

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

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Session
Date and Time:	Wednesday, November 10, 2020 at 6:00 PM
Meeting Location:	Zoom Virtual Meeting
SRA Members Present:	Chair Grace Napolitano, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Dean Rubin, Russ Vickers
SRA Members Absent:	David Guarino
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development Kathryn Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner Mathieu Zahler – Consultant
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

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

Regular Meeting

Executive Director's Report

Daniel stated that:

1. The Economic and Revitalization Task Force continues to meet, they will host a virtual Town Hall forum on Thursday, November 12, 2020 at 6PM. There will be a presentation and an update from Mayor Driscoll, David Greenbaum (Health Agent), Dr. Roberts (Head of Northshore Medical Center,) Kylie Sullivan, and himself. They will update the public on the pandemic and encourage community members to remember local businesses for their purchasing because that support is needed.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. Discussion of Bicycle Rack Styles and Locations in the Urban Renewal Area

Tom Devine, City of Salem Senior Planner, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Devine stated that the 2018 bike master plan was robust, but they want to add bike storage throughout the City. The best practices are basic, with support in two places, only one person needed to store it. There are limited style racks, some are individual others are multi-rack, but certain ones could become public art. Covid-19 has expanded the use of public way so they could have bike corrals that would need other City approvals. City staff has prioritized bike rack locations and provided a map: blue are existing racks and the purple are proposed that can be added or relocated. He asked if there were any objections to the use of black inverted U-rack. Do any Board members want to be involved with the location selection, and if the Board would want a role in the future process for the more creative racks or bike corrals.

Chair Napolitano asked if they plan to replace existing or add new locations. Mr. Devine replied new location of the same or different style. Mr. Rubin stated that he's glad to see the growth, City support, but he's not in favor of swapping out old bike racks only adding new locations and

fun designs for specific locations. The visual markers on the ground for bike corrals reminds people of their purpose which is good. He doesn't feel the need to be involved in the design and location, the data will provide that info. Chair Napolitano agreed and noted that she would only want to know the specialty bike rack locations. Mr. Rubin suggested including the Public Art Commission with the specialty racks locations. Mr. Daniel stated that he can provide an update from the staff, since this type of project is exempt from the SRA.

Chair Napolitano opened Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Napolitano closed Public Comment.

2. **217-221 Essex Street:** Modification of Approved Project – Proposed Installation of Transformer
Joey Acari and Keegan Hayes were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Acari stated their need to add a transformer to upgrade the power at their buildings and two locations are proposed, both on public property. The first location would be at the rear corner of the property close to Old Town hall in the grass and next to a bench. They are required to be 5-feet away from the wall and it would be concealed with a boxwood hedge with side access. The second location is at the rear of building, 5-feet away from the building, and between two existing trees, where it would be exposed but screened. The first is the better option although the power source is between the trees where location number 2 is proposed.

Mr. Rubin stated that both are on City land requiring easement. There is a lot of pedestrian traffic and both would be prominent in terms of lines of site. He suggested installing it halfway up Derby Square and away from the focus. Mr. Acari suggested moving it between the first two benches. Mr. Vickers agreed with Mr. Rubin. Mr. Daniel suggested the transformer align it with the elevation, place it between the windows, and shift the bump outs for the benches.

Mr. Acari stated that the rear entrance will be 2 Derby Square at the private way. He suggested planting shrubs around the transformer option 2 to help conceal it. Mr. Vickers suggested the DRB review the transformer placement options. Mr. Daniel suggested a mock-up of the transformer size using cardboard.

Chair Napolitano opened Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Napolitano closed Public Comment.

Rubin: Motion to refer to the DRB.

Seconded by: Vickers

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 4-0 in favor.

