



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
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ISRD 58/17

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, March 14, 2017

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Bush Asia Center
409 Maynard Avenue S.
Basement meeting room

Board Members Present

Eliza Chan
Stephanie Hsie, Vice Chair
Carol Leong
Herman Setijono

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Tiernan Martin
Valerie Tran

Vice Chair Stephanie Hsie called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

031417.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 24, 2017

MM/SC/CL/SH 2:0:2 Minutes approved. Ms. Chan and Mr. Setijono abstained.

February 14, 2017

Deferred.

031417.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

031417.21 614 Maynard Ave. S.
Applicant: Ming Fung, Solterra

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed change of use on a portion of the 2nd floor from “restaurant” to “office” for Solterra (968 sq. ft.). Exhibits included plans.

Applicant Comment:

James Wong, Solterra, presented the proposal. He explained they are new owners of the property and proposed to use upstairs space for their office. He clarified it is just the non-restaurant space.

Public Comment:

Dorothy Wong, Executive Director for Chinese Information Service Center, noted the importance of economic revitalization without displacement of cultural value and history. She said she supported the proposal.

Cynthia Brothers asked if any changes to the building are proposed.

Mr. Wong said not at this time.

Board Discussion:

Ms. Leong said it is good to activate the space.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for use, as proposed.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on consideration of the application submittal and Board discussion at the March 14, 2017 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

The proposed use meets the following sections of the **International Special Review District Ordinance and applicable Design Guidelines:**

SMC 23.66.320 – Proposed uses

MM/SC/HS/CL 4:0:0 Motion carried.

031417.22

312 and 314 6th Ave. S. – Jackson Building

Applicant: Michelle Kumata, Wing Luke Asian Museum

Ms. Chan recused herself.

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed construction of a historical and interpretive display to activate a vacant storefront. Proposed work includes a retroactive request for approval to replace a scissor gate that was damaged by an automobile. Exhibits included photographs, renderings and plans. The Jackson Building was constructed in 1932 and is a contributing building within the District. The building is located within the Asian Design Character District. The ISRD Board received a briefing on January 24, 2017 on proposed storefront activation and

design in the adjacent vacant storefront. The Board recently recommended approval or installation of a barber pole at 314 6th Ave. S.

Applicant Comment:

Michelle Kumata, Wing Luke Asian Museum (WLAM), provided an overview of the project which she described as a collaboration between WLAM, SCIDPDA, and building owner, Paul Murakami. She said the display will highlight incarceration during WWII and the return and rebuilding of Nihonmachi. She said this year is the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066.

An Huynh, SCIDPDA, provided context of the site and said the space was used as a warehouse during incarceration. She said the family took a crowbar with them in anticipation of using it to remove boards from windows and doors upon their release. This will be one of the artifacts on display.

Ms. Kumata said the windows of this space have been boarded up for a long time.

Ms. Huynh explained that Paul Murakami will be curator of the installation; she said it will be low maintenance and he will change out artifacts from time to time.

Ms. Kumata explained a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) which included Mr. Murakami, WLAM, SCIDPDA, and neighborhood stakeholders was formed and three meetings were held. She said the goals of the project were developed by the CAC: convey perseverance, show importance of this Nihonmachi, and add to Wing Luke neighborhood tour. She said they plan for May installation and completion in June. She guided board members through design details. She distributed a sample of the vinyl window film, noting that will have a 5-year lifespan. She said the north window will be dedicated to incarceration time with vinyl window treatment referencing boarded up windows and a photo of Minidoka. She said the south window tells story of post WWII with photo of interior of Higo store and an original light fixture. She said that smaller side windows will display Minidoka images and durable artifacts.

