



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

ISRD 223/09

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, August 25, 2009

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

Board Members Present

John Bisbee
Weng Chan
Misun Chung Gerrick
Robert Ha
Bill Lee
Rich Murakami
Joshua Osborne-Klein

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

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

082509.1 CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

082509.11 Theatre off Jackson
409 7th Ave. S.
Applicant: Patti West, director

Use: Proposal to change the use of the upper level from museum to multi-use arts facility and gallery.

Ms. Frestedt explained that the Theater off Jackson is requesting a change of use for its upper level (former WLAM space) from museum to multi-use arts facility to include: gallery and exhibit space, readings, rehearsal space, occasional music or dance events, fundraisers and meetings. The space will also be available for rental. It will also serve as meeting and event space for the Canoe Social Club, which is a member-based, multi-disciplinary arts club and a project of the ToJ. She said the applicants have requested to expand the Non-Profit Arts Organization liquor license from ToJ to include the upper level. The space will not function as a full bar or nightclub, liquor will only be served in conjunction

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with appropriate events of ToJ's own producing and rentals that obtain an appropriate permit. The space will not be available past 1:30 AM. The gallery will be open before and after events at ToJ as well as first Thursdays for the Pioneer Square Art Walk and third Saturdays for the ID Art Walk. The space will be available for weekday daytime meeting, classroom or workshop space. The space will not be open during events as ToJ because of noise bleed.

Patti West said they intend to lease the space through 2010. The upstairs space will not be open the same hours that the theater is open. The space will be used for gallery, exhibition, and reception activities.

Ms. Frestedt noted that the current use is varied and the application is consistent with 23.66.320 and she supported the application.

Board Questions:

In response to clarifying questions Ms. West explained the request is retroactive and said the gallery and exhibit space are currently operating

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Board Discussion:

Mr. Bisbee asked if there had been any complaints from residents about the noise.

Ms. West explained they are very careful about noise and noted that at a recent fundraiser the music couldn't be heard outside. She noted they had no plans to lease the space out for late night/after hours events because they don't want to disturb the neighbors and because of liability issues. She said a staff member is on site for all events. The maximum occupancy is 211 but they cap it at 150 because of seating capacity and there are only two bathrooms.

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

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

SMC 23.66.320 – Permitted uses

SMC 23.66.326 – Street level uses

MM/SC/JOK/RM

6:0:0 Motion carried.

082509.2 GUIDELINE REVISION WORK SESSION

Board discussion regarding proposed design guideline revisions.

Ms. Frestedt summarized the changes made to the draft.

The Board discussed the order of the introduction and policy section. A Board member recommended adding a statement that the Board has the digression to waive certain guidelines on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Osborne-Klein suggested adding “including but not limited to site specific considerations such as geography, placement, siting on the lot etc.” He noted the importance of developing goals and the need for care in use of loaded words. He thought the prior meeting’s presentation was helpful, the contribution of graphics will be a significant improvement.

Ms. Frestedt noted the consultants’ interest in a walking tour and explained the Board had to be cognizant of the quorum issue; she said she would investigate possibilities for the whole Board to go on the walking tour with members of the community.

Ms. Chung Gerrick arrived at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Lee asked how the rezone expansion of boundaries would impact the Guidelines.

Ms. Frestedt said that the current discussion should work within the existing boundaries, since they have not yet changed. The Board continued to discuss options for walking tour routes.

Mr. Osborne-Klein said the History and the Intro/Policy sections should be switched noting the Intro/Policy section was dry and he thought it was better to start with something more interesting.

Mr. Ha agreed it was a good idea and noted that it might help people feel more positive going through this process.

There was discussion about where the map should go and that perhaps it is something Mike and Brianna could help with.

Mr. Murakami asked why the Levels of Intervention to existing buildings is where it is rather than further back into the document after process.

Ms. Frestedt said it will help orient reader to Purpose and Intent and noted the most minimal intervention is best. She said this section will explain why preservation is important.

Mr. Osborne-Klein thought that “levels of intervention” sounded too technical.

When considering flexibility, Ms. Frestedt explained that there are sections in the Land Use Code that the Board cannot over-ride. There is pretty proscriptive code existing within the Asian Design District. The Design Guidelines are supplementary to the Land Use Code and are at their essence, recommendations. She said the code will state what you can and cannot do, the guidelines state, as an alternative, what the board prefers you do. What type language is most appropriate and can be upheld if a decision is challenged e.g. and the use of the words “should” versus “shall”. “Shall” is the stronger of the two. She said it is important to have feedback from Mike and Brianna.

Mr. Lee said it should be original material and moving out from center would be less rigid.

