

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee: Design Review Board, Special Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: 98 Washington Street, First Floor Conference Room
DRB Members Present: Chair Paul Durand, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, J. Michael Sullivan
DRB Members Absent: David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Helen Sides
Others Present: Kate Newhall-Smith
Recorder: Colleen Brewster

Chair Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

Signs

1. 9-11 Dodge Street, 217-219 and 231-251 Washington Street (Hampton Inn/Mixed Use Development): Residential Address Sign (continued from 8/29/19)

Andrew Queen of Opechee Construction Corporation were present to discuss the project.

Queen stated that the residential address connection sign and lighting method were previously vague. He proposed halo lit lettering and a black box to contain the electrical component that will be mounted to face of steel canopy on a pitched roof. At night there will be a low glow coming from behind the lettering. The letters will be pin mounted off the black box behind it.

Miller asked for the other trim and accent colors that are on the building. Queen replied that all storefronts, canopy, sign box, and window frames will be black and the façade red brick.

Perras asked about drainage for the canopy. Queen replied that the canopy pitches from back to front and from right to left, and it will drain off the front corner, furthest away from the single egress door.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Sullivan: Motion to approve as presented.
Seconded by: Perras. Passes 4-0.

2. 139 Washington Street (Eastern Bank): Discussion and vote on A-frame sign.

No one was present to discuss the project.

Newhall-Smith stated that the location is a concern, they won't realistically place it at the "X" indicated on the proposed plan, they will place it by the bikes. Miller believed the

signage will change with each promotion, but it should be placed next to the building. Chair Durand stated that as a bank, the sign should be a nicer quality sign.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Chair Durand: Motion to continue to the next regular meeting.

Seconded by: Sullivan. Passes 4-0.

3. 30 Church Street: (Hive & Forge): Discussion and vote on sign package.

Rachel Chandler and Jen Simone were present to discuss the project.

Sullivan asked if the pendant sign will be centered or mounted on an existing bracket. Newhall-Smith replied, on an existing bracket. Chair Durand suggested they space out the proposed text on the oval sign. Sullivan suggested they lower the "Hive and Forge" sign and consider using the white highlighting as shown in the proposed sign. Miller added that whichever they use, all their signage should match. Chandler replied that there was no white in the sign, it was a printing issue. Sullivan noted that he liked the white because it made it more dynamic.

Chandler stated that they may paint the sign rather than have it made. They are still finding their branding and want to become a year-round institution in the City, for small craftsman and artisans to sell their crafts, and be more than a retail shop. They have a vinyl sign and business cards but want to focus on the front of the shop now.

Sullivan asked if the blade sign will hang perpendicularly on the existing bracket. Chandler replied yes. The sign will be molded sign foam, approximately 1-inch thick with gold edging.

Miller stated that the wall sign seems overwhelming and needs more brick visible around it. Sullivan agreed, and added that it could also be pushed up. Perras asked for the height of the existing banner and if it would be placed back in the same opening. Simone replied two-feet and no, they are worried about the winter weather and stability if the sign were placed in the same location as the banner.

Perras suggested the top of sign be shaped to fit into the curve of the archway but this may create a clearance issue below. Chandler replied that they want to be more visible and pull in customers. They want the people on Essex to be able to see them from the alleyway. Perras suggested they start one-foot below the arch and go up into it. Chandler replied that she is concerned with seeing the back of the sign when inside the building, but they could consider modifying the sign. Sullivan encouraged the applicants to show the sign as it will be installed and preserving the archway in their images. The signage could also be within the brick band of the building but could be smaller or just be letters. They could also consider installing it between the underside of the archway and the coursing, but to respect the architecture of the building.

Newhall-Smith suggested breaking-up the application and allowing the applicants to keep their temporary sign for October and just look at the blade sign for now.

Chair Durand stated that the wording on the blade sign could use more space and for them to add more black space around them, one-inch above and below.