Ms. Kumata said poster of Aya and Masa Murakami will be on the door; green trim around the door reproduces the Higo wrapping paper. She said single bare bulb is reminiscent of the bare bulb in the barracks. She said strip lighting will be used in central windows. She said a text panel will rest on a stand. She said that Aya and Masa taught school in Minidoka and some letters from former students will be displayed. She said they will include photos of the store and from Minidoka. She explained that stud walls will be installed for photos 18" away from windows. Hinges will be added to provide access for maintenance. She said that on a future project Nihomachi Alley will be activated with murals and lighting.

Ms. Huynh summarized the mural project along the alley.

Public Comment:

Ling Chinn, Rex Apartments, said she's known the family for years and thinks it's wonderful. She said supported the proposal and asked why the Murakami brother wasn't included with the photo of Aya and Masa.

Ms. Kumata said he is in another photo.

Ms. Chinn said she has his car.

Ms. Frestedt commented on the issue of transparency and said this space is different in that this project is preserving the history of the space and telling the story. She said that the windows have been covered and the space has been vacant for a long time.

James Wong asked if the space was ever leased.

Ms. Kumata said it has been used for storage.

Ken Okamoto, Solterra, asked if the family who cared for the property is acknowledged in the text, in order to honor that history. He said in Los Angeles things were not secured and no one looked after properties while people were incarcerated. He said the people who watched the space for the family should be recognized.

Ms. Kumata said Blumenthal and Zimmer are mentioned in the text.

Ms. Leong said this is the second time the board has heard about this project and that lots of questions were asked at the first review. She said she supported the application.

Ms. Hsie said they have done a lovely job; it is a historic component that will preserve the culture and history.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for exterior alterations, as proposed.

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on consideration of the application submittal and Board discussion at the March 14, 2017 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

The proposed exterior alterations meet the following sections of the **International Special Review District Ordinance and applicable Design Guidelines**:

SMC 23.66.030 – Certificates of approval – Application, review and appeals

Design Guidelines

II. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines

- A. Any exterior façade alteration shall respect the original architectural integrity of the storefront.

Secretary of the Interior’s Standards #10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

MM/SC/CL/HS 3:0:1 Motion carried. Ms. Chan abstained.

031417.3 BOARD BRIEFINGS

031417.31 665 S. King St. – Rex Hotel
Presenter: An Huynh, SCIDPDA

Ms. Chan recused herself.

Briefing on proposed removal of a non-original awning that runs the length of the façade above the storefronts and on the proposed reconstruction of the Tai Tung neon cabinet sign.

Ling Chinn, Rex Hotel, said the awning is not original to the building.

An Huynh noted that the Rex is in the center of the historic core. She said that Tai Tung has been there since 1935 and that the owner (Harry Chan)’s grandfather opened the restaurant. She explained the proposal to install a sign for Tai Tung restaurant and to remove a non-original awning from the building. She provided photos of the original Tai Tung sign and said it inspired the new design. She said the new sign is 6’ long x 2 ½’ tall x 8” thick. She said “Tai Tung” will be in white letters with white neon; “Chop Suey” will be in white letters with red neon; and the Japanese characters will be in white paint. She said the blade sign is proposed because it will create more pedestrian interest. She said attachment will be similar to original: upper arm into the mortar joint and lower arm into wood pillar. She said a structural engineer will review the installation method to ensure safety.

Ms. Huynh said they based the size of the new sign on photos of the original sign and the door. She said the cabinet will be dark brown aluminum. She spoke to older patrons who remember the sign being vibrant and visible. She showed photos of other blade signs around the district. She said the sign evokes the historic character of the district.

She explained the proposed removal of the awning, which is not original. It was installed incrementally over time. She said they will remove awning from entire frontage and small portions that wrap to east and west elevations. She said they will do light patch of holes and analysis of building fabric beneath to determine what else needs to be done. She said they will leave revealed wood trim.

Ms. Leong said she appreciates the Tai Tung sign and the nod to history. She asked how the community will know that history. She noted conflicting feelings about what “Chop Suey” communicates. She said the intention is right, but wants to make sure there aren’t negative connotations as viewed by others...due to the historic context and uses of the term.

