



The City of Seattle

# International Special Review District

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ISRD 182/08

## MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, July 8, 2008

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

### Board Members Present

Jerry Chihara  
Misun Chung-Gerrick  
Robert Ha  
Amalia Gonzalez-Kahn  
Weng Chan  
Joshua Osborne-Klein

### Staff

Rebecca Frestedt  
Melinda Bloom

Board Chair Robert Ha called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

### **070808.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Mr. Chan and Mr. Osborne-Klein arrived at 4:36 pm.*

*May 27, 2008*

MM/SC/JOK/AGK 5:0:1 Minutes approved. Mr. Chan abstained.

*June 10, 2008*

MM/SC/AGK/JC 4:0:2 Minutes approved.  
Mr. Chan and Mr. Osborne-Klein abstained.

### **070808.2 CERTIFICATES OF APPROVAL**

070808.21 Susan G. Komen Foundation  
718 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. S. - Nikkei Manor

Application:

Ms. Frestedt provided the staff report. She said this is a proposed Change of Use to convert a retail space (approx. 3000 sq. ft) to office use for a non-profit foundation. She pedestrian-oriented retail uses are encouraged within the International District Mixed (IDM)

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The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

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zone. She noted that the proposed space is located outside of the Asian Design Character District. The street frontage exceeds 145' feet.

Applicant Comment:

Mona Locke, Executive Director of the Puget Sound Susan G. Komen Foundation affiliate, stated her office is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest in the country. She said they want to relocate to the Nikkei Manor site because there is another non-profit moving in and believe it to be a good joint location for both organizations. She said they would like to be located in the community they serve and this year they provided grants to Asian America, Native American, and African American and Hispanic/Latino communities. Ms. Locke stated they would bring in scores of volunteers which would bring new people into the community; they serve a 16 county service area.

Mr. Ha thought it would be positive and would bring more people into the ID.

Susan Oki, from Nikkei Manor, stated it would fit in with their mission as a nonprofit; they serve the elderly and to the extent they could have increased traffic it would make it safer for their elders.

Mr. Chihara stated that preferred uses at ground level are retail-oriented and it would be nice to have private offices away from the street frontage. It is important to present a public face to the right of way and to engage with the pedestrian environment.

Ms. Locke stated they designed the offices to be in the back so they would not block the windows and would not look cluttered. There will be cubicles that do not go up to the ceiling in the central portion.

Mr. Osborne-Klein cited the code language that says "non-pedestrian oriented uses that are not typically visible from the sidewalk may no exceed 145' of street frontage per use". He asked if the Board has discretion in their decision as it seems to be a non-discretionary element.

Ms. Frestedt stated the Board could make an exception in this case given special considerations and that could be stated in the motion or noted for the record.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn asked if parking has been secured.

Ms. Oki agreed to eight parking spaces for the applicant's use within their lot.

Public Comment:

Hyeok Kim, the Executive Director of Inter\*Im, voiced full support of the application and is familiar with the organization because of the outreach they have done to the API community around breast cancer research and prevention. They are happy to have an organization come into the ID that may have a mainstream label but has its values deeply seated in the core values that make up the ID, paying attention to issues such as racial disproportionality especially in health care issues.

Action:

I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for a change of use, as proposed. The Board grants a departure on the street frontage as noted in SMC 22.66.326E.

**This action is based on the following:**

**Applicable Guidelines**

**SMC 23.66.302 – International Special Review District goals and objectives**

**SMC 23.66.326 – Street level uses**

E. Nonpedestrian-oriented uses and businesses that are not typically visible from the sidewalk may not exceed twenty-five (25) feet of street frontage per use when located within the interior portion of a block, or one hundred forty-five (145) feet of street frontage per use when located on a corner.

Nonpedestrian-oriented uses include but are not limited to:

Community clubs or centers;

Family associations;

Human service uses;

Nonprofit community service organizations;

Theaters and spectator sports facilities.

