



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISRD 71/09

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, February 24, 2009

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

Board Members Present

Robert Ha
John Bisbee
Weng Chan
Joshua Osborne-Klein
Jerry Chihara
Bill Lee

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Misun Chung Gerrick

Chair Robert Ha called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

022409.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 13, 2009 Deferred.

January 27, 2009
MM/SC/JC/JOK 5:0:0 Minutes approved as amended.

Mr. Chan arrived at 4:37 p.m.

022409.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

022409.21 J&J Plaza
510 6th Ave S.
Applicant: Steve Zamberlin, National Sign Corporation

Signage: Proposed signage.

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed reconfiguration of storefront signage and the proposed addition of a tenant directory. Exhibits included drawings and photographs. She said the property owner received a Certificate of Approval in August 2008 for a Change of Use to

subdivide the retail space into multiple office and retail units. She said the record shows that the original J&J Plaza signage was approved by the Board in September 2003.

Marie Wan, National Sign Corp. who was presenting on behalf of Steve Zamberlin, passed out photos of existing and proposed signage as well as the directory signage catalog. The directory will be attached to the wall using sunken screws so attachment will not be visible; there are four penetrations points. She said the owner has decided not to pursue the directory signage at this time, but she appreciated the opportunity to brief the Board on the proposal.

Ms. Wan explained the other portion of the application to reconfigure the existing sign. They propose to change the word box from “Gift Store” to “Plaza”.

When asked if National Sign would fix the existing attachment penetration areas that resulted from the original sign’s removal, Ms. Wan replied that was the landlord’s responsibility; they will plug the holes but the landlord will do the finish. She said the new sign will have fewer penetrations.

Ms. Wan summarized the proposed directory signage. She said what they were purchasing was standard “off the shelf” type of system where strips can be purchased as needed. The finish will likely be polished silver.

Ms. Frestedt stated that the size of the sign and the finish were not yet finalized therefore the Board should defer action until more details are received.

Mr. Osborne-Klein liked the overall concept and stated that it was necessary for sub-divided commercial spaces such as this.

Mr. Chihara asked if the signage as proposed meets the signage allowance; Ms. Frestedt confirmed it does. She said a total of 90 square feet is allowed and the proposed signage amounts to 39 so it is well under the maximum allowance.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

There was not additional Board discussion.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for the primary signage and defer consideration of the tenant locator sign.

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

ISRD Design Guidelines for Awnings and Canopies, Façade Alterations and Signs

- I. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines**
- II. Design Guidelines for Signs**
 - a. Buildings with multiple tenants**
 - c. Internally lighted signs in all locations**

SMC 23.66.338 – Business identification signs

MM/SC/JOK/JC

6:0:0 Motion carried.

022409.22

Jackson Apartments Building

664-676 S. Jackson St.

Applicant: Paul Mar, Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation Development Authority (SCIDPDA)

Exterior alterations: Masonry restoration and repair.

Ms. Frestedt read from the staff report. She explained the proposed repairs include:

1) Replace water table above the storefronts with new sheet metal and weather proofing; 2) New weather proofing and sealant joints at windows; 3) Re-lay masonry veneer on the South façade above the water table; and 4) Erect additional scaffolding to access the lower portion of the wall and stock materials. Exhibits included a structural engineer's report, drawings and photographs.

Ms. Frestedt said on September 23, 2008 a portion of the brick veneer unexpectedly failed and collapsed onto the sidewalk. She said she issued an Emergency Certificate of Approval for structural bracing and façade repair on September 25, 2008 conditional upon the applicant submitting a complete application for a Certificate of Approval for the associated repairs. She stated that the Jackson Apartment Building was built in 1917 and is a contributing building within the National Register District. The contractors will incorporate the original brick back into the façade. She noted that the original cornice was removed and the storefronts altered during the 1960s.

Paul Mar, SCIDPDA, explained that the building was vacated until the emergency repairs were complete. The SCIDPDA was able to get the tenants back in three weeks as the City deemed the building occupiable. The condition of the emergency Certificate of Approval was repair to be done within 45 days. Mr. Mar said the gear is on site now, the scaffolding and swing stage and they will repair the cornice piece that goes across the soldier course. He said that reinforced steel had been put up to secure it.

Mr. Chihara asked if they had assessed what caused the brick veneer to fall off since that would be important to the restoration.