Ms. Huynh said there are images of the old sign in the restaurant and acknowledgement about the sign and its story. In response to a question about the origins of the proposal, she said she has been working with the owner.

There was further discussion of the term “chop suey” and questions about its historic origins and interpretations over time.

Ms. Leong said that 1935 was a very different time and the owner was not being derogatory but as time went on the term became used in different ways. She said that “chop suey” was a term used to introduce non-Chinese to Chinese food. She said there is no traditional food like that; it was a Western invention.

Ms. Huynh commented on racism and the history of the words. She said she will bring this information back to the owner for further discussion.

Ms. Leong said she saw no conflicts with the Guidelines regarding color, font.

Ms. Huynh said she is working with the owner as part of an economic development façade improvement matching grant.

Mr. Setijono said he was concerned about the connection which he said might need to be beefed up to support the 150-pound sign. He said to investigate structural safety.

Ms. Huynh said they will have a structural engineer review.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board Discussion:

There was discussion about terminology and its history and community and outside community perception to that.

Ms. Frestedt noted that Max Chan has done a history of food in the district restaurants in conjunction with Wing Luke Museum and may be a resource for historic information about the use of the term.

Ms. Hsie said to study the relationships of the sign to the width of the sidewalk and questioned if the sign needs to be that big. She asked if edge detail will be rounded.

Ms. Huynh said it will be.

Ms. Hsie said to look at the color of the background and that a darker background might pop more than the brown that is proposed. She said to look at finishes and connections.

031417.32

504 5th Ave. S. – Publix

Presenter: Andrea Dobihal, Brasstacks NW

Briefing on proposed storefront alterations, including the addition of a walk-up window and metal canopy, outdoor seating, window film and signage for a new tenant, Great State Burger.

Marty Penner, business owner, introduced the project and provided an overview of the business. There are two other locations in Seattle; he said while they have a brand for consistency each store is reflective of the neighborhood it is in. He noted the plan to activate the corner and said they will have a sidewalk café.

Kailan Gregga, Best Practice Architecture, guided board members through the packet of materials.

Ms. Frestedt explained the code provisions related to “formula fast food” and asked the applicant to speak to their business model in light of that definition.

Mr. Penner said that they want the consistency of their brand but reiterated that each locality is important and design is unique to that spot. He said they use a lot of wood.

Andrea Dobihal, Brasstacks NW, said the design focuses on the Pacific Northwest; they don’t want the business to be a generic brand.

Ms. Gregga noted the location in the Publix and the context of the site. She said there will be one street entrance to the space and one in to a shared hallway. She said that they plan for outdoor seating and tables on Weller and noted they aren’t selling alcohol so won’t have rails or markers. She said there will be a walk-up window under a new awning which will create more pedestrian activity. She said this will be next to the existing delivery ramp; lines will queue around corner. She said there are no existing trees, just an International District light poles and hydrant. She said the kitchen will be in the front corner and the main dining room is on the east side. She went over existing materials on elevation and said they will add a steel awning which will bolt to steel beam and a window in one bay. She said there will be a semi-transparent window graphic of mountains that wraps the corner. “Great State Burger” represented by Japanese characters will be included. She indicated location of louver. She said two blade signs are proposed – one at the entry and one at the walk-up window; they will be aluminum cabinets with steel structure bolted to steel structure. She said that no conduit will show – wiring will go to interior. She said there is a steel tube inside. They will use soft white LED 2700 Kelvin.

Ms. Frestedt noted existing banners shown are not approved.

Mr. Gregga said the exterior furniture will be steel tables and red and blue molded resin chairs.

Mr. Setijono cautioned about doing anything outdoors without a canopy above because of the pigeons and seagulls at this location.

Ms. Chan noted there are a lot of homeless in the area.

Mr. Penner said the same conditions apply downtown and they have been able to manage. He said sitting outside is a nice good weather opportunity.

