



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Acting Chair

Julie Parrett

Julie Bassuk

Seth Geiser

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Julie Parrett

Osama Quotah

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Joan Nieman
Administrative staff

April 18, 2013

Convened 10:35 am

Adjourned 4:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

4755 Fauntleroy Alley Vacation

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Acting Chair

Julie Bassuk

Seth Geiser

Shannon Loew (excused from 3:30 on)

Julie Parrett

Osama Quotah

Ellen Sollod

Debbie Wick-Harris

Commissioners Excused

Martin Regge

Laurel Kunkler

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast

Joan Nieman

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April 18, 2013

Project: **4755 Fauntleroy Alley Vacation**
Phase: Urban Design Merit (second review of UDM)
Last Reviewed: March 7, 2013
Presenters: Bill Fuller, Sears Fuller Architects
 Dan Albert, Weisman Design Group
 Jeremy Febus, KPFF Engineers

Attendees:

Beverly Barnett	SDOT
Bruce Rips	DPD
Cynthia Edwards	UFCW21
Dan Blohowiak	Fuller Sears Architects
David Bricklin	Bricklin & Newman
Deb Barker	Community Member
Dorothy Mankey	Whole Foods
Driscilla Mansfield	UFCW21
Jack McCullough	McCullough Hill, PS
Jeffrey Tosh	Alki Masonic Temple
Jermaine Smiley	Local 242
Jessica Clawson	McCullough Hill, PS
Jessica Olivas	UFCW 21
Joe Mizrahi	UFCW21
John Concannon	Community Member
Jose Vargas	UFCW21
Josh Sutton	YMCA
Joy Borkholder	West Seattle Resident
Lance Sherwood	Weingarten Realty Investors
Lauren Berkowitz	Community Member
Linda Mitchell	Community Member
Louisa Swenson	UFCW21
Mark Weisman	Weisman Design Group
Mellina White-Cusack	Community Member
Mike Barthel	Whole Foods
Mike Swenson	Transpo Group
Robert Scully	DPD
Samantha Keller	Community Member
Sarah Chem	UFCW 21
Sarah McCaghren	Community Member
Sharon Meeks	Fairmount Community
Steve Sears	Fuller Sears
Steve Williamson	UFCW 21

Time: 1:30-4:00 pm

Summary of Proposal

The petitioner is proposing to vacate part of the alleys in the block bounded by SW Alaska St, Fauntleroy Way SW, SW Edmunds St and 40th Ave SW in the West Seattle neighborhood. The alley is 'T' shaped and both the top of the "T" which is 258 feet long and the northern 200 feet of the base are proposed to be vacated. The southern 275 feet of the existing alley would remain.

The Petitioner will provide a private east-west alley south of the east-west section of alley that would be vacated. The private alley will be in an easement that allows for vehicular and pedestrian use by the public. The private east-west alley would be south of the existing alley, and it would be wider than the alley being removed.

Public benefit ideas presented include a pedestrian connection along the new private alley, small plazas at the corners of the proposed buildings, and enhanced streetscape improvements along 40th Ave SW.

Agency and Public Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT. Confirmed team has been meeting with SDOT staff on function and safety of alley configuration. Last time there were concerns about trucks backing into pedestrian areas. In substantial agreement and able to say the design meets fundamental standards of function and safety.

Bruce Rips, DPD. Summarized DRB review and the overlap with DC review. The DRB was concerned about northeast corner tower massing. They found the various small plazas not inviting to the public and more like forecourts for residences. They questioned orienting the development onto the mid-block connector. Some of their safety concerns about the drugstore drive-through and truck entrances were addressed in the design shown to the Design Commission at this meeting.

Public comments were received verbally at the meeting from: Jeffrey Tosh, Alki Masonic Lodge #152 Board member; Deb Barker, community member; Sharon Meeks, Fairmont Community Association representative; Dave Brikland, Representative of UFCW; Sarah McCaghren, resident of condominiums south of project; Mellina White-Cusack, community member; Josh Sutton, community member; Mike Barthol, Whole Foods; John Concannon, community member; Dorothy Mankey, Whole Foods employee; Steve Williamson, UFCW representative. Written Comments were submitted by René Commons, Deb Barker, Diana Rose Vincent and Dave Brikland.

