Seattle Design Commission

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APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

6 May 2004

Please review these minutes for accuracy and return any comments or corrections by
Wednesday, 04 August 2004
to Carrie Duncan via phone at 615-1107; fax at 233-7883; or email at carrie.duncan@seattle.gov

Convened: 8:30am

Projects Reviewed

South Day Street
Jefferson Park Golf Driving Range
South Park Library

Adjourned: 1:00pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair
Frances Nelson
Iain M. Robertson
Nic Rossouw
Donald Royse
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino

6 May 2004 Project: **South Day Street**
Phase: Street Vacation
Previous Reviews: None
Presenters: James Pappin, Prelude, LLC
Adrienne Quinn, Buck & Gordon
Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Attendees: Nannette Martin, Mt. Baker Community Club
Enid Miller Slivka, Mt. Baker Community Club
Michael Dorcy, DPD
Marilyn Senour, SDOT

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00331)

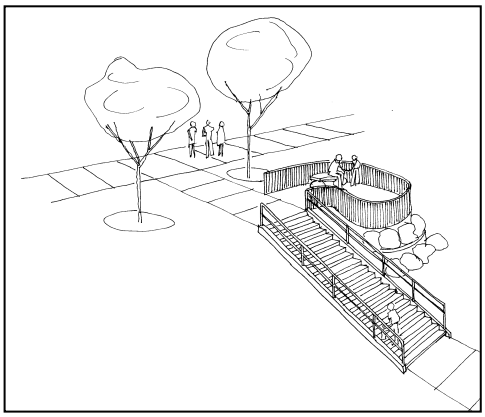
Action: The Commission thanks the team for its presentation and its consideration of the city's vacation policies.

The Commission's decisions regarding vacations are based on two steps: first, an appropriateness for the urban design of the neighborhood and the good of the city; and second, an evaluation of whether the public benefits stemming from a vacation warrant the Commission recommending the granting of a vacation. The Commissions' consensus is that this project does not meet the first step; therefore, the Commission does not recommend approval.

In addition, the Commission finds the proposal raises other concerns which have not been adequately answered, including:

- **The city would be giving up land for future potential use and the proposed remedy should the city need to reacquire the land – eminent domain – is a difficult and expensive proposition;**
- **The issue of the maintenance of the right-of-way could be solved in some other way than through the proposed vacation;**
- **The proposal to deed the viewing platform to the city does not meet a public purpose by virtue of its location and does not include a continuing maintenance agreement.**

The applicant is petitioning for a partial vacation of South Day Street (between 32nd Ave. S. and 33rd Ave. S.) in the Mount Baker neighborhood. They are seeking vacation of approximately twenty-seven feet of the northern part of the street, which is adjacent to the public stair. The applicant does not propose to vacate any portion of the public stair. The vacation will allow the applicants to create one additional single family lot. The applicant proposes to build a viewing platform on the proposed vacated right of way that would enhance the community by providing views of Lake Washington.



Proposed View Platform

The applicant brought to the Commission three questions:

1) Why are we here? The applicant offered that they have brought the case before the Design Commission not only to seek a partial vacation of this street but also to generate discussion about public benefits and the city's street vacation policies.
2) What are the consequences of the City's de facto prohibition of granting street vacations in residential areas? The applicant argued that the result of this de facto policy was that throughout the city, people have reclaimed vacant streets for their own personal use with the tacit permission of the City which, in effect, creates private use of public property, but without providing any public benefit.
3) Is there truly a value to the city's de facto prohibition policy? The applicant noted the argument that the city typically uses to defend its policy: that the city might eventually need to use the property for its purposes and that it would set a bad precedent and would enable other vacations. The applicant argued that the city should make a reasonable evaluation for each case to determine the merits of a vacation. Furthermore, the applicant argued that the city could always condemn the land and return it to the public domain if needed at some point in the future.

The applicant asked the Design Commission to challenge City Council to rethink the city's de facto prohibition on street vacations in residential neighborhoods.

