricting the description when it might change. Sarah provides clarification on the definition, which does seem to match that. Structural vs float – 50% each?

  Jason agrees with Dave that it is purposefully worded to incorporate different styles of systems – the floatation system might be 50%, but the components may NOT be that specific. An assessment may be required for novel systems, especially. Jason worries this issue may be in question because people may not want to complete the permitting process; again, he says he is open to being called for clarification at any time. Dave – not by volume, but by component, designed in his opinion to give latitude to the applicants. Dan says no one ever pulls permits for floatation blocks, because they are commonly replaceable; he is concerned with having those specifically listed on the Title. Wants to be able to provide the best info to potential contractors coming in. Sarah comments that the foam shouldn't be considered as a floatation device because they are not permanent. Also says people will find a way around it; it's more important to do the work safely.

  Jason advocates case studies or precedents for a training manual or training materials that show what the 50% MIGHT look like, since it CAN wildly vary visually. A visual guide not just to the 50% but to the whole process. Kelly agrees, something along those lines is what she had imagined for the brochure. Kelly also argues that logs, specifically, are defined as floatation devices, not the foam blocks, which are supplemental, not structural. Jason confirms he does not consider foam blocks structural, unless he runs across odd situations where they ARE a foundational aspect of the floatation system, for example. Logs, joists, stringers are the floatation system.

  Visual guide to examples. Ken says the City is discouraging the creation of brochures – only one graphic designer available, websites are easier to update – leaning away from paper vs website, especially if the website is printable. Jason references an internal

powerpoint for as a source for images, and would support that type of education option online. Will try to find the example, pin that for now to revisit at next meeting.

Dan suggests x # of logs, x # of stringers, and the volume of joists; easy to calculate percentages replaced to see if that 50% is met. He thinks we should reach for a definitive formula that the contractors can use. Dave says he doubts that method would get argument from the city, agrees that a visual guide would likely be beneficial. Pin potential verbiage change for now – Dave does clarify that changing code language would be a long undertaking, but non-change re-clarification has much more leeway. Brochure development – evolved to be more of a webpage, though usually City doesn't do specific pages for specific codes. Ken shares screen; starts on common home projects page. Generally, construction above the water follows Residential building code, common home projects page lists multiple options, but it does NOT include floating homes at this time. Says no specific page speaks to floating structures, and his draft would fill that gap. Ken is willing to send out Word mockup for editing. Would be a page dedicated to permitting issues specific to floating homes, with links to relevant pages elsewhere on the website. Intended to be an inviting page. Needs to be detailed enough to convey that permitting for these types of structures differs from that for other residences. Ken however says he is not subject matter expert, and invites suggestions and edits. Continues to outline the proposed webpage, which is in line with other similar city webpages for residential building projects. Can be linked to multiple sensible locations on the website to make the info accessible. An image would be on this page as part of the header, and other images CAN be added to the text, though with respect to keeping the webpage legible.

Sarah suggests adding information on the float rating system, as it is required to get a loan. Not enough to "get into the weeds" but enough that you aren't surprised by it when you are already "in the weeds." Dan does say that is covered on his webpage, and floating home agents do cover that info generally, as it is part of the financing process – not sure if it's relevant to the city page.

Sean suggests adding something for moving floating homes either into or within a moorage, as a permit for moving them around is needed. Also suggests something about special code requirements based on location i.e. the airport and the aircraft overlay zone. Dan agrees that it is relevant for new construction, not sure how much for remodels. Sean clarifies that it would mostly be for moving around and into those areas. Permit pulled is usually the electrical permit to his knowledge. Kelly agrees a good potential addition. Also likes the webpage, with the addition of imagery. Ken shows the Unreinforced Masonry page as an extreme example page with large amounts of relevant imagery – likely more than needed, but showing the potential. Overall, images and adding floating homes into the list of residential properties on the website is good. Ken and Jason will likely review stock photos and inspection issues for options. Dan says he can get pictures of floats in various stages of construction. Also has a book with basic

diagrams. Dan happy to present options he has available – Ken says to email them to him, he's more than happy to review them for webpage suitability.

- Sarah first on next agenda – RCAC Communication Plan.

- Future meeting date – Thursday, April 9th, 11:00am. Kelly will put it to the rest of the missing committee members; Cassie will get it scheduled.

- Meeting adjourned 12:05pm.