

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
SRA Members Present:	David Guarino, Dean Rubin, Cynthia Nina-Soto
SRA Members Absent:	Chair Grace Napolitano, Russ Vickers
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development
	Kate Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Regular Meeting

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. Economic Recovery and Revitalization Task Force: On April 14, 2021 they received a federal grant from the Economic Development Administration in the amount of approximately \$660,000 that will be given out over the course of two years and used with their partners at Main Streets, Destination Salem, and the Enterprise Center. It will provide support for programming, marketing, and technical assistance to businesses as well as funding for an economic development study. They want to investigate other opportunities for growth for existing businesses so that people can work and live in Salem. The newsletter and outreach continue to let people know of opportunities.
2. Ms. Newhall-Smith is working with John Andrews of Creative Collective on outdoor seating and the outdoor opportunities for retailers.
3. Main Streets received a state grant from the Local Rapid Recovery Program to pursue an in-depth analysis that will be completed in June with recommendations on next steps to support the downtown district.
4. He thanked Ms. Newhall-Smith for her research on the abutters notification which was a long-term goal of the SRA. They want to improve the abutter notification, public comment, clarity for individuals and the public for efficiency and transparency. Mr. Guarino echoes Mr. Daniel's comments since the public has been known to say that they do not always know about projects in the City.
5. HSI published a guide to the Urban Renewal Plan and the SRA process. It makes the guidelines more user friendly, has Design Standards, the history of the SRA, a guide for how to provide public comment so people can be effective when providing feedback. There is a link to it on the HSI website, historicsalem.org.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **1 Derby Square:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for installation of decorative window decals on second story windows

Ken McTague of Concept Signs, was present to discuss the project.

McTague stated that small decals are proposed for the middle windowpane on the lower 6 pane window sash. The applicant wanted an embellishment without making actual signage. The DRB reviewed and recommended approval but suggested they alternate the design in each window. There are six windows in total, three on the front and three on the side. Mr. Guarino asked if the applicant decided on the DRB's alternating design recommendation. Mr. McTague didn't believe the applicant had a preference, but he believes it would be best to eliminate the redundancy in the design. Mr. Rubin noted that the DRB recommended option 1 or alternating the image and asked if the tenants will operate out of the second floor. Mr. McTague replied yes.

Public Comment

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Nina-Soto: Motion to approve with option #1

Seconded by: Guarino

Roll Call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

2. **282 Derby Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for installation of new windows, black awnings, a faux wall over the entryway and exterior paint for “All Souls”

Jen Tran and Patrick Schultz were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Schultz stated that the design included new awnings, four new double-hung windows, painting the faux brick façade red, installing a vinyl decal on the front door, and installing a blade sign that was approved by the DRB. They were divided on whether the sign mounting board should be black or red but have since agreed upon red to break up the two awnings.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the DRB reviewed the application in March and held a special meeting later in the month where they recommended the currently proposed façade changes and signage.

Mr. Guarino asked what specifically changed with the windows. Mr. Schultz replied that there were four windows that were inoperable and the proposed is for double-hung within the same frame. The paint color at the existing faux brick below will be selected by Waters & Brown.

Mr. Daniel requested their timeframe to open. Mr. Schultz replied June 1, 2021.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Guarino: Motion to approve the application with the DRB's recommendation

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

3. **15 Federal Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of infrastructure associated with city-wide SiFi initiative on public land adjacent to the Church Street parking lot

Linda Calnan (Project Manager, SiFi Networks), Joshua Arnold (General Contractor, Mears Group), Mike McCollum and Clint Roques (Jacobs Engineering) were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Calnan stated that starting in May, Salem has granted them the right of way to build infrastructure and provide a fiber city network to enable an internet provider to operate on the infrastructure to be maintained by SiFi networks. Telecommunication cabinets are proposed around the city including this one on Federal Street. Cabinet #15 will be located within the grassy area on the far end of the Church Street parking lot where it will be less visually obtrusive. It will also be surrounded by bollards at each corner.

Mr. Rubin asked if the location would be obtrusive to the neighbors across the street. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that 10 Federal Street is commercial space and not residential.

Ms. Nina-Soto noted that two additional boxes are shown beside the cabinet on the site plan. Ms. Calnan replied that the chamber/vaults on either side are underground but will be flush with the grade.

