



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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

ISRD 46/24

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, March 26, 2024

Time: 4:30pm
Place: Hybrid Meeting

Board Members Present

Heather Hargesheimer
Nella Kwan
Kyle Jacobson
Adrian Lam
Gary Lee

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Paul Lee

Chair Adrian Lam called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

ROLL CALL

032624.1 PUBLIC COMMENT

032624.2 MEETING MINUTES

February 27, 2024
MM/SC/KJ/HH
4:0:1 Mr. Lam abstained.

032624.3 CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

032624.31 519 7th Avenue S.

Applicant: Gilbert Chin, Gee How Oak Tin Association
Change of Use: Proposed change of use from retail to office for Beacon Plumbing

Ms. Frestedt provided the staff report on the proposed change of use, noting that the signage for the business had been reviewed and approved administratively. She explained

that “Office” is not a preferred use within SMC 23.66.326 – Street-level uses. Therefore, it cannot be reviewed administratively. She said it is the staff opinion that this use may be appropriate, so long as the transparency requirements of SMC 23.66.336 are met and there is pedestrian activity into/out of the storefront.

Gilbert Chin, who presented on behalf of the business owner, said that that the prior retail tenant, owner of an art gallery, retired. He explained the space will be used for office only; there will be no storage or customers. He said that the property owners, of which is a member, approve of the new use.

Ms. Frestedt confirmed there is visibility into the space. She said that the use and signage were proposed within separate applications.

Ms. Kwan asked if there would be company cars or trucks parked nearby.

Mr. Chin said, no, this is just an office use.

Mr. Jacobson and Mr. G. Lee had no concerns or additional comments.

Mr. Lam said the use is not preferred but is permitted. He said having a business in the space will promote activity in the area. He asked a clarifying question about the interior layout, which was clarified by Mr. Chin.

Ms. Frestedt said pre-pandemic an office use may have been discouraged. She said the preference was for pedestrian-oriented, activating uses such as retail, restaurant, etc. She said a vacant storefront may be a greater concern at this point in time.

Mr. Lam said he supported the change of use.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for use, per the submitted application materials. The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the March 26, 2024, public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

This action is based on the **following applicable sections of the International Special Review District Ordinance and relevant Standards:**

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)

SMC 23.66.320 – Permitted uses

SMC 23.66.326 – Street-level uses

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes

B. Asian Design Character District

4. Transparency Requirement

MM/SC/GL/KJ

5:0:0

Motion carried.

Mr. Chin said the change of use will be helpful.

032624.4 Staff Summary and Board Business

Ms. Frestedt reviewed administrative approvals to date.

Ms. Frestedt said City Council confirmed Mr. Lam's second term and new member Samantha Wong.

Ms. Frestedt reminded Board members about the deadline to turn in Financial Impact Statement forms, for the Office of Ethics and Elections.

Mr. Lam asked how the board should consider proposed change of use in a larger space.

Ms. Frestedt said there are size requirements with different uses. She explained the importance of the transparency requirement and pedestrian-oriented use within the retail core. She said questions have come up regarding different types of screening whether for security, kitchen screening or sun shading. She said she works with the applicant to explore options and said it is often finding a balance. She said there are businesses that installed window film with advertising on it; they are non-compliant. She said window treatments require a Certificate of Approval since they impact transparency. She noted shades were approved at Hing Hay CoWorks for sun screening; opacity was reviewed so screening was provided and there is still the ability to see in.

Mr. Jacobson noted the issue of non-compliance and the cost to businesses to install something that may have to come down. He wondered if people are unaware of the process.

Ms. Frestedt said some aren't familiar with requirements and others are yet proceed anyway. She said the Historic Preservation office is working on a 'welcome letter' for historic districts that outlines the processes. She explained that a 'compliance letter' may be sent when she sees things that have been done without going through the process and she'll work with a property to come into compliance. Enforcement authority falls within the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI).

Adjourn: 5:11 pm.