3. **256 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Façade Trim Painting
The applicant was not present to discuss the project

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the windows down the alley to the parking lot would be black. It's not clear if the replacement door would also be black and two door styles were proposed, and

Patti Kelleher, the City's Preservation Planner, thinks the second door style is the most appropriate. The columns are white, but it needs to be clarified if they would be painted too. The building is historic, and Ms. Kelleher is not in favor of painting the trim black. All other buildings on this street have white trim so this would be a drastic change. DRB meets next week so this could be passed along to them to review. Mr. Rubin stated that he is not a fan of the black. Chair Napolitano agreed and asked if there is a preservation restriction on the building since it's historic. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that she will investigate it and she added that the Historic Commission does not have jurisdiction over the paint colors since it's outside of the historic districts. Ms. Nina-Soto stated that black trim would make the building stick out and the trim at some photos looks like PVC not wood which doesn't accept paint well.

Mr. Daniel noted that the Design Guidelines have a statement on consistency with adjacent structures. The applicant may not be ready for next week's DRB review which should include a photo mock-up with the trim black. Ms. Nina-Soto agreed with needing more information to understand the full extent of the proposed black trim. Mr. Vickers noted that this application is incomplete but agreed that it should be referred to the DRB.

Chair Napolitano opened Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Napolitano closed Public Comment.

Vickers: Motion to refer to the DRB.

Seconded by: Rubin

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 4-0 in favor.

New/Old Business

1. Superior Court and Crescent Lot: Update and Public Comments Received

Mr. Daniel stated that they continue to meet regularly with DCAMM, the focus has been on the selection of the preferred development team. The ANR sub-division of property is underway and will be on the Planning Board agenda on November 19, 2020. It's done in collaboration with DCAMM as the owner. The parcel includes the Family & Probate Court as well as the two historic court buildings that are subject to the RFP.

Chair Napolitano opens Public Comment:

Chair Napolitano stated that the comments may be limited to 2-minutes per person, public comments are for the SRA to be considered for the purposes of their deliberation, public comment is not meant to be a dialog with the applicant. Public comments can also be submitted in writing to Ms. Newhall-Smith at the City of Salem. At the conclusion of public comment there will be a 5-minute opportunity for development teams to respond. Once public comment period has ended the SRA will convene in Executive Session then back into the public meeting at which time they will provide an update; however, there will be no additional public comment once the SRA reconvenes. The annual meeting will also be held after they reconvene.

Jeff Schwartz, 23 High Street. Wanted to speak on the merits of have the MOJ in this location. The Museum of Justice location is near the site of that was used in the Witch Trials and it can be

traced as the origin for many of the personal protections enshrined in the Constitutions as the Bill of Rights, as well as 6 of the first 10 constitutional amendments. Salem does a great job of educating visitors about how and why the Trials took place but the consequences of the Trials deserves deeper exploration as well as a deeper understanding of the laws and justice in the country, particularly by witnessing mock courtroom proceedings and particularly at this time in our nation with its current legal issues. The MOJ will educate people on how law and justice work.

Jim Rose, 23 Lynde Street. Agreed with the statement by Mr. Schwartz and thinks it's an outstanding idea since much of the legal history since be traced back to this location. Winn provided a great proposal, and he wished the JHR proposed tunnel was in the Winn proposal. Perhaps these elements could be combined.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Napolitano close Public Comment.

Executive Session

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.

Chair states that the Open Session will reconvene at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

Executive Session began at 6:45PM.

Roll call vote to adjourn to Executive Session and return to public meeting.

Nina-Soto: Motion for executive session.

Seconded by: Rubin

Roll Call Vote: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano.

Executive Session ended at 7:30PM and the Public Session reconvened.

Chair Napolitano reiterated that the Public Comment portion of the meeting will remain closed.

Chair Napolitano made the following statement.

“This evening we are announcing the preferred developer and backup developer for the historic courthouses at 32-34 Federal Street and the Crescent Lot at 252 Bridge Street. This is a significant milestone, and yet, it is important to note this is just one step in a process that began decades ago and will continue for several more years.

