



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 186/09

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, June 23, 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.

062309.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 26, 2009

MM/SC/RM/WC

4:0:1 Minutes approved. Mr. Osborne-Klein abstained.

June 9, 2009

MM/SC/JOK/RM

5:0:0 Minutes approved.

062309.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL

062309.21

Chase Bank

600 5th Ave. S, #107

Applicant: Shawn Bowen, Tube Art

Signage: Proposed installation of new business identification signs.

Ms. Frestedt went over the proposal to install illuminated channel letter business identification signs to in two locations. The signs will feature white lettering with a blue

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The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

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Chase Bank logo and will replace the Washington Mutual signs on the South and East facades. Exhibits included drawings, photographs and attachment details. She said that the proposed signage meets the allowance requirements of SMC 23.66.338. The amount of signage proposed is 48 sq. ft. The allowance is 48 sq. ft., adjusted to take into account lack of street frontage. The building is located within the Asian Design Character District.

Shawn Bowen, Tube Art, said due to the ownership change from Washington Mutual to Chase new signage is needed to reflect the new business. He explained that channel letters with Chinese characters would follow the English signage, similar to the existing bilingual Washington Mutual signs. Signs would use LED illumination.

Mr. Ha said he appreciated the inclusion of Chinese characters.

Mr. Bisbee arrived at 4:45 p.m.

Public Comment:

Brian Chow asked for a translation of the proposed signage.

Leah Nitze, from Chase Bank, said this is the only branch incorporating Chinese characters. She said that the characters roughly translate to Chase Bank. She said Chase has a committee that reviews translations for accuracy and that this proposal has been reviewed by the committee.

In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Bowen explained the method of attachment and said that they propose to use 3/8" expansion screws into the mortar joints and indicated where the channels would be located.

Ms. Nitze said they are installing a raceway where needed and added that Chase prefers flush mounted signs, where possible.

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

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

Design Guidelines for Awnings and Canopies, Façade Alterations and Signs
IV. Signage

Design Guidelines for Signs

II. A. Buildings with Multiple Tenants

The following design guidelines apply to buildings with multiple tenants:

1. All signs on a single building shall be coordinated as to size, shape, color and location. They shall be of shapes, colors, and textures compatible with each other and with the architecture and exterior finish materials of the building.

2. When a tenant's space has no street frontage, the maximum permitted sign area shall be one half (50%) of the area allowed in SMC 23.66.338D, using the width of the tenant space projected to the nearest street in place of the street frontage measurement.

SMC 23.66.338 – Business identification signs

MM/SC/JOK/RM

6:0:0 Minutes approved.

062309.3

GUIDELINE REVISION WORK SESSION

Board discussion regarding proposed design guideline revisions.

Ms. Frestedt explained that Brianna Holan, an urban designer from LMN Architects has volunteered to assist the Board with the guideline revision process by contributing graphics and visuals to the final document. Ms. Frestedt said that Ms. Holan has experience developing design guidelines in other cities and circulated examples of her work. She said Ms. Holan would be invited to present a summary of a work at the next revision session. Ms. Frestedt stated that as a precursor to Ms. Holan's visit, she suggested that the Board review guidelines from other districts and discuss pros and cons of the different approaches.

Mr. Murakami said he thought the layout for the Boulder, CO guidelines was the most clear and user friendly of the examples provided by Ms. Frestedt and that others seem to include greater detail and are less intuitive. He recommended that the guidelines start from a general perspective and then become more specific as a means to help users navigate through the document.

Ms. Chung Gerrick agreed and said including a table of contents would help to add clarity.

Mr. Osborne-Klein commented that Honolulu, HI's guidelines may provide a good comparison, as it seems to be the closest in terms of issues that are addressed. He said it was also easy to follow.

Public Comment:

Brian Chow made a reference to the matrix Ms. Frestedt distributed at the last revision session and suggested adding Honolulu, HI to the document.

Board Discussion:

Mr. Bisbee spoke about the heritage value reference included in the Old Town District Guidelines (Victoria, BC, Canada) and suggested including this to help clarify what the Board is protecting and why. He said he is still struggling with what "Asian Character" design is. He commented that Asian character in the District is also rooted in the adoption of Western motifs.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said Asian character seems to refer to color schemes and sign design more than an architectural style.

Mr. Lee noted the history of the African American community in the area around Little Saigon. He wondered whether or not any of the original signs or references to that era of the District still exist.

Mr. Osborne-Klein said the Vancouver, BC guidelines are difficult to follow and inaccessible; he said they are dense and overly technical.

Ms. Frestedt said that it will be important to consider the users of the guidelines in mind and craft the wording accordingly.

Ms. Chung Gerrick liked the separation of Vancouver, BC's guidelines for designated buildings and non-designated buildings to make requirements more clearly delineated.

Ms. Frestedt noted the geographically distinct areas of the Vancouver's Chinatown and that in Seattle the separation is not as clear. She also noted that some guidelines include a discussion of the different levels of intervention: restoration, rehabilitation and renovation and said this is something that could be included in the ISRD guidelines, including a discussion of how one approaches making changes to a building. She noted that minor changes can have major, long term impacts.

Mr. Ha referenced the Honolulu guidelines and noted that some requirements appear to be more restrictive than the ISRD.

Ms. Frestedt noted the intent of the current guidelines is to allow flexibility, particularly outside of the Asian Design Character District. She suggested that the guidelines are structured to continue to encourage flexibility of design while establishing appropriate parameters.

There was a discussion about the heights of existing buildings, both contributing and non-contributing and the potential development that may follow under the South Downtown rezone.

Mr. Osborne-Klein cautioned that when describing compatibility to existing buildings it is important to recognize the existence of less significant or non-contributing buildings. Those buildings may not be the appropriate baseline for compatibility. Ms. Chung Gerrick said one way to address that may be to include a map of what is and is not a contributing building.

Mr. Murakami said when designing a new structure a developer or designer should consider what the new construction is relating to. He said that greater narrative is needed in terms of what type of development is desired in neighborhood.

Ms. Frestedt said that she could add text that states that there are unique characteristics about each site and development should be site specific. She said what is appropriate in one location isn't necessarily appropriate in another. She said she encourages applications to consult with staff and board to get feedback early in the design process.

Public Comment:

Brian Chow commented on what a big job the Board has in revising the design guidelines and recognized the challenge of community outreach and language issues.

Ms. Frestedt referenced the Boulder guidelines which contain a section that defines areas of significance in buildings, purpose of guidelines, Secretary of Interior Standards and explanation of different building types. She said she would expand the definition section of the draft to address some of these issues.

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