

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SALEM REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Fiscal Year 2013
July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013



BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

**Conrad Baldini
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November 2013

SRA ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2013

INTRODUCTION

Since it was created in 1962, the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) and its Design Review Board (DRB) have played an active role in the redevelopment of downtown Salem. Over the past 51 years, the SRA has made significant contributions to the revitalization of the Central Business District. Critical to this success is its commitment to preserving the social fabric and architectural heritage of the city.

The SRA Annual Report for fiscal year 2013 provides an overview of the projects that the SRA reviewed during the year, those in construction, and those that were completed. It also includes the public projects and initiatives that impact the downtown. Overall, the report is a reflection of the high volume of activity and the quality of development projects being constructed in the Urban Renewal Area.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PROJECTS

Old Town Hall

Since fiscal year 2009, the City has leased Old Town Hall to Gordon College and its Institute for Public History. Under Gordon College's management, the building continues to be actively programmed and yet remains available for rental by the public as well as for public meetings. In February of 2013 the City renewed its lease agreement for Old Town Hall with Gordon College for an additional five years, which extends the agreement's date of termination to July 31, 2018.

Gordon College markets Old Town Hall as an event venue through Destination Salem and various websites. In addition, word-of-mouth recommendations from past event hosts—especially for weddings—continues to generate new bookings. The College has been successful in building relationships with several entities that continue to book events at Old Town Hall on an annual basis (or more often). These groups include:

1. Local retail store Pamplermousse, which books an annual Spring Fling and Octoberfest – these events highlight local businesses and artists, and raise funds for the Salem YMCA;
2. The Massachusetts Poetry Festival, which features local poets and lectures; and
3. Commonwealth Vintage Dancers, which holds an annual Fezziwigs Ball and other events that average an attendance of over 100 people.

Having these regular events that draw large crowds at Old Town Hall helps to highlight the venue while driving business downtown.

During fiscal year 2013, the building hosted a wide range of events. They included Gordon College classes and programming offered by the City of Salem Department of Parks, Recreation, & Community Services, as well as private receptions, dances, birthday parties, weddings, fundraisers, concerts, theatrical performances, art shows, and graduation ceremonies. Old Town Hall continues to host Gordon College's "History Alive!" program,

which produces live performances of *Cry Innocent*, an interactive performance about the witch trial of Bridget Bishop.

The site manager is in the building daily during the week, and the College has made some physical repairs to building. Repairs made in fiscal year 2013 include the following:

1. Reflooring of the Great Hall in September of 2012
2. Roof repairs made by the City in order to stop leaks and shore up loose shingles in the first quarter of 2013
3. Repainting of the Great Hall in June of 2013

There were 28,220 visitors to the Salem Museum during the 2012 season (June – October), which represents a staggering 131% increase over the previous season's attendance. This was fueled in large part by an October 2012 figure of 15,229 visitors, which is the best month the museum has ever seen. Likewise, June 2013 saw an increase of 732 visitors (a 47% increase) over the same period in 2012. The museum continues to grow in popularity with visitors and residents alike.

The exhibits tell the history of Salem from pre-European settlement through contemporary times. There is no admission fee; however, a \$3.00 donation is suggested. The Salem community has also been very supportive of the museum. Community members have donated money, artifacts, and time, and shared stories to help the museum effort.

Parking Management Study

The SRA and City of Salem jointly funded a parking study that was conducted during fiscal year 2010. The study concluded there was adequate parking supply, but there is unbalanced utilization and pricing. Representatives from the SRA were part of the Working Group that met regularly during the study. In June 2011, the City Council adopted a set of ordinance changes and related recommendations for changes to the parking system. Implementation of the system changes began in fiscal year 2012 and continued into fiscal year 2013. Recent system changes include the addition of more “smart” meters at downtown parking spaces that accept credit and debit cards, and the installation of in-ground devices that communicate with the smart meters. The City's Parking Department in cooperation with the Parking Board are responsible for tracking the performance of these implemented changes.

Retail Market Plan

To advance efforts to revitalize downtown Salem as a vibrant year-round retail destination, the Salem Redevelopment Authority retained Karl Seidman Consulting Services, ConsultEcon, Inc. and the Institute of Regional Development to complete a Downtown Retail Market Plan. The Market Study presents results from an analysis of the downtown customer base and business mix, as well as their implications for the downtown retail development strategy. The Retail Market Plan presents the recommended strategies and an action plan to strengthen downtown Salem's retail base, expand its customers and improve the customer experience while visiting and shopping downtown. The Action Plan was completed in May 2007 and continued to serve as the core work plan for the Salem Main Streets program in fiscal year 2013.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Peabody Essex Museum Expansion

In 2011 the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) announced a 175,000-square-foot expansion, which will add new gallery, public program and education spaces. The SRA in August of 2012 approved the PEM to proceed with the construction of a new mechanical penthouse on its roof, and in November approved the installation of a new emergency generator. This work comprises the “enabling phase” of the expansion, which paves the way for future work to be done. Due to the unfortunate passing of the original architect for this project, the PEM has since announced the selection of a new firm – New York based Ennead Architects – to redesign its expansion. The SRA was informed that the project completion is now delayed until 2019. When completed in 2019, the PEM expects 400,000 visitors annually, and it will rank among the nation’s largest art museums.

