



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISR D 147/20

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, November 10, 2020

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Matt Chan
Matt Fujimoto
Faye Hong
Sergio Legon-Talamoni, Chair
Russ Williams
Tanya Woo

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Andy Yip

Chair Sergio Legon-Talamoni called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

In-person attendance is currently prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.5. Meeting participation is limited to access by the WebEx meeting link or the telephone call-in line provided on agenda.

Roll Call:

Matt Chan	Present
Matt Fujimoto	Present
Faye Hong	Present
Sergio Legon-Talamoni	Present
Russ Williams	Present
Tanya Woo	Present

Absent

Andy Yip

111020.1 PUBLIC COMMENT

A Vietnamese interpreter was available during the public comment period. There was no public comment.

Ms. Frestedt stated that no written comment was received in advance of the meeting and no community members pre-registered to give public comment. She noted that due to administrative error the sign-up feature had not been enabled until 50 minutes prior to the meeting. Ms. Frestedt took responsibility for the error and said that if anyone tried to sign up before the feature was enabled they could provide public comment in writing either via US Postal Mail or email. She said community members can submit comments in language and they will be translated. She said that the Department of Neighborhoods takes public comment very seriously and values language access. She said that DON continues to reevaluate how we are serving the community and language access for large projects. She said that last meeting agenda was provided in both English and Chinese; the current agenda was provided in both English and translated into Vietnamese. She said agendas that include new construction projects will be translated and interpretation will be provide during the meeting. She said she is reviewing ways to make the virtual meeting content more accessible to non-English speakers.

111020.2 PROJECT BRIEFING

111020.21 1224 S. King St. – Little Saigon Landbanked Site Park Project

Presenter: Katie Bang, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Mark Tilbe, Murase

Briefing on proposed development of a new park on an undeveloped lot. This briefing will provide an overview of the evolution of the park design development, landscaping, furnishings, and proposed artwork.

Mark Tilbe, Murase Landscape Architecture, provided site context and existing conditions. He said the photos show a 12’ grade change on the site. He indicated a weeping willow on Victorian Row House site that will remain.

Katie Bang, Seattle Parks and Recreation (PAR) reviewed project schedule. She said that to date they have held three large public meetings; Seattle Police did a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) walk; and the team presented to Little Saigon Park Advisory Committee. She said they are currently in design development. She said they are working with Arts and Culture and have an artist on board. She said construction could start in September 2021 and run through August 2022. She said public engagement revealed no strong preference of options presented, but noted a slight preference of 1 and 2 over 3. She said public noted concern about safety and security, and homeless use. The public voiced support for open sight lines, add lighting and a more open flexible use space. She said they noted a desire for stronger understanding/portrayal of Vietnamese references in the designs. There was continued support for the children’s play area.

She said they used the Racial Equity Toolkit to set outcomes and summarized some of the findings, including, but not limited to:

- Increase opportunities for historically underrepresented communities to participate in the public engagement process
- Involve Stakeholders. Analyze data.
- The Little Saigon Park Advisory Committee was created to involve stakeholders from for profit and non-profit sectors as well as residents from the Little Saigon community

- Determine Benefit and/or Burden.
- Benefit: Increased access to open space
- Burden/Unintended consequence: Reduced parking for Lam's Seafood
- Lam's Seafood is culturally significant to the community. Working alongside Lam's to assist with messaging for customers can help minimize harm to the business
- Continue to check-in with stakeholders on status of the park design and engagement opportunities

Ms. Bang said that this is one of 14 land banked sites which were purchased by Seattle Parks to provide additional access to open space in a high-density urban neighborhood. The park will provide accessible space for neighborhood events and community interaction. The design of the park will reflect the cultural character of the neighborhood. The park will be designed to CPTED principles and be designed to reduce maintenance. She said there is a 15% max limit on impervious surfaces. The 15% impervious surface limitation excludes pathways.

Mr. Tilbe said the park is designed to provide different sizes of spaces for accessible community gatherings and events. A public art installation will reflect the culture of the neighborhood. The park will be designed with open sight lines and night lighting. There will be multiple locations designed for performances. An electrical panel for events will be installed. The parking space in front of the park on S. King Street will be reserved for temporary food trucks and PAR maintenance vehicles. The community requested a play area.

Mr. Tilbe identified the site for the art. He reiterated the 12' grade change on the site and identified ramps to provide ADA access. He said there is a seating wall around the play area for parents. He noted the amphitheater, plaza, open lawn, moveable tables and chairs and identified the large willow tree at the Victorian Row Apartments. He presented an enlarged section drawing of a gradual ramp with guard rails and handrails included, but minimized where possible. He said the children's play area will have a rubber play surface.

Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Culture, said artist Kalina Chung was selected from a call for art. She worked with Friends of Little Saigon on design inspiration. He noted that she was not available to attend the meeting due to a schedule conflict. He said has personal experience with the Chinatown International District (CID). Her parents are from Vietnam and she grew up going to the CID. The inspiration for the work comes from the tube homes of Vietnam, which are narrow and several stories high. He noted that the park space is narrow; the intent is for people to look upward. He said the art will act as a gateway and will help connect people to the natural world, from a busy street into the park. He said it is designed at 30' but budget constraints may impact height. He said the piece will be fabricated from a series of panels with a number of design motifs from multiple Asian cultures, a call to the collective spirit. He said it will be made from steel, painted in bright colors.

Mr. Tilbe said three walls at edge of plaza will get art pieces with motifs from Kalina's work, put on face of benches. He said the same color palette as the art will be used. He said the play area will also take color references from Kalina's work. He said it is an urban park and it will be designed to be safe. He said the play surface in the children's play area will be a bright rubber mat so no sharp objects can get lost amongst chips. He said Goric rubber steppers and rubber spheres are proposed. He said tables and chairs will be cabled together; he noted proposed bike rack and trash/recycling receptacles.

Mr. Tilbe proposed narrow planters as screening elements on either side of the park; planters will be filled with Golden Bamboo. He proposed smaller trees – Japanese maples, Styraax will join the existing Weeping Willow. He proposed pole lights marching along the outside edge with lights facing inward. He said they will keep open sightlines. Seat wall lights will replace pole lights under Weeping Willow. There will be a raingarden below the play area.

Mr. Chan asked how tall the new trees would be.

Mr. Tilbe said the canopy will start about 5 – 6' up.

Ms. Woo asked if more outreach is planned.

Ms. Bang said they have moved into the Final Design development, informed by an extra public outreach event for the play area with Little Saigon Park Advisory Committee, SCIDpda, and twenty business owners. She said that more outreach is planned for art piece. She said they are getting into materials and design now.

Ms. Woo asked about graffiti and maintenance plan.

Ms. Bang said they are working with SPD on making sure the park can be safety patrolled. Maintenance staff will make sure the design is maintainable and durable. She said the art will have an anti-graffiti coating.

Ms. Woo asked if skateboard use and 'climb-ability' of art structure had been looked at.

Ms. Bang said there is a PAR review process for that.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked how events will be scheduled.

Ms. Bang said PAR has its own scheduling team; some events require special event permit. She said they haven't talked about reserving picnic space rather prefer leaving the space open and flexible for the community.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said he is excited about the art element as a gateway. He said the inspiration reminds him of artist Edoardo Tresoldi who does wire mesh silhouette with lighting integrated. He asked if they'd considered incorporating lighting into the artwork.

Mr. Huff said there is no budget for lighting. He proposed working with PAR on existing lighting plan to see if light could shine on structure.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if the art structure will be light and airy or more solid and dense.

Mr. Huff said the artist wants a lighter feel. He said it will be light as possible but noted that it will be fabricated of forged steel.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni wants to see a section cut or elevation so he can see the thickness of the panels, construction detail, etc.

Mr. Huff said the artist is now looking at fabricators and pricing.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if they are still exploring colors for play area.

Mr. Tilbe said the colors are not set. He said that now the artist is on board it is flexible, and they want to pick colors that work with the art.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni appreciated that colors will be integrated with art.

Mr. Huff said they have continued with outreach for design motifs and colors.

Mr. Fujimoto spoke about the artist's gateway in relation to the ramp. He sees a tremendous relationship between the two spaces. He noted the contrast in the forms between the lattice work and the vertical design of the guardrail and asked if there are other options. He said there is an opportunity for a common language between the two.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said it would be nice to see material continuity between archway material and guard rail.

Mr. Fujimoto clarified he was mainly looking at the metal grate and referenced p. 16 on of the presentation materials.

Mr. Tilbe said they can look at options. He said that one of Kalina's patterns is similar to a shoji screen. He said they have a very tight budget and need to find something that works with the art piece.

Ms. Bang said they have been working through balancing everything. She said the guardrail is a bit more industrial and has to meet Code requirements. She said they will continue to explore.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said to consider the porosity of the guard rail and art pick as well.

