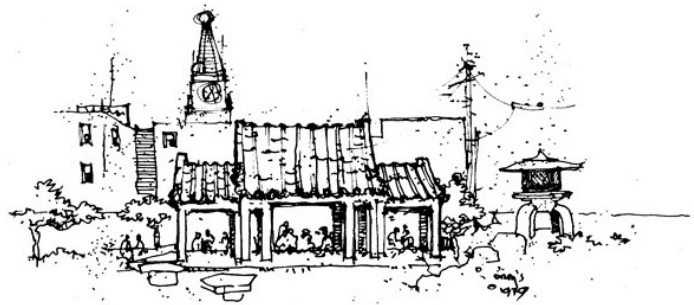




The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649

Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

ISRD 64/26

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, April 28, 2026

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Place: Hirabayashi Place, 442 S. Main St., Donne Chin Community Room (in-person)

Hybrid Meeting

Board Members Present

Heather Hargesheimer, (HH)

Kyle Jacobson (KJ)

Hyan Ho (HyH)

Samantha Wong (SW), Chair

Zhiyun Zhu (ZZ)

Staff Present

Nelson Pesigan (NP)

Rebecca Frestedt (RF)

Lilian Young (LY)

Absent

Jade Yan (JY), Vice-Chair

Key

BM Board member

AP Applicant

SM Staff member

Chair Samantha Wong called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

042826.1 MEETING MINUTES

January 13, 2026

MM/SC/KJ/HH

5:0:0

The motion passed unanimously.

042826.2 PUBLIC COMMENTS

A CID community member speaking on behalf of the CID Coalition, expressed support for adding housing through the proposed eight-story mixed-use development on King Street but urged three key changes: more on-site affordable units, more family-sized units, and a commitment that ground-floor retail prioritize local, family-owned businesses rather than chains. She emphasized that the CID faces some of the highest displacement risks in

Seattle, with nearly half of households cost-burdened, and warned that fully market-rate development would be inaccessible to many current residents and could intensify displacement pressures.

042826.3 CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

042826.31 600 5th Ave S. – Uwajimaya Village
Applicant: Aleisha Hicks-Settles, Blanton Turner
Record number: DONH-COA-01735

Design and Signs: Proposed painting of a mural on the face of the building on either side of the entry to the Food Hall at 5th Ave S. and S. Weller St. and installation of window graphics, including signage, on the exterior of the storefront windows on all four sides of the building.

SM Rebecca Frestedt reported that the proposal includes painting a mural at the entrance of the Uwajimaya Village food hall and installing window graphics on three sides of the building. She noted that the Weller Street façade falls within areas identify as the Retail Core and the Asian Design Character District overlay, which heightens the need for careful review.

SM Frestedt explained that detailed signage in the district is typically installed on the interior side of storefront windows and discussed alternative placement options with the applicant and highlighted a growing issue of unapproved window advertising appearing throughout the neighborhood, emphasizing the importance of evaluating applications on a case-by-case basis.

SM Frestedt expressed specific concern about placing window film on the exterior of the Weller Street façade, citing design guideline F, which requires that all glass and window areas remain clear and prohibits mirrored glass. While the proposed material is not mirrored and noted that exterior window film can still affect reflectivity and alter the appearance of the glass, making this an important consideration for the Board.

AP Aleisha Hicks-Settles presented Uwajimaya Village’s proposal to refresh areas not included in the 2019 renovation and explained that the project is intended to reduce clutter such as takeout menus and cardboard coverings in the storefront windows to support compliance with design guidelines, and bring vibrancy to a highly visible corner.

Uwajimaya partnered with local artist Stevie Shao, who will paint a 22-by-19-foot exterior mural and has a ten-year maintenance contract for annual touch-ups. The window graphics covering less than 50% of each window bay use translucent, low-tack, anti-graffiti film and feature simple food icons and small QR codes rather than large promotional signage.

AP Hicks emphasized that exterior placement allows better maintenance and avoids grease buildup inside the food hall and also noted that the design ties into existing branding, accommodates tenant turnover by changing only icons, and includes Kinokuniya to encourage consistent, culturally aligned window use across all storefronts.

