



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISR D 221/19

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY October 8, 2019

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

Board Members Present

Stephanie Hsie, Chair
Yuko Kunugi
Sergio Legon-Talamoni
Russ Williams
Tanya Woo

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Andy Yip

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

100819.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 28, 2019 Deferred.

100819.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

100819.21 515 7th Ave. S. – Deng’s Art Studio & Gallery

Applicant: Gilbert Chin, representative

Ms. Woo recused herself as she is a member of Oak Tin.

Ms. Frestedt explained the request for retroactive approval for revision to the backing material of a neon sign (for “Beacon Plumbing”). Dimensions: 44”w x 33 3/4”h. Exhibits reviewed included plans, photographs and samples. A Certificate of Approval was issued for the neon sign in July 2019. The approval was for a clear backing. The installed sign has a white, opaque background. The business also installed a translated sign, that was not included in this application. That sign is currently out of compliance, since no Certificate of Approval has been issued for that sign. The Gee How Oak Tin Hotel was constructed in

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1907. It is a contributing building located within the Asian Design Character District. Beacon Plumbing subleases an office space within Deng's Studio.

The ISRD Board Coordinator is concerned that the sign, as installed, violates the district's transparency requirement, pursuant to SMC 23.66.336 B4.

Applicant Comment:

Gilbert Chin provided translation of the sign which he noted has already been fabricated. He asked for approval of the sign with exception because a clear background will show lots of wire and transformer. He said they changed it to white plastic background to hide that.

Ms. Hsie noted the sign was up and a second sign was provided with translation; she asked if it is a problem to remove the backing.

Mr. Chin said the board asked for translation. He said it is difficult to change it out.

Mr. Williams asked Mr. Chin's affiliation with the space.

Mr. Chin said he is representing Beacon Plumbing and the owner of the building both of whom are friends. Beacon is leasing space there and wants to serve the community.

Mr. Williams said the spirit of asking for translation is not asking for a separate sign but to incorporate that into the main sign. He said there isn't transparency into the space.

Mr. Chin said they put two together and it will be another hoop to connect the two; there is a couple inches between the signs.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if this is the only storefront window.

Mr. Chin said yes.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Mr. Legon-Talmoni said the intent was not to require a second sign; it was a suggestion to redesign the original sign to incorporate translation. The option is not required.

Ms. Hsie said the backing is white and covers 50% of the window. She was concerned that along with the second sign almost all the window is covered.

Mr. Chin said he could remove the second sign.

Ms. Frestedt said the Beacon sign alone could be considered. She said to consider continuity, relationship of style and color to sign; the two signs are very different.

Color backing

Mr. Williams had mixed feelings and said he didn't want to log jam a small business owner, but it is not what the board approved. He stated that the board voted for a clear background.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni concurred. He preferred the original design intent and to remove the bottom sign. He asked what the main business is.

Mr. Chin said it is an art gallery.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said it is large and covers so much window space for just renting a desk.

Ms. Kunugi agreed and said it is hard to tell what the business is. The signs are confusing; they should make this sign clear.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said they could defer, and the applicant could come back with more information and changes in the backing.

Ms. Frestedt said they are trying to work out a solution. She said the white backing makes it seem bigger than a clear backing would. She said middle ground would be somewhat transparent and helps disguise the wire and transformer but still allow visibility into space.

Ms. Hsie said options include deferring and re-doing the sign or redesigning the sign. She noted the transparency requirement. She said it makes sense to be white if material is on it. She suggested coming back with dimension to show it is within size requirements.

Ms. Kunugi suggested moving the sign over to the angled side of the storefront.

Mr. Chin said it isn't visible there.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said to come back.

Board members discussed options for moving forward; there was concern about precedence with a non-conforming sign being allowed and a sign that was not approved being installed. Options to deny or defer were discussed with a preference for the applicant to come back with a middle ground.

Ms. Frestedt noted that Chinese characters are a recommendation, not a requirement. She said the applicant could voluntarily withdraw the application.

Mr. Chin stated that he wished to withdraw the application and said he will go with clear background, as approved; he will tell sign people to go clear back and fix the problem.

Ms. Frestedt reported that election notice had been translated into Chinese and Vietnamese. She went over relevant election dates for submission of registration and nomination forms.

Ms. Frestedt reported that the Guidelines revisions triggered SEPA, which is complete. She said formatting is needed.

Ms. Frestedt said that design teams can opt into new Guidelines; a few have already.

Ms. Frestedt said interviews had been scheduled for board vacancy after which recommended candidates will be forwarded to the Mayor's office and then to City Council for confirmation.

100819.3 BOARD BRIEFINGS

100819.31 1001-1005 S. King St.
Presenter: Matt Driscoll, d/Arch LLC

Briefing on proposed demolition and new construction of an 8-story mixed use apartment building to include 76 parking stalls. The focus of this briefing will be on the demolition proposal and the evolution of the preliminary massing studies.