**MM/SC/AGK/JC**

**6:0:0 Motion approved.**

070808.22

Maynard Ave. Green Street Project

West side of Maynard Ave. S. between S. Jackson and S. Main Streets

Application:

Ms. Frestedt explained that the request is for revisions to the curb, including landscaping. The proposal will increase the width of the sidewalk and curb along West side of Maynard Ave., between S. Main and S. Jackson Streets by six feet (6') and add temporary landscaping within the expanded curb while the applicants finalize the design and landscaping plan. No parking alterations are proposed. She said this application is part of the Maynard Avenue Green Street project. She stated that the applicants received a Certificate of Approval in August 2007 to extend the curb on the East side of Maynard Ave. She said an application for final design of the curb, including lighting, seating and final landscaping design will be reviewed by the Board at a later date.

Ms. Frestedt introduced the applicants, Tom Im, from InterIm Community Development Association and Dave Rogers, from SVR Design.

Mr. Im provided an overview of the history of the Green Street project and stated that both Main and Maynard have been designated as green streets. He said the intent is to improve the pedestrian environment on specific corridors. He said they have worked to obtain funding as well as create a vision of what it could look like. He stated that the City got funding to expand the west side of the street by 6' and they want to take advantage of that and do improvements on that side of the street. InterIm has talked to the three adjacent neighbors and none want trees in this area specifically on the southern part of the improvement.

Mr. Im said they want to expand the green street to both sides of the street so it will bookend the east and west sides and will lead people up to the community garden as a gateway effect for the Nihonmachi community.

Mr. Rogers said that SDOT was encouraged by the level of community support for the project, which helps to secure funding. He said Maynard Ave. and the neighborhood now have a proponent in the City and that SDOT has the funding and crews available to expand the work. The east and west sides were designed together with SDOT; there is funding for the curb relocation/realignment, art vision, driveways, drainage improvements and the curb width matches existing at the intersection. He said there will be no loss of parking on the east side. He said the clearance width is 20' wide with no parking. He said the diagonal parking on one side will be changed to parallel parking. The driveways into the parking lot will be brought to City driveway standards.

Mr. Chihara was surprised that SDOT approved two curb cuts so close together and asked if they thought about eliminating one of the curb cuts.

Mr. Rogers stated the question came up but the City didn't push it, and that he expects that the parking lot will be redeveloped at some point.

Mr. Chihara said as the project is presented the whole effort is based on making Maynard more pedestrian friendly but the curb cut issue contradicts that. He noted that vehicle access and egress is not as busy as other lots so perhaps the degree of conflict is minimized; it would be desirable to consider removing it at some point. He expressed concern that a cut would be located where the street was starting to narrow.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked Mr. Rogers asked if narrower streets actually caused drivers to be more cautious and therefore can reduce conflict with pedestrians.

Mr. Rogers explained that curb bulks can calm or slow traffic.

Mr. Chan asked about the width of the street at the narrowest point.

Mr. Rogers said that there are 20' from curb to curb.

Mr. Chihara asked if the landscaping shown on the drawing was there as placeholders and if an evolution of landscape design is still to come.

Mr. Rogers stated there would multiple presentations to the board as they move along.

Mr. Ha asked about lighting and said he would like to see better lighting for safety. He is concerned about trees blocking views of parked cars.

Mr. Rogers agreed and said lighting should be designed in concert with plantings.

Ms. Frestedt advised lighting was not part of this application.

Mr. Osborne-Klein noted the plan doesn't provide opportunity for bike lane if that was precluded in the future.

Mr. Rogers said this raises a good point, but that he discussed this with SDOT and they don't anticipate a lot of bike traffic on the street given the grade.

Ms. Chung Gerrick stated it would be nice to see landscaping continue onto the street; she thought it a great project and is excited to see it when it is done.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Action:

I move that the International Special Review District Board approve a Certificate of Approval for Street Use and temporary landscaping, as proposed.

This action is based on the following:

**General Requirements Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 23.66.336** - Proposed rehabilitation projects should respect the architectural and structural integrity of the building in which the work is undertaken, through sympathetic use of colors, material and style.

**Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and New Construction**

**#1** – A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

**#10** – New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

**MM/SC/AGK/JOK                      6:0:0    Motion approved.**

I move to that staff writes a letter on behalf of the Board in support of removal of one or both curb cuts on Maynard Avenue.

**MM/SC/JC/AGK                      5:1:0    Motion approved. Mr. Osborne-Klein opposed.**

**070808.3                      BOARD BRIEFING**

070808.31                      Maynard Ave. Green Street Project  
East side of Maynard Ave. S. between S. Jackson and S. Main Streets

Briefing on proposed design, public art, and landscape treatments associated with the proposed Green Street along Maynard Ave. S.