Mr. Guarino asked how many of these boxes will be placed around the city. Ms. Calnan replied 25 and each can serve 1,000 subscribers. Mr. Guarino asked if this cabinet could be placed on the mall side of the Church Street lot. Ms. Calnan replied that the cabinet position was moved to comply with department requests to minimize visual impact along the corridors leading to St. Peter's Church.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Mr. Rubin noted that he attended the SiFi presentation a few weeks ago and is excited for the project and the City for making this investment.

Guarino: Motion to refer to DRB for review

Seconded by: Nina-Soto

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

Guarino amendment the motion to include an approval subject to a DRB review.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

4. 53 Charter Street: Modification to Approved Plans – Exterior restoration of historic home

Mr. Rubin noted that he is an abutter to this home.

Jennifer Mello of Pomeroy & Co. was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Mello stated that the owner has a new contractor, will be eliminating the addition and returning the house to its historic appearance by replacing shutters, replicating original moulding profiles, and recreating the vestibule entrance. Two phases are proposed, an exterior restoration

to include new siding, roof, trim, and maintaining as much of the original material as possible based on historic evidence. No landscaping is proposed for phase 1.

Mr. Guarino requested the proposed paint colors. Ms. Mello replied that no decision has been made regarding proposed colors, but the façade color will be like previously proposed.

Mr. Daniel asked if the vestibule will be returned from the PEM or recreated. Ms. Mello replied that it will be recreated since legal matters have it tied to PEM and cannot be easily return it to the owner.

Guarino: Motion to refer to the DRB

Seconded by: Nina- Soto

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

5. 38 Norman Street: Schematic Design Review – Construction of a new mixed-use building with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above

Ryan Whittig and Matthew More (developers), Annie Raferty of the Morin Cameron Group, Philip Sima (Founder/Architect at Balance Architects), and Attorney Scott Grover of Tinti & Navins.

Atty. Grover stated that the property is on the edge of the B5 district and has been underutilized for years. They met with the planning staff that urged a 1 to 1 parking ratio, so they reduced the unit number. They plan to demolish the CMU building and create a new mixed-use building with 1,800 square-feet of retail restaurant and 25 residences on the 4 floors above. 25 parking spaces are proposed to achieve the 1 to 1 ratio. This project complies with the dimensional requirements of the B5 district, and its size is appropriate.

Mr. Sima stated that they anticipate 1- and 2-bedroom units and residents that will use the commuter rail but protected bicycle parking will be provided for this multi-modal development. They will redevelop the property and provide areas of vegetation. They will elongate the building and construct a building with a mixture of materials to fit the neighborhood. They will match the height of the neighboring buildings and top floor will have a 10-foot step-backs. There will be an active street level with outdoor seating and vegetation with vegetative screening at the rear open surface parking area. A strong corner is important to them and the proposed building has been oriented for an urban scale by moving it closer to Norman Street. Their proposal went from 6 to 5 stories and floors 4 and 5 were set back on both Crombie and Normal Street. They want to imitate what been constructed along Essex Street by adding downlighting and carrying some rhythm and material down from the upper floors to the ground floor. Bays are proposed at the common areas with private and common roof deck areas at the sides. They will match window and siding styles along with setback changes along Normal Street and a mansard roof above.

Mr. Guarino noted the existing underutilized space and the property as a gateway to the route that connects downtown to the McIntyre District. He thanked them for the meetings they have held to date; however, the proposed size is large and the existing vs. proposed is jarring despite their reductions in square-footage. Mr. Witting replied that rental market economy is affordable in Salem based on their financial projections indicate minimal returns within just under 10 years making this project viable and financially successful. Their original proposal would have resulted

in a higher profit, while the current proposal put them at the bare minimum, and they would not feel comfortable proposing additional reductions in size. Their site selection was based on zoning and they are compromised already on what is allowable by right. Mr. Witting noted two developments that are similar in scale so what is proposed should not feel foreign. Mr. Guarino noted that a building across the street used as an example does not fit within the neighborhood and does not act as a bridge between the two neighborhoods. He asked how the proposed building can be seen as a mix of the two styles. Mr. Wittig noted that design elements exist downtown but not necessarily the McIntyre District, but they are proposing smaller scale windows, façade changes, a mansard roof and undulating the building height. Atty. Grover added that the Urban Renewal Plan contemplated situations such as these which is where setbacks come into play to distance the proposed structures from its residential neighbors, and they adhered strictly to that design criteria in consideration of that.