Steve Lekan, d/Arch, provided site analysis and proposed an 8-story mixed used apartment building. He provided context analysis and noted recent projects in the district, Thai Binh, and the Acme Poultry site. He said that King Street is a designated green street and noted nearby properties.

He proposed demolition of existing 1914 buildings and went over historic uses which include garage, produce company, grocery store, pattern shop, industrial laundry, and industrial chrome plating. The report (full report in DON file) detailed uses, alterations over time. He said the facades have been completely altered multiple times, garage door removed, and the interior has been altered. He said there are better examples of the typology throughout the City.

Mr. Lekan reported they have a community engagement plan and have engaged with Friends of Little Saigon as a strategic partner to help develop and execute the effort. He said they have taken design cues from Little Saigon and explored ways to break out the façade design. He said that Thai Binh is across the street and is massive. He said they looked at how the buildings interact with the public. He went over the Design Guidelines for east of I-5 as well as districtwide guidance which require a response to context, public realm, building orientation, relationship of building to open space. He went over Zoning Code and how the building design responds to it.

Mr. Lekan said overhead high voltage power lines on 10th require setbacks. He went over the three massing options. He noted that Option B was preferred. He said that all three provide 100 units, 76 parking, 8 stories; commercial, amenity, with garage entry on back. He went over departures matrix (p. 50 of briefing packet). He went over 10' view triangle removed from one side of the garage entry ramp in order to shift garage ramp to property line. He said community and public space has been created at residential entry and at corner. He noted the relationship to historic church. He said the plaza/public space will be used for public art that would reflect the community. He said small affordable community

space has been designed to be as flexible as possible to accommodate needs. He said differentiated commercial spaces allow flexibility of use. He said they are working with small business coordinator to find suitable tenants. He went over materials and how colors may be applied.

Ms. Woo left at 5:30 pm.

Public Comment:

Josh Brevoort, architect and board member of Friends of Little Saigon, advocated for use of vacated right of way for access to building and other buildings that get developed. He said right of ways are needed in the district.

A community member stated that the Summit School was built on part of the vacated property so the right-of-way would never run through.

Demolition

There was discussion about the proposed demolition. Ms. Hsie stated that she didn't hear any objections from the Board to the proposed demolition. She appreciated the report. She asked if the building architect was known.

Mr. Lekan said they could not identify the architect. He said that no one of significance to occupied the building.

Massing

Mr. Lekan said they will be opting into the new Guidelines.

Ms. Hsie said she was glad they recognize that King Street is important. She said the fact that the building will be visible from I-5 should also be considered.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni appreciated the corner as open public plaza and that it would be preserved for public and open space. He expressed concern that the preferred scheme provides a lot of verticality at the corner and reinforces the large tower feel. He gravitated toward the Code Compliant scheme because of the ground floor. He said it communicates more of the programming. He said some of that got lost with the preferred scheme; the relationship with the rest of the district was lost.

Ms. Kunugi agreed. She said the Code Compliant option feels most natural to the area; street level scale retained; brings some nice neighborhood feel to the ground level. She said the preferred scheme has more of a downtown feel.

Ms. Hsie supported the Code Compliant option; She said that the base, middle, top approach is tied to the program. She said if the design team is going to deviate from that approach, she wanted to understand why; should be strong programmatic reason with cultural design. She appreciated that they carved out massing to contribute to public realm. She encouraged the team to widen sidewalks. She supported more connectivity through the district. She said small niches and small corners relate to how people use and define the public realm space.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni: think about locating interior community space on periphery of building so easily visible, accessible. He appreciates thinking of bringing in public access space and suggested working that out more. He said the verticality at the corner feels looming and to find a middle ground. This is a gateway to Little Saigon. This is the transition point between two districts. He said some elements of the Code Compliant option that could make its way to preferred scheme.

Mr. Williams said the preferred option is towering – refinements are needed with the pedestrian experience in mind. He recommended creating a datum line across.

Ms. Hsie noted this is the first building seen as relating to the west portion of the district. Overarching mass; way to breakdown massing, texture with balconies; texture and patterning; how treat corners – give it a special treatment. Options 1 and 2 – hard to see how they relate to the district. If you deviate, provide rationale.

Departures

Ms. Hsie said she doesn't want to see a blank façade, but discouraged a wedding cake effect, as well.

The Board did not raised concerns about a site triangle departure.

Ms. Kunugi asked if this is the lowest part of site?

Mr. Luken: yes.

Community Outreach

A Board member asked about the community response regarding massing.

Mr. Luken said most preferred massing options 2 or 3. He added that comments not related to massing, just appearance.

Ms. Kunugi said it makes a big difference understanding why people preferred what they did.

Qyunh Pham, ED, Friends of Little Saigon (FoLS), said the first meeting was an introduction to project and provided FoLS an opportunity to discuss overall what they'd like to see. She said the hope is that the next meeting will get into a deep dive about massing and design.