BM Heather Hargesheimer asked for clarification on how the project team plans to execute and maintain the proposed exterior window graphics over time and specifically questioned whether the team had considered the impact of placing graphics on the outside of the windows.

AP Hicks responded that the exterior window graphics have an expected lifespan of four to six years, but Uwajimaya has budgeted to replace them every three years to ensure they remain in good condition and added that the adhesive used on the graphics is durable enough to withstand routine window washing, noting that she has used the same material for several years without issues.

BM member Kyle Jacobson asked whether, given the ISRD guidelines governing window treatments, the project team had explored alternative locations for the proposed graphics or other decorative elements and wanted to understand whether options besides placing detailed artwork on the windows were considered and ultimately ruled out.

AP Hicks explained that alternative locations for the graphics were not feasible because the Weller Street side of the building is almost entirely windows beneath the eaves, leaving no other practical surfaces for artwork and added that the window graphics also help screen unappealing views into the food-prep areas while remaining within the 50% coverage limit and maintaining cultural relevance.

AP Hicks noted that Uwajimaya hopes this project will set a positive example for neighboring businesses reducing handwritten signs, clutter, and maintenance issues and encourage others to follow suit in improving the overall appearance and cohesion of the district.

Chair Samantha Wong noted that the Board would need to determine whether it had enough information to craft a recommendation based on the staff report and referenced the SMC transparency requirement, clarifying that the intent is for 50% of the façade not just each individual window to remain transparent.

Chair Wong asked whether the scale of the proposed mural and window graphics had been evaluated with this in mind, and how the design aligns with guidelines intended to maintain active street-level engagement and avoid reflective or obscuring treatments and questioned whether the mural or window coverage might unintentionally reduce visibility or interaction between the street and interior spaces, especially given that this project presents an opportunity to improve transparency where windows are currently blocked by interior items.

BM Jacobson referenced the Seattle Municipal Code transparency requirement, noting that street-level uses must maintain visible connections to the sidewalk and that at least 50% of the exposed, street-facing façade between sidewalk level and 10 feet must remain transparent and summarized additional provisions, including limits on window height above the sidewalk and the possibility for the Board to allow reduced transparency only when structural or architectural constraints create a hardship.

BM Jacobson also highlighted that if transparency is reduced, elements such as murals, landscaping, or display cases should be incorporated to maintain visual interest at the street level.

SM Frestedt did not include a proposed motion in the staff report, anticipating that the Board would need discussion given the design guidelines and potential concerns. From a staff perspective, the graphic design itself is appropriate, and she appreciates the applicant's efforts to revise the proposal. However, based on reading the code.

SM Frestedt believes many concerns could be resolved by placing the window graphics on the interior so that transparency is maintained and the glazing remains reflective as intended.

SM Frestedt acknowledged the applicant's differing goals but emphasized that this is a key issue for the Board to resolve and clarified that these concerns do not apply to the painted mural at the entrance, noting that the building is not historic and that the mural enhances the architectural character and cultural relevance of the site. She said the primary concerns relate specifically to the window graphics.

SM Frestedt emphasized the importance of the Board considering the specific transparency requirements that apply to the Weller Street façade, noting that this portion of the building lies within the Asian Design Character District while the other façades do not and explained that the transparency standards BM Jacobson referenced apply only to this designated area and that the building straddles two regulatory zones.

SM Frestedt added that while some parts of the code may benefit from future community updates, the Board must apply the current guidelines when evaluating this application.

Chair Wong commented that the proposed design is visually engaging but raised broader concerns about the growing trend of retailers using decals, murals, and window treatments in ways that may gradually reduce true transparency and street-level engagement and acknowledged that the applicant's graphics are 50% translucent and still allow visibility into the interior.

Chair Wong noted that the Board should consider at what point cumulative treatments across the district begin to diminish the intent of the transparency guidelines.