Storefront Improvement Program

The Department of Planning and Community Development implements a Storefront Improvement Program in Salem as part of the Mayor’s goal to revitalize the downtown commercial area. The program offers a one-to-one matching grant up to \$5,000 for exterior storefront improvements including signs, awnings, painting and lighting. During the past fiscal year, two downtown businesses participated in the program and developed designs. Over the years, the program has helped increase the number of quality signs and storefronts by giving business owners an incentive to improve their storefronts.

Sign Improvements

The SRA and DRB review and approve all sign changes that are proposed in the Urban Renewal Area. In fiscal year 2013 the SRA and DRB approved new signage to be installed at the following businesses:

Adriatic Restaurant and Bar (155 Washington Street)
Angelica of the Angels (2 Central Street)
Avalanche Wear (24 Front Street)
Derby Lofts (51 Lafayette Street)
Fivehands Curiosity Shoppe (2 North Street)
Game Zone (270 Essex Street)
i Taco (7 Church Street)
Jo’ Freedom (196 Essex Street)
Melita Fiore (83 Washington Street)
Opus (87 Washington Street)
ReBound Properties LLC (16 New Derby Street)
Red Line Café (188 Essex Street)
Re-Find (72 Washington Street)
Re-Find Men’s (244 Essex Street)
Roost (40 Front Street)
Salem Screamery (60 Washington Street)
Social Palates Photography (24 Artist’s Row)
Sugar Rush (230 Essex Street)
The Boutique (6 Front Street)

The Naumkeag Ordinary (118 Washington Street)
Turner's Seafood (43 Church Street)
Village Tavern (168 Essex Street)
Vintage Wood (223 Washington Street)
Witch's Hide (190 Essex Street)

Façade and Other Storefront Projects

The SRA and DRB also review storefront and building improvements, such as repainting of façades and replacement of lighting. The following projects were reviewed and approved by the SRA and DRB during fiscal year 2013:

48 Central Street (A&J King Artisan Bakers) – New Awnings
43 Church Street (Turner's Seafood) – New Awnings, paint for window trim, and lighting
11 Dodge Street – Perimeter fence
East India Square (Peabody Essex Museum) – New mechanical penthouse and emergency generator
6-12 and 16-20 Front Street – Replacement of Windows
51 Lafayette Street (Derby Lofts) – New awnings
25 Lynde Street – Alteration of exterior siding / painting
83 Washington Street (Melita Fiore) – New paint color for door
87 Washington Street (Opus) – Exterior improvements including duct work
93 Washington Street (City Hall) – Roof and chimney repair
103 Washington Street (Town House Square Condos) – Change to exterior paint color

PUBLIC PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

A number of public projects and initiatives were initiated or continued in the downtown during the past fiscal year. The following are those projects and initiatives that impact the Downtown Renewal Area.

Repairs to City Hall

In the summer of 2011, the City Council secured \$2 million to initiate repairs to City Hall. In August of 2012, the SRA approved the replacement of its roof, masonry repairs to the chimneys, new gutters and downspouts, and repairs to its skylights. This work was completed in March of 2013.

Essex Street Pedestrian Mall

Through a partnership among the City of Salem, Peabody Essex Museum, and the Salem Partnership, a consultant team was retained in 2011 to conduct four public forums on design improvements to enhance the pedestrian mall. The goal of the process was to develop a design that would strengthen the corridor and make it a vibrant place throughout the year.

The first set of improvements included removing some of the landscaping beds and replacing the areas with brick in order to increase pedestrian access and improve sight lines. Construction was completed on this phase in September of 2012.

In October 2012 and March 2013, the SRA approved phase two plans for the pedestrian mall, which included the removal of cobblestone “tabs” and replacement with brick, the resetting of cobblestone areas to improve drainage and ease of walking, removal of the wooden kiosk, replacement of trees, and the redesign of the fountain at Washington Street. Work was substantially completed on all of these items in July of 2013, with the exception of the fountain. The City plans to reissue bid documents this winter for the renovation of the fountain with the expectation that it will be completed in the spring of 2014.