Mr. Mar said that an assessment had been done, but he had not yet seen it. As part of the stabilization program the masonry contractor put pins across the façade so it is all tied back to the building. They took more brick off and saw no other deterioration behind it.

Mr. Mar summarized the proposed repairs to be done. The temporary reinforced steel will be removed to restore the "water table" (soldier course); the windows that have been exposed the past four months will be sealed; the brick will be put back in place. He said he didn't think there was enough good brick to reuse so he will purchase some to augment what they have. The brick will be re-laid and the entire façade cleaned.

Mr. Chihara asked if there was a way to "feather in" the brick over a larger area – to weave in the new brick – in case there is a variation in coloration. He noted there was a lot of variation in color on the existing brick and it would help to weave in the new.

Mr. Mar agreed.

Discussion ensued about the color of the brick and how, once cleaned, it may look very different. It was determined that the brick would be cleaned first and then a new brick selected in order to find the closest match possible.

Mr. Mar stated he would have the contractor clean some of the existing brick and then use that to match for purchasing new.

Mr. Chihara confirmed that they would be purchasing salvaged brick and not new; Mr. Mar confirmed that to be correct.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board Discussion:

Board members determined they had enough information provided that the work needed to happen quickly for the protection of the building and the businesses in that area; the brick selection would be made on appropriate color and it would be woven in to existing.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for the masonry repairs, as proposed.

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

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes

**Design Guidelines for Awnings and Canopies, Façade Alterations, Security and Signs
II. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines**

The following guidelines will be used by the board in the evaluation of requests for storefront and building design approval and shall apply to the Asian Design Character District (SMC23.66.326).

- A. Any exterior facade alteration shall respect the original architectural integrity of the storefront.
- B. Earthen materials such as brick, wood, concrete and tile shall be used for entry doors, windows and the main facade.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

- 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

MM/SC/JC/JOK

6:0:0 Motion carried.

SOUTH DOWNTOWN CODE AMENDMENTS

Ms. Frestedt said this is a follow up briefing on proposed land use code text amendments, including zoning changes, and new height and bonus programs. She said the first presentation took place on February 10, 2009. She introduced Susan McLain and Gordon Clowers, City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Ms. Frestedt said there are two sections to the ISRD Code: SMC 23.66.015 and 23.66.035 that address proposed changes or proposals to establish, alter or abolish Special Review District or make changes to the Land Use map. She said the Board had already made a recommendation to support the proposal expanding the District boundary to S. Charles St. She said this will be a final discussion about the proposed text amendments associated with the underlying zoning proposal. She read an email submitted by Ms. Chung Gerrick since she was unable to attend the meeting.

Ms. Frestedt explained that there is a proposal to eliminate the table in SMC 23.66.338 that proscribes how much signage is allowed. She said that the proposed replacement language was inspired by language in the Pioneer Square Preservation Board ordinance.

Ms. McLain went over the exhibits. She summarized the process thus far and described the public advisory group process. She said the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) studied transportation, housing inventory, inventory of historic resources in and outside the National Register Districts, economic and real estate issues, and small business issues. She referred to a report summarizing a small business survey from businesses in the District. DPD received a lot of comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that was published in 2007 and the Final EIS in May 2008. She said they received a lot of feedback on the Japantown area; they received feedback that the initial development standards they put forward were too restrictive and didn't provide enough increased development capacity to serve as an incentive for redevelopment.

Ms. McLain stated that there have been many community discussions. She said Tom Im, from Inter*Im, has been very active in the land use and non-land use issues.

Mr. Osborne-Klein expressed concern over the proposed bulk in Japantown because there were no setback requirements for the towers on the east-west axis and he was concerned about light impairment; he was also concerned about street level residential between Weller and Dearborn and thought retail should be required at the street level in those two blocks.

Ms. Frestedt introduced Mr. Im, whom she has invited to the meeting to comment on behalf of the Vision 2030 group.

Mr. Im said Inter*Im owns a piece of property within that corridor and after doing a pro forma they determined they could not feasibly develop a project under the initial proposal. He said that he thought the changes to the proposal resulted in a win-win. He also spoke to keeping the core retail area. He was concerned about spreading the retail to far outside the core and losing some of the effectiveness of keeping the core retail area intact. He said that density and lots of retail works in New York City but he didn't know if Seattle was "there" yet. Even if there is not retail on the ground floor storefronts will still be subject to the transparency requirements.