Action:

I moved that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for the Uwajimaya Village design and signage *with the condition that decals on the windows are no higher than an average between three to five feet.*

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval based on considering the application submitted to the Board on April 28 2026. For 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 and relevant Standards:**

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes

- A. General requirements.
- B. Asian Design Character District (applies to the Weller St. façade)
 - 4. Transparency Requirement
- C. Exterior building design outside of the Asian Design Character District (applies to the non-Weller Street facades)

SMC 23.66.338 – Signs

ISRD Design Guidelines

II. Storefront and Building Design Guidelines Sections F.

Design Guidelines for Signs

II. Design Guidelines

- A. Buildings with Multiple Tenants

MM/SC/SW/HH

5:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

SM Frestedt clarified that the motion on the floor would pass as stated but paused to address an administrative question about procedure and noted that although it is uncommon for a chair to make a motion, it is permitted under Robert's Rules of Order.

042826.32

1038-1040 S. King St.

Applicant: Chaohua Chang, architect

Record number: DONH-COA-00220

Final Design: Proposed final design for new construction of an eight-story mixed-use development on a vacant lot. Proposal includes right-of-way improvements. No parking is proposed.

Use: Proposal to establish use for ground floor commercial space (2,612 sq ft) and 51 residential apartments.

SM Frestedt explained that the application under review is for final design approval, covering exterior finishes, colors, materials, overall massing, and any right-of-way elements such as sidewalk and landscaping improvements and noted that the project was last briefed before the Board in February 2025 and that the original application dates back to 2017, with delays caused by economic conditions and the pandemic.

SM Frestedt summarized the issues previously raised by the Board particularly questions about material transitions and sidewalk grade changes and confirmed that the applicant would address those points in the current presentation and also clarified that the site lies

outside both the National Register District and the Asian Design Character District, meaning the Board's review focuses on use and design rather than affordability or tenant selection.

Applicant Chaohua Chang presented an overview of the proposed development for the vacant 6,000-square-foot lot on South King Street near 12th Avenue South. The project includes ground-floor commercial space, residential units from the second floor upward, and basement storage. The building will contain 51 dwelling units and incorporates design responses to community outreach regarding street activation, safety, and parking concerns. The design features setbacks to improve light and residential livability, a ground-floor retail presence, and a roof garden.

AP Chang also discussed façade treatments, material choices, and site constraints such as limited lot width, required egress, garbage staging, and the current condition of neighboring properties. The team is planning varied materials, including storefront glazing, stone elements, panel cladding, and cedar accents, as well as potential artwork on exposed walls. Special attention was given to the narrow passage between the project and the adjacent building.

BM Hargesheimer thanked the applicant for incorporating feedback from the previous review and expressed support for adding a mural and textured color treatment to the blank wall, encouraging both approaches and also complimented the mural artist referenced in the earlier presentation as a strong candidate for the work.

BM Hargesheimer's main concern focused on the narrow corridor between the project site and the adjacent building, specifically the trash room that opens onto this passage and noted the likelihood of grime or debris accumulating when bins are dragged out for weekly collection and observed that the plans did not show hose bibs or other means for washing down the area.

AP Chang responded that the team had not fully considered the cleaning needs for the corridor but agreed it is an important issue and noted that trash will remain contained inside the trash room, but acknowledged that additional planning is needed to address potential grime from moving bins through the passage and emphasized that future tenants will also have an interest in keeping the area clean and functional, and that coordination with the neighboring property owner will be necessary to ensure the corridor works well for both properties.

Chair Wong offered additional design-focused comments, noting that after reviewing the updated renderings, her main questions centered on materiality and how the proposed massing relates to nearby historic buildings.

Chair Wong observed that adjacent new construction, such as the adjacent Beam apartments, use heavier masonry bases and more horizontally continuous stone elements, whereas the proposed design features tall vertical stone pillars that visually read differently.

Chair Wong suggested the project team consider whether the massing and material transitions could better reflect the character of surrounding historic buildings and

encouraged the applicant to think about how these design choices influence the building's relationship to the neighborhood context and its architectural cohesion.

Action:

I move that the International Special Review District Board recommend approval of a Certificate of Approval for Use, Final Design and right-of-way alterations at 1040 S. King St., per the submitted application materials. This application does not include signage or artwork, *including the mural on the East façade.*

This application is conditional upon submission of an application for a Certificate of Approval for the design of artwork at the east façade and signage and design enhancements *of the east and west façade to more, be in complementing on the north façade.*

The Board directs staff to prepare a written recommendation of approval, based on considering the application submittal and Board discussion at the April 28, 2026 public meeting, and forward this written recommendation to the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

This conditional on submitting the detail drawing that is noted on A405.

