

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: **Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting**
Date and Time: **Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at 6:00 pm**
Meeting Location: **120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room**
SRA Members Present: **Chairperson Grace Harrington, Christine Madore, Dean Rubin, Russell Vickers**
SRA Members Absent: **David Guarino**
DRB Members Present: **Chairperson Paul Durand, Glenn Kennedy, Christopher Dynia, David Jaquith**
DRB Members Absent: **Ernest DeMaio, Helen Sides, J. Michael Sullivan**
Others Present: **Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development, Andrew Shapiro – Economic Development Planner**
Recorder: **Colleen Brewster**

Chairperson Grace Harrington calls the joint meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

Joint Meeting of the SRA and DRB

- 1. 289 Derby Street (City Owned Parcel / “Carnival Lot”):** Discussion on proposed design for active waterfront park space.

Daniel stated that parking lot at 289 Derby Street was acquired at the end of 2016, to create a new public place with a connection to waterfront being a goal as well as a connection to the Harbor Walk, the south side of the river and ultimately Shetland Park. Kathy Winn from the Planning Department led the RFP process. 13 proposals were received, 6 firms were interviewed, and Clara Batchelor of CBA Landscape Architects was selected. Mayor Driscoll wanted to ensure that the design process also engaged the public. The participatory design process has been ongoing, residents have gathered at the site for the public participation in the discussion of what they would like to see during the themed events. Daniel noted that input and feedback from both the SRA & DRB are being sought as CBA continues to move forward with their design.

Clara Batchelor of CBA Landscape Architects of Cambridge, MA was present to discuss the project.

Batchelor stated that 4 of the 5 scheduled events have been held with an average of 65-70 participants at each event. 5 designs were posted along with pictures of other parks for inspiration and the public gave their comments and the consensus was to carry forward with design No. 1 and to combine No. 3 & 5. Those two schemes for the site are proposed today each with additional design elements.

Scheme A: Rectangular Arbor at the waterfront for shade, stepped down walls near the water due to the 18-24” grade change, and interactive art pieces and boulder or flexible seating. The trees would be deciduous to maintain visibility through the site. Possible neighboring development opportunities led them to incorporate an addition roped off seating with landscaping along the building side of the site and screening along the gas station side of the site. The inclusion of portable toilets are still

being discussed but were added near the street. A bike share station and kiosk listing any scheduled activities are also being considered.

Scheme B: Many people preferred curved lines with central open space with small gathering areas and room for activities. A paving scheme (labyrinth) in stabilized stone dust has been added to one open area. A bridge or floating dock was also suggested. The inclusion of either is dependent upon the budget, but gates could be added at the waterfront to allow future water access. Granite blocks were placed in the walkway and lawn as informal seating. Three evergreen trees were added as gas station screening and the trees have not yet been decided.

Daniel noted that the final conceptual plan will be presented on site next Wednesday. Batchelor added that comments will still be welcome. Rubin stated that he needed further clarification on the intended uses for the site to determine whether the design facilitates those uses. Kennedy agreed and noted that he can comment on the design, however; the possible scenarios and usages need to be prioritized. Daniel replied that the site needs to look good year round, be welcoming, and the spaces need to be flexible depending upon the programming; events, festivals, etc. Participants on site give their input. Kathy Winn noted that the RFP wasn't specific and they wanted to rely on an inclusive design process to determine what residents wanted out of the space. Daniel noted that a garden would need sponsoring but could be a future use goal. Madore asked if a list of "wants" has been generated. Batchelor replied yes, however it has numerous items; but predominately green space, trees, flowering shrubs and the proposed plans could work with or without the wish list items. Flexibility was a must, for yoga, dancing, theatrical plays, movie nights on a portable screen, etc. Madore noted that the proposed design should focus on a type of space not available elsewhere in the City. Opening the site up to water activities means people will need a place to park a vehicle to unload/load their water sport equipment.

Vickers noted active programming will be needed to draw people to the site and asked what features could be included to keep the site active without active programming. Chair Durand replied food and activities, and noted that accessibility throughout the site would be needed, not just at the sidewalk along the street, especially if the idea is to connect the waterfront. This could create a space where people can hide along the waterfront. The angled walkway provides clear views for police security and straight lines for easy snow removal. There should be a connection to the neighboring convenience store. Daniel stated that Tim Clark (285 Derby Street building owner) is considering changing the use of the building and the design should give flexibility for a potential easement for future access. Vickers agreed and noted that that agreement should be set up. Rubin stated that that edge of the site appears to be 'conceded' to neighboring building, out of the way benches could be placed along that building. A fence or wall in that location will take away flexibility from the site.