The applicant is co-petitioning with an adjacent property owner, but can speak for both parties today. He presented both owners' plans for their properties. They would like the city to grant them a partial street vacation (and thereby ownership) for a segment of land that extends from their property lines to the edge of the stairway, which is located in the middle of an unopened public right-of-way. The additional property would enable them to: 1) develop a more generous residential parcel with a single family house and 2) subdivide the second property and build two single family houses on that. He will leave the existing stairs and build a new viewing platform, which he will deed back to the city. The city will not only gain a viewing platform for the public to use, it will also gain immediate funds from the sale of the property, perpetual extra tax revenue from development of an additional residence on the property, and an additional single-family residence.

View of Lake Washington from 32nd Avenue South

<u>Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns</u>

- Has the applicant determined what invasive plants there are in the right-of-way and if removing the plants in the right-of-way – even if they are invasive – would mean a loss of habitat for local wildlife?
    - Applicants said there are morning glory (calystegia sepium), ivy (hedera hibernica), blackberry (rubus laciniatus), and holly bushes (ilex aquifolium) in the right-of-way.
- In order to properly evaluate the proposal, we need to know the size of the buildings that will be proposed and how they will affect the views from the viewing platform. Also we need to know what will be planted on the planting strip between the building and the stairs.

    - Applicants said that he would probably build a 2 story building with a basement.
- With the ability to build to 35 feet, the potential exists that the viewpoint would be blocked.
    - Applicants said that they would be willing to enter into a covenant to restrict the height of the house.
- It is troubling to build into the right-of-way.
- The stairs in question are part of a network of stairs in the area. The stairs are charming, and since they are on a steep slope, they are the "highest and best use" of the right-of-way. Placing a building 5 feet from the stairs would create a radically different experience. The benefits of the platform do not outweigh the benefits of the existing stairs.
    - The applicants noted that the stairs and the city property on either side are not maintained by the City. The same unmaintained condition exists at the stair west of 31st Avenue South.
- The viewing platform might not bring in more people to the area, therefore there is little benefit to the public.
    - Applicant said the existing stairs were not well used. However, the viewing platform could be used both year-round, and for special events such as SeaFair.
- If the owners are concerned about the cleanliness of the right-of-way, why haven't they applied to SDOT for a street use permit and cleaned the area themselves? The owners have other ways of meeting some of their stated objectives.
- Concerned that if the viewing platform is deeded to the city without maintenance funds, the platform would not be maintained.
- If the city does need this land in the future, it will be difficult and costly to do so -- it is not easy to condemn land in Washington State.
- The primary benefit of the proposal is not to the city it is to the two property owners.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- Beverly Barnett, a representative from SDOT, reported that the applicant did indeed have the right to petition the city for a street vacation. She said that the applicant had to demonstrate that there was enough public benefit to justify the vacation.

- One member of the public asked the Commission to not approve the vacation. She wondered if the proposed house would block or mar the views from the viewing platform. She also noted that the stairs were used daily.

- Michael Dorcy, a land use planner with the city, expressed concern that the applicant's proposal might be not feasible, as the property was on a steep slope, and therefore might not be able to be developed per the city's steep slope ordinance. Also, he pointed out that the maximum building height permitted on the property was 35 feet, enabling the property owner to build a house that might effectively block the views from the viewing platform.

6 May 2004 Project: **Jefferson Park Golf Driving Range**
Phase: Design Development
Previous Review: 15 February 2001 (Briefing); 6 December 2001 (Concept Design)
Presenter: Ernie Ferrero, Parks
Wayne Ivary, Ivary & Associates
Attendee: Karen Lynch, Parks
Andy Soden, Parks Golf

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00207)

Action: The Commission thanks the presenters for coming and would like to make the following comments and recommendations:

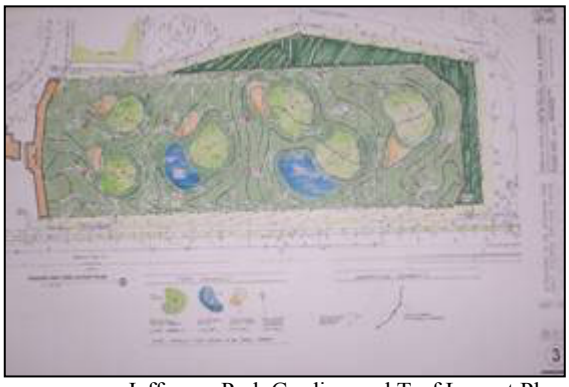
- **Appreciates the proponents' care with which they thought about both the park and the community throughout the design process;**
- **Appreciates the work to date with the community in developing the design and encourages further work with the community to look at ways of either celebrating or concealing the nets and/or poles;**
- **Given that light pollution is a concern throughout the city, appreciate the attention given to improving the lighting and minimizing light spillover into the park and community;**
- **Appreciate the exploration of enriching the groundplain and ways to integrate the stormwater and infiltration facilities; and**
- **Recommends approval of the design development.**