This action is based on the following applicable sections of the **International Special Review District Ordinance, Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards:**

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC)

SMC 23.66.030 - Certificates of approval - Application, review and appeals

SMC 23.66.302 – International Special Review District goals and objectives

SMC 23.66.308 – International District preferred uses east of Interstate 5

SMC 23.66.320 - Permitted uses

SMC 23.66.332 – Height

SMC 23.66.336 – Exterior building finishes

A. General Requirements. To retain and enhance the visual order of the District, which is created by existing older buildings that provide unique character and form through their subtle detailing and quarter-block and half-block coverage, new development, including exterior remodeling, should respect the architectural and structural integrity of the building in which the work is undertaken, through sympathetic use of colors, material and style. Exterior building facades shall be of a scale compatible with surrounding structures. Window proportions, floor height, cornice line, street elevations and other elements of the building facades shall relate to the scale of the existing buildings in the immediate area.

B. Exterior building design outside of the Asian Design Character District.

SMC 23.66.342 – Parking and access

Design Guidelines for Awnings and Canopies, Façade Alterations, Security and Signs

I. Awnings and Canopies

This action is also based on the **following applicable sections of the Secretary of the Interior Standards:**

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its 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/HH/HyH

5:0:0

The motion passed and approved unanimously.

042826.4 BOARD BRIEFING

042826.41 CID Street Light Pole Banner Project
Presenter: Yongkang Zhao, CIDBIA
Record number: DONH-COA-02122

Briefing on a collaborative project between the CIDBIA and SDOT to install banner artwork on approximately 80-86 Red Lantern streetlight poles. The banners will primarily be displayed in Little Saigon and Chinatown, since Japantown already has existing artwork on its poles. Installation proposed to occur in mid-June 2026.

Presenter Yongkang Zhou of CIDBIA provided an overview of the CID Pole Banner Project, a collaboration between CIDBIA and the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). The effort focuses on installing new art banners on Red Lantern and pedestrian-scale streetlight poles across Chinatown and Little Saigon.

The project is timed to coincide with increased summer activity, including FIFA-related foot traffic, and aims to enhance visibility and vibrancy in the neighborhood. SDOT is currently finalizing permitting with Seattle City Light after verifying each pole location and will handle banner production and installation following established design specifications.

Presenter Zhou also summarized the community-driven artist selection process. CIDBIA opened an open-call contest in February, receiving 145 submissions, followed by a public online voting period that garnered nearly 2,000 responses. The top 20 designs were then

shared with neighborhood businesses, residents, and community organizations for additional feedback. Input was collected through door-to-door outreach and partner organizations, with results grouped by stakeholder category.

Regarding banner installation, Laura Corn from SDOT explained that the pole banner assemblies will be printed, fabricated, and installed by United Print Signs and Graphics, a contractor SDOT has successfully partnered with on past banner installations along Third Avenue.

Laura noted that the installation method mirrors the previously approved approach used for the Japantown banners, ensuring durable, long-term performance. To meet the deadline before the FIFA construction moratorium begins, SDOT will instruct the contractor to complete installation in the evenings using hand ladders, which allows the work to continue without triggering construction-related restrictions.

Chair Wong was pleased with the updated design materials, noting that the renderings appeared cohesive and engaging and shared that she found the concepts fun and well-developed and did not have any requests for changes prior to the applicant's next formal submission.

BM Hargesheimer agreed that the project is exciting and has come together well and looks forward to seeing it move ahead and did not have any adjustments to request before the applicant proceeds to the next stage.

042826.5 STAFF SUMMARY AND BOARD BUSINESS

SM Frestedt reported that two recent applications outdoor seating for Miro at the Louisa Hotel and the installation of two additional CCTV cameras received no appeals, and Certificates of Approval have been issued.

SM Frestedt also reminded a few board members to submit their required 2025 financial impact statement forms and noted she would follow up individually to complete that process.

SM Frestedt added that two candidates were recently interviewed for the vacant mayoral-appointed position, previously held by Adrian Lam, and that a recommendation has been forwarded to the Mayor's Office for consideration before City Council confirmation.

Chair Wong adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.