Rubin asked what other waterfront parks have done either successfully or unsuccessfully. Batchelor replied that she completed a park in Cambridge that added a kayak rental space. The ½ acre site won't feel crowded and even without programming should be welcoming enough to bring people to the site. Jaquith noted that floating docks in Toronto and Green Bay have been successful. Kennedy noted that Notch has a good use of outdoor space. Durand stated that the building of a park will draw people to it. Jaquith stated that he prefers the curved design for mystery, agrees with flowering plantings near the building, but noted that all seating should be placed within the paving not in the grass. Lighting will also be important. Batchelor noted that the lighting at the street and harbor walk will be the same and lighting options are included in the plans. Vickers added that the site should have an iconic signature feature to draw in visitors. Dynia noted that a park along the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston has a water feature that draws a crowd. Kennedy stated that he prefers curved design but the programming needs to be determined, a straight path will pull people in and curved encourages meandering. Jaquith added that well placed and clear signage will be necessary at this site and neighboring sites to know there is something to see at this location. Daniel noted that planned events won't be every day, however; the site will be used daily by the residents of Salem.

Chair Harrington opens public comment.

Jennifer Firth, President of Historic Salem. Commended the City of Salem for acquiring the property. Preservation Partnership suggests that there be some historic interpretation to understand the history of Salem and the wharf's connection to the water. A design in 1979 for Nathaniel Bowditch Park was proposed along the South River. PEM has a historic anchor and canon that they want to find a new location for and both could be placed on the site. Jessica Herbert of the Historic Commission noted that the old merchants created flags that could also be placed there.

William LeGault, 2 Orne Street. Don't let personal perspective of low tide affect your judgement of the site. This project will remind people of the canal.

Deborah Greel, Public Art Planner. Public Art can be placed on the site; this would be a great opportunity to use the water as event use during Salem's off-season, for a future art feature such as a light festival, or just lighting in general on the canal. Lighting could be added to the Congress Street Bridge.

Tim Jenkins, 18 Broad Street. Lighting extends use of space, the curved space is inviting, kids and their parents will use the space, agrees with Durand - too much of a break between the gas station and site, won't be inviting, celebrating maritime history angled design resembles a sextant (nautical theme).

Chair Harrington closes public comment.

No vote was taken. Joint meeting adjourned. Regular SRA meeting commenced.

Chair Harrington called the regular meeting of the SRA to order.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

Executive Directors Report:

Daniel stated that the scope has been finalized for the feasibility study of the Superior Court property, which will take 8 weeks to be completed. Daniel noted that there was a \$50,000 request funded under the Capital Improvement Program for a downtown development study that would examine a variety of issues, including the potential of linking the Superior Court and County Commissioner Buildings to the City owned crescent shaped parcel at the T station when the parcels are put out for RFP. Arrowstreet did a study of the crescent shaped parcel and a meeting was held two weeks ago with the T regarding their land adjacent to it. The T agreed that they have no operational need for the site and they will provide an evaluation of it. Air rights over the busway was also discussed but may not be economical feasible at this time. This study will help the City think through potential developments.

The Traffic and Parking Department is coordinating an analysis of the Museum Place Mall parking garage, including the examination of its structural useful life; the evaluation of it will be completed in late summer or early fall. A plan for when it needs to come down and the impact of its removal will need to be determined.

Madore asked if the downtown study area was the same as the SRA's jurisdiction, a vision of the downtown as a whole; is there any overlap? Daniel replied that it would encompass more than the Urban Renewal area, focus on publically owned properties in particular, with potential linkages to other sites. More will be determined in the next fiscal year.

1. 184 Essex Street (Omen): Discussion and vote on proposed new paint color for top of awning.

Kimberly Branche, Assistant Manager of Omen was present to discuss the project.

Branche stated that their store recently expanded into the space at 182 Essex Street. They want to paint the awning and were encouraging the neighboring owners to do the same. Shapiro stated that DRB approved the new storefront signage but asked that the painting of the top of the awning be continued to a date when there were at least 4 DRB members present that were in favor of the project. The Board members asked how the project would be executed, debated whether it was okay that it would be the only awning painted on the building, and inquired as to whether other owners would want to paint their awning other colors. It was determined that different color awning would be acceptable if proposed and that the current building owner approved of this one being painted. DRB approved it 6-1.

Madore asked what the main concern of those DRB members not in favor of the painting and why the other store owners didn't want to paint their awnings. Shapiro replied that they didn't like one awning being singled out. Branche replied that the other store owners thought it was too expensive and the building owner didn't want to pay to paint it.

Chair Harrington opens public comment.

No one in the audience wished to speak.

Chair Harrington closes public comment.

Rubin Motion to approve proposed new paint color for top of awning as recommend by the DRB. Seconded by: Vickers. Passes 4-0.

2. Lappin Park: Discussion and vote on proposed installation of new drinking fountain (to replace existing)

Andrew Shapiro was present to discuss the project.

Shapiro stated that the new drinking fountain will be replaced and a piece of the curb will be removed to make the fountain handicapped accessible. The design has a historically sensitive appearance and has been approved by the Historical Commission. A chrome plated bowl will be installed rather than the brass that is shown in the materials due to concerns of theft. Shapiro noted that member David Guarino asked if a water bottle could be filled from it, and the answer is no, the bowl is not deep enough. Other more modern water fountains that will be installed around the city will have that option, however; this is one of two others in the downtown area that are more historic. The fountain will be shut down in the winter and maintained by DPW.

