

**City of Salem Planning Board
Approved Meeting Minutes April 18, 2019**

A public hearing of the Salem Planning Board was held on Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall Annex, 98 Washington St., Large Public Hearing Room, First Floor, Salem, Massachusetts.

Chair Ben Anderson calls the meeting to order at 7:02PM.

I. ROLL CALL

Those present were: Chair Ben Anderson, Helen Sides, Carole Hamilton, Kirt Rieder, Matt Smith, Noah Koretz (6)

Absent: Bill Griset, DJ Napolitano, Matt Venio (3)

Also in attendance: Mason Wells, Staff Planner

II. REGULAR AGENDA

A. No Items

III. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

A. 24 Fort Avenue Footprint Power plant

Scott Silverstein, President and Chief Operating Officer of Footprint Power, will present an update to the Board on the status of the Footprint Power plant project. This update will address design changes proposed by Footprint Power to the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB). These changes were initially discussed with the Planning Board at the regularly scheduled meeting on February 7, 2019.

Scott Silverstein represents the project. Feedback from the Planning Board was obtained and site visits were made. Feedback has been incorporated into the Plan. Issues previously raised were:

- Final construction of the berm and completion of the gabion wall vs. concrete block and fencing
- Beta fence over the drain line
- Panels on surface of the tower
- Monumental stack lighting changes

A notice of project change was submitted to the EFSB for the concrete block and fencing and change to Beta fence; the EFSB determined that no further inquiry was necessary. A gray color for the beta fence will help it match the louvers. NOT included in the notice of project change were:

- Elimination of polycarbonate panels on steam turbine building. These will now be installed
- Monumental stack lighting changes

(mini mesh) will be used in place of the standard chain link fence. The black fabric on the mock up, that provided 95% visual screen, will be swapped out for one that provides 100% visual screening.

The Board had requested that Plans be submitted; they were in the letter and are shown now, and outlined. Renderings are described.

Stack lighting and its technical details are described. The Board's concerns will be addressed and Mr. Steve Prudhomme, principal of Illuminate New England and photometric analyst, speaks and outlines the data. The tower will be lit up and down from bottom and top, with a very narrow 7 degree beam spread directly aimed at one another.

Visuals are presented of the mini-mesh and additional screening.

Chair Anderson feels that the lighting presentation was helpful. He asks about the Beta fence area, concerned about the screening ability of the plantings planned there and how they work with the berms. Mr. Silverstein explains that viewed from the street, the main pathway will be over the top of the drain line, so the two berms fold into each other with the pathway between them, but not in a “valley” formation. Regarding maturity of plantings, he will get back to the Board with that information. The Chair feels that one section should perhaps be left open for access but not visible to the public.

Kirt Rieder asks if there is a topographic rating plan for the revised location of the pathways; this was previously provided but is not included tonight. He is also concerned about what visitors will see when “ascending” the pathway, but it will be at grade. The height relationships of the fence and pathway are described. What is proposed is a replacement for the gabion wall; Kirt Rieder is concerned about the visibility of the facility, as well as how the fencing is attached and its ability to resist sagging. Mr. Silverstein was reassured by the contractors that it will be rigid, and can provide further information. A sample of the Beta fence has not been provided and it is not shown; this is a concern. The location of the mini mesh is described again, and the views from various viewpoints described. Kirt Rieder is in favor of the mini mesh vs. chain link; to clarify, this will all be mini mesh, with the standard anti-climb security mesh (product name uncertain) and fabric only on the back side. It is not known how this will be fastened to the mini mesh. Keeping the fabric intact and in good condition is discussed. Extra fabric will be kept on hand for repairs.

Which fencing materials are in what location are further discussed. The overall visual experience has not changed.

Lighting changes are discussed at length.

Kirt Rieder was previously concerned about lighting die off/ability to perceive lack of or decreasing intensity; he is now reassured. Alternative lighting scenarios are discussed; what is now proposed is an alternative to a continuous strip, which was the ideal solution. Helen Sides feels it will achieve the same effect as a single beam. There will be a definitive band of light on the tower. The width of the light will be 10’ wide, though the beam itself will be smaller. The Chair was originally concerned about the sharpness of the light fixtures; now there will be a sharp cutoff top to bottom either side, more intense but not perceivable until cut off at the end, a consistent beam from top to bottom. It is supposed to look like a backlit surface, not a beam of light.

Kirt Rieder approves of the new plans and appreciates the Applicant’s patience with the Board’s feedback.

B. Salem Bicycle Parking Guidelines

The Bicycle Parking Guidelines, which were reviewed by the Salem Planning Board on October 18, 2018, were approved by the Salem Bicycling Advisory Committee on December 18, 2018. The completed guidelines are available on the City of Salem website.

No action required by the Planning Board.

Mason Wells reviews the guidelines; comments from the Board were incorporated, including:

- Durability of the rack
- Internal vs. outdoor bike parking
- Language changed from “Should be encouraged/considered” to “strongly encouraged” in several instances, as these are guidelines, not requirements; the Board can request special permit review
- Comment about bike racks as public art was changed from a recommendation to “only with the approval of the Planning Director”

This is finalized but comments may still be incorporated if desired. Examples of well or poorly designed bike rack designs are welcome.