Gordon Clowers said a couple people in the advisory group meetings advocated for the capability of residential development at street level but it wasn't a large part of the early discussion.

Ms. McLain talked about expanding the retail core south of Weller St. She said that even though retail uses are not required in that area there are a number of parcels ready to be redeveloped and in many of the projects that have been developed in that area most have included street level retail.

Mr. Osborne-Klein reiterated his concern about townhouse style housing and said there is so much loitering and vagrancy in those square blocks and to have private residences makes him nervous.

Mr. Clowers explained it exists in Vancouver and stoops with small fences around the yards tend to civilize the block.

Ms. Frestedt said that another philosophy is that owners would create a legitimate uses rather than loitering and vagrancy.

Ms. McLain said she didn't think intense retail was always the answer to loitering and vagrancy and civility issues. She described the businesses in the International District as "struggling" and they needed intensive co-location including residential to encourage a 24-hour presence. She provided additional handouts and went over the Use requirements noted in Seattle Municipal Code 23.66.326.

Discussion ensued about smaller retail as the typical pattern in the core and the potential for exceptions. Ms. McLain cited 23.49.011, the section of the Downtown Code and in which ground floor uses do not count toward FAR calculation.

Mr. Clowers referred to the retail and restaurant spaces that open on to S. Weller St. at Uwajimaya. Ms. McLain said Uwajimaya is an example of how the Board worked with the developer to ensure there are street facing uses at street level. She said that Uwajimaya is an example of a business located partially outside the core retail area but the Board was able to influence the face of that building and how that retail faces the street.

Mr. Osborne-Klein supported a recommendation for overall principles: increased density, preservation of the height restrictions in the core neighborhood. He commented on bulk issue in Japantown and noted that the economic reality, the inclusion of green streets and alleyways will probably create enough spacing. He asked for more thought on best way to deal with the area south of Weller in terms of street activation and safety. He spoke to the reality of the neighborhood not being the quiet suburbs and noted civility issues early in the morning (5:00 – 7:00 a.m.) and late evening (6:00 – 11:00 p.m.).

Mr. Lee said he works outside in the District and noted that undesirable activity goes on all day, every day. The biggest complaints he hears from community members are related to traffic and parking. If more retail comes in, more parking would be needed.

Mr. Osborne-Klein added that the area is becoming the nexus of public transportation – light rail, trolley, and buses.

Ms. Frestedt stated the rezone proposal cannot address all community concerns and is just one piece of the puzzle. She said the Board's work on updating the District Design Guidelines can help address design related issues.

Mr. Clowers said planting a few seeds of good projects can attract other projects and can change things pretty quickly and make people feel safer.

Ms. Frestedt said that she has been hearing support from Board members in favor of the proposal but noted broader concerns, such as public safety, that are outside the purview of DPD.

Mr. Im commented that the City was going through neighborhood planning update integrating a number of communities. He noted that a number of communities are not included; the International District is one of them perhaps because this process is supplanting the work that would have been done in a plan. Public safety and transportation need to be addressed somehow. He stressed the importance of creating more affordable housing and more open space.

Mr. Ha supported Mr. Osborne-Klein's comments and said safety is the main concern.

Mr. Chan noted public safety and parking as issues.

Ms. Frestedt said when the Board reviews new construction proposals they can have the opportunity to work with developers and provide input on where dumpsters etc. would be.

Mr. Bisbee acknowledged the amount of work that has gone into the proposal and cited civility issues as being important to livability as planning and zoning; he said public manners are needed.

Action: I move that the ISRD issue a recommendation in support of the Livable South Downtown Plan with a recommendation to the City to consider examining street level uses that can help promote civility and public safety within the District.

MM/SC/JOK/BL

6:0:0 Motion carried.

Mr. Osborne-Klein left at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Chihara stated he sat in on the review of the redevelopment of International Children's Park and one of the comments made was the positives about the amount of sunlight coming into the park and that development south could impact the park. He asked if there was any language or restrictions to allow additional daylight in the park.

Mr. Clowers responded that the City's SEPA Ordinance covers public parks and access to sunlight. He said to watch closely on building project reviews and encouraged members to submit comments.

Mr. Lee asked if all impacts – safety, parking – considered.

Mr. Clowers stated they are required to do an Environmental Impact Statement for all public projects and plans; they have done that process.

022409.4 BOARD BUSINESS

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

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