



The City of Seattle

Pike Place Market Historical Commission

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

MINUTES

MHC 79/21

Wednesday May 26, 2021
4:30 p.m.
Virtual meeting via WebEx

COMMISSIONERS

Sam Farrazaino
Chris Bown
Michael Hammond
Grace Leong
Golnaz Mohammadi
Lisa Martin, Chair
Lauren Rudeck, Vice Chair
Christine Vaughan
Stephanie Young

Staff

Minh Chau Le
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Chair Lisa Martin determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

She reminded Commission members to announce any conflict of interest or ex parte communication prior to review of applications.

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

Roll Call

052621.1 PUBLIC COMMENT There was no public comment.

052621.2 APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF USE APPROVAL

052621.21 Maiz

1914 Pike Pl, Soames Dunn Building
Aldo Gongora, Business Owner

Proposal for new business specializing in handmade Mexican foods and grocery items. To be operated by Maiz LLC dba Maiz owned 100% by Aldo Gongora. She said the space is in Zone 2, street level, food (a-e), retail (a-d) uses permitted. The current use: vacant. Previous use was Mexican Grocery, food (c)(d)(f). New use would be food (c)(d)(f). Space is 450 square feet. Proposed ownership structure: LLC owned 100% by Aldo Gongora. Owner financial affiliations: Aldo Gongora is a co-owner two full service Mexican restaurants operated by Sazon LLC. Owner operator: Aldo Gongora to be onsite for day to day operations. Business hours: 10 am – 6 pm, Tuesday – Sunday. Exhibits included location, description of business, sample product list, and LLC Certificate of Formation. Guidelines that applied to this application include 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7.

John Turnbull, PDA said they are excited about this tenant. He said the Mexican Grocery space was established in 1976 and had a strong and loyal following. It was owned by La Mexicana until it was sold about four years ago along with this retail space which the new owner closed. He noted the desire to have another specialty Mexican retail continue the historic use. He said they have been working on this and then COVID hit. He said the applicant has experience with a family business and will create a new business that focuses on Mexican corn, handmade tortillas, masa, related to Baja. He said it will be a great addition that will continue the historic use. He said he believes the business has enough panache that it will be able to deal with the Starbucks line.

Aldo Gongora said it is hard to find good tortillas for a restaurant. He said that Mexican tortillas are not that heavy and the process to make them makes a lighter tortilla. He said they work with different varieties of corn from different parts of Mexico that offer different flavors and textures unlike the hybrid corn grown in the US. He said they will offer prepared food that will be prepared off site as well as specialty items they make for retail. He said they have suppliers selling native corn which is not as high yield as hybrid, and it is more expensive to grow. He said the corns are seasonal and will be used only as they are in season, there are 59 varieties. He said he plans to grow his own corn eventually.

Ms. Vaughan asked what the main focus is.

Mr. Gongora said it will be 50% hand pressed tortillas and 50% specialty grocery to start but he plans for that to change to 70% tortillas and 30% specialty grocery.

He said he will see what people want, if they want to be able to grind their own maiz or if they just want cooked tortillas.

Ms. Vaughan asked if he was involved with any other businesses.

Mr. Gongora said he has restaurants with his wife and sister in law; his wife runs one in Queen Anne and his sister in law runs the one in Ballard. He said the second restaurant will close at year's end.

Susan Brems, PDA said the business will be a whole new concept – no sit-down dining, no alcohol; meet the producer small batch production and much better-quality corn than we are used to.

Mr. Turnbull said next door (Starbucks) started as selling raw coffee beans to take home and grind your own coffee; he sees this as similar.

Ms. Young asked if they would have demonstrations and if they would sell equipment as well.

Mr. Gongora said yes and there will be a window for people to watch production.

Ms. Young asked if he has any food trucks.

Mr. Gongora said they started doing events and in 2018 bought a truck. He said they park the truck and trailer in their restaurant parking lot; Slazon LLC is on the trailer.

Ms. Martin asked about proposed hours.

Mr. Gongora said he planned on being open Tuesday through Sunday and closed on Monday.

Mr. Turnbull said PDA leases require business to be open six days a week to allow the owner to take a day off.

Ms. Vaughan said it meets 2.6.3.

Ms. Rudeck asked where the food would be prepared.