Supporting comments -

- Keeping the drugstore drive through for convenience of elderly citizens
- Good stewardship of public land
- Improved pedestrian safety design
- Welcomes development and additional green spaces
- Follows with established Triangle plan

Opposing comments –

- Concerned about grade change in alley, site drainage, power lines
- Concerned about access to Masonic Lodge
- Number of truck deliveries and drugstore access limitations
- Concerned about alley width and safety with truck access
- Primary corner not fully developed
- Flawed traffic volumes for deliveries

Summary of Discussion

The Design Commissioners considered the presentation, answers to clarifying questions, and the comments from agencies and the public. In the category of Light Air Massing Scale they discussed whether the alley needed activating uses and how well plantings in the alley would fare given limited natural light. It was eventually concluded that activation along the pedestrian connection was not desirable because of the number of elements already in the design, and the additional vehicular conflicts it would bring with it.

In the area of circulation, it was noted that the design reduced the number of access points along the edges of the block, but had quite a number of them in the through block connector. Commissioners noted that the pedestrian connection was very desired by the community, and that the width and provision of raised, curbed sidewalk was beyond what would have been required by code. Concern was expressed over access to the Masonic Temple parking lot, and it was considered as a condition of approval. There was also concern about how pedestrians would move from the midblock connector to the new park, north of 40th. Loading areas for people moving into residential units was identified as a need that was not being provided for. The drug store drive through was discussed. While SDOT had provided assurance that the design would be safe, commissioners questioned adding more vehicles to the mix and the affect on the area where the alley segments intersect. It was noted that it wasn't yet clear what utilities improvements were required and being provided.

The commission discussed the public benefit package preview and provided early comments, listed below, at the end of the action.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the team for the presentation of its request for an alley vacation and the proposal's urban design merit. The Commission commends the design team for collaborating with the City on a crossing at the main intersection of Alaskan and Fauntleroy.

Urban Design Merit is the first of two steps in the Design Commission's vacation review process. Approval of both the Urban Design Merit and Public Benefit package constitute a recommendation to the SDOT Director by the Design Commission to approve the vacation. The ultimate decision to grant the vacation lies with the City Council.

The Design Commission has evaluated the urban design merit of the 4755 Fauntleroy Way SW proposal to vacate the T shaped alley that runs parallel to and between Fauntleroy Way SW and 40th Ave SW, from SW Edmunds St north to approximately 100 ft. south of SW Alaska St, where it branches east and west to 40th Ave SW and Fauntleroy Ave SW. 6,600 sq. ft. would be vacated. The Commission finds that:

1. The vacation would replace the east-west segment of alley located about 100 ft south of and parallel to SW Alaska St with a private alley about 165 ft further south. The area of the private alley would be approximately 11,100 sq. ft. and it would be in an easement to the public, providing for circulation of vehicles and pedestrians.
2. With the new location and wider width, the alley would provide a valuable through block pedestrian connection, and better meet a need identified by the City and neighborhood in the West Seattle Triangle Urban Design Framework, than the current east-west alley alignment.

With a vote of 5 to 3, the Commission found the proposal justified in terms of Urban Design Merit conditional on the items listed below. At a future meeting the Commission will evaluate and vote on the Public Benefit package.

1. Work with Masonic Temple to resolve issues of access to their parking lot, which can only be reached through the alley.
2. Demonstrate how pedestrians would connect across 40th Ave SW to the new park slated for development in the near future.
3. Provide a solution for loading during move ins and move outs that isn't far from entrances and obstructed by streetscape amenities.
4. Continue to resolve the risk for pedestrian conflicts at the drug store drive through.
5. At the intersection of the two alley sections, improve orientation so pedestrians aren't drawn into the auto-oriented north-south segment, and explore solutions that will connect the pedestrian walkway across that point.

Dissenting votes:

JP: Project development was not sufficient for approval. Drive thru continues to seem problematic despite SDOT thumbs up.

ES: Shares JP's comment. Although - drive through allowed here, considering we are encouraging people to get out of cars to promote energy efficiency and non-motorized transportation, this could be solved another way. Would like topographic information included in any future presentation.

OQ: Going right way, but had many comments and concerned that might be missed. Land is going to applicant, the city is giving it up, so the weight is on the applicant to show the merit of allowing it.

Comments on Public Benefit Preview

Be clear what's required by code, green street etc.

Be clear what's meant to be public space and what isn't. Call out. Also, be clear how the public will use it.

Residents don't need to be taken out with design moves and providing them their own space, they are activating.

Cues just aren't there yet. Plazas not special. How they connect beyond, engage with larger urban fabric, how plazas speak to park across the street, for example. Feels insular.

Don't count midblock connector too highly in public benefit package, conflicts.

Great working through some of crossings at major intersections.

40th so great, and investment in park across, but any way to extend it, so it's not just a half a block of rain garden and improvements. Even if just small step of improvement of that block until it's redeveloped.

As with LA Fitness, mindful of ADA and pinch points of elements and congestion points of ped flow. Sometimes less is more.