Tom Im, InterIm, explained that the project is intended to create a gateway leading to the community garden. He said Maynard is considered the front yard of the Nihonmachi community they plan to incorporate references to Japantown. They want a sustainable development approach that will capture the rainwater off the roof of the Nihonmachi Building and direct it into cisterns built throughout the street. The run off would ultimately lead into public drainage system. He said there will also be a drip irrigation system that will feed plantings.

Mr. Im said they plan to include public art elements as well; there is a serpentine art element that will have river rock or ceramic art pieces. They want to get the public involved to help

design and install it. He said historical markers will tell the story of Japanese Americans' history in the community. He said the markers will be flush with the ground and integrated into the serpentine art structure. Lights will be solar and will be located at the very edge of the art project. He said the cisterns will be raised above the ground and there will be vertical structures. There will be a 2<sup>nd</sup> piece of art to add some verticality and the cisterns will also create some vertical elements.

There was a discussion about the plumbing configuration within Nihonmachi Terrace (adjacent to the proposed enhancements) and the movement of water from the cistern into the sewer.

Mr. Rogers said that the amount of water going into the cisterns will be managed differently in summer and winter and also during certain storm events. The cisterns will be made of precast concrete which is structurally efficient. Design elements such as wood, art, tiles could be bolted to them; some could have plants coming out of the top, some could have a grate on the top but they have to think about the possibility of people dropping cigarette butts and trash into them.

Board discussion:

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn thought it should be intuitive so that people know they can walk on it.

Mr. Rogers said they have a landscape architect who is choosing a plant palette and that they would consider "steppable" varieties.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked if this was just between Madison and Main and if there were plans to expand the concept at all.

Mr. Rogers said right now Maynard is designated as a green street and at this time it is a green street with no greenery.

Mr. Chihara commented on the pipe coming out of the building to feed the cisterns; he thought they looked "funky" in terms of design style and didn't know that "funky" would work in this neighborhood. He would like to have more information about design options for cisterns. He had some safety concerns and wondered if people would climb or swing on the piping. He recommended routing the pipes underground and taking a more conservative approach.

Mr. Rogers acknowledged the concern. He said Mr. Chihara's comments echoed what they have heard before: no corrugated metal, nothing "funky". They looked at undergrounding, but this is not the preferred option. They are hoping the pipes will work in a safe manner and provide a solid structural element there.

Ms. Chung-Gerrick was concerned about safety and maintenance. She said considering the steep slope they might need a railing around the cistern.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

070808.32

ID 2030 Design & Resource Center

Joyce Pisanant, from the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda), presented a briefing on SCIDpda's ID 2030 Design and Resource Center.

Ms. Pisanont described the function of the SCIDpda and said there are four primary lines of business: real estate development, property management, community engagement and senior services. She presented on the Community Design Center concept -- what it is and what it means to have it in this neighborhood. She said Community Design Centers are places where people can come and learn about neighborhood design and development in their communities. She provided a matrix of different models that exist of Community Design Centers and noted that the PDA is still in the process of formulating what their scope of work will be.

She said in 2008 they will focus on education, engagement and some conceptual design. In 2010 – 2012 they will focus on engagement, education and increase their design scope of services to offer greater menu of options to people in the neighborhood, and in 2013 they will add development. She summarized a few specific projects for the first two years, including the redevelopment of a Children's Park and developing a strategy to address vacant buildings. Years 3 and 4 they hope to start an arts initiative, focus on Little Saigon and façade improvement program.

Ms. Pisanont said the Design Center would be a center for coordinating and supporting existing efforts and helping to fill gaps. She said they aim to reach beyond the usual suspects through extensive outreach, visual cultural and language specific communication, technical assistance, referral to resources and to be proactive instead of reactive. They will work with the ISRD to assist with vetting new design guidelines; commercial resource library, and could be a mechanism to help recruit future ISRD board members.

Mr. Chihara was excited to hear there will be a resource available to small business owners and ID residents.

Ms. Pisanont said that the recent work on the International Children's Park redevelopment provides a good example for the type of collaborative work that could occur within the Design Center.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said it would be nice to have the Design Center housed in a central location where experts can come in and assist the community.