Mr. Fujimoto noted the placement of the light fixtures and asked about how the surfaces will be lit in the middle portion of the ramps. He encouraged lighting up the walk surface.

Mr. Tilbe said the light is consistent and they will have engineers look at foot candles. He said the rendering in the presentation is conceptual.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if a traffic study is being done and noted the reduction of parking for Lam's.

Mr. Hong left the meeting at 5:30 pm.

Mr. Chan said he would like to see the ramp and guard rail details with the gateway. He said he would like to be able to see what it will look like from deeper into the park. He asked the height limit for structure on east side of park and how impact to the park could be mitigated.

Ms. Frestedt said the height limit is 75-170 depending on programming.

Mr. Fujimoto appreciates the artwork at 30' and expressed concern that budget may inhibit ability to achieve that height.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said the art looks intentional and grand in a larger concept, especially as it relates to Vietnamese culture and balconies seen in Vietnam. He noted Mr. Chan's comments about potential development on east side of park and said that the board could weigh in on mitigation.

Ms. Woo asked if the utility pole shown in rendering would remain.

Ms. Bang said yes.

Mr. Chan asked if the art would sit in front of the poles or behind. He said he would like to see a more accurate rendering, with the artwork placed in relationship to poles, trees and other features.

Mr. Tilbe said art will sit within park property.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni commended the applicants on a wonderful job on the project. He said they have listened to board feedback and engaged with community. He appreciated the transparency with their plans and looked forward to the final design.

Mr. Fujimoto hoped the beauty and simplicity of the art concept is retained.

Mr. Huff noted that the fabrication method is not determined yet.

111020.3 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt said an announcement went out to ISRD email list about postponing the ISRD election until further notice because of Covid-19. She said the notice will be posted on ISRD website as well. She said no other briefings are scheduled at the moment. She said City Council extended the emergency order allowing Staff to review smaller projects such as signs and minor repair, not larger projects or demolition. She said if something can't be reviewed by staff it will come before the board.

Mr. Chan asked about the large number of public comments Ms. Frestedt mentioned at the start of the meeting.

Ms. Frestedt said public comment was received on the 206 5th Avenue project that was recently reviewed by the Board. She said that CID Coalition and its supporters were concerned that the project was heard at a virtual meeting and community wasn't notified. She said comments have since been posted to social media. She said concerns were raised that the use was changed from condominiums to apartment.

She said that on new construction projects outreach and community engagement is of increasing concern to community. She said the Design Review Board (DRB) requires outreach. She said outreach is not required in historic districts. She said the decision to do outreach is not a requirement. She said there have been recommendations to explore extending that DRB requirement to historic districts.

Mr. Chan spoke to the Board's review process. He said there may be questions by the public why something wasn't covered, and they may not be aware there were seven other meetings on that project where that was discussed.

Ms. Frestedt said that there not been strong community opposition to the 206 5th Ave. S. project in the four meetings that occurred. She said three public comments had been received, two from Coalition members and one from a community member; there was spoken comment at one meeting. She said the application was complete and board action is required in SMC 23.66 within a certain time frame outlined in the code. She said there are other projects in the pipeline do not have complete applications at this time.

Mr. Chan asked if the meeting recording is available to public for review.

Ms. Frestedt said it is available upon request.

Mr. Chan said he saw social media comments that characterize that the Board as rubber stamping the project. He wanted to make sure a public record is available should people want to review it.

Ms. Frestedt said that minutes are not posted until the Board reviews and approves them. But the recording is available upon request.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said he saw the posting and noted that people had been contacting him directly. He said it is in the Board handbook that we should not respond, and that people should direct comments to Staff.

Ms. Frestedt reminded board members it is not appropriate for them to speak outside of a public meeting about projects that are active and in process and they should direct interested parties to Staff. She said board members must disclose any inquiries.

Mr. Chan said he was getting texts during the meeting regarding it and commented, "I can't comment on that."

Mr. Fujimoto said he did, too and he did not respond.

Ms. Frestedt said to avoid conflicts of interest no response is the appropriate response and that members should disclose that they have been contacted.

Ms. Frestedt said that since elections can't be held it has been confirmed that all seated members will continue to serve until new members are elected / selected. She noted Mr. Legon-Talamoni's appointment is due to expire and asked if he would be able to continue to serve. He responded yes.

Ms. Frestedt said there may or may not be another meeting before the end of the year. She said that December 8 will be the last meeting of the year if we have a meeting.

Adjourn

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