



The City of Seattle

Pike Place Market Historical Commission

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MINUTES

MHC 121/21

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

4:30 p.m.

Virtual meeting via WebEx

COMMISSIONERS

Chris Bown
Michael Hammond
Lisa Martin, Chair
Christine Vaughan
Stephanie Young

Staff

Minh Chau Le

Absent

Sam Farrazaino
Grace Leong
Golnaz Mohammadi
Lauren Rudeck, Vice Chair

In-person attendance was prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.5. Meeting participation was limited to access by the WebEx Event link or the telephone call-in line provided on the agenda.

Chair Lisa Martin determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

She reminded Commission members to announce any conflict of interest or ex parte communication prior to review of applications.

090821.1 PUBLIC COMMENT

None

090821.2 APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATE OF USE APPROVAL

090821.21 Corner Produce and Rojo Juice
1500 Pike Pl, Corner Market Building
John Turnbull, PDA

Staff introduced the proposal to extend and expand upon the existing temporary Use approval MHC 93/21, which allowed for sale of juices and beverages. Staff stated the proposed extension was for March 2022 and the proposed expansion of product line would add vegetable stocks, frozen juice items, fruit and vegetable purees, trail mix, sauces, and condiments. Staff stated the project location. She said the business is currently operating under temporary Use approval that expires September 6, 2021. The space is in Zone 2, street level, food (a-e), retail (a-d) uses permitted. Current approved use: food (a). New use would be food (c)(f). Space is 400 square feet. Ownership structure: Sublease by Rojo Juice owned 100% by Rhonda Faison as Sole Proprietor. Owner financial affiliations: None. Owner operator: Rhonda Faison to be onsite for day to day operations. Business hours: 9 am – 6 pm, 6 days per week. Exhibits included MHC 93/21. Guidelines that applied to this application included 2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, and 2.13.

Applicant Comment:

John Turnbull, PDA said the temporary approval just ran out. Bob Klein is tenant. He said he can't pull it off. She is interested in staying there, with altered hours a bit for weather. No significant hope that Bob Klein will reactivate a produce stand. The requested date is the end of lease date. Request to allow Rhonda to continue to incubate her business and try out some new products. Working on proposal for permanent tenancy come march. Good quality product, good customer service. This will give her some stability during cold time of year. Products she is adding will not happen all at once. Just talked about as sidelines or related products such as vegetable broths or purees etc. This has not been a high stall solely was high stall and grocery back in 1980s run by George Stilnovich plus grocery story. He noted interest in some kind of hybrid operation.

Rhonda Faison, Rojo owner wants to introduce some new products as a next step. Success during summer and wants to show what more she can do.

Ms. Martin asked if there would be any other changes proposed?

Mr. Turnbull said there may be some additional equipment.

Ms. Faison said the middle table is where they do all their work. She said produce sales were OK, the only money-maker was cherries. She worked with organic cherry farmer from Wapato. She said most customers went to produce stands.

Mr. Turnbull said there was some bulk juicing

Ms. Faison said she sold growler sizes (16 ounces) and they did well.

Ms. Vaughan said effort has been made to keep produce fronting on Pike Street and she said she appreciates that. She said it adds to the image of the Market. She asked if the 400 square feet ROJO occupies is the total of corner produce?

Mr. Turnbull said not total...space is about 850, section used by Ellenos. A back corner, small space unused.

Ms. Vaughan clarified Rojo's space per site plan.

Mr. Turnbull said they can measure it out at some point.

Ms. Vaughan said it is a sublease from another tenant made it clear he can't make it in produce. She wondered if the profits of Rojo were going to lease holder.

Mr. Turnbull said leaseholder Bob still has to pay rent and a percentage of sales made at the stand. He said the PDA, as landlord is getting base rent plus percentage of sales.

Ms. Vaughan said the owner/operator doing the work should see the profits from her business.

Mr. Turnbull said this is not a situation they want to continue.

Ms. Martin clarified that the lease on this space would be concluding in spring of 2022 with the hope that Rojo would be leased in that space or somewhere else in Market.

Mr. Turnbull said Rojo wants to stay here and they will work on that goal with her. He said Ms. Faison is just starting out and they need to look at goals and ability to stay open throughout the year. He said he thinks they will come up with something compatible with the space and he hopes it will be compatible with the commission guidelines. He said they need time to work on it. He said because Bob is the tenant, he has to work with Bob who is supposed to be running a produce stand.

Ms. Vaughan said at the point the stall was a hybrid if the pasta place, Woodring, and Chukar Cherries were in produce spaces.

Mr. Turnbull said when it was a hybrid, there were other high stalls. He said Woodring and Chukar Cherries used to be Loback's meats. This stand has had approval to sell salads and other value-added products to make ends meet, yet he has never used it. He said fresh cut vegetables, fruit and salad mixes are all approved at this stand now, and it has always been different from other ones. He said there have been five or six businesses that have operated at this spot.

Ms. Le said in the late 1970s and 80s businesses changed hands.

Mr. Turnbull said that George Stilnovich would build up a business, find someone to take it over and they would build up a big accounts payable at produce houses and George would come back in, pay the accounts payable and build the business back up again and then find someone else to take it on. He had that operation for over twenty years; he doesn't do that anymore.

Ms. Vaughan said that when this site was a hybrid, there were more high stalls in the market.

Mr. Turnbull said there were.

Ms. Vaughan said the application is in direct conflict with 2.13 and 2.9.1. It is frustrating that the commission tried to address the problem of 2.9.1 in revised guidelines that were put forward to the city in 2019, but that was never acted upon so that it could become part of the guidelines. She said an owner-operator shouldn't have to pay the price for the city's slowness to move. She said she would abstain from voting so as not to penalize the applicant. She said the guidelines requires that temporary approvals be consistent with all other guidelines and hybrid use of that stall does not follow 2.13 which requires high stalls be preserved. She said there is a place in the Market for Rojo to operate but she didn't think the prime corner in the Market is the place to do it.

Ms. Faison said that if she were not in that space, the place would remain closed because Bob Klein can't maintain it as a produce stand. She said she came in not knowing all the stories, but completely turned the space around. Prior to her moving in, the space was closed and prior to that it was making no money. She said she has turned it around and into a community spot where people come to get some liquid healing from her juice or just be around the good vibes provided by her and her staff. She said she grew up going to the Market and her grandparents did as well. She said it is important to have her project there. She said she is still doing produce. She said she understands wanting it to remain a produce stand and said she wants to preserve as much as possible because of love for the Market.

Mr. Bown asked what would be in the space if the juice shop were not there.

Mr. Turnbull said the space would probably be shuttered because there were no viable tenants.

Ms. Martin said having activity was preferable to closed storefronts.

Ms. Vaughan said the operator had done a good job with prominently displaying produce over the summer.

Action: Ms. Vaughan made a motion to adopt a resolution to approve the application as presented.

MM/SC/CV/CB 4:1:0 Motion carried. Ms. Vaughan abstained.

090821.3 REPORT OF THE CHAIR
None

090821.4 STAFF REPORT
None

090821.5 NEW BUSINESS
There was no new business.

Minh Chau Le

Commission Coordinator
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