Kirt Rieder comments that there are horrific examples of bike racks as art, some in Salem. He recommends that the Art or Bike Committee may want to review these, as opposed to the Planning Director. Mason Wells notes that it depends on whether the function is more artistic or utilitarian. Mr. Rieder feels the Committee could provide feedback to the Planning Director. Matt Smith comments that some artistic bike racks look like they would be functional, but are not; this should be avoided. Function in this case is more important than aesthetics. Kirt Rieder cites the Kendall Square bike racks, which are stainless steel, aircraft quality. Adding examples and encouraging review by another committee would be a good idea. Noah Koretz feels that making the process of designing and installing an artistic bike rack onerous, would lead to more utilitarian bike racks being installed, which is preferable. He is not sure that public art should be married with bike racks. Several Board members concur. However, since no requirements can be made, only suggestions, the Board wonders if, during Site Plan Review (SPR), it can deny something if it does not meet these requirements. Bike racks may be a condition of approval. Traffic flow/parking requirements as applied to SPR is the jurisdiction under which this would fall.

Although this is not a public hearing, the Chair allows public comment.

Eric Papetti of Symonds St. is on the Bicycling Advisory Committee as well as the Traffic and Parking Commission. He thanks the Board for its collaboration in the development of the guidelines. His comments include:

- Echoes the thoughts of the Board re artistic vs. functional bike racks
- Notes it is unclear to him, as a Traffic and Parking Commissioner, who is in charge of street furniture and notes that any recommendations about artistic bike racks should be worded so as to direct it toward whoever that person is, once determined
- Asks the Board to consider how information would be disseminated to potential and current developers; it would be on the website and has been uploaded under "Form & Applications". It would also be presented to applicants when they came into the department so they have it at the start of the process
- Requests that the Board consider how to use these requirements when determining traffic mitigation methods
- Requests that the Board review the Guidelines in a year or so, to see what is working and what is not
- Asks the Board to, as it looks at upcoming revisions, consider the ultimate goal of making this a zoning change or transportation demand management ordinance where it will have more teeth

Matt Smith notes that placement of bike storage within buildings is also important as many times it is located in hard-to-reach areas, and this can be a deterrent to use. It is more likely to be used when it is in the vicinity of the main entrance to the building or parking garage. These suggestions/requirements should be incorporated in the future. Chair Anderson comments that bike parking should perhaps have the same requirement as for parking, maybe even swapping out some car parking spots. The Board feels this would be a positive development. Helen Sides feels that the SRA/DRB would have oversight on the aesthetics and placement of bike racks, if they are external/on the street. There is the question of whether this is considered parking or storage, though.

Matt Smith notes that some buildings are putting bike racks in plain view, many times creatively, and this can also be a marketing plan for those interested in this mode of transportation. Kirt Rieder notes the mechanism to control that distance is often a dimension in the code; the one he uses in his day job is a prescriptive 20+ page bike parking code. Salem may not be ready for that, but should be looking at it for key reference points. Matt Smith notes that the Board should also use it when considering designs that come in.

C. Receive and File: Design Review Board Memo on 11 Goodhue St. / Flynnntan

In a memo to the Planning Board, the Design Review Board notes their review and approval of design changes made to 5 residential units at 11 Goodhue St on the former Flynnntan site. These were made to satisfy a condition of the project's original special permit.

No action required by the Planning Board.

Mason Wells notes that the original condition was that the DRB would review this, and that did not happen for the amendment adding 5 townhouse dwellings to this property. This retroactively went to the DR, which reviewed and approved the plans.

Kirt Rieder asks about the new curbing on Boston St., which has been installed, but resident neighbors are still parking on the sidewalk. Curbing was meant to deter this. Mason Wells notes it is under discussion in the Planning Department, and can get back to the Board with details. The state of the area is described.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Planning Board meeting minutes for special meeting held on March 12, 2019.

A motion to approve the minutes for the Special Planning Board meeting held on March 12, 2019, with minor amendments, is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Matt Smith, and the motion carries.

B. Regular Planning Board meeting minutes held on March 21, 2019.

A motion to approve the minutes for the regular Planning Board meeting held on March 21, 2019, with minor corrections, is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Matt Veno, and the motion carries.

Helen Sides notes that the project behind Shaw's is underway; it is moving forward as originally approved, since the Board did not approve any changes.

Bertuccio Ave. legal matter updates are not available at the moment, but Mason Wells will look into it. Other issues that require updates are discussed. There is no resolution to the issue of trees with Mr. Burr in the Lafayette area. Tom Daniel is working on this and will call Kirt Rieder to get his input. The Applicant did not follow the Plans as approved. Kirt Rieder feels that other Planning Board members should weigh in. A letter was sent to the developer that they were at risk. The Chair should summarize tonight's discussion and share it with the developer. Plans must be built as permitted or a change requested.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn is made by Helen Sides, seconded by Noah Koretz, and the motion carries.

The meeting ends at 8:04PM.

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For actions where the decisions have not been fully written into these minutes, copies of the decisions have been posted separately by address or project at: <https://www.salem.com/planning-board/webforms/planning-board-2019-decisions>

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Kilb, Recording Clerk

Approved by the Planning Board on 05/02/2019

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance § 2-2028 through § 2-2033.