Ms. Dobihal said that furniture will come in every night.

Ms. Hsie said what was proposed is vibrant and fun. She had no objections to the colors. She said that this location is in Chinatown rather than Japantown and suggested using Chinese characters instead. She noted that the property owners are Japanese.

Ms. Frestedt said that Asian characters are encouraged in this area of the district but that there is nothing that specifies which language. She suggested getting community input. She said the Moriguchi family has a long history in the district. She noted that 5th and King is the gateway to Chinatown but said that boundaries have migrated over the years. She said there are strong opinions about the boundaries.

Ms. Dobihal said Miye Moriguchi suggested bringing it to the board.

Mr. Setijono said to use Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese to be safe.

Ms. Leong said it is a unique neighborhood. She said the Guidelines say that façade appearance should integrate into the neighborhood. She said the Chinatown gate is one block away. She said this is the Chinatown International District (CID) with immigrants from all parts of the world. She said the area also has a strong jazz history. She wasn't sure what the answer is but suggested including both Chinese and Japanese characters.

Ms. Hsie said the design is fun but without Asian text you can't tell you are in the CID. She suggested adding one more layer to patterning to make it uniquely CID. She said she is glad they are going in on this corner.

Ms. Frestedt said this is the initial presentation of the proposal and provides an opportunity for the applications to hear from the Board. She said that it is a bit of a design departure, but noted it is a new building and a new use. She said it is in the Asian Design Character District. She said there is so much screening and said the board should talk about that and how it relates to transparency. She said the awning design is one now typically found in the District. She asked the Board to consider the application in overall compatibility to other businesses and district.

Ms. Gregge said the code requires 50% transparency and they are at 39%. She said that the west-facing window the vinyl covers more. She noted the slatted format allows a peak into the kitchen and they want to encourage curiosity.

Mr. Setijono reiterated his concern about outdoor seating because of the pigeon and seagull factor.

Ms. Frestedt noted that Specialty's and Starbucks, across the street have outdoor seating, but there are many pigeon deterrents in Union Station Plaza.

Mr. Setijono said it seems like it will be a fun place.

Mr. Setijono departed.

Ms. Hsie cited the Guideline related to awnings and said the color matches and the scale is acceptable but noted a prohibition against shiny high gloss or translucence.

Ms. Gregge said they are proposing a more matte finish.

Ms. Frestedt suggested they bring in the matte material sample.

Ms. Hsie requested a sample of the vinyl striping to see the affect and suggested wider spacing. She cited 23.66.302 and noted the purpose of the district. She said the design is great but questioned how does it promote the area. She noted perforated steel in Hing Hay park in the shape of Asian animals. She encouraged the applicants to think about ways to incorporate references to the District. She asked about the light bulb affect.

Ms. Frestedt said the bulbs are a classic sign element but they haven't been seen in newer blade signs in this neighborhood.

Ms. Hsie said to make this a signature CID location.

Ms. Leong agreed and said it is the first of many in this evolutionary neighborhood. She appreciated their mission as a company to complement the districts they are in. She said to look at the mountains on the vinyl and to have a second layer of questioning with a nod to Asian character.

Ms. Hsie said the traditional canopy curls and suggested looking at shapes, patterns, colors and historic elements.

Ms. Chan suggested walking around the neighborhood to get inspiration. She said this will be a vibrant, lively addition.

Ms. Leong said to come in with calculations for the window graphic.

Public Comment:

Cynthia Brothers said this is a working class cultural community – not an extension of the stadium. She expressed concern with their price point and the design elements are devoid of Asian culture. She said to give back to the community and consider hiring from the community.

Mr. Penner said they want to do more than lip service and want to be a good neighbor.

031417.4 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt said the Mayor selected an appointee – Sergio Talamoni. She said final design for 6th and Yesler and an application for the ACME poultry site will be coming before the Board soon for a briefing.

Adjourn

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