

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

**Board or Committee:** Design Review Board, Regular Meeting  
**Date and Time:** Wednesday, August 23, 2017 at 6:00 pm  
**Meeting Location:** 120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room  
**DRB Members Present:** Chair Paul Durand, Ernest DeMaio, Glenn Kennedy, Chris Dynia, David Jaquith, Helen Sides, J. Michael Sullivan  
**DRB Members Absent:** None  
**Others Present:** Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner  
**Recorder:** Colleen Brewster

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

**Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review**

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- 1. 125 Washington Street (Ledger):** Discussion and vote on proposed installation of signage.

Brett Danahy of Ledger was present to discuss the proposed signage.

Danahy stated that front entrance signage will be a hand painted 23K gold leaf applied directly on the black wood transom above the double main entrance door.

Kennedy asked why this particular font was selected. Danahy replied that it matches interior signage.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Jaquith: Motion to approve proposed signage.  
Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes 6-0.

- 2. 55 Lafayette Street (Mark Your Spot):** Discussion and vote on proposed installation of signage.

Eric Deininger of Mark Your Spot was present to discuss the proposed project.

Deininger stated that the sign will fit into a bracket already in place. It is a 28"H x 37"L custom blade sign made out of reclaimed wood, mounted with metal black brackets, with raised lettering and it is encased in aluminum. Shapiro noted that a vinyl sign is also proposed on the glass door. Deininger noted that the sign lettering will be silver with black trim. The glass door sign will have a slight black outline but no raised

lettering. The 1'x1' vinyl decal affixed to the window of the front door entrance, centered on the upper half of the door.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Kennedy: Motion to approve signage as submitted.  
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 6-0.

**3. Artists' Row:** Discussion and vote on proposed installation of signage.

Rick Rawlins faculty director of the student team that worked on the project was present to discuss the proposed signage.

Rawlins stated that buildings have been painted, select windows and doors have been added, and there is some additional painting that will be done next season. The DRB's concerns regarding the barn door and entrance signs were revisited. The barn door is in place and its surface has been painted with chalkboard paint. Vendors can add their activities list to the door/sign surface with chalk as they are scheduled. The overall signage has quieted down and is more consistent throughout. Rawlins noted that when Artists' Row is open the barn doors will be open and the door will cover the written calendar. Rawlins added that the color of the numerals will match all of the entrance signs to help tie all of the signage together.

Shapiro noted that the approved signage has been slightly revised and the barn door itself has been approved. The second trim color to be removed and each building will have two accent colors. The approved signage for walls did change.

Sullivan arrived.

Kennedy noted that the revised proposal is cleaner and less sporadic.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Kennedy: Motion to approve installation of signage.  
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 7-0.

**4. 1 Washington Street (Church Court Condo Association):** Discussion and vote on proposed replacement of roof shingles, siding, decks, and windows (small project review).

Jim LaPointe, one the Board of Trustees members at the Church Court Condos, was present to discuss the proposed project.

LaPointe stated that the 16 unit building is managed by three trustees. The building envelope has failed; the lack of window flashing has allowed the wood to rot and they are seeking a cost effective way to repair the exterior damage, since 10 of the 16 units are occupied by retirees on fixed incomes, and two are Arc units. They hoped to use vinyl siding since one section of the building already has vinyl installed. Azek trim boards and CertainTeed monogram vinyl trim boards are proposed and samples of both, as well as pavers, railings, etc. have been provided.

LaPointe noted that all siding will be removed, the sheathing repaired, and new Harvey windows installed. DeMaio asked about the thickness of the window casing, Azek trim boards and proposed corner installation. Thomas Daniel of Crosby Services replied 5/4 trim Azek PVC corner boards with rabbited corners, cortex screws and plugs, and butt jointed window corners. The Harvey windows have an integrated 5/4 PVC as part of the window assembly. An Intex railing system is proposed because it is the only composite product available with an aluminum reinforced core that can make the 12 foot space and doesn't require a center post.

Jaquith noted that he is in favor of the roof shingles and railing. The siding should be Hardie not vinyl siding within the downtown area, smooth vinyl is more susceptible to fire and can melt, and it also cups. Azek is okay but the Harvey muntins should be no bigger than 5/8".

DeMaio noted that when trimmed with Azek vinyl is only noticed when up close to it. Corners wrapped in Azek will be acceptable. Dynia and Sullivan agree with DeMaio.

Chair Durand stated that trimmed edges solves many of the problems with vinyl siding. Jacquith asked if J strips will be installed. Daniel replied yes, at deck transitions and at the undersill where it dies into the soffit.

Sides noted that the seams highlight the thinness of the material. LaPointe replied that they will use extended length vinyl (25 feet) to minimize seams. Daniel added that the gable ends are brick and will have no vinyl seams. Hardi plank boards would change the look of the building.

Kennedy asked how many runs are longer than 25 feet. Daniel replied a couple but the seams could face away from street to make it less obvious. Sullivan asked if the seams would overlap. Daniel replied yes.

