



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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

PSB 1/22

MINUTES for Wednesday January 5, 2022

Board Members

Lynda Collie
Kianoush Curran
Maureen Elenga
Lauren Kush
Jose Lorenzo-Torres
Alex Rolluda, Chair

Staff

Genna Nashem
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Lindsay Pflugrath

Chair Alex Rolluda called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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

010522.1

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

October 6, 2021

MM/SC/ME/LC

5:0:1 Minutes approved. Ms. Curran abstained.

October 20, 2021

MM/SC/ME/LC

5:0:1 Minutes approved. Mr. Lorenzo-Torres abstained.

November 3, 2021

MM/SC/ME/KC

4:0:2 Minutes approved. Ms. Kush and Mr. Lorenzo-Torres abstained.

010522.2

PUBLIC COMMENT

010522.3 BOARD BUSINESS

010522.31 Work session

Board discussion and comments about draft guidelines document.

Signs – Location

Mr. Rolluda: asked if upper floor signage still must comply with letter size requirement.

John Owens: yes. Delete category for upper story signage and be more specific detailed in others.

Ms. Nashem: would allow signage in window. Noted Embassy Suites sign where applicant wanted to push the rule and have signage on upper level. The sign was denied. The applicant wanted 240 square feet of signage per elevation in addition to the base signage already approved. If upper story signage is allowed, this is potentially what would be allowed.

Mr. Rolluda: they wanted to put signage on the mechanical screening on roof. Compromised on east façade. Language now prohibits; if this section were eliminated, does board still have teeth.

Ms. Nashem: yes, saying where signs can be located. By having it there it was making it allowable so best to not. Here are signs allowed and where located
Can state upper level not allowed
Example, building name sign - Courtyard Marriott Capital C – whole building, same business

Ms. Curran: Whatever language used, avoid another situation with Embassy Suites drama; carefully craft wording.

Mr. Owens: could make exception for one occasionally.

Ms. Curran: not advocating for that – that gets sticky and people would get creative with their arguments. Avoid it but applying language to modern buildings to 19th century buildings in district is problematic. Could language reflect that? Differentiate?

Ms. Nashem: because didn't do that, it helped the case. Signs needed to be compatible with other signs in the district.

Mr. Rolluda:
argument to have was older buildings with ghost signs.

Ms. Nashem:
ghost signs are considered an architectural feature, not sign, so is not comparable to signage.

Mr. Owens:
signs should be pedestrian-oriented; upper-level signs are to be seen from a distance.

Ms. Collie:
is there a height minimum; could someone come back and put it on Smith Tower?

Ms. Nashem:
Downtown code does not apply to Pioneer Square; no sign above 60' unless public building or hotel. Court case – not allow a business allowance over another business.

Ms. Collie:
if an exception, how would you define where that would fit. If upper level, because fully occupied by one business. Need to think about how to apply rule to a Smith Tower or Grand Central.

Mr. Owens:
new draft, new controlled
By taking out upper-level signs, it closes the door to egregious problem.
Use a graphic showing where, what kind of sign is allowed.
Provisions should dictate, not the graphic but graphic would be helpful.

Mr. Lorenzo-Torres:
suggested providing samples of what is wanted.

Mr. Owens:
could expand on examples already provided and could explain why one would be allowed and one would not.

Ms. Elenga:
if address use, if a need for wayfinding – hotels need visibility from freeway; find balance.

Ms. Nashem:
what about signage in store front windows? What is appropriate number?

Mr. Owens:
look a size and number of windows; storefronts create their own nuances; neon discussed.

Wall Signs, Murals

Ms. Nashem:

need to make distinction between mural and wall sign.

Mural is just art.

A wall sign could include a graphic element.

Art has no advertising component.

Graphics, no words, sign versus what is art.

Topographic lines – art, but if on Geotech company, probably a sign.

Be clear what is art and what is sign.

Mr. Owens:

mural under new and existing buildings. Underline location 'pedestrian oriented'.

Ms. Elenga:

only on vertical surfaces.

Mr. Owens:

meaning edge perpendicular to sidewalk; can clarify with simple graphic.

Illumination

Backlit not allowed:

McDonald's sign – no. Some contemporary buildings backlit or halo might be preferable to neon.

Ms. Nashem:

be careful; internally lit except neon; exposed neon is OK but not a box sign lit with neon inside.

Ms. Elenga:

internally lit should not be allowed in district. Halo is the closest. Not consistent to allow in some places and not others.

Mr. Owens:

now written that internally lit signs are not allowed.

Steve Treffers:

some discussion about defining halo lighting. Some have lit letters versus solid lighting.

Ms. Curran:

distinction that neon is only allowed within window area.

Ms. Nashem:

now can have neon blade or window sign.

Mr. Owens:

internally lit signs are not allowed; keep this?

Mr. Rolluda:
yes

Ms. Curran:
yes, ban internally lit signs.

Mr. Owens:
go through illumination types; will clarify exposed neon.

