

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Executive Session Meeting Minutes**

<b>Board or Committee:</b>	<b>Redevelopment Authority, Executive Session Meeting</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 6:00 PM</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Zoom Virtual Meeting</b>
<b>SRA Members Present:</b>	<b>Chair Grace Napolitano, David Guarino, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Dean Rubin, Russ Vickers</b>
<b>SRA Members Absent:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<b>Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development Kathryn Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner Matt Zahler – Development Consultant</b>
<b>Recorder:</b>	<b>Colleen Brewster</b>

Chair Napolitano calls the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

To discuss the development proposals submitted in response to the Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of real property located at 32-34 Federal Street and 252 Bridge Street, Salem, MA, because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Vickers made a motion to begin executive session.

Seconded by: Rubin.

Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 5 in favor.

Chair Napolitano stated that the Open Session will not reconvene at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

Mr. Daniel reviewed the criteria in the RFP in their evaluation process.

Mr. Rubin noted that the tunnel and kayak launch is public realm and are great ideas, but the City would need to really champion them both with City funding. He questioned whether the City would prioritize these when other projects haven't received support in years. Mr. Daniel noted that either of these would be a significant undertaking and Salem has a history of taking on multiple large goals at once. The developer would only manage the process which would be important. Mr. Zahler noted that a public finance consultant would provide the critical thinking needed and should be on the development team to help with financing and using a MassWorks grant. This is the most ambitious idea they've seen so far but they aren't using their public finance hat and didn't consider CPA funding, etc. They aren't recognizing that and didn't have the right answer for this very important question. It should not be on the City to help facilitate the result. Mr. Vickers noted that the tunnel idea resonates with the community. Salem Partnership has worked towards it in the past, but it will require strong community support, the Salem Chamber, etc. to help secure funds. His first project was getting a new courthouse, it was a joint effort that began in 1994 and it was finally built 4 years ago. Ms. Nina-Soto noted her excitement about this interview, but the developer gave no answers regarding the purpose of the project and what would occur if Salem State didn't move in. Mr. Guarino agreed and added that some of their answers were that they didn't have to answer the questions now. He agreed on the necessary public effort but believed it should be part of the negotiation. The developer should lead but with City support.

Mr. Zahler stated that they can't teach them that process, they need to have the relationships to make that happen or know how to make it happen. Mr. Vickers questioned whether it was the SRA and City's role to bring these public components into fruition. JHR mentioned a partnership and there are no answers only ideas of what to include. Chair Napolitano feared they will be beholden to the state, should find a better way to put more responsibility on the developer rather than the City. Mr. Vickers agreed. Mr. Daniel stated that there could be a MassWorks grant that would create an economic impact with a potential second grant for the same intersection. He wanted to be clear that this is a public project and who is doing what needs to be clearly defined. He is in favor of the public realm idea and the tunnel, but a person would land at the wall of the garage and it's not a clear view to the tunnel as indicated in the renderings. Mr. Rubin suggested working with the MBTA on new signage.

Mr. Vickers questioned the SRA's financial questions. Mr. Zahler replied that the developer may not have found it relevant. The breakdown provided was for site-work only and the tunnel is not in the budget and the plaza courtyard number was low. Their answers weren't good and said they'd lease the building and put the income back into the project, meaning a phased opening. They would lease the courthouse and use that income to off-set costs, or open the crescent lot first and use that money. Mr. Rubin noted that the phasing hasn't been determined. Mr. Zahler noted that he was not impressed with their performance in terms of adding value.

Chair Napolitano asked about Salem State spot reservation. Mr. Zahler replied that it's not feasible to save the space for them. Mr. Vickers noted that Winn gave the same answer. Mr. Guarino reiterated that the space is supposed to engage the public but not if it were to sit vacant for 7 years. Mr. Daniel noted that JHR showed lease revenue as part of their pro forma. Atty. Tinti was absent tonight and could be their connection to public financing. Mr. Zahler suggested they interface with the MBTA because an engineer won't do that and questioned the financing gap.

Mr. Rubin realized that they proposing to build the new structure along Bridge Street and opening up the back for the enjoyment of the water. Ms. Nina-Soto noted the proposed terraced space, but the overall use of the spaces was a mix. Mr. Vickers questioned how they'd match the building lines with the on-ramp. Mr. Daniel noted that Winn set the building back, so people don't feel as if they are living against the on-ramp. Ms. Nina-Soto suggested a site visit because it feels very claustrophobic especially since the pedestrians will need to go underground to get under Bridge Street, which doesn't have a 'Welcome to Salem' feeling. Mr. Guarino – agreed. Mr. Rubin asked if SSU would provide public access.

Rubin: Motion to end executive session.

Seconded by: Vickers.

Roll Call Vote: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 5 in favor.

Rubin: Motion to adjourn.

Seconded by: Vickers

Roll Call Vote: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 5 in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.