Prior to this development opportunity, the community worked for years to ensure Salem would remain the judicial center for the region. Community members, local and state elected officials, and many others collaborated on the development of the J. Michael Ruane Judicial Center, the renovation of the Probate and Family Court, and the disposition of the former District Court at 65 Washington Street.

The SRA has continued the long history of local and state collaboration working with its partners, elected officials, state administration, and the community to advance the restoration and reuse of the historic courthouses. In addition to state legislation, major milestones include hosting an Urban Land

Institute panel to focus on development goals for the northern end of downtown, working with the City Council to transfer ownership of the Crescent Lot to the SRA so that it could be wrapped into the project, issuing a Request for Qualifications which resulted in eight teams submitting their visions for the properties, and finally choosing four of the teams to respond to a Request for Proposals.

Community input has been part of the process throughout. While one team chose to withdraw from the process, the SRA received three strong proposals—JHR Development, North River Partnership for Community Reinvestment, and Winn Development.

Throughout these past few months, the SRA has drilled down into the proposals seeking to fully understand each team's vision, financial viability, and commitment to fulfilling the community's goals for the project. On behalf of my fellow board members, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the three teams, their long-lasting engagement with this process, their responsiveness to all of our questions, and their willingness to explore and consider ideas outside the scope of their original proposals.

I would like to thank the North River Partnership team for its dedication and enthusiasm for this project. It was a difficult decision to narrow down the teams to two finalists and while North River was not selected as a finalist, the Board wishes to thank them for their participation in this selection process.

As we have stated before, the SRA is not just selecting a development team, we are selecting a development partner. We know there is much work yet to be done to bring the development concept to reality. While the fundamental objectives will remain consistent, we know there will be changes and challenges along the way. There always is with complicated projects such as this. The SRA is ready to begin working with preferred developer through the next stages of the development process including a letter of intent, development agreement, purchase and sale agreement, and permitting.

Historic preservation and downtown economic vitality have been core to the SRA's work for nearly 50 years. We note that our predecessors on the SRA were working in an economically distressed environment with rundown buildings and vacant storefronts. Thanks to their efforts, today's downtown landscape is much improved. Vacancies are low and downtown is a vibrant and active place. While we remain true to the values of historic preservation and downtown economic vitality, we must also be responsive to new challenges such as the high cost of housing. We must also acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the selection process and the current state of real estate markets. We are hopeful that the pandemic will resolve in the coming months and allow the project to proceed unaffected.

To the two finalists—I want you to know that the Board feels you have done a tremendous job. You have shown professionalism, expertise, and dedication. We are very grateful for the quality of your work. The SRA has had a thoughtful and deliberative process, and it is difficult to make a selection between two highly qualified teams. However, a selection is the task before us.

The SRA is pleased to announce that it has selected the team led by Winn Development as the preferred development partner.

We look forward to working with the Winn team to transform the vacant historic courthouses and bring new uses and vitality to this area of downtown. In addition to the historic restoration work, the Winn proposal brings connectivity and improvements to the intersection and public realm at Washington and Bridge streets. Winn's proposal, more than any other, also activates the northern

section of downtown. Our research, experience, and public information has shown us this is largely an underutilized area of the otherwise vibrant downtown.

Importantly, the Winn proposal also brings significant affordable housing to downtown—57 percent of the units are income restricted. Of this total, 34 percent will be affordable to households earning less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income—with some restricted at 30 percent and 50 percent AMI. These new homes will help downtown Salem remain home to a socio-economically diverse population and provide housing to a wider range of downtown workers.

To our backup development team, JHR Development, we are grateful for your hard work and dedication to this process. Your excitement about this project was evident throughout every stage. We appreciate your creativity and passion. We hope that you will continue to pursue opportunities for development in downtown Salem and throughout our community.

Thank You”

Rubin: Motion to end the Regular Session.

Seconded by: Vickers

Roll Call Vote: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 4-0 in favor.

