



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISRD 166/21

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, October 12, 2021

Time: 5:00 pm

Place: Remote Meeting

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville
Matt Chan
Matt Fujimoto, Chair
Faye Hong
Russ Williams
Tanya Woo
Andy Yip

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Chair Matt Fujimoto called the meeting to order at 5:13 PM.

101221.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 9, 2021

MM/SC/MC/TW

4:0:3 Minutes approved. Ms. Baskerville, Messrs. Hong and Yip abstained.

April 27, 2021

MM/SC/FH/MC

5:0:2 Minutes approved as amended. Ms. Baskerville and Mr. Yip abstained.

101221.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

101221.3 COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Presenters: Quynh Pham and Valerie Tran, Friends of Little Sài Gòn staff

Administered by The Historic Preservation Program
The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

"Printed on Recycled Paper"

Valerie Tran, Operations Director, said that she was here to share observations and lessons learned from the Friends of Little Sài Gòn (FoLS) staff. She prefaced by saying that the FoLS is kickstarting the 2030 Action Plan to develop plans to help guide the future of the neighborhood. She said there are bringing on a consultant firm to help engage with the community and encouraged ISRD Board members to engage in the outreach. She said they plan to develop guidance for the next 10 years.

Mr. Tran said that, until recently, Little Saigon has been characterized by low rise, industrial and warehouse buildings with very little design and use precedent. As opposed to the CID where there is established design, clear design value and visual culture and traditions. She said there is little precedent for design, and they are thinking creatively about how to develop design that speaks to the neighborhood.

Friends of Little Saigon encourages:

Promote street level activity through ground floor commercial space with frequent customer interactions, external-facing, restaurants, doctor's 'office. Space needs to be actively used space and not community space that sits empty.

Outdoor space options that connect the inside and outside.

Be thoughtful, intentional about commercial uses and plan for it early in the design. It shouldn't be an afterthought. Restaurants that are not easily dividable or spaces being left unleased and then used for management office are not good.

Ms. Tran encouraged the Board to ask applicants if tenant improvements are included; if retail space is affordable. She explained the desire for developers to accommodate and support business on ground floor and to consider pedestrian and traffic movement, deliveries, etc. She said scale of buildings should relate to and not overwhelm the neighborhood and she supported the use of alleys and the alley network.

Mr. Chan asked how the MHA applies to Little Saigon with regard to mass and scale. He asked if 17 floors are allowed there.

Ms. Frestedt said underlying zoning determines maximum building height. She said in some places it is 150 feet, with additional height allowed based on proposed uses and type of housing.

Mr. Chan said a lot of what was mentioned is out of board jurisdiction, and asked FoLS to take that into account. He said the ISRD board has a limited scope and pressure should be put on other ruling bodies. He said, for instance, the ISRD Board has no say on leasing rates.

Ms. Woo said in 2018 the ISRD Design Guideline Committee met and discussed preferred building materials, uses, colors. She said that yellow and oranges were mentioned for Little Saigon. She asked about the status of that work.

Ms. Frestedt said the updated design guidelines are close to being published for SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) review; a draft is posted on the ISRD website. She said the pandemic delayed further review and adoption of the document. She said it is still an active body of work and important to keep moving forward. She said Little Saigon community members were involved and there is a section specific to Little Saigon. She said the current guidelines are more focused on the area west of I-5.

Ms. Baskerville asked the next steps for FOLS Action Plan community outreach.

Ms. Tran said they anticipate three community-wide engagements along with leadership committee. She said there is opportunity for board to interact around conversations.

Mr. Fujimoto appreciated the presentation and said it is impressive to see how they hope to shape the fabric of the neighborhood. He said discussions have impact and focus is important for street level uses, activation and early intentional development. He asked what the group thinks about I-5 bridging or lidding.

Ms. Tran said I-5 is not a beautiful thing to see as one comes into the neighborhood and it splits the neighborhood physically and socially. She said they are working on how to welcome people from both sides to Little Saigon. She said newer developments like Thai Binh are setting some precedents.

101221.5 BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt provided an update about board election. She said due to COVID, the 2021 Board member election would be mail-in only and noted that election was not held in 2020. She said voting information would be sent out to all registered voters and local media. She said ballots must be received by mail by November 30, 2021; there will be a unique ballot for each voter. She said documents will be translated into Chinese and Vietnamese. She said all deadlines will be maintained per board procedures. She said all five elected positions are on the ballot this year for the first time. She said this is being done to maintain staggered terms. She said in 2020 positions 3 and 5 expired and elections weren't held; members elected to these positions will serve a one-year term. She said two in-person registration opportunities would be held, one in Little Saigon and one in Hing Hay Park, both outside for safety concerns. Additional sessions could be held, upon request. She said identifications must be checked to complete registration.

Mr. Fujimoto thanked Ms. Frestedt for all her efforts to do mail-in election.

Ms. Frestedt said it is her intention to make it as easy as possible. She said there is a post office in the neighborhood.

Full board meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm. *Messrs. Yip and Hong left.*

ARC meeting convened at 6:06 pm.

