



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Julie Bassuk
Chair

Seth Geiser

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Tom Nelson

Julie Parrett

Martin Regge

Osama Quotah

Ellen Sollod

Debbie Harris

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

March 7, 2013

Convened 12:00pm
Adjourned 3:30pm

Projects Reviewed

4755 Fauntleroy Alley Vacation

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair
Julie Parrett
Seth Geiser
Debbie Harris
Lolly Kunkler
Julie Bassuk
Osama Quotah (excused 1:30-3:30)
Shannon Loew (excused from 1:30-3:30)
Martin Regge
Ellen Sollod

Staff Present

Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino



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March 7, 2013

Project: 4755 Fauntleroy Alley Vacation

Phase: Urban Design Merit

Last Reviewed: N/A

Presenters: Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill, PS
Jessie Clawson, McCullough Hill, PS
Lance Sherwood, Weingarten Realty
Bill Fuller, Fuller Sears Architects
Steve Johnson, Fuller Sears Architects
Dan Blohowiak, Fuller Sears Architects

Attendees:

Beverly Barnett, SDOT
Steve Sears, Fuller Sears Architects
Tracy Record, West Seattle Blog
Bruce Rips, DPD
Michael Jenkins, Council Central Staff
Dan Albert, Weisman Design Group
Martin Babb, UFCW 21
Deb Barker, citizen
Laird Bennion
Joy Borkholder, citizen
Ken Bunker, UFCW 21
Rene Commons, citizen
Cynthia Edwards, UFCW 21
Rhonda Farrar, UFCW 21
Reagan Jackson, UFCW 21
Paul Kapioski, citizen
Steve Marquardt, UFCW 21
Stephanie Metcalf, UFCW 21
Joe Mizrahi, UFCW 21
Steve Orser, Lennar Multifamily Investors
Elena Perez, citizen
Andy Rasmussen, Weisman Design Group
Chas Redmond, Morgan Community Assoc.
Jermaine Smiley
Louisa Swenson, UFCW 21
Mike Swenson, Transpo Group
Jose Vargas, UFCW 21
Steve Williamson, UFCW 21

Time: 1:30pm-3:00pm

Summary of Proposal

The proposed development would include two buildings separated by a mid block connection that includes the private alley and the east-west pedestrian connection. Each building is designed to have 5 floors of apartments over ground floor retail (70 feet in height). The proposal includes approximately 66,000 sf of retail and 370 residential units. The design for the building in the north section of the project includes frontage on 40th SW, SW Alaska St and Fauntleroy Way SW and SW Edmunds St. includes a drug store on the ground level. The buildings, the private alley and the mid-block connection are connected below grade by a parking garage that includes parking for 570 vehicles.

The private alley and midblock pedestrian connection between the two buildings would connect Fauntleroy Way SW, 40th Ave SW and the portion of the alley that is to remain publically owned. The new connection would vary in width from 42 ft at Fauntleroy Way SW to 50 feet at 40th Ave SW. The connection would serve normal alley functions including a loading dock and access to below grade parking. A landscaped pedestrian walk on the south side is proposed. Public access for vehicles and peds would be provided through an easement.

Presentation

The project team presented the Powerpoint dated March 7, 2013, which can be accessed on the Design Commission website.

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

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, not satisfied that the design and configuration of midblock crossing will provide service and public benefit functions. Need changes in drive through for drug store, backup for trucks, safety and public benefit. She wants to see amenities and public spaces on exterior of site. One of the strongest elements is the green street treatment.

Michael Jenkins, council staff for Rasmussen; Concerned about the mid block the connector and the corner of Fauntleroy and Alaska. Feels there is too much traffic on mid block connector. There is lack of interest to embrace major corner. It is a node, landmark and gateway. He wants the design to implement goals within West Seattle Triangle framework.

Public Comments

Written public comments were received from: Diane Rose Vincent, René Commons and Deb Barker. These were considered before the meeting.

Steve Marquardt, Local 21, UFCW; Concerned about street vacation. The project's impact doesn't serve public, undermines walk-ability goals of W Seattle Triangle plan. Currently design is Auto dominant and freight dominant. Neighborhood already has supermarkets. Project is a threat to supermarkets and small shops.

Chaz Redmond, Morgan Community Association; He is not opposed, but has concerns in 4 areas. 1-Wants more striking structure at corner. 2- Mid block crossing not ped friendly, safe or green enough. 3-Alaska side pedestrian access and streetscape is poor. 4- Impact on transportation.

Other negative public opinions included:

- Unnecessary for Whole Foods- enough there
- Mid-block connector too dangerous.
- Needs to better match WS Triangle Plan.

Other positive public opinions included:

- Project is awesome; it's going to be beautiful.
- Will bring jobs and life to area.
- Healthy shopping options - I want to shop where I live.

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked the team for the presentation of its request for an alley vacation and the proposal's urban design merit.

Urban Design Merit is the first of two Design Commission approvals needed before we will recommend approval of the vacation to the SDOT Director. Approval of both the Urban Design Merit and Public Benefit package constitute a recommendation by the Commission to approve the vacation. The City Council makes the ultimate decision on the vacation.

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 general public, providing for circulation of vehicles and pedestrians.
2. The width of the private alley and public easement would be 42 ft. If the existing alley were to be retained, the proponent would be required to dedicate land to increase the width of the alley to 20 ft.
3. 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.
4. The new alley configuration would create a larger building site along SW Alaska Way: a 265 ft by 265 ft site, instead of a 265 ft length along Alaska and 100 ft depth along Fauntleroy. This would allow for a large anchor tenant at this central neighborhood intersection. Bulk and scale of the larger building are being mitigated with architectural design and the relatively large distance between buildings at the new, private, east west alley.
5. Given the block has two busy arterials and a green street on its perimeter, the choice of vehicle access points is challenging. The choice to disperse the access to parking and loading offers a good solution.

With a vote of 0 to 7, the Commission found the proposal is not justified in terms of Urban Design Merit for the reasons listed below. At a future meeting the Commission will evaluate and vote on the Urban Design Merit again. The Public Benefits proposed for the vacation will also be reviewed and voted on in the future.

1. There is concern that the private alley design does not provide sufficiently for vehicular maneuvering and safety of pedestrians. Work with SDOT to resolve this.
2. Consider possible pedestrian vehicle conflicts where the alley meets SW 40th St, a green street, and whether the number of vehicles exiting onto SW 40th St could be reduced.
3. Refer to the West Seattle Triangle Urban Design Framework Plan and design the building to provide a gateway at Alaska and Fauntleroy as the plan envisions. Consider how this building works in concert with the development proposed at the other corners of this intersection.
4. Also refer to the vision of the pedestrian midblock connection in the West Seattle Triangle Plan, and provide the level of improvements that it recommends for pedestrians along the north south alley.

The Commissioners also offered the comments listed below on the preview of the public benefit package. The package presented consisted of 1) the through block pedestrian connection, 2) three small plazas along Fauntleroy Way SW, at SW Alaska St, midblock, and at SW Edmunds St., and 3) green street improvements to 40th Ave SW.

- The value of the through block connection lies not only in its basic function, so use programming and design to bring activity to the walkway and make it an inviting space.
- The plaza at Alaska and Fauntleroy does not read strongly as a public place and isn't well integrated with the gateway gesture, and it's location at a busy intersection makes it particularly challenging. Please search for solutions as the design evolves. Take the context into consideration, looking at the other corners of this intersection.
- Reach out to the artist of the mural and consider relocating it.