Annual Meeting

Roll Call Vote: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 4-0 in favor.

Annual Report

Mr. Daniel stated that the annual report runs through the fiscal year and ended on June 30, 2020.

2019-2020 Goals:

1. Designation of a development team for the Superior Court, County Commissioners Building and crescent lot.
2. Ensuring the stakeholders feel involved in the SRA process including creating an abutters notification process which they are close to having in place along with other City Boards and Commissions.
3. Continuing to build a relationship with the City Council so the Council understand the SRA’s goals, vision, and project pipeline. He, Ms. Newhall-Smith and Chair Napolitano met with the new Councillors and give them an overview.

Redevelopment Projects (active during the last fiscal year):

1. 5 Broad Street: The regulatory framework took time to get in place and they will start the permitting process soon.
2. Dedication of Charlotte Fortin Park. The SRA took ownership of the lot adjacent to 285 Derby Street. The SRA received \$218,963 for that easement and those funds are in a special account to be utilized for public access supporting the programming of the park, engagement and activities related to it; however, the activation was not possible this year to due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. The Court buildings and ultimately tonight’s developer selection.
4. 285 Derby Street began its façade restoration that will wrap around the corner of the façade and face the park which will be modified in the coming years.

5. 217-222 Essex Street renovation into housing on upper floors and maintaining commercial space on first floor is underway.
6. Mixed use addition to 30 Federal Street.
7. Smaller residential projects on 2 Lynde and 49 Federal Street.
8. Closure of Deland Lighting after approximately 100 years. The property is being renovated with housing above and commercial space below including Santander Bank.
9. The PEM completed their expansion.
10. The Hampton Inn completed construction although the hotel didn't open until this current fiscal year.
11. Construction began at the District Court at 65 Washington Street.

Mr. Daniel stated that signage was reviewed by the DRB over the course of the fiscal year as well as two café permits. During the pandemic they allowed temporary outdoor dining which had its positives to be incorporated in the long term. Several façade and building improvement projects were reviewed and approved by the SRA. The SRA also provided advisory design services to the Planning Board on the Entrance Corridors, North River Canal Corridor, and project permitted through the Municipal & Religious Reuse special permit process.

Public Projects and Initiatives: A number of City projects include the bike racks from tonight's meeting don't require SRA approval but the SRA is promoted as a venue for public participation and to receive feedback even for small application such as Comcast being added to Artists' Row, restriping at the Church Street lots, artificial turf at Lapin Park, in addition to on-going efforts at Old Town Hall, Public Art, and Artists' Row which are within the Urban Renewal boundaries.

Salem Main Street is a partner for the Downtown and they continue to be a strong economic partner during the pandemic for the Economic Development Response Team. They have a small business loan that supported a new business on Canal Street as well as other investing within the City.

Board/Administrative Changes: Ms. Cynthia Nina-Soto joined the Board in May and filled Gary Barrett's seat after he resigned and joined the Licensing Board.

Accounts: There was only modest interest growth in an account with approximately \$9,800. Charlotte Fortin has \$218,963. The SRA received an CPA award to support the Courthouse project of \$40,000.

Mr. Rubin agreed that the list is extensive, but it has been a productive year.

Election of Officers:

Chair Napolitano agreed to continue to serve as Chair. Mr. Vickers will step down as Vice-Chair. Mr. Rubin agreed to serve as Vice-Chair. Mr. Guarino gave Ms. Newhall-Smith the authorization for him to continue to serve as Treasurer.

Nina-Soto: Motion to approve the appointees as presented.

Seconded by: Vickers.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 4-0 in favor.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the 2021 meeting schedule has been determined and posted to the SRA website.

Approval of Minutes

No minutes to review.

Adjournment

Rubin: Motion to adjourn the annual meeting.

Seconded by: Vickers

Nina-Soto, Rubin, Vickers, Napolitano. 4-0 in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00PM