The proponents noted it's been a few years since the Jefferson Park Golf project has come before the Design Commission. Since then, there have been changes in the golf program and facility and in their operations. The city recently reclaimed ownership of the golf facility, as past models of operation – by a nonprofit organization in the 90s and a concessionaire in the 60s, 70s and 80s – proved to have shortcomings that left the facility inadequately maintained and in debt. The restructuring is designed to restore the facility to fiscal and operational health.

The proponents portrayed their proposed project as a maintenance improvement and not a design project. The major element of the project is making improvements to the driving range facility. The project is broken into Phase I and Phase II. The budget for Phase I is $635,000.

In Phase I, they propose to:

- reduce the range to 250' by 750', thereby creating an additional .6 acres of open space between the driving range and the reservoir and improving the circulation through the park;
- make the driving range facility safer by increasing the height – from 60' to 110' – of the poles and nets surrounding the range;



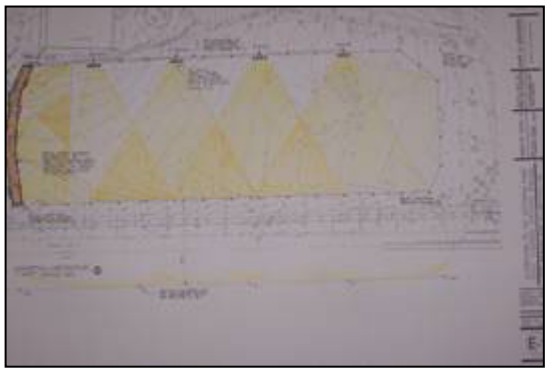
Jefferson Park Grading and Turf Layout Plan

- recontour the range to improve the stormwater management and prevent occasional flooding of the community center;
- add simulated ponds and target greens to the range;
- install either natural grass or artificial turf;
- place shields on the existing lights, to reduce light pollution;
- add lights to one side (north)

In Phase II, they propose to:

- double deck the tee box; and
- renovate the clubhouse.

The proponents have held meetings with the community. The community's main concern is the lighting, which shines into the community center and into neighbors' windows, so designers are addressing that.



Jefferson Park Conceptual Lighting Plan

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- What opportunities exist for a more natural drainage system? Why would you be looking at artificial turf and not grass?
    - Artificial turf is cheaper to operate.
- Is it a financial decision to use artificial turf?
    - Artificial turf is cheaper to operate but grass is cheaper to install.
- What are the sustainable components?
    - No money in budget to landscape buffer or add a trail; perhaps could be done in Phase II.
- Look at a cost/benefit of natural grass vs. artificial turf. The amount of green space in the city is small and ever diminishing; do we want to start permitting artificial turf in parks?
- Consider grading the range when fixing the drainage system.
- Think more adventurously about the poles and nets, like perhaps adding flags, changing the color at a high level, adding stencils to the nets, and including a periscope in one of the poles.
- The community should have a say in the poles' design.
- Don't use chemicals or fertilizer.
- What is the impact of the nets on birds?
    - Called other operators, and they don't have problems.

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6 May 2004 Project: **South Park Library**
Phase: Design Development
Previous Reviews: 7 August 2003 (Predesign)
Presenters: Frank Coulter, Seattle Public Library
Ray Johnston, Johnston Architects
Mary Johnston, Johnston Architects
Alison Walker Brems, Johnston Architects
Jess Harris, DPD
Attendees: Claudia McCain, Seattle Public Library
Dennis Ross, Library Citizens Implementation Review Panel

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00307)