App Requirements

Number of signs

Ms. Nashem:
went over; a couple items need verbiage
try eliminate conditions or how determine the number of signs appropriate
of signs
per lineal feet
per view point
per window
A-boards
sign band
Code only says to 'avoid over proliferation'

Mr. Owens:
draft does not deal with this comprehensively
Need statement about 'over proliferation' and be more specific
Should be able to identify building from pedestrian level

Ms. Collie:
Suggest photos of properly done signage
'No additional signage hung below awning' – what does that mean?

Ms. Nashem:
Agree
Not all storefronts are symmetrical or have same number of windows
If one window, or five
Restaurants have band at base of window with hours, etc.
Graphics helpful

Mr. Rolluda:
Agreed – language Mr. Owens suggested and addition of photos
Defending over-proliferation can be subjective; graphics/photos helpful

Mr. Owens:
Add a provision about number of signs in general.
Page 5 ii – mostly old language, expand that.

Signs – New Buildings

Ms. Elenga: seems no way to avoid
Differentiate
Embassy Suites – is the sign lit

Ms. Nashem:
Not internally lit but it has lighting, like halo lights

Mr. Owen:
Possibly halo lit on contemporary buildings but not on historic buildings

Mr. Rolluda:
Why need separate section for signs on new buildings
Why can't they stay within the modified Guidelines.
How purpose is to maintain character of the district
They can work within those guidelines

Mr. Owens:
In some cases will be more restrictive, example – wall sign

Mr. Treffers:
Put a pin in this until discuss new construction
Gets to compatibility and differentiation
Gets a little subject, but thinking about buildings holistically
Maybe a statement these same apply to new with exceptions

Mr. Rolluda left the meeting at 10:04 am

Mr. Owens:
Add application requirements

Ms. Nashem:
Existing guidelines don't allow both blade and awning so that would be a change to allow both

Mr. Owens:
Limit to 6 square feet neon, size limitation

Ms. Nashem:
Talked about both, non-illuminated
Guitar sign – to get it big enough to construct in neon had to calculate the surface of the sign; it had to be large enough to be constructed.
6 square feet – getting words without graphics

Mr. Owens:
Could go to 8 square feet

Ms. Nashem:

Could check with sign maker to see what is possible - is a nice sign constructable at 8 square feet

Mr. Owens:

Do graphic analysis

Understand 8 square feet versus 6 square feet as viewed from pedestrian realm

What dimension mean in terms of visibility

Ms. Elenga:

LED – energy consumption, should be allowing – now duplicate incandescent light well

Sign Bands

Ms. Nashem:

Callus 3C sign – not approved

Look at transparency, visibility in and out

Had a case with solid posters in window with visibility at edges only. Applicant said that because not specific about visibility, argued there was visibility at 1" edges

10" letters in windows – using exception, up to three letters larger than 10"

3C is a very attractive sign; although large you can see in and out

No % is noted, it is only about visibility/transparency

Ms. Elenga:

% could be more consistent based on window sizes

Mr. Lorenzo-Torres:

25% of entire two panels? Or each panel? Or each pane?

Ms. Nashem:

Be sure to be specific about pane of glass

Mr. Owens:

% of vinyl covering, including logo, only that pane of glass

25% of all windows? Or one per space?

Mr. Lorenzo-Torres:

Exception for corner – have one on each face

Ms. Nashem:

What about storefronts with two windows with door in center

Ms. Elenga:

Symmetry on both would be consistent with era

Still on primary façade of non-corner building

Corner building – one on each face for wayfinding

Mr. Owens:

Could say up to two signs on two windows

Ms. Elenga:
Prohibit in transoms?

Mr. Owens:
Transoms would allow greater visibility

Mr. Lorenzo-Torres:
Could say a larger %

Ms. Curran:
Visually signage on transoms is awkward; prohibit

Ms. Elenga:
Pedestrian realm not at transom level

Ms. Curran:
Lower window up to 25% for sign but non-corner only one window
Could also have a blade, plenty of signage
Allowing upper-level window signage is risky

Ms. Kush:
Placement and visibility of signage – consistency is important
Street sign – overkill

Ms. Nashem:
3C example – 25% would calculate logo and word; business could have just the words
just 10” high; Third Culture looks to be 8-10”

Mr. Owens:
Not on transom window
25% of actual window area
One sign per business except on corner, one side per face

Ms. Nashem:
Recommend look at examples of symmetrical storefront with two windows

Mr. Owens:
Will re-do verbiage and will need graphics to show intent of guidelines.

010522.41

Board nominations for Chair, Vice Chair, ARC chair

Ms. Nashem said board elections are typically held in January. Process was skipped last year due to Covid. Mr. Rolluda’s term is up in March; Chair and Vice Chair need to be elected. ARC Chair has typically been architect. She asked nominations be emailed to her and she would set up e-polling for vote.

Ms. Curran preferred anonymous voting.

010522.5 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR:** Alex Rolluda, Chair

010522.6 **STAFF REPORT:** Genna Nashem

Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator
206.684.0227