Mr. Guarino stated that HSI provided a strong letter and suggested making the building entirely residential. Mr. Wittig replied that the Urban Renewal plan calls for activating the streetscape and he does not believe will be desirable to residents and commercial spaces will provide an amenity to residents. They do not believe all residential will be a good investment.

Mr. Rubin requested the changes/compromises they have made since their initial proposal and after community meetings and input. Mr. Wittig replied that in response to public feedback they made the following change #1: transition from a contemporary design to something more contextual with the downtown and period appropriate, #2: reduction in proposed scale, #3: maximized the setbacks to be even further away from their neighbors, #4: reduction from 6 stories to 5 as well as stepping back the façade. Mr. Sima added that after their initial contemporary design they incorporated a more traditional material – brick, but in a contemporary way, which helped them locate the residential and commercial entry points. The design then transitioned to a historic mill style building with brick pilasters, a traditional window pattern, and a curtain wall ground floor treatment at the commercial spaces, which did not change the program but decreased the height. The evolution of the design has resulted in a smaller scale building with a more appropriate design. Mr. Rubin stated that the design iterations show the design teams willingness to listen.

Ms. Nina-Soto stated that neighboring structures indicate that the proposed building is both very tall and wide making it hard to visualize. The mansard roof is a nice touch but would better accommodate the neighbors if it were one floor lower. She noted her concern with the garage and parking entrance on Crombie which is a very narrow street. The owner of 18 Crombie Street would not be happy with a constant stream of vehicles entering and exiting next to her home. The statements made in HSI's letter closely reflect her feelings about this project. She appreciated that rental units are proposed since they are needed in Salem, but she suggested a modification to the design to further reduce the height and width.

Mr. Daniel acknowledged the referral to the Urban Renewal plan and the meetings that took place and modifications to make the proposed structure conform to those standards. The activation and the pedestrian bubble are not the only objectives tied to the Urban Renewal plan but there needs to be a balance. Preserving and enhancing historic architecture is also one of the objectives which applies to new and existing areas. He agrees with much of what's been said, however the

proposal may be less than what's ideally appropriate for this site. He added that the SRA was involved with saving of 18 Crombie Street roughly two decades ago.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the following comment letters have been received regarding 38 Norman Street, by 4PM on April 14, 2021.

- a. Anne Whitter, 10 River Street, submitted April 9, 2021
- b. Julie McLean, 6 Chestnut Street, submitted April 10, 2021
- c. Pamela Zombeck, Linden Street, submitted April 11, 2021
- d. Patricia Leonard Russo, 2 Chestnut Street, submitted April 12, 2021
- e. Dr. Janice Lebel, 1 Chestnut Street, submitted April 12, 2021
- f. Bill Raye and Edward Jacobs, 2 Chestnut Street, submitted April 13, 2021
- g. Johanna Kerr, 43 Endicott Street, submitted April 13, 2021
- h. Historic Salem Inc, 9 North Street, submitted April 13, 2021
- i. Carol Carr, 7 River Street, submitted April 13, 2021
- j. Sean and Craig Smith, 20 Chestnut Street, submitted April 13, 2021
- k. Joyce Arcisz, 141 Washington Street Unit 8, submitted April 13, 2021
- l. Meg Twohey, 122 Federal Street, submitted April 14, 2021
- m. Linda McLaughlin, 14 Francis Road, submitted April 14, 2021
- n. Joyce Wallace, 172 Federal Street, submitted April 14, 2021
- o. Elizabeth Stuart Padjen, 27 Chestnut Street, submitted April 14, 2021
- p. J.P. Lenny, 19 Flint Street, submitted April 14, 2021
- q. Richard Lindeman, 113 Federal Street, submitted April 14, 2021
- r. Martha Shreve, 17 ½ Chestnut Street, submitted April 14, 2021
- s. Deborah Lebow & Pennel Paris, 42 Chestnut Street, submitted April 14, 2021

Public Comment:

Richard Willis, 16 Crombie Street. If the images were shown from different angles, it would show the drastic difference in height between it and its neighboring buildings. His rear garden would most likely always be shadowed by the proposed building. The garage entrance should not be off Crombie Street given that the street is crowded and will result in a back-up of traffic. The proposed restaurant means delivery trucks that will need a place to park. The proposed parking spaces come with an additional rental cost and residents may decide to obtain a parking permit from the City and park on the street. The building is oversized and if the developers can't make it work at the price they paid then perhaps they paid too much.

