



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Seth Geiser

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Joan Nieman
Administrative staff

June 6, 2013

Convened 8:30 am
Adjourned 4:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Denny Substation

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, chair (excused at 1:00pm)

Osama Quotah, vice chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Seth Geiser

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew (excused at 2:15pm)

Martin Regge (excused till 11:30pm)

Commissioners Excused

Ellen Sollod

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast

Joan Nieman

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Project: Denny Substation
Phase: 30% CIP review (vacation at later date)
Last Reviewed: October 18, 2012 Pre-Design

Attendees:

Beverly Barnett	SDOT	Juliet Vong	HBB Landscape Architects
Blake Fisher	NBBJ	Karlee Gaskill	Seattle City Light
Brad Lange	Capitol Hill Housing	Laurie Geissinger	Seattle City Light
Carl Tully	NBBJ	Lloyd Douglas	Cascade Neighborhood Council
Chris Huffman	Stepherson Associates	Lyle Bicknell	DPD
Jenifer Clapham	KPFF	Matt Ayer	Seattle City Light
John Pearson	Community member	Michael Clark	Seattle City Light
John Savo	NBBJ	Sandra Lorentzen	Cascade Area Property Owners
Jose Sama	NBBJ	Shane DeWald	SDOT
Josephine Wong	Capitol Hill Housing		

9:15am – 12:00pm

Summary of Proposal

Seattle City Light is proposing to build a substation on one full block that is bordered by Denny Way, Minor Ave N, John St, and Yale Ave N and bisected by Pontius Ave N and a NS alley. In an area of about 9 blocks around the project, network improvements will be made in the ROW in phases. The station will also be connected to the Massachusetts substation via underground, and in SODO overhead lines.

City Light has proposed to vacate Pontius north of Denny, and south of John to optimize the functional design of the substation. Early public benefit ideas are open space west of the structure and green street improvements along John.

Substation technology has changed. This substation is a gas-insulated substation(GIS), which allows for a smaller footprint and integration into neighborhood. All that is visible above grade now are big metal boxes on a concrete slab.

The station will connect to the Massachusetts substation via underground, and in SODO by overhead lines. In an area of about nine blocks around the project, network improvements in the ROW will phase in.

Summary of Discussion

The discussion at this meeting was primarily about the vacation alternative with the more sculptural building; the third of the three concept ideas. The Design Commission at pre-design supported this alternative.

The categories of discussion were 1. Macro-urban context and siting; 2. Local circulation, edges, landscape; 3. Program (art integration, education opportunity, sustainability); 4. Material, views in (roof), character; 5. Further opportunities for urban design merit and public benefit.

The presentation featured the vacation alternative, which is a large, relatively low, and nearly square structure covering much of the site. The walls without a roof and the void in the center are covered partially with baffles that span the full length of the structure. The walls fold and have ramps for pedestrians, reminiscent of the Waterfront overlook walk. The structure is approximately 40 ft high. Pedestrians can enter the ramps from grade at the northeast corner (closest to REI), the southwest corner and mid-block on Denny, they can walk the upper edge of the east and west sides of the structure. The structure sits on most of the site, except for a triangular open space on the west, and a four-story, historic apartment building, the Brewster, on the northwestern corner. The substation structure meets Denny and the alley to the east, but pulls back from John to the north.

Presentation

The project team presented the *Powerpoint* dated June 6, 2013, which can be accessed on the Design Commission website.

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Commission/Project_Review_Meetings/Minutes/default.asp

Jose Sama, NBBJ, reviewed *PowerPoint* presentation.

Agency comments

Shane Dewald, Landscape Architect SDOT: *#3 alternative provide something grand for streetscape and does it uniquely. SDOT looks forward to working with NBBJ.*

Beverley Barnett, SDOT: *A good chance to learn about #3 alternative and to provide early input.*

Lyle Bicknell, DPD: *John Street, being a Green Street provides an opportunity for an improved street design and potential public benefit for the alley vacation.*

Written Comments: none

Public Comments

John Pearson lives next to proposed substation: *Appreciates local architect involvement. Asks team to consider Cascade neighborhood as part of the environment. Prefer to have as much a roof as possible. Would like proposals to show, as option, maximum roof coverage.*

Josephine Wong, Capitol Hill Housing (CHH) owns Brewster: *CHH feels substation will have negative effect on residents of the Brewster. Resulting in long-term loss of rental incomes. The substation will dwarf the Brewster without a noise barrier. Tenants perceived health risk and loss of parking would affect revenue. CHH requests EIS before signing any agreements.*

Sandra Lorentzen Cascade area property owners: *Project will affect entire neighborhood not just adjacent street -many blank walls. Cascade property owners want to be part of process.*

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked the team for the presentation of the concept stage of the Denny Substation. The commission applauded the project team for continuing the design of alternative three, integrating the open space and building designs, and involving the artists early.

With a vote of 7 to 1, the Design Commission approved the 30% design of the Denny Substation with the following recommendations:

1. Be cautious with the strategy of “dissolving” a building of this scale in such a prominent location; embrace its scale and emphasize how it can provide positive experiences for the neighborhood. Perhaps further explore the detail already begun that is at the more human scale
2. Bring forward developing all the edges of the building. Including consideration for the roof as fifth façade. Do not neglect the alley and John St.
3. Further develop the way the building interacts with its surrounding landscaping, further exploring how the landscape may be integrated into the design of the ramping façades and its surfaces.
4. Consider the views of the interior from the street and eastern edge of Denny & Minor.
5. Work with SDOT to identify options for pedestrian crossings and bus stops on Denny – and leverage SDC on how we may be of assistance.
6. Further develop the sustainability strategy and put it at the forefront of the design given the relevance of sustainability within the core offering of SCL as an energy provider.
7. Further develop programming with educational components and sustainability elements that relate to the function of the facility.
8. Consider undergrounding the overhead power adjacent to the proposed Arena project public benefit open space.
9. Organize the ramp design so that it interconnects with the existing pedestrian patterns in the neighborhood. Currently its organization appears to be driven more by the form of the building.

Martin Regge abstained.

Osama Quotah voted against. Roof ramp idea was not developed enough for 30%.