Miller asked if the bottom of the banner sign would be straight under the archway. Chandler replied that it's 96-inches-high and they must use a ladder to adjust the existing vinyl sign. Miller suggested they move the sign up to where the banner is now and maintain the arch opening. Chair Durand suggested the sign project off the wall to clear the face of the projecting brick which will still maintain the arch.

Perras suggested a third option, a sign that fits within the soldier course of the banding above the archway. Chair Durand requested the applicants provide images of the remainder of the building, to see the proposed signage in context with the remaining signage.

A-Frame Sign

Chair Durand stated that the sign is too large. Chandler replied that the sign will be six-square-feet, they measured it wrong.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Perras: Motion to approve the blade sign with the adjusted spacing of the wording, continue the review of the wall sign, and to approve the A-frame signs at six-square-foot maximum each.

Seconded by: Sullivan. Passes 4-0.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

- 1. 168 Essex Street (Village Tavern):** Review of Installation of awning over patio – *Request to Withdraw.*
- 2. 1 Derby Square:** Review of Installation of skylights – *Request to continue to October 23, 2019.*

Miller: Motion to continue to the October 23, 2019 regular meeting.

Seconded by: Perras. Passes 4-0.

- 3. 15 Crombie Square:** Review of replacement of rotting column on rear porch of 3-unit residential structure – *Request to continue to October 23, 2019.*

Miller: Motion to continue to the October 23, 2019 regular meeting.

Seconded by: Perras. Passes 4-0.

- 4. 30 Federal Street:** Review of Construction of an addition – *Request to Withdraw*

Newhall-Smith stated that the applicant is trying to rework their parking without having to apply to the ZBA, depending on whether they receive support from their abutters on their revised plans. They hope to reapply with the SRA in October. Community Development Director, Tom Daniel, informed the applicant that their project is materially different so they must reapply with the SRA, which they hope to do in October.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Councillor Flynn stated that he's received several calls on the project. At Pickering Wharf, the Rockett's purchased enough condominiums to give themselves 51% ownership of the association. He asked if in this condominium association, can the owner/applicant make changes any of the proposed changes without 51% permission.

Jane Arlander, 93 Federal Street. Stated that the 28 Federal Street is "New Salem Condominiums" and the Washington Street condominiums are "Church Court Condominiums."

Newhall-Smith replied that 30 Federal Street is on its own parcel and only shares a party wall with 28 Federal Street, therefore is a different building with different ownership. The applicant purchased the building, not as a condominium owner in conjunction with 28 Federal Street. Councillor Flynn replied that he was told the offices of 30 Federal Street are all condominiums, possibly with deeded condominium parking.

Chair Durand requested the applicant provide information on the legal ownership of the building if they return with a new application.

Chair Durand closed public comment.

North River Canal Corridor Projects

1. 70-90 ½ Boston Street & 13 Goodhue Street, River Rock Residences, Townhouses & Retail: Review of condenser screening

Attorney Kristin Kolick of Serafini, Darling & Correnti and Katya Podsiadlo of Verdant Landscape Architecture were present to discuss the project.

Atty. Kolick stated that the design was approved by the DRB in 2017. The larger multi-family structure is in the back and 6 townhouses placed along Boston Street are currently under construction. There were AC condenser units on a concrete pad for the townhouses and they want to discuss landscape screening.

Podsiadlo stated that the existing concrete pad is 12-feet wide x 6-feet long as shown on Construction Documents. Miller noted that the condensers are stacked so there are twelve, not six, as the plan indicated. Podsiadlo noted that they were asked to conceal them from public view on Boston Street. They want to treat the South and South-East ends. The previously approved plan included; honey locust street trees on Boston street, and a red oak, river birch, and 3 crab apple trees behind it. They want to add two varieties of evergreen trees (three junipers and three arborvitae's, and one pink flowering spirea shrub, to create an ornamental evergreen screen not uniform planting that will help conceal the units as well as provide a front yard aesthetic.