Anna Gordon, 12 Crombie Street. This underutilized lot is a prime location, and she is glad that it will be developed, and she attended the neighborhood meeting with the developers in March. Any parking on Crombie Street will impact the current residents, particularly if they obtain resident parking stickers, and there will be more than the 25 vehicles being proposed. Access from Crombie Street will cause congestion particularly since it is across from the strip mall parking lot. She asked how parking spaces will be assigned since the covered spaces will be more desirable than the uncovered. A driver would need to back into garage space number 13, which many be a challenge. There could be a back-up while waiting for the garage to open too. The blocking of natural light for her neighbors is a concern so a shadow study should be completed and shared. The design aesthetic is objective, and she appreciates the design team

listening to the feedback they have received; however, a mansard roof may not be the right solution and its proportions seem off and the previous design did a better job of breaking up the massing. If the design were refined it could work. Stair head heights have been added for four private roof patios which adds approximately 10-feet to the height of the building, even if they are below 70-feet-high. Mr. Moore noted that their residents would not be allowed to obtain residential parking passes from the City.

Donna Seger, 7 Chestnut Street. Thanked the developers for engaging in the dialog with the community and happy to know that the SRA appreciates the importance of this site. This is along a major entry corridor and she's concerned that the first floor will remain vacant which has occurred elsewhere in Salem. Unsure of where the architect found architectural cues in the neighborhood to incorporate a mansard roof and there were no perspectives from Chestnut Street since Norman Street is a continue of Chestnut Street. Concerned about parking, particularly when the City does not enforce parking permits the developers say they won't allow the residents to receive so there will be no repercussions.

John Seger, 7 Chestnut Street. Appreciates Balance Architects creating the renderings so everyone can see what they have proposed. Agreed with Crombie Street being a continuation of Chestnut Street but also acting as a transition, but a residential feel through the incorporation of townhouses would be nice to see. First-floor commercial space would be difficult to lease but this an opportunity for that edge to reflect the past.

Emily Udy, HSI. Appreciated the consideration and discussion that has occurred tonight based on their letter. They met with the developer privately and publicly and appreciated the conversation and response to their feedback. HSI has been consistent with their concern regarding the size of the proposed building and the developer has been consistent in their response. At 5 stories this building will tower over Crombie Street and numerous entities advocated for the preservation of 18 Crombie Street and a building of this size will have significant impact on this and other small-scale buildings and adjacent neighbors have the strongest voice. She appreciated Mr. Guarino's encouragement of the building being entirely residential, and the street could be activated with a townhouse style first-floor and should be considered by the developer as well as reducing the height. They look to the SRA to set clear limits and guide the developer on their next steps.

Mike Becker, 23 Summer Street, and owner of the adjacent lot. Agreed that the property is underutilized, and he is in favor of its development, and he's sympathetic to the development challenges in Salem. He appreciates the height reduction and step backs since the first iteration, but three stories and a roof deck proposed 14-feet away from his adjacent building is close and will overlook the windows of his property. He questioned whether a roof deck was needed at that location. Mr. Sima replied that the building to the lot line is approximately 15-feet. Mr. Becker stated that 5 stories is a lot of height to the east of their building and requested a shadow study. Mr. Sima replied that a shadow study can be completed. Mr. Becker asked if the main building also had roof decks. Mr. Sima replied that there are four private roof decks accessed from each unit. Mr. Becker asked if they had considered eliminating a floor or the roof deck along the West elevation. Mr. Sima replied that the west side will be three stories with a step back but to provide a common amenity through use of the roof deck. Mr. Becker noted that he is

generally in favor of development but has some concern and can provide the rendering of his neighbor development to include in their renderings for an accurate portrayal.

Alice Merkle, 28A Federal Street. Appreciated the neighborhood meetings with the developer and their response to public comment. Agrees with the concern of vehicles entering and exiting Crombie Street and potential for congestion.

Robert Rogers, 9 Crombie Street. Appreciated the accommodations made by the developer but was sympathetic to the constraints they are facing. Liked the architectural style of the current design. Shared the concerns on parking and traffic and suggested they switch the vehicular and pedestrian entrances since Crombie Street is very narrow and the proposed vehicular entrance is opposite the strip mall vehicular entrance. Norman Street is busier but there is more room to maneuver a vehicle and Crombie would be a quieter street for residents to enter the building. Would appreciate the building being set back even more if pedestrian activation is one of their objectives and to include more greenspace for resident use. Mr. Wittig replied that they considered swapping the residential and vehicular entrances and a traffic study will tell them the actual traffic flow. A vehicular exit right before the rotary would be ill-advised but the traffic study will help make that determination. The current parking lot use is more transient than the residential application being proposed.