101221.4 ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE BRIEFING

101221.41

1224 S. King St. – Little Saigon Park Development

Applicant: Katie Bang, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Mark Tilbe, Murase Landscape Architecture

Briefing on proposed development of a new park on an undeveloped lot. This briefing will focus on the ARC review of construction details and evolution of the artwork by artist Kalina Chung.

Mark Tilbe provided context of the land banked site in Little Saigon. He provided an overview of the project.

Kalina Chung, artist, explained her contribution to the project. She said the work is inspired by shared conceptions of home and the concept of the “tube house”, and how they are constructed by our community and our surroundings; both the built and natural environment. She said when she first arrived in Vietnam, she visited her aunt’s tube house which were built this way to extend space upwards, adding generational space, flow, and typically, a storefront on the ground floor. She saw a connection between this architecture and the space in Seattle allotted for the park. The space holds the anticipation of buildings to come; reminiscent of the versatile ways Vietnamese people adapted to their space in a growing city. While the purpose of lattices is to create security for storefronts, they also hold aesthetic charm, each culture has varying traditional shapes and designs. In many traditional Pan-Asian homes, these open windows create a flow and connect us to the natural world outside. In this case, the façade will create the infrastructure for a row of tube homes, and entry into a garden oasis. Drawing from the many cultures, histories, and people that have shared the site’s space, she chose three varying designs to display. The structure is to appear light in its presence and create an openness in, what will eventually be, a rather dense space.

She said the green echoes the garden, with particular connection to the long-lasting willow tree that lives near King Street. While the tree is only expected to live 5-10+ more years, its significant memory to the community will be imbedded in the structure through color. The desired two green tones are inspired by the willow. A lighter green on the interior of the panel cuts creates further dimensionality.

[Staff note: The aforementioned willow tree was unexpectedly fully uprooted in a fall storm in 2021, since the meeting took place. It has been removed from the adjacent property of the Victorian Row Apartments.]

Mr. Tilbe provided an example of how sandblasting technique will look and he indicated on drawing where the lattice pattern will be sandblasted onto face of benches. He provided an overview of the walkway and noted play area. He said it was decided to keep the play area in the colors originally selected with blue rubber play surfacing and contrasting golden yellow balls. He said this creates more color vibrancy within the park by adding colors that are complementary to the gateway feature. The golden yellow was also carried through the park in the bench motifs. Yellow is a culturally relevant color with positive connotations including prosperity and happiness.

Mr. Tilbe said the guardrail section has been further developed to show the artist gateway feature behind. The guardrail panels have changed from a rectangular grid to a square grid pattern in order to allow for more openness and tie into nearby concrete score patterns. The color of the guardrail will be black to match other proposed site furnishings and blend into the background. He requested board input about the appearance of the guardrail – should it be more colorful? Or should its appearance be minimized?

He said plantings have been selected for color, appropriateness and include bamboo, Japanese Maple, Japanese Snowbell trees. He said in the last ISRD meeting there was concern that the middle portion of the ramp appeared darker in the graphic. Light levels were reviewed by the lighting designer and a new fixture has been selected to add additional light toward the center of the site, more even with the sides. He said at the south end near King Street and near the Willow, lighting will be placed in seat wall.

Mr. Tilbe went over drainage and stair details, play equipment location and installation.

Ms. Baskerville noted the yellow and orange and two-toned green in the play area and asked if more yellows could be incorporated on the ground or more sandblasted pattern to bring in more color. She noted the perspective from Jackson, looking down at the Park and the opportunity for color to invite people in.

Mr. Tilbe said they can look at more options.

Ms. Baskerville said daylilies are orange and yellow and would emphasize the orange and yellow colors.

Mr. Tilbe said they can look at the plant palette.

Ms. Baskerville asked if there could be more in the play area for kids. She noted the structure looks fun and it could use more space around it.

Mr. Tilbe noted there is a fall zone 6' set back requirement from seat wall or hard surface. He said the play area focuses on play for smaller kids.

Ms. Baskerville suggested seating at the top near the art piece.

Mr. Tilbe said it is an option and noted that tables and chairs like what is proposed at the bottom of the park could be added at the top.

Mr. Fujimoto appreciated the rendered higher scale design.

Ms. Chung said this is her first permanent project and it is a big learning curve. She said in the process she has listened to stories and community feedback; she wants the piece to be significant to the community. She said panel design was influenced by being on Native land.

Ms. Woo said it is beautiful. She asked if it is climbable.

Ms. Chung said the sculpture was originally 7-8' tall but has now been raised to 9-10' to mitigate climb-ability.

Ms. Woo left the meeting at 6:37 pm.

Mr. Fujimoto said lighting is important as is CPTED design. He appreciated the photometric lighting rendering and said it is a good place to start.

Mr. Tilbe said they want the park to visually remain open.

Mr. Williams appreciated that board questions from previous meeting had been addressed. He said he was excited to see the park come to fruition with the amount of thought and energy that has been put into it.

Mr. Chan voiced support for the project and said he would like to see a view from top to bottom. He said he would like to understand the feeling for the experience when entering the park. He said it is an impressive view from King Street.

Adjourn

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