Rubin asked if there has been a water pressure issue. Shapiro replied no.

Madore asked if the water fountain has a pet water feature. Shapiro replied not at this particular downtown location.

Chair Harrington opens public comment.

Jennifer Firth, President of Historic Salem. Is in favor of this accessible water fountain.

Tim Jenkins, 18 Broad Street. Asked on what surface will the water fountain be placed. Shapiro replied a concrete pad with brick curbing at the perimeter.

Chair Harrington closes public comment.

Rubin: Motion to approve as recommended by the DRB.
Seconded by: Madore. Passes 4-0.

3. 1 Sewall Street (YMCA): Discussion and vote on proposed improvements to playground area – small project review.

Madore recused herself from participating in this agenda item.

Charity Lezama, Executive Director of the Salem YMCA was present to discuss the proposed project.

Lezama stated that the playground is being redesigned and the old fire truck is being removed so there will be nothing for the children to climb on.

Rubin asked if the space is secure. Lezama replied that there is a fence but it can be jumped.

Shapiro noted that the DRB recommended approval with conditions. 1) The playground is adjacent to parking lot with vehicles next to play area with no rigid barrier, however; they can't condition what is not required. The Building Department and YMCA agreed to install a wooden guardrail to divide the space. 2) They wanted to see the details regarding the construction of the trellis and review the proposed color and design. DRB would also get final approval on the shed and trellis design and they had no issue with the shed's location or purpose. It can be approved by the SRA to allow the YMCA to begin the project, but the DRB will need to give the final approval.

Chair Harrington opens public comment.

No one in the audience wished to speak.

Chair Harrington closes public comment.

Vickers: Motion to approve the improvements to playground area as recommended by the DRB; the DRB shall have final review and approval authority over the details of the proposed shed/trellis structure.

Seconded by: Rubin. Passes 3-0.

4. Artists' Row: Discussion and vote on new paint color scheme, windows/doors, and signage scheme.

Deborah Greel, Salem Public Art Planner, was present to discuss the proposed new paint color scheme, windows/doors, and signage scheme.

Greel stated that they wanted to continue to make Artists' Row an active and engaged space. Designer Rick Rawlins has offered to work with his design students and she hopes to begin to implement their design soon. There would be a change in the color scheme to help unify the space. A contractor will install new windows and doors at the different stalls and revamp public bathrooms. One of the Artists' Row artists is designing a new barn door for the bathroom. Architect and artist Claudia Paraschiv of Creative Placemaking, will be the artist of residence for the month of July.

Shapiro stated that DRB has unanimously approved the project with conditions. They've approved the window and doors. The barn door concept is approved but they felt that the graphics could be better tied into the remainder of the project which they want to be revised and re-reviewed. They've eliminate a second trim color to simplify the color scheme. They felt that the super-graphics (large numbers that correlate to the individual stalls) should better identify with the space. They've agreed to hold off on individual building tenant signage which needs to be more thought-out. They did approve the "Row" letters to be painted on side of the buildings. Greel noted that tenants are aware of the proposed changes but not all in agreement because they would prefer to keep their own signage. There will be pops of color, mini-gardens, community tables and umbrellas, and creative placemaking at nooks / recesses between buildings to activate all of the corner areas.

Madore asked about the font concerns of the DRB. Greel replied that she will have to discuss that with Rick to find a way to downplay the font. Changeable signage behind Plexiglas is also being suggested to find out what is going on at Artists' Row and let them know where they are. Shapiro noted that the barn door can be approved but not the signage to be placed on it.

Rubin noted that it will be good to refresh the space.

Chair Harrington opens public comment.

No one in the audience wished to speak.

Chair Harrington closes public comment.

Rubin: Motion to approve the new paint color scheme, windows/doors, and the barn door but not graphics on the door, as recommend by the DRB.
Seconded by: Vickers. Passes 4-0.

New / Old Business

5. 65 Washington Street (Former Salem District Court Property): General project update.

Daniel stated that housing development incentive zone was approved by the state the week prior. There was a meeting with Deborah Greel and the development team regarding public art for the building/site. Merrill Diamond has agreed to place public art at the first floor corner of Federal Street and an art consultant has been retained for this project. The president of Monserrat College of Art, Steve Immerman, has also been involved in the discussions. The strip of land by the sidewalk is City owned and what can be done with it is being considered, either a sculpture or plantings.

This project will go before the DRB in June and will return to the SRA this summer. They will request a tax exemption agreement from the City Council which could be finalized by September. There has been no additional news from DCAMM.

The LDA has been amended and DCAMM had no issue with it. Shapiro noted that the applicant will apply for a planned unit development (PUD) Special Permit from the Planning Board, which should begin late summer or early fall. Site Plan, building height, parking, etc. will all be reviewed. Daniel added that proposed projecting cornice will also need a license for projecting over the public right of way.

Minutes

The minutes from the May 10, 2017 regular meeting were reviewed.

Chair Harrington Motion to approve the minutes.
Seconded by: Rubin. Passes 4-0.

Adjournment

Harrington Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: Rubin. Passes 4-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:00PM.

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