Public Art

Noted in the feedback received during the four public forums on the pedestrian mall was a desire to see more public art downtown. As a result of this interest, the City has worked on several public art initiatives over the past couple of years.

In June of 2012, the City received a \$25,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to develop a public art master plan in concert with its partners, the Salem Partnership and Peabody Essex Museum. This plan was substantially completed by end of the fiscal year 2013 with the help of Via Partnership – a St. Louis based consulting firm that specializes in the development of public art strategies – and a working group comprised of City stakeholders. The process included a community workshop called *Imagine Art Here!* held in March of 2013, at which more than 50 citizens gathered to help shape a public art vision and provide critical input into identifying locations for public art, and *Envisioning Public Art* in June, 2013 where the public was invited to provide feedback on draft recommendations. The City will now use the public art master plan as a basis to form a public art commission and guide future public art initiatives.

In 2013 the City reinvigorated its “sculpture series” by installing three works by sculptor Austin Collins, who is a professor at the University of Notre Dame. The sculptures arrived in late June and were installed at various locations in the downtown, including at the corners of Washington and Derby Streets, at Bridge Street Neck in front of the Old Salem Jail, and on Derby Street at Artists’ Row. They will remain until June of 2014.

The summer of 2013 also marked the second year of the City’s “ArtBox” program. Through ArtBox 2013, six designs were selected by a jury and the work of the artists can be found on four utility boxes downtown and two in Lafayette Park. There are now a total of 12 painted utility boxes in the city through this program, which was based on the successful 2010 pilot project in front of Gulu-Gulu Café.

Artists’ Row

Mayor Driscoll continued Artists’ Row in the existing Salem Market Place in 2012-13 to capitalize on the ability of art and cultural activities to spur activity downtown. The seasonal program is designed to give area artists and craftspeople an opportunity to work, exhibit and sell their work and in exchange, they provide free performances or workshops on the weekends. In May 2013, the four stalls in the Salem Market Place were awarded to Salem artists answering the City’s Call for Artists. This program also provides great synergy between the nearby Main Street Farmers’ Market that runs between June and October at Derby Square.

Salem Main Streets Program

The Salem Main Streets Program was reorganized during fiscal year 2007 under the umbrella of the Chamber of Commerce, but with its own Steering Committee. Originally established in 2000, the Salem Main Street Program assists with the recruitment of new businesses, provides technical assistance to businesses, coordinates promotional events and serves as a leading advocate for a strong commercial-retail environment. The Salem Main Streets Program continued to work with the SRA and the City during fiscal year 2013 to promote a vibrant, retail-oriented downtown. The Arts Festival, weekly Farmers' Market, and "Scooperbowl" all continue to be successful events organized by Salem Main Streets.

City of Salem Business Loan Program

The City of Salem continued to recruit and retain businesses in Salem by helping with financing gaps through its Business Loan Program. The program targets businesses that seek to make capital improvements to their buildings and those looking to expand their enterprise. In fiscal year 2013 the program funded an additional loan to Bioengineering Group, Inc.

BOARD/ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

There were no changes to the Board membership during fiscal year 2013. Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner, was hired in the spring of 2013, replacing Tom Daniel. He helps to staff the Board.

CONCLUSION

The SRA has had great success over the past year in its efforts to promote appropriate private and public development in downtown Salem. Over the next year, the SRA will continue to support commercial and retail development while promoting the values and cultural heritage of Salem.

Salem Redevelopment Authority
FY 13 Financial Report (Receipts and Expenditures)

Date	Description	Check Number	Deposits/Interest	Withdraws	Balance
	Balance Forward				\$5,799.54
7/31/2012	Interest - July 2012		\$ 0.49		\$5,800.03
8/31/2012	Interest - August 2012		\$ 0.49		\$5,800.52
9/30/2012	Interest - September 2012		\$ 0.48		\$5,801.00
10/31/2012	Interest - October 2012		\$ 0.49		\$5,801.49
11/30/2012	Interest - November 2012		\$ 0.48		\$5,801.97
12/31/2012	Interest - December 2012		\$ 0.49		\$5,802.46
1/31/2013	Interest - January 2013		\$ 0.50		\$5,802.96
2/28/2013	Interest- February 2013		\$ 0.44		\$5,803.40
3/31/2013	Interest- March 2013		\$ 0.28		\$5,803.68
4/30/2013	Interest-April 2013		\$ 0.24		\$5,803.92
5/31/2013	Interest- May 2013		\$ 0.24		\$5,804.16
6/30/2013	Interest - June 2013		\$ 0.24		\$5,804.40
	TOTALS		\$ 4.86		\$5,804.40