Ms. Hsie spoke about the massing schemes, asking do you want CID traditional, historical, more expressive, conceptual? What does “different” mean for this neighborhood? She said she wants to understand why decisions were made – programmatic, cultural.

Ms. Kunugi was also curious about the community thinks of the proposed use and community space.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said he appreciates the design team's interest in hearing what community wants.

100819.32

1224 S. King Street – Little Saigon Park

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

Katie Bang introduced a briefing on proposed development of a new park on an undeveloped lot. The focus of this briefing will be on the evolution of the proposed design alternatives. She said they will go through a formal naming process.

Mark Tilbe, Murase Associates, provided context of the site, including grade differential, proximity to the Victorian Row Apartments and the Nisei Veterans Hall. He said the willow tree will remain.

Ms. Bang went over the schedule and preferred scheme. She said they are in the schematic design phase. She reported on public engagement conducted, CPTED principles, meeting with Little Saigon Advisory Committee and public meeting. She said there have been eleven meetings from August 2018 through July 2019. She said they are working on parking challenges/options. She noted use of the racial equity toolkit. She said the space was landbanked by King County levy to bring green space to urban areas. She said they are working with the Office of Arts and Culture for the artist selection. She said they are working with other City departments to look at parking options in conjunction with Lam's, since the park will replace a lot they had been using.

Mr. Tilbe went over green space requirements associated with the landbanked site. He said public input stated desire for flexibility in use for events, plays, inclusion of power and lighting. Cultural references were desired and low maintenance plant palette. Concepts reviewed included a dragon (not enough space for events), fluidity, terrace. CPTED walk informed some of the design choices. Preferred option model based on wide sidewalk, gradual transition to Jackson, a plaza, ramps to play area, and wide seats that can double as event seating.

Ms. Bang said the play area will activate the area.

Board members looked at 3-D model provided.

Mr. Tilbe showed how the spaces could be programmed in various ways and how tents could be added.

Ms. Bang said they want input on play equipment and overall concept and programming.

Public Comment:

Erica Cheung said it is a great concept, open and friendly. She asked if play equipment could be higher to cater to older kids. She said there should be visibility and she noted there is limited greenery and more trees for shade would be nice. She noted the side seating area. She said it is a lovely design that will add to the community.

Mr. Tilbe indicated elements along path that are seating and said wide stairs are also seating.

Scott Murase said the maple trees will get larger and will be beautiful shade trees. He said they could add tables and chairs like those are Hing Hay park.

Tiernan Martin applauded the design team. He said there is great flexibility for events and uses. He said the view looking north will be wonderful. He said the view looking south from Jackson from the streetcar landing off sidewalk is a little underdeveloped. He said there is more opportunity to frame as welcoming.

Ms. Bang said artwork is planned for that side.

Mr. Tilbe said there will be tall narrow bamboo walls with lighting.

Mr. Martin said he knew they were working with SCIDPDA and looked at survey of groups who use other parks, lessons learned.

Matt Fujimoto said he loves the progression of the space. He asked about massing details on the model representation.

Mr. Tilbe said there is large concrete sections on one side; they have marked projects under development now.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni noted that adjacent buildings provide an opportunity for art.

Mr. Tilbe said they don't plan murals; they will use bamboo screens to soften space next to buildings.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if they will retain east-west retaining wall?

Scott: yes, and will add where needed. He said that rails are not needed; they kept the grading similar to adjacent parcel and made sure it is ADA accessible.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni asked if is green space accessible?

Mr. Tilbe said the lawn at the south is accessible green space.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni said supported the approach.

Ms. Kunugi: great outreach has been done. Admire process and outcome. Play structure is sculptural and allows freedom to approach differently. She noted the integration of playful ramp for kids. Asked for picture of other sculptural elements.

Mr. Murase said it was an early idea. They want accessibility for everyone.

Ms. Kunugi appreciated the canopy design and asked inspiration for design.

Mr. Murase said Asian motifs, especially the cloud. Needs to be affordable and be made of plate steel.

Mr. Williams noted the 75% maximum impervious – excluding circulation paths. Will 5' wide ramps be adequate?

Mr. Tilbe said lots of study has been done. There will be stair-side spaces for landings, two wheelchairs could pass at once. Seating on seat wall still allows for movement.

Ms. Kunugi left at 7:13 pm.

Mr. Legon-Talamoni noted that language of ramps etc. relate to transportation corridor at Jackson.

Ms. Hsie said they have done a great job and great feedback. Making the 3-D model is commendable to help people understand design. It helps board understand why design choices were made; great to show various uses.

Next Steps

In response to a question about the plan for engaging an artist, Ms. Bang said she and Mr. Murase are on the selection committee plus two community members. They will suggest an art plan and identify locations. She said there were 26 responses to the call for artists, which included a desire for a strong connection to the community.

Ms. Hsie expressed an interest in the planting scheme and transition between soft and hard scape, locations for planting and a lighting plan. She was interested in the design of the ramps and said it would be a great opportunity for something fun and playful.

Adjourn at 7:22 PM

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