Mr. Gongora said he might rent space at a commissary downtown but there is also a possibility in West Seattle; he is still investigating. He said their Ballard location is too small and they will vacate Queen Anne space by end of year.

Ms. Vaughan asked if that restaurant would be replaced with another.

Mr. Gongora said no, that the focus will be on Maiz LLC at this time. He said he would be on site all day; his wife will help, and they made add a third person.

Ms. Leong said the business will bring energy to the Market.

Ms. Martin appreciated the focus on preserving heritage and bringing that to the Market.

Ms. Vaughan cited 2.6.8 about ownership of business outside the Market. She said the applicant owns two businesses, but they have different names and different focus, so it is OK.

Ms. Martin said that the guideline says “may” deny, not “shall”. She said the other two locations have different names and provide sit down service; this is completely different. She said they are separate entities.

Ms. Young said it is a special concept; it can appeal to a tourist to eat on the go or to locals to take home.

Ms. Martin noted it would provide an experience and opportunity to ‘meet the producer’.

Mrs. Rudeck said the menu is different from the other restaurants.

Ms. Mohammadi said the concept will bring so much to the Market. She said he will be sharing his Mexican heritage and it is a beautiful addition to the Market.

Action: Ms. Young made a motion to adopt a resolution to approve the application as presented.

MM/SC/SY/GL 9:0:0 Motion carried.

052621.3 APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF DESIGN APPROVAL

052621.31 Maiz
1914 Pike Pl, Soames Dunn Building
Aldo Gongora, Business Owner

Ms. Le explained the proposal to renovate interior space and install storefront signage. Exhibits included a site plan, photos of existing conditions, renderings and floor plan, signage details, color and material samples, and equipment

information. Guidelines that applied to this application included 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6.

Applicant Comment:

John Turnbull, PDA went through exhibits and said the space has been vacant and it has not been remodeled since 1976. He proposed removal of a small wall to open up view, wall tile would be installed, cement block. He said it is not possible to add a fry hood in this location.

Ms. Vaughan asked if there will be stools in the space.

Mr. Gongora said yes, yellow metal stools as in exhibit. He said the mural design will be similar to what is shown but they don't have final design yet. He said it will illustrate Mexican heritage, ancient ways, cooking maize.

Ms. Vaughan asked if the mural will be hand done.

Mr. Gongora said it will be done by hand.

Mr. Turnbull said vinyl tiles were pulled up and there is no concrete, just wood. He said it is unlikely the wood can be refinished and suggested a light gray ceramic tile, VCT or Saltillo tile or hardwood.

Mr. Gongora said the counter will be 2" thick wood with a natural finish.

Ms. Vaughan asked the dimension of the concrete block.

Mr. Gongora said they will use 11.4" x 11.4" or 16" x 8".

Ms. Martin asked if the colors are fluorescent.

Mr. Gongora said no they are a Mexican pink which is used widely in Mexican culture.

Ms. Young asked if the breeze block has a concrete surface.

Mr. Gongora said it is perforated white and they will keep it like that. They will put their logo up in the tiles on wall.

Ms. Vaughan said color decisions are made before the meeting.

Mr. Gongora said the blocks come pre-painted white and they will leave them like that.

Ms. Vaughan cited 3.4.2 b and said that fluorescent colors are not allowed; she said these colors are close but they are not reflective.

Mr. Gongora said it is a flat paint and is not shiny.

Action: Mr. Hammond made a motion to adopt a resolution to approve the application as presented.

MM/SC/MH/CV 9:0:0 Motion carried.

052621.4 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 28, 2021

MM/SC/CB/SF 9:0:0 Minutes approved.

May 12, 2021

MM/SC/LM/SF 8:0:0 Minutes approved. Mr. Hammond abstained.

052621.5 REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Ms. Martin said there has been no movement on the design guidelines cheat sheet. She suggested working more as a group and asked for volunteers. Mr. Bown volunteered.

052621.6 STAFF REPORT

Ms. Le said she has been getting inquiries and applications including ongoing design with Can Can, garage elevator and stair, temporary outdoor café program is extended until October 31, 2021, and PDA review of annual crafts overflow. She said the rules and procedures document is ready for Law. There has been no movement on pending nomination for Position 2.

052621.7 NEW BUSINESS

Minh Chau Le
Commission Coordinator
206-684-0229