Ms. Frestedt said a map would be helpful. She said that more stringent guidelines are needed for the Asian Character Design and core than the rest of the district because it contains the concentration of the oldest and most architecturally intact structures of the district; the periphery doesn't have as many. She went on to say that because each application is reviewed on a “case by case” basis that a lot of discussion about where a property is located happens during initial discussions with Staff. Page 6 notes the different sections of the District and there may be other areas in the guidelines where we might want to call those out. She said she would bring a map to a future meeting and would ask Mike and Brianna how to orient the geographic aspect.

There was discussion about contributing buildings – known and unknown – and non-contributing buildings in and outside of the Asian Character District. Ms. Frestedt explained that contributing buildings come from the National Register and all are within the historic core. She referred members to the board binder – to the copy of the National Register listings specific to segment of core of district. A building is determined to be contributing by a submission of a historic property report when submitted by someone doing work and it becomes part of the buildings historical file. Discussion of contributing buildings, non-contributing buildings and contributing buildings not yet identified.

The Board discussed whether or not to include a section on the process for determining whether or not a building is contributing or non-contributing. Ms. Frestedt noted that this had been discussed early on in the revision process and she thought the Board had determined not to include this discussion in the guidelines in order to keep the document as concise as possible. She said that she speaks to property owners on a case-by-case basis about the status of their building and explained to the Board how the decision is made. She said the determination is based, in part, on whether or not the building is included in the National Register District and the submission of a historic property report prepared by a preservation consultant.

Ms. Chung Gerrick referred to page 4 – last sentence - and said a preliminary meeting is where the historic and character of district would all be reviewed.

Mr. Frestedt provided an example of the store front renovations on the Ascona Building; she has spoken extensively with the owner/architects about the historic materials etc. and there is much happening behind the scenes.

Ms. Chung Gerrick suggested including where to find additional information on contributing buildings.

Mr. Murakami asked if there is some way to let people know that even if outside of the core it could still be a contributing building and even though it may not be identified there is still a process that can determine that.

Joyce Pisnanont, SCIDpda, said people make assumptions and it is not clearly called out. At some level assumptions are being made that people will actually read the document. She suggested making the guidelines as they are needed to be made for legal purposes but in terms of explaining to people a separate set of information should be create She said business owners won't read them because it is too much work.

Discussion ensued about the large spectrum of potential readers of the Guidelines from a local business owner with limited English to an architect and the need to address the full spectrum of projects from a simple sign to new construction.

Ms. Frestedt noted the value of creating one page handouts that speak specifically to change of use, signage and very basic things that can easily be translated into multiple languages.

Ms. Frestedt explained the reasoning behind the guidelines – providing a legal framework that community members can look to to understand how decisions are made but ultimately a lot of personal contact is needed to help people navigate the system. She asked board members what general characteristics that should be encouraged.

The Board began to discuss desirable characteristics of site design.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said except for Jackson streets tend to be narrower compared to some other streets in the city – and allows more pedestrian activity and has a much better scale. Parallel parking instead of diagonal contributes to scale of the more historic streets.

Mr. Ha noted parallel parking means fewer parking spots.

Mr. Murakami noted it allows for a better pedestrian experience.

Mr. Osborne-Klein suggested calling out alleys and that there are built in storefronts and historic use of alleys that should be recognized.

Discussion ensued about dumpster-free alleys and their interest in cleaning up and activating alleys.

Ms. Frestedt she will include a section on alleys in the guideline draft and the Board can revisit what is desired for alleys, especially Canton and Maynard Alleys.

Access to parking garages via alleys rather than from the street was discussed as was the tendency to push ducts etc. to the alley side of buildings and what this might mean to what an alley looks like and how it is used. Lighting was brought up as an issue in alleys.

The Board reviewed street use requirements and discussed building orientation to the street. Ms. Chung Gerrick noted the new education building south of the Chinese Southern Baptist church and the lack of entries on to the street. The Board provided examples of buildings that have interior retail configuration, such as the proposed building on 10th and Jackson and Uwajimaya. They discussed the characteristics of these buildings and how they relate to the street.

Ms. Frestedt suggested board members review their handbooks, specifically Preservation Brief 17 which talks about architectural characteristics. She asked them to consider how building design and architectural features contribute to the character of the building and its surrounding environment. She encouraged Board members to think about how ground level of a building is treated differently from upper stories, different proportions, window openings, whether or not there are transoms – and think about how different parts relate to presence on street.

Mr. Osborne-Klein noted the small and local nature of businesses in the district is important to consider.

Ms. Frestedt said that may be part of site design – the size and configuration of retail space. Preference for an external focus rather than internal – may be something that can be called out.

082509.3 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt advised that the Board elections were coming up and that notices would be out in September. Three Board member positions are up for re-election: John Bisbee, Joshua Osborne-Klein and Weng Chen. She noted that all are eligible to run again. Misun Chung Gerrick's appointment would be up at the end of the year and she was eligible for re-appointment.

Adjourn

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator
206-684-0226
rebecca.frestedt@seattle.gov