



The City of Seattle

International Special Review District

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ISRD 126/22

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF TUESDAY, June 14, 2022

Time: 4:30pm

Place: Hybrid Meeting (in-person and WebEx)

Board Members Present

Lizzy Baskerville, Vice- Chair

Ryan Gilbert

Nella Kwan

Ming Zhang

Staff

Rebecca Frestedt

Melinda Bloom

Interpreters

Qingci Cai

Lillian Young

Absent

Adrian Lam

Michael Le

Andy Yip, Chair

Vice Chair Lizzy Baskerville called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

061422.1 PUBLIC COMMENT

Young Ye spoke in support of the 500 S. Jackson St. project which they said will help promote CID as a destination place.

Sue Kay did not support the 500 S. Jackson St. project. She lived in redlined area and grew up in the Chinatown International District (CID). She noted the encroachment of I-5, stadium, hotels, condos and the loss of sunlight, water, sky, tree canopy and fresh air; she said more shadows are coming. She spoke about KODA and said Da Li made promises that were not kept. She said every inch given up will not be retrieved. She said the project is lining the pockets of the developers and not the community. She said the project is out of scale and she wished she had the money to fight the powers that be.

Brittany Wu said she works in the CID and supports the project. She said old people are afraid and it is scary here and dark. She said the new building is needed to bring more people here and bring economics back. This project is helpful for that and we need people more interested in CID.

Meilani Mandry did not support the project. She said lives in and is linked to the CID and noted negative impacts to the low income and elderly who don't need high-rise, nor can they afford it. She said development should cater to the existing community. 29 stories is too tall and at most should be seven. She said the site is seen as the gateway to downtown and not as a cultural district. She said low class working people need support and services, not high-rise towers.

Lawson Wong said he lives/works in the CID and supported the project. He said the project will transform the underutilized parking lot while respecting history. He said it will serve the community and make it safer. He said the neighborhood is unsafe and drugs are sold at bus stop there now.

Christina Shimezu said she works in the CID and noted her grandfather, father and uncle had business in Nihonmachi. She said she opposes the development and that gentrification is a risk to the survival of the neighborhood. She questioned who the development is for and said if current people are priced out of the neighborhood it isn't us. She said DaLi project was not for those living in the CID and she asked the board to protect the CID against forces that threaten its survival.

Hua Wu lives and works in the CID and supports the project because it will bring new modern housing, retail and make street more welcoming and alive. The project will bring more positive energy to the community and there will be more diversity in the neighborhood.

Max Chan works in the CID and opposed the project. He said CID is more than business – it is a vulnerable neighborhood and community at risk of economic and cultural displacement. He noted the scale, size, intent would have negative impacts on the long-term stability of the district. He said 29 stories is too tall and he questioned if the average resident afford housing here. He asked what this building is doing for the community.

Pui Leung works near site and supported the project noting it is just a surface parking lot now. The project will bring in housing and business and vibrancy that will improve safety. Balance is needed, the CID must move along with the rest of the area.

061422.2 BOARD BRIEFING

Staff confirmed that Adrian Lam was recusing himself, due to earlier involvement with the first iteration of the Fujimatsu Village project.

061422.21 500 S. Jackson St. – Fujimatsu Village
Presenter: John Stout, Weber Thompson

Briefing on Use and Design proposal for new construction of a 29-story mixed-use residential tower with a 6-story terraced podium and ground floor retail (22,000 SF of retail space on first two levels). Onsite parking (210 stalls) is planned for residential and commercial uses. The focus of this briefing will be on site context and massing studies.

Tomio Moriguchi said he is the owner of the site, which is not part of Uwajimaya. He said the project has changed, eliminating the hotel as earlier proposed, and a new architect and partner – Da Li have joined the team. He said there is no demolition as the site is a parking lot now. He said it is a legacy project for his family. He said a viable community requires viable housing, commercial business, retail to serve residents and tourists. He said Da Li is a quality real estate developer in Taiwan and he is fortunate to work with them. He provided a history of the Moriguchi family noting incarceration and that he was a charter member of the ISRD. He appreciated all the work the board does and continues to do and looks forward to this project's completion. He said 350 units of housing are proposed with 20% (78) being affordable. He said a mix of new equals to a safer, thriving community. He said local worker housing is needed and the project will add more eyes on the community and more pedestrian traffic.

John Stout, Weber Thompson said they are in the early part of the process and provided examples of the type of work Weber Thompson does. He noted the context of this site as the gateway to the CID and as a regional transportation hub. He provided context of the site and noted new development in the immediate area. He said they analyzed the scale and topography of the site and went over the zoning envelope allowed. He provided feedback gained at five virtual community engagement events and one open house.

Mr. Stout went over Study options 1, 2A and 2B with 2B preferred. Presentation materials in the DON property file. He noted how they broke up the podium to reduce scale and created a stepped podium. He said 2B better relates to the context and noted a more landscape-friendly environment and more space for pedestrian realm. He said street level will be treated as main retail hub on Jackson and with landscaping it will create a nice retail experience. He said 5th Avenue is set back 6-8' more, providing a wide pedestrian realm that feels safer. He said Main Street is a green street and there will be a quieter experience around the residential lobby. He noted the 6' setback and buffer of landscape on both sides of the street.

Ms. Baskerville appreciated the presentation that addressed questions related to ISRD code.

Mr. Gilbert appreciated the team talking through the evolution of the design and development perspective. He said he overall agreed with placement of massing.

Mr. Zhang said it is a good initial study with clear direction. He agreed 2B is the best direction of the three. He said the overall massing of CID to downtown is a transition. He said the 5th Avenue pedestrian sidewalk is comfortable and appropriate and it is good to connect to retail. He said along 5th Avenue it is busy. He liked the intention to break podium down to smaller scale and reiterated 2B is a good choice.

Ms. Kwan said she wants to see how the project grows and develops, how safety will be addressed how parking would be helpful for the community. She was excited to see what they would bring to the table.

Ms. Baskerville noted lighting and safety and cited SMC 23.66.304. She wants to know how the project would protect, preserve and promote community businesses.

Mr. Stout said they want small retail businesses or a mix.

Ms. Baskerville said it is about the transition zone of CID to luxury downtown. She wondered how someone who lives in an affordable housing unit now would feel walking next to it, would there be amenity space? Public space is important. She said increased landscaping is good and is desperately needed. She agreed with Mr. Zhang that the mass needs to be a little smaller scale tower north. She asked to see views and impacts to sunlight. She recommended including translation in future outreach and showing the Board more of what the team has heard from the community.

Mr. Stout said they plan more community engagement.

Mr. Zhang asked to see a continued dialog with community members to address their concerns. He said to have solid data regarding sun shado studies especially at the northeast corner. He said it is a gateway building and is important and said a plaza at the southwest corner would be appropriate. He said to continue to explore the podium massing to be more appropriate with adjacent buildings. He said the respect the context and to integrate Asian culture into the design.

Ms. Baskerville said there are lots of opportunities for improvement including safety and creating welcoming space.

Ms. Frestedt said a couple board members were out and she would ask them to watch meeting recording so they will come to next meeting with same information.

Mr. Gilbert thanked the community members who gave public comments.

Ms. Baskerville said a lot of public comment was received.

Ms. Frestedt said all documents are public documents and can be requested in writing.

061422.3 STAFF SUMMARY and BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Frestedt went over a summary of administrative approvals issued or pending since July 12, 2022. In response to a question she said she is working on a template to show during Board meetings. She thanked Lillian and Qingci for their exhausting and important work interpreting.

Adjourn

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