



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649, Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 600 4th Avenue, 4th Floor

PSB 177/21

MINUTES for Wednesday October 20, 2021

Board Members

Present
Lynda Collie
Kianoush Curran
Maureen Elenga
Audrey Hoyt
Lauren Kush
Lindsay Pflugrath
Alex Rolluda, Chair
Felicia Salcedo

Staff

Genna Nashem
Melinda Bloom

Absent

Jose Lorenzo-Torres

Chair Alex Rolluda called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

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

Roll Call

102021.1 APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

June 16, 2021

MM/SC/AH/LC

4:0:4 Minutes approved. Mmes. Curran, Elenga, Kush, and Pflugrath abstained.

July 7, 2021

MM/SC/AH/LC

4:0:4 Minutes approved. Mmes. Curran, Elenga, Kush, and Pflugrath abstained.

102021.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

Bobby Harvey spoke in support of code changes especially rooftop uses. He said it has been a great tool for the neighborhood and would allow public up to see the spaces and views. He said it is a great way to promote getting people back to the city. He said there is a need for this type of venue.

Eugenia Woo, Historic Seattle spoke in support of the proposed code amendment to *SMC 23.66.140 – Height* in the Pioneer Square Preservation District Ordinance. Currently, penthouse uses in Pioneer Square are limited to office and residential buildings. She would like to see penthouse uses expanded to allow lodging and eating and drinking establishments. This minor code change would open opportunities for increasing viable businesses and investment in the neighborhood.

She said the Railspur project by Urban Villages is an outstanding example of how preservation and economic and community development can go hand-in-hand. The project’s mix of office, residential, and hospitality uses in three historic buildings connected by improved alleys is a game-changer in the neighborhood. A boutique hotel in the Westland building (100 S King St) will be a welcome use, attracting not only visitors to Seattle and Pioneer Square but also locals interested in an urban rooftop bar/dining experience and maybe even a staycation.

In addition to being preservation advocates, Historic Seattle is a stakeholder and property owner in Pioneer Square—we own the Cadillac Hotel and Mutual Life building. Established in 1973, Historic Seattle is the only citywide nonprofit and public development authority dedicated to saving meaningful places to foster lively communities. We understand how challenging yet rewarding it is to own historic buildings. Finding the right uses for these buildings is part of this challenge. Allowing a rooftop bar on the Westland building will help the project ultimately succeed. This is good for Pioneer Square and Seattle. She said penthouse use should abide by Secretary of Interior Standards (SOI) and not be for buildings less than four stories.

Mr. Rolluda asked a clarifying question about penthouse use on buildings less than four stories.

Ms. Woo said it depends on location, visibility, setback. She said it could happen mid-block potentially. She said she would not want to see code change to allow any size or anything in conflict with SOI.

102021.3

APPLICATION

102021.31

Nugent Building
407 2nd Ext S

Alteration to the transom window

Boris Castellanos reported that he found glass to replace the transom glass that was removed and asked that the meeting be postponed until the glass samples arrives so board members can see it.

Mr. Rolluda agreed and said he preferred board members have opportunity to see how glass relates to adjacent glass.

102021.4 BOARD BUSINESS

102021.41 Code updates

Rooftop coverage/uses

Gordon Clowers, SDCI presented.

Existing approach:

- Features on rooftops are allowed to exceed height limit or the rooftop, whichever is less: by 4 feet or more, up to 15 feet for many features
- Rooftop features are limited to a % coverage of rooftop - 15% of roof area, except coverage up to 25% can be Board recommended
- In other Downtown zones, the existing cover % limit is 35% or 55%
- Pioneer Square also has minimum setbacks from edges: streets, alleys
- Rooftop penthouse additions are allowed for office and residential uses. Coverage limit is 50% of roof area for them. Rooftop penthouse additions were the most likely viable uses for additions in Pioneer Square when the Downtown codes were written 30+ years ago.
- Enclosed rooftop recreational spaces, on new structures, up to 15 feet above height limit. Elevator equipment serving these spaces can go higher. These spaces + mechanical equipment cannot exceed 35% of roof area.

Why Proposed

Adoption of the latest Energy Code in the last year is more intensively requiring steps to promote carbon neutrality in new buildings.

- This will mean more & different mechanical features are used on rooftops, for space-heating and water-heating. Like heat pumps.
- We need to increase rooftop coverage limits to make sure there is enough allowed space to fit mechanical features and other desirable rooftop features.
- The proposed coverage increase across most zones in the city is 10 –15% over today's limits
- A chance to revisit other regulations for Pioneer Square, and recent requests to consider more flexibility on rooftop features.