Mr. Chihara asked if there were other community design centers in Seattle.

Ms. Pisanont said that Earthworks is located here, but had a different focus. She said that there are only approximately 40 registered similar community design center-related centers in the country.

Ms. Pisanont said she hopes that the Design Center will house a data base to help people understand how potential designs would look. She mentioned a similar concept in Vancouver B.C. where they use a data base that pulls together CAD, PhotoShop and GIS and provides the history, location, owner, condition of the property. The program will show what the property would look like if it were built to a particular height, of what a façade improvement would look like. She said the SCIDPDA is hoping to develop a commercial revitalization data base that would allow one to identify by street corner the type of businesses that are around and the potential for other types of businesses that don't currently exist, but how they might fare if brought into the neighborhood.

**BOARD BUSINESS**

Ms. Frestedt announced that she received three letters of interest for the Board vacancy and will conduct interviews within the next three weeks. She said she will forward the recommendation to the Mayor's office who will make the final selection.

Ms. Frestedt noted that she had not received comments or feedback from the Board in response to the Livable South Downtown proposal and asked the Board if they had given the proposal further thought.

Ms. Chung Gerrick said she considers the block adjacent to Uwajimaya to be equivalent to a wall separating Pioneer Square and the International District.

Mr. Osborne-Klein thought some of that height might be minimized if the over-the-tracks area is redeveloped.

Ms. Frestedt the intent along Washington is to add connectivity to between Pioneer Square and the ID. She expressed concern about the potential impact of the upper stories, but noted that this may be mitigated through controls on the lot coverage limit.

Mr. Osborn-Klein said that anything over 100' should have some percentage of residential units. He said the decision not to do any upzoning in the historic part of the neighborhood provides a good compromise and balance.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn said that she is concerned that maintaining the current heights in the core would limit opportunities for new Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) dollars. She expressed concern that boutique hotels and condos were planned and thought needs to be paid to affordable housing as this is primarily a low income neighborhood.

The Board discussed the benefit of incentive dollars coming back into the neighborhood and where the additional heights should be granted to create opportunities for TDRs. Board members were not in agreement about the increase of height in the historic core. The Board would like more information on how locally generated TDR money could be used (whether it would be reinvested within the District or could be used citywide).

Mr. Osborne-Klein suggested that increasing heights on the periphery one way to make up for the loss of height increases in the core.

Ms. Frestedt asked if the proposed 240' heights were problematic for the Board.

Ms. Chung-Gerrick said she thought 240' is too high for this neighborhood. She said having a district with a relatively low height in the core surrounded by very tall buildings wouldn't feel right.

Mr. Chihara commented that the 240' height is limited to the northwest corner of the district. He said he agreed with Mr. Osborne-Klein and thinks that there were enough controls on the developable area of each parcel, through setbacks and lot coverage limits, to satisfy his reservations about the additional height. He said it will depend on how the properties are developed and that smaller parcels are unlikely to be developed to 240'.

Ms. Frestedt asked if the Board would like to see lot coverage limits expanded.

There was consensus among the Board that they would not want to see that happen.

Mr. Osborne-Klein asked the Board was in agreement that development rights dollars should be kept within the neighborhood and suggested making support contingent on that happening.

The Board agreed.

Ms. Frestedt said she would draft a letter and circulate it to the Board for feedback. She asked for the Board's perspectives regarding the proposal to extend the District boundaries south to Charles St.

The Board supported Southern expansion of District boundaries.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn noted the proposed heights at the top of the Japantown hill and said she preferred that height limits would be stepped, as she was nervous about the idea of an enormous tower at the top of the hill.

Mr. Osborne-Klein stated he would like to see a ground floor retail requirement in Japantown to avoid dead or inactive spaces.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn would like to see a requirement that the area continue to contribute to the pedestrian environment.

Ms. Frestedt said International District Mixed is what is proposed for the majority of Japantown and there is ground level retail required. She noted, however, that the International District Residential zone does not have the same requirements.

Ms. Gonzalez-Kahn asked about the possibility of allowing townhouses and more family housing because there is not much in the neighborhood.

Mr. Osborne-Klein wants to see street activation and doesn't want to see huge buildings with no pedestrian interface.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

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