Sides asked about the deck ceiling material. Daniel replied an Azek beaded composite ceiling.

Daniel presented the Everlast system sample and noted that it is a quartz based product vs. cementitious. The 12 foot long panels has two available profiles, 4½" and 7". Unlike Hardi plank it doesn't absorb water and can have rabbited PVC for lowered maintenance with cortex crews and plugs.

LaPointe noted that they are providing two options, but are requesting vinyl because the Everlast will be a strain on the community. Kennedy, Sides, and DeMaio agree that they prefer the heavy shadow line of the Everlast. LaPointe noted that the Everlast is \$60,000 additional, totaling over \$500,000 for the entire building envelope and site work.

*Chair Durand opens Public Comment.*

Jane Stauffer. Noted that she and her husband are about to move into unit 404, and she is speaking for 2 other first floor owners. They are in favor of wood not vinyl.

Meg Twohey, 122 Federal Street. Asked if any other properties under SRA approval have vinyl. LaPointe replied yes, 26 Lynde Street. Twohey noted that she is in favor of Everlast and the vinyl sets a precedent to the district and City.

Kent Wallace, 172 Federal Street. Noted that the price difference is minimal. LaPointe replied that not all of the mostly retired residents can easily afford that additional cost.

Jennifer Firth, Historic Salem Inc. President. Not in favor of the vinyl which will set a precedent. The price difference per unit for the Everlast composite is minimal.

Steve Pelletier, Board of Directors member. Noted that a vote was taken, the owners were asked and 80% preferred that vinyl be used.

DeMaio noted that long term maintenance costs are a factor that should be considered. LaPointe replied that the maintenance between both would be about the same.

Tim Jenkins, 18 Broad Street. Asked about the age of the current siding. LaPointe replied that it was installed in 1986 but it was a poor installation job. Jenkins noted that painting would be an ongoing cost and he would prefer wood with regular maintenance. Daniel noted that the Everlast can be painted and the product is 8-12 years old. LaPointe added that there is a class action suit against Hardi Board and there is no cellulose in Everlast.

Steve Pelletier, one of three Condominium Board trustees, stated that he is in favor of the Everlast product that would provide a better look. Maintenance on wood would be a hardship for their 10 retired tenants and 80-90 year old owners.

*Chair Durand closes public.*

Chair Durand stated that he is concerned with precedents set by approving vinyl but comfortable with Everlast to protect the sanctity of the district. Sides agreed and noted that wood would be less appropriate due to cost of the long run and the size of building. Prefers a newer material, the Everlast in combination with Azek.

Jaquith stated that there should be a 4½" exposure and suggests a higher priced shingle be installed for a lower maintenance costs. LaPointe noted that the color selected is called Flagstone.

Kennedy stated that he is in favor of the Everlast and not want to set a precedent with approval vinyl.

Kennedy: Motion to approve replacement of roof shingles, siding with Everlast composite product with a 4½" exposure, decks, and windows.  
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 7-0.

## **North River Canal Corridor Projects Under Review**

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### **5. Mayor Jean A. Levesque Community Life Center:** Discussion and vote on construction documents.

Dan Skolski, managing principal of DMS Design, LLC was present to discuss the project.

Skolski stated that roof info was not provided at the last meeting. Documentation provided show rooftop units with screening, elevator penthouse, Solatubes, and photovoltaic panels.

Skolski stated that there will be 4 RTU (rooftop units) on the main building and 1 on the single story, 1 elevator penthouse, and Solatubes for natural light at the interior of the one story space. The 5 RTU's will be screened on all four sides with metal panels mounted on a framework mounted directly to the unit, so there will be no additional roof penetrations. The second floor RTU's are less than 3 feet tall and the first floor RTU is less than 5 feet tall. The elevator penthouse will not stick up past the height of the roof plane. The photovoltaic panels are 39"Wx69"L, will stick up less than 2 feet and sit at a 20 degree angle mounted on a pedestal system.

The updated renderings show that no RTU's or their associated screening can be easily seen from 100 feet away but they can be seen from 200 feet away. The photovoltaic panels and Solatubes and not be seen. Endless Energy designed the mounting system for the panels and a cut sheet has been provided.

The horizontal Envisor rooftop screening system can be easily removed for maintenance. The buff color and model RVE has been selected.

Sullivan asked if the RTU's could be grouped to minimize the screening. Skolski replied yes but only at one area. Skolski noted that the RTU's were shifted towards street to make them further away from residential neighbors. Sullivan noted that the screening is larger than units, which compounds the problem. Chair Durand noted that units rust. Sides stated that she would prefer the Dark Bronze. Jaquith and Chair Durand agreed.

DeMaio noted that the unit on single story will be visible from street.

Shapiro noted that elevation difference on Bridge Street may not make it visible. Skolski replied that it will be noticed from further away.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

Meg Twohey, 122 Federal Street. Concerned with effects on the national register historic district and screening for the mechanical units from residential neighbors, is in favor of the darker screening, is concerned with the visibility of the angled panels on roof, and asked about the proposed roof color. Skolski replied white. Twohey asked who owns the CLC condo and when the other portion of the project will be built. Shapiro replied that Highrock Development has hired a contractor to build the building, The City of Salem owns the CLC, and the start date for the other building is unknown.