To avoid Energy Code issues, want to give the same extra coverage to Pioneer Square: 15-25% coverage limit is low

- Discovered that greenhouses (for plants) are not specifically covered in Pioneer Square regulations. If did nothing, the Downtown-wide limit of 60% coverage when greenhouses are present would apply.
- Independent request to allow lodging and restaurant uses in rooftop penthouses, in Pioneer Square
- Other recent interest in retrofitting enclosed recreational spaces on existing structures

Propose to bump up rooftop coverage for tall features (to 15 feet) by 10%, from 25% to 35% with Board recommendation

- Keep other existing setback provisions
- When greenhouses present, allow up to 45% roof coverage (10% more gives space for the greenhouse). Compared to 60% in other Downtown zones.

- For economic health and revitalization, penthouse spaces for lodging and restaurants are reasonable ideas for 2021 and beyond. Same 50% coverage as other penthouse types proposed as it would have the similar visual appearance.
- Would remove the minimum 60-foot height and 10,000 square foot building footprint for office penthouses
- Would let the lodging, restaurant penthouses occur on buildings of any size

Define new construction for the purpose of an enclosed recreational space above the height limit to be a building built since 2008 when the code was enacted. If allow recreational spaces to be retrofitted on buildings built since Jan. 2008, they can likely meet the “green” requirements in the existing code.

Board Questions

Ms. Kush asked about timing of use and noise impacts.

Mr. Clowers said nighttime noise limits kick in at 10:00 or 11:00 pm that put a 10-decibel limit on noise. He said that reduction would put a damper on the ability to make noise and is a best practice for use. He said it could be discussed as no time limit has been added yet.

Ms. Hoyt asked about the history of recreational use if it was included with office and residential or if it was a part of code.

Mr. Clowers said it was added in 2008 and related to on new buildings; enclosed recreation was a good amenity.

Ms. Hoyt asked if it was a gym amenity, if this is how it was applied.

Mr. Clowers said it could be.

Ms. Nashem added it could be a break room or a conference room also. She said that the common recreation room has requirements in order to allow the space to be above the height limit such as a higher standard of energy efficiency. She said it is like a bonus for meeting certain requirements. The board had a briefing a while back about 505 First, the question was, can a building that was recently built but did not include the enclosed recreational space at the time of construction still be considered a new building and add a penthouse if it can qualify with the conditions in the code.

In the Pioneer Square code, all the rooftop features specify that it would be 15' above the roof or height limit or whichever is less where in the greenhouse code for downtown if that applied to Pioneer Square, it would be 15' above the height limit. Given that most historic buildings are not built to the height limit, that would make it difficult to tell how tall it can be and it would require a lot of discretion from the board to determine how high it can be. This change will add to that 15' above the roof or whatever is less

Mr. Clower said that is a distinction in Pioneer Square code. It contains a range of possibilities.

Mr. Rolluda noted setbacks requirements and said board requires they provide a site section showing what is visible from specific distances from the building and the penthouse impact be minimized.

Ms. Pflugrath said the issue of buildings four stories or less was brought up in public comment by Eugenia Woo. She asked if there would be a restriction in the amendment for buildings of four stories or less and their ability to take advantage of penthouse requirements.

Mr. Clowers said they haven't written that in yes but this discussion is a perfect opportunity to discuss the wisdom of that and the board's input will be key.

Ms. Nashem asked board to think about a recent project for Grand Central where the Buttnick Building would not have qualified as it is not 60' in height. It was only eligible with considering the average height of the combined buildings as one project.

Mr. Clowers asked if there should be a lowered or intermediate minimum.

Ms. Pflugrath said it should be case by case. On a shorter building, how would it keep the character of the neighborhood? She said it seems the Code could allow for an exception with demonstration to the board.

Ms. Elenga said she concurred with Ms. Pflugrath's comments. She said there should be limitations for buildings under four stories as outlined by Ms. Woo.

Mr. Rolluda asked where the process is at now.

Mr. Clowers said the legislation is draft is written and SEPA could be done in November. When SEPA done it will be open for public comment, then there will be an appeal period, consideration of comments, finalize documents. He said City Council could review the first quarter of 2022.

102021.5 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR:** Alex Rolluda, Chair

Mr. Rolluda said there will be a new board orientation with a district site walk this spring.

Ms. Nashem said new and 'old' members are invited to participate, especially to point out successes and challenges.

102021.6 **STAFF REPORT:** Genna Nashem

Ms. Nashem reported she would interview a Get Engaged member so it is possible the board will have another member. She said the City Council will then have to review and approve but she noted the Council is in budget session so a new member may not be confirmed until November. She said the board will then have ten members.

She said to expect a long meeting on November 6, 2021.

Genna Nashem
Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator
206.684.0227