Blake Anderson, 5 Chestnut Street. Since 18 Crombie Street was restored, this street has gotten more attention than Federal Street. Having a building out of scale with Chestnut Street and the general McIntyre District is not appropriate and this will become a major entryway building. A building scaled to the neighborhood would be best. The strip mall was ill-conceived idea that has not been a hospitable space so retail space at the streetscape won't be welcoming and vibrant, particularly during Halloween and in the winter. The building heights of 1 and 2 Chestnut Street should be their reference on height rather than the downtown. Significant efforts and listening to neighbors have been made and they support a healthy vibrant city but what is realistic. They must be careful with retail because Salem will have to live with it. Chestnut Street becomes a parking lot that the City does not enforce so they should implement 1.5 parking spaces per unit to keep vehicles off the neighboring streets. He does appreciate the efforts of everyone to date.

Nathan Ritsko, 24 1/2 Chestnut Street & McIntyre Neighborhood Assoc. Appreciated the attention to this project. Cautioned the inclusion of retail and commercial uses since it is not inviting particularly on a busy street. He would support a residential first floor. He is supportive of the Crombie Street neighbors and suggested that a shadow study to be completed. He appreciates their proposed use of brick and wood trim, but preferred authentic not synthetic materials be used. Mr. Sima replied that all the modern materials are synthetic, and the clapboard will resemble wood.

William Raye, 2 Chestnut Street. Appreciate the comments and thoughtfulness. He will be able to see this from their house but would lose their views because the building is too big and too tall. He is unhappy with 23 Summer Street being approved and this will be placed behind it. Has concerns for the direct abutter that will lose light and have a garage opening and closing outside her home all day and night. Additionally, people will need vehicles and 1.5 should be the parking ratio not 1 since many people park where they should not. A restaurant outside his home is

something he is not in favor of; however, HSI's residential only use is a good idea. The developer making money is not a priority for the neighbors.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Ms. Nina-Soto requested additional views of the mill building and asked if they could eliminate the first-floor retail and create townhouses that wrap the corner, which may be closer to what people want to see. The proposed height and width are a big consideration. Mr. Wittig replied that townhouse is desirable but geared towards ownership. This is a large lot and zoning allows it and they are below the requirements. The feedback says that the zoning is not appropriate but it's what is allowed. The cost of site isn't driving the building size and the underlying economics of rentals in Salem and cutting the size in half doesn't move the needle for them, but they will see what they can make work. They considered not doing the project when they were squeezed to a 1 to 1 retail. They want the first-floor use to be vibrant and nothing is set in stone, but they need to be financially prudent on behalf of their investors since banks will only loan money for financially viable projects.

Mr. Guarino – DRB recommendation. The SRA is not okay moving forward with the issues that have been raised. Echoed Nina-Soto's comment that they continue to move this project forward.

Vote: Guarino motion to continue to the May 12, 2021 regular meeting.

Seconded by: Nina- Soto.

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

New/Old Business

1. License Agreement Renewal: Continued use of SRA property by Massachusetts Bay Colony Brewers, LLC dba East Regiment Brewing Company:

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the license agreement to use the outdoor property as their tasting room, which is on SRA property, was entered into on July 18th, 2019. The license agreement was valid for 1 year with an automatic 2-year renewal and Mass Bay Colony Brewers would like to renew for 1 year, from July 2021 – July 2022, as well as the \$500 renewal fee which has not been paid. The SRA is owed a total of \$1,500.

Vote: Guarino made a motion to approve the license agreement as written.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

2. Redevelopment of the Historic Courthouses and the Crescent Lot: Update on Project Status:

Mr. Daniel stated that they continue to meet with the Winn Development team and DCAMM every other week. Ms. Newhall-Smith added that they have made minor changes to the preservation restriction and will send to DCAMM then to MHC before it can be filed. Mr. Daniel noted that they have worked with a consultant, Historic Commission, Federal Street Neighborhood Association and are finalizing the LOI. There will be a joint meeting with the SRA and City Council soon to get the Council up to speed and introduce them to the development team. The SRA met with the Council year ago to discuss shared goals and one of the SRA goals