Ken Wallace, 172 Federal Street. Lives approximately 100 feet away from building and asked what will stop the noise of the RTU's, and if the panels will reflect back at their homes. Skolski replied that the panels will be reflective when the sun changes. Sides noted that the panels will be more absorbent than reflective and suggested that site sections be revised to show the proposed angles and the neighborhood. Sullivan noted that there will be trees and screening. Kennedy noted that these panels are installed next to the highway and they would be not placed if they were too reflective. Durand noted that the sound levels from RTU's drop off dramatically at great distances.

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. Asked what percentage of roof will be covered with panels on the white roof and noted that her neighborhood is having ongoing HVAC sound and screening issues at Temple Shalom.

Skolski noted that the panels will rise above the 10" high parapet. The panels are butted together will appear in long dark strips. Sides recognized and applauded a City building making energy efficient efforts. Wallace suggested that the retaining wall and fence above it could be raised.

Twohey asked when the fence will be installed and asked if they requested that it be installed at this stage. Shapiro replied that the fence is not part of this project review but the Planning Board approved it. Amanda Chiancola, Staff Planner for the City of Salem, noted that the phasing of the fence was not discussed. Kennedy suggested that the building be constructed first to determine if there are any issues. Wallace asked who owns retaining wall. Shapiro noted that he does not know and that the DRB can't decide ownership at the meeting.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Sides stated that the building will cut down the street noise for the residents.

Sullivan noted that the photovoltaic panel and the cool roof is an improvement.

Sides: Motion to approve the construction documents with dark screening at the RTU's.  
Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes 7-0.

## Old/New Business

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### **6. Discussion regarding Commercial Design Guidelines and their applicability to projects that could require review in the Entrance Corridor Overlay Districts.**

Amanda Chiancola, Staff Planner for the City of Salem, was present for the discussion.

Shapiro noted that there is a potential zoning change for the DRB to review projects within the entrance corridors. Any project over 10,000 SF would automatically be referred by the Planning Board to be reviewed by the DRB, similar to what has been done with the North River Canal Corridor projects. Any projects between 2,000 and 10,000 SF would come to a vote of the Planning Board for a review and vote and the DRB also.

The City's Community Design Guidelines are referred to for DRB reviewed projects but it needs to be determined if they should be used for entrance corridor projects, and if items should be revised, added, or eliminated.

Chiancola stated that the City Council adopted an amendment to include a portion of Vinnin Square on Paradise Road and Jefferson Avenue to the entrance corridors. Those two streets have not been added to the Design Guidelines.

Sides noted that it should be clear whether the 10,000 SF includes the existing building. Shapiro replied that it is unknown whether the SF would include the existing building. Chiancola noted that it many more projects would be under DRB review if that were the case.

DeMaio questioned the effectiveness of the document if they have to stick to the guidelines to ensure proper follow through. Many of the items refer to maintaining the historic buildings and districts and restoration vs. renovation. The character of each entrance corridor is different and these guidelines could discourage creativity for potentially significant buildings. Some of the adopted standards haven't been adhered to and the guidelines can quickly become secondary, but he applauded the City for wanting to involve them DRB more. Shapiro replied that they are guidelines not standards and are used for reference, there should be a good reason to deviate from them, and the reigns could be loosened to encourage creativity. Chair Durand noted that imitating doesn't relate to modern designs. Shapiro noted that there are no immediate plans to rewrite the guidelines.

Sullivan stated that it would be great for the DRB to have some control in the designs constructed on the entrance corridors. Sides noted that the DRB having this level of oversight would slow their process. Jaquith noted that the Secretary of the Interior Standards give an architect enough room to meet the standards that DRB's are concerned about and the Salem DRB is not afraid to set a well-deserved precedent. Chiancola noted that the staff is drafting a letter to present to the City Council now. Sides asked if the DRB will be adjunct to SRA. Chiancola replied yes and the NRCC has the DRB.

Shapiro asked if any immediate removals were suggested. DeMaio noted that the guidelines should have a broader view and not just a historical reference. It should encourage creativity. Chiancola agreed that the guidelines should promote good design and transparency. Chair Durand stated that the size and complexity of the project should be a factor is whether it an appropriate projects for the DRB to review.

Kennedy suggested that the document should be digital and not a PDF.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

Jennifer Firth, Historic Salem President. Agrees but appreciates new design. Some items are stifling.

Tim Jenkins, HS. Agrees that the guidelines are stifling. Highly developed entrance corridors exist with little space for new developments. Not all corridors are historic, it seemed to be an out of date document.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Individual comments from the DRB will be sent to Shapiro.

## **Minutes**

The minutes from the July 26, 2017 joint (with SRA) regular meeting were reviewed.

Kenned: Motion to approve the minutes.  
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 7-0.

## **Adjournment**

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Seconded by: Kennedy. Passes 7-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:50PM.

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