Podsiadlo stated that the Juniper is native style and can start at between 4-5-feet high but could be lower and grown higher. The tops of the condensers will still be seen initially and to allow the root ball to take hold and survive. The arborvitae will be skinny, can start at 7-8-feet tall and will provide full screening. The junipers will be between the wall and the fence and the irrigation system will be adjusted to allow the new plantings to survive. Lastly, spirea is proposed that will be 5-gallon initially and planted in front of it to draw the eye down.

Podsiadlo noted that the condenser units will remain mounted on the racks they are currently on, at 7.16-feet high. Miller asked if any tubes to be built around it. Podsiadlo replied no, and they will have access for landscaping and leaf removal.

Chair Durand asked if any piping is above ground. Podsiadlo replied that she would confirm that during her punch list the next day.

Miller stated that she doesn't want to use arborvitae's in this area because they will get damaged by the snow. She also agreed with not using the same tree in a row in case one plant doesn't survive, it won't be so noticeable. Evergreens are good but not arborvitae's and Goodhue Street plant list had good options. She suggested installing one of their other built fences that were approved elsewhere on the property or a trellis, as close as possible. Hydrangea, Boston Ivy, or Baptisia could also be used as the lower planting, will screen the condensers and will last.

Sullivan stated that he doesn't agree with adding a fence, since there are already two types of fences in the immediate area. Podsiadlo replied that a fence would need to be 7 feet for full screening. She also considered a shorter plant that when it grew would be wider than proposed and would need to be pruned but would get tall over time. Miller stated that they should have an initial impact of screening. Chair Durand noted that a trellis could be 6-feet-tall, and it will provide a boundary for technicians, without just having plantings growing in their way. Sullivan added that a technician would need to push the vegetation aside to service the unit if the plantings grew too close to the units. Chair Durand stated that the trellis should be a stand-alone item and be more vertical and 6-feet tall.

Perras disagreed with the addition of a trellis and suggested that vegetation would be enough. Chair Durand stated that only at the front with small side wings of a trellis would need to be added and Junipers will spread out. Podsiadlo added that a trellis will help with air flow around the units. Perras stated that he is more concerned with the long view from the street. Podsiadlo replied that the street trees along Boston Street will help conceal the units. Sullivan noted that the existing fence is already 30-36-inches away from the condensers along the south-east end and asked if the technician space requirements were known. Miller suggested planting multi-stem trees. Podsiadlo replied that they will plant the trees as close as they can to the units and the service space requirements were unknown.

Sullivan stated that the existing fence along the south-east side with the addition of a trellis will make it too busy. The greenery should be able to conceal it along the side. Podsiadlo replied that two junipers will be planted along that side, but they also want some immediate impact. Miller stated that she would like to see a trellis along the street side and agreed that it would be tight along the sides and changing the arborvitae's to holly trees.

Newhall-Smith stated that a Planning Board referral has been requested and the DRB recommendation will be forwarded to the Board.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Miller: Motion to approve a 6-foot-tall wood lattice with side extensions and three Juniper's, three Holly's, and one pink flowering Spirea shrub.
Seconded by: Sullivan, Perras - abstained. Passes 3-0.

Old/New Business

1. Representative on Public Art Commission

Sullivan stated that he is resigning from the Public Art Commission. It meets once a month, for 90-minutes maximum, and it's a good way to see what art is up and coming in the City. Newhall-Smith noted that Julie Barry is the new Public Art Planner who previously worked for the City of Cambridge. Sullivan noted that it started with a public art master plan and funding is an issue for art related projects. There are some competitions and sculptures too. The Commission is a dynamic young group of people and you would interview the Artist's Row tenants too. Chair Durand replied that they should continue this discussion so that other Board members are present. Sullivan added that is a requirement for someone on the DRB to also be on the PAC.

2. October Meeting Date

The Board discussed alternate meeting dates to work around Halloween and Thanksgiving. The Board agrees to cancel the regular October 30th and November 20th meetings, and to schedule one meeting on November 6th. The meeting date for December will be the 18th.

Minutes

No minutes to review.

Adjournment

Miller: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: Sullivan. Passes 4-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:30PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033.