



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

ISRD 184/23

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2023

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Hybrid meeting: Virtual access on the WebEx platform as provided in the meeting agenda. Physical location: Seattle City Hall, 600 4th Avenue, Boards & Commissions Room L2-80

Board Members Present Virtually

Heather Hargesheimer
Nella Kwan
Adrian Lam
Ming Zhang
Andy Yip

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Ryan Gilbert
Michael Le

Chair Adrian Lam called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

102423.1 APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

August 8, 2023

102423.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

102423.3 CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

102423.31 604 S. Jackson St. – Jackson Building
Applicant: Binko Chiong-Bisbee, Kobo at Higo
Record #: DONH-COA-01056

Ms. Frestedt explained the proposed installation of storefront murals on the Kobo at Higo storefront to replace existing boards that went up in 2020. Attachment will be to panels behind the existing boards. The installation will be temporary. The Jackson Building is a contributing building within the National Register District. The site is located within the

**Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods**

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Asian Design Character District and Retail Core. The existing boards were installed during a larger neighborhood effort to secure and protect storefronts during the height of the pandemic and in response to damage caused during protests. This proposal is not responsive to the transparency requirement under [SMC 23.66.336 B4](#); however, the applicant is requesting consideration of approval to allow the panels on a temporary basis due to ongoing public safety concerns that have impacted the neighborhood.

Binko Chiong-Bisbee explained her business, KOBO Higo has been in business for 20 years. She talked about the crime and vandalism in the district which create a negative neighborhood climate. She said holiday lights put up were immediately vandalized. She proposed new portions of the banner project through Japantown and Nihonmachi as positive artwork to offer the community.

Mr. Yip virtually joined the meeting at 4:44 pm.

Ms. Chiong-Bisbee proposed boards installed into concrete which are easily removed. She said they got a Small Sparks grant and will coat banners with anti-graffiti coating. She said the messaging on the panels will help the neighborhood and the greater Chinatown International District. She said the blue panels have already been removed from the next-door business.

Ms. Hargesheimer appreciated the project and that graffiti coating is planned to protect the mural. She asked the intended duration for the murals.

Ms. Chiong-Bisbee said they hope for a year. She said she gets comments all the time from the public. She said the public doesn't understand the issues business owners deal with daily. She said that efforts are being made in the city and she is optimistic.

Ms. Hargesheimer said she understands the reasoning behind the murals and appreciated the beautification.

Mr. Yip said the murals are culturally appropriate and he supported the project.

Mr. Zhang asked about the eastern-most panel.

Ms. Chiong-Bisbee said it is verbiage – celebratory wording - with patterning in the background.

Mr. Zhang asked if it is art or commercial.

Ms. Chiong-Bisbee said it is artwork created by Kenji Hami Stoll. She said a couple images from the Japantown banners were used to beautify panels while they are up.

Mr. Lam asked about attachment to building.

Ms. Chiong-Bisbee said there are 17 pieces of plywood there now – attached to 2" x 4" that is anchored into the sidewalk. The storefront is protected behind the panel.

Ms. Kwan said there is a strong story behind the images that will be shared with the public. She said it is a great idea and an opportunity to learn.

Mr. Lam asked if they'd thought of using a QR code.

Ms. Chiong-Bisbee said they could do that, and Wing Luke could host the information. She said that QR codes sometimes age out.

Mr. Lam said the transparency standard is not met but in light of public safety issues, the limited duration and the reversibility he supported the application. He said it would benefit the current situation and provide an opportunity for learning.

Amy Chen Lozano said she supported using a QR code.

Ms. Frestedt said what is proposed is a mural and not commercial messaging. She said she would not have put signage forward. She said the art project is an exceptional project given the multitude of reasons discussed.

Action: I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for design – temporary artwork, at 604 S. Jackson Street, *with the following conditions: Approval will only be granted for a duration of one year with the opportunity to get an extension if needed. Following this timeframe, the panels will be removed and any penetrations to the storefront will be repaired. Any future security measures will require separate review and approval.*

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the October 24, 2023 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

This action is based on the **following applicable sections of the International Special Review District Ordinance:**

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior Building Finishes

- A. General Requirements**
- B. Asian Design Character District**

Secretary of the Interior Standard #9

MM/SC/AY/MZ 5:0:0 Motion carried.

102423.4 STAFF SUMMARY and BOARD BUSINESS

Administrative approvals since October 10, 2023

Ms. Frestedt reviewed administrative approvals. She said she approved the traffic signal wraps in Little Saigon because of the sense of urgency to improve the streetscape and quality of life there. She said much outreach had been done and there was much community support.

Ms. Frestedt said lots of applications have been received but none are ready for board review yet. She said it is a busy time in the neighborhood, there is lots of work underway.

Regarding the ISRD board election, Ms. Frestedt said the deadline to submit nominations was last week and the ballots will go out next week. She said more information will come on appointed seats.

She said the Design Guidelines discussion will be scheduled in the near future. She heard community feedback that more time was needed.

Adjourn

Rebecca Frestedt, Board Coordinator
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