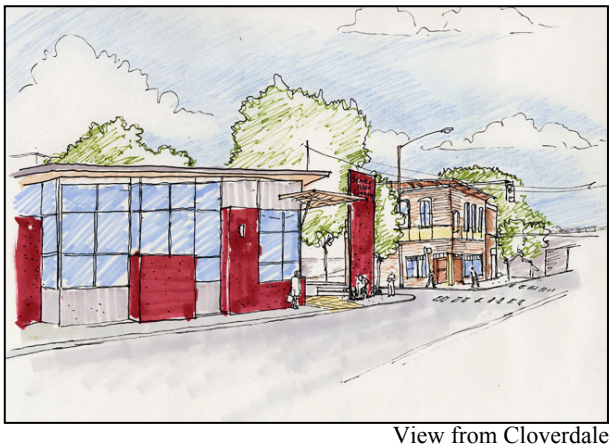
Action: The Commission appreciates the presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations:

- **Commends the proponents for accomplishing a lot on a tight budget;**
- **States that the sustainable ethic applied throughout the building is laudable;**
- **Where possible, it would be nice to integrate an interpretive component of sustainable design;**
- **States that the details, like the canopy, are thoughtfully designed and enrich the project;**
- **States that the artwork, which is inexpensive and simple, responds to and engages the community;**
- **States that the piazza effectively embraces the public space and the sidewalk and the Commission hopes the design continues to balance the sense of openness and closure;**
- **States that the allusions to the area's history and the river in the piazza are a nice feature;**
- **States that the clerestory windows are a welcome addition;**
- **Find resolution in the final design of the canopy;**
- **Supports the requests to SDOT to allow the following: locating a pylon on the corner, flexibility on street tree placement, and flexibility on the parking requirements;**
- **Recommends approval for design development and does not need to see again.**

The Commission saw and approved the project in the predesign and schematic design phase; the latter was in February 2004. The proponents updated the Commission on the project's changes, including the deletion of community room, and the refinement of design details.

The site lies at the intersection of Cloverdale and 8th. The Duwamish River is nearby. There is lots of noise from Cloverdale and 99. The challenge was to design a building within a tight site that incorporated good pedestrian access and a courtyard. The site is within a large Hispanic community, and near a community center and Cesar Chavez Park. Involvement with the Hispanic community led to the

incorporation of references to their culture in the building and site design. The design reflects the culture's hand-made crafts – for example, the woven basket in the canopy.



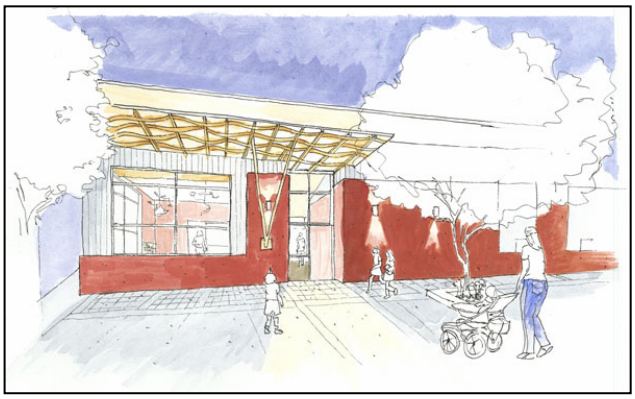
View from Cloverdale

The courtyard has been refined. It now includes:

- a piazza on the street at the corner with benches and sitting stones;
- concrete pavers and 10 trees;
- a gathering space which serves as a respite and amphitheatre;
- the signpost frames the corner;
- at the request of the community, the signpost includes a water feature that "flows" into curving, meandering pavers set in the courtyard and ends in an aspen grove; and
- additional pylons in courtyard are inset with gobos (inset lights similar to theater lighting) to project light patterns on the wall. The patterns were developed with community input and will change seasonally; and
- lights will help illuminate entry and piazza as well.

The building plan has been further refined. It now includes:

- 3 "living" rooms on axis with front door;
- exterior materials include stained wood, real stucco and glazing;
- circulation desk opens to children's area;
- clerestory windows;
- no more courtyard walls – the courtyard is small, and it made sense to deemphasize them. During the design process, the walls dissolved into pylons with benches in between. The pylons now include the light projectors that display patterns on the exterior wall;
- bright interior colors (green, fuscia, though circulation desk will be neutral);
- perforated ceiling panels; and
- task lighting (more residential-like in scheme).



South Park Library Sketch

The proponents would specifically like the Commission's reaction to the new courtyard design and use of gobos to project art.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Good community involvement especially with the art/gobo wall projection.
- Likes use of salvaged materials. Would like to see an educational component to inform people about the use of salvaged materials.
- Appreciates the design drawing upon the area's rich history.
- Appreciates the art component, both within the building and through involving the community.
- Canopy is an intriguing element that adds a lot of richness to the corner of the building.
- Supports new courtyard design, especially considering the scale of the courtyard. Removal of the courtyard walls is appropriate for design and safety reasons. It effectively adds more space for civic use; the space is rich and is implied to extend into the street. The pylons symbolically represent a sense of the enclosure.
- Sections available?
    - Proponents stated that they didn't bring them.
- How will the streetlighting along 21st impact the art projected on the wall? Might want to explore since lighting is a strong component of the design.
    - One streetlight on corner on site's side of the street. Not another one until the next corner.
- Perhaps could add in-ground lights on the corner to illuminate the canopy. Could argue with SDOT that you don't need another overhead light.
- Somewhat laments loss of the wall.
- Pylons look lonely – maybe there should be more of them and higher?
- Elegant overall design. The clerestory windows add to the elegance – they enable the roof to appear like its hovering.
- Likes the casual look and materials of the building's exterior.
- Now that the wall is gone, could the proponent negotiate with SDOT to push the pattern in the plaza onto the sidewalk and to the curb, thereby expanding the space by about a third?
    - Would need to explore that with SDOT.
- The canopy and main roof are in conflict and not resolved.
    - Agree. Have been talking about the canopy meets the building. One possibility is that the infill material doesn't meet the building.
- Is the roof "green" and does the building meet the LEED rating?
    - Don't have the funding to be a LEED accredited building. While they are not in full compliance, they have informally addressed many of the items on the LEED checklist.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A member of the public has seen gobos in use before and likes them.

- Jess Harris, the DPD planner for the project, commented on several permitting issues:
    - setback for pylon on a corner;
    - extending the courtyard pavers into sidewalk (an issue for SDOT);
    - modification of street tree requirement;
    - Smaller parking spaces than required.

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6 May 2004 Project: **Commission Updates and Correspondence**
Phase: Staff briefing
Presenters: Layne Cubell
Attendees: none
Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00009)

Summary: The Commission discussed important projects facing the City and how the Commission can be most effective in their involvement. They discussed the Monorail and the desire to reinforce the recent letter written by the Monorail Review Panel, the reformation of the Light Review Panel, the interviews for the City Design manager, and the Commission's recent briefing before Council's Urban Development and Planning Committee.

The Commission felt the letter written by the Monorail Review Panel accurately reflected the views of the panel. The Commission agreed the panel itself also is a legitimate subcommittee of the Commission and should be able to provide comments and write letters about projects like the Monorail, which affects the urban design of the city. In order to make that point clear, the Commission will write a letter to Council stating its mission and purpose, the relationship between the Monorail Review Panel and the Commission, and the fact that the panel, as a subcommittee of the Commission, can legitimately review and offer comments and concerns to City Council about the Monorail. At the 5/7 meeting of the Monorail Review Panel, the panel will discuss its mandate. David Spiker, John Owen, Steve Sheehy (Co-chair, Planning Commission), Grace Crunican (Director, SDOT) and Diane Sugimura (Director, Planning and Development) will all be present.

The Light Rail Review Panel is reforming after a hiatus to begin reviewing the proposed stations for the northern route of light rail from downtown to Northgate. Tory will serve on the panel; Pam is unsure whether she can make the commitment.

Commission staff updated the Commission on the schedule for interviews for the City Design Manager. In addition to formal interviews, the final candidates will appear before the full Commission on May 20.

The Commission also discussed its recent briefing before Council's Urban Development and Planning Committee. The presentation went well and those Commissioners who participated, (Spiker, Royse, Rossouw and Laughlin Taylor) were thanked for their time.

6 May 2004 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS	A.	TIMESHEETS
	B.	MINUTES FROM 6 DECEMBER AND 20 DECEMBER 2001-APPROVED
DISCUSSION ITEMS	C.	DEBRIEF ON COUNCIL UDP COMMITTEE—CUBELL
	D.	COMMISSIONER RECRUITMENT-2004—CUBELL
	E.	OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS—ALL
ANNOUNCEMENTS	F.	DC/PC VIADUCT DEIS WORKING SESSION #3-- MAY 21ST, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM, KT 4096