



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Seth Geiser

Megan Groth

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

September 5, 2013

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

Gamma Phi Beta Skybridge

Commissioners Present

Tom Nelson, Chair

Osama Quotah, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain (arrived at 1:30 pm)

Seth Geiser

Megan Groth

Commissioners Excused

Debbie Harris

Laurel Kunkler

Shannon Loew

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Joan Nieman

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September 5, 2013 3:00 – 4:30 pm	Project:	Gamma Phi Beta Skybridge	
	Phase:	n/a	
	Previous reviews:	n/a	
	Presenters:	Kay Fleenor Karen Cascio	Bumgardner Gamma Phi Beta
	Attendees:	Amy Gray Lisa Hummel Katherine Jansen Angela Steele	SDOT Lisa Hummel Garden Design Gamma Phi Beta SDOT

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to provide recommendations on an application to the City for a new term permit ordinance for an existing skybridge over an alley at the Gamma Phi Beta sorority in the University District. The Design Commission was to provide a recommendation on whether to approve the permit and make recommendations on the proposed public benefit. There was no previous review of this project by the Design Commission.

Summary of Proposal

The petitioner has applied to SDOT for a new term permit ordinance for an existing skybridge across the alley between 16th and 17th Avenues NE, just north of NE 45th Street.

The skybridge was built in 1976 to connect the main building of the sorority with “the annex,” a large single-family home bought and converted a few years before. The meal facilities and gathering spaces are located in the main house, and the women living in the annex must cross the alley to eat and participate in sorority activities. At the time the skybridge was built, the notorious Ted Bundy murders were going on and one of his victims was abducted from the alley where the skybridge is now located. The proponents would like to retain the skybridge because of safety concerns.

The proposed public benefit package includes the following elements:

1. Pruning City-owned trees on 16th Ave NE
2. Sidewalk repair on 17th Ave NE
3. Planting of a large chestnut tree on 17th Ave NE
4. Participation in UW/SPD crime prevention program

Summary of Presentation

Kay Fleenor gave the presented dated September 3, 2013, and available on the [Design Commission website](#). A handout of costs associated with providing the public benefits was distributed and can be found on the website under Presentation 2.

Summary of Discussion

The Design Commissioners discussed the issue of taking people off of the ground plane and exacerbating the problem of safety in the alley. They talked about whether the public benefit should focus on the street frontages, or be located more closely to where the impact of the skybridge is located. The trees were also discussed, including advice from the City arborist at SDOT to provide several small trees instead of one large one.

Agency Comments

Angela Steele of SDOT reported that the Skybridge Review Committee recommends that the new skybridge ordinance be approved and supports the sidewalk and tree replacement as public benefit.

Public Comments

none

Action

The Design Commission thanked the team for the presentation of the Gamma Phi Beta Skybridge. With a **vote of 5 to 1**, the Seattle Design Commission recommended to the SDOT Director approval of a new permit for the existing Gamma Phi Beta Skybridge located over the alley that runs between 16th and 17th Avenues NE north of NE 45th Street in the University District with the condition that the project be brought for administrative review when the design has been updated according to comments received at this meeting.

The Commission approved the following public benefit mitigation items:

1. Sidewalk replacement on 17th Ave NE along the full frontage of the property
2. Replacement of a missing tree on 17th Ave NE and provision of one additional tree; 4-inch caliper Horse Chestnut in consultation with SDOT arborists
3. Creation and implementation of a safety plan for residents in consultation with Seattle and/or UW police
4. Improvements to the alley at the skybridge to increase actual and perceived safety or residents and the public

The Commission also provided the following guidance to the project team:

1. Provide improvements to the alley to an extent commensurate with the eyes on the street that are being lost because people are moving through the skybridge instead of at ground level.
2. Consult with SDOT and the neighbors on measures to activate the alley.
3. Trim existing landscape and provide on-going management of the landscape in accordance with CPTED best practices to increase visibility and safety.
4. When further developing the safety plan, give particular attention to aligning physical improvements at the skybridge and activating programming to make that area a safer environment.

The reasons for the votes against were as follows:

BA: More thoughtful physical improvements and a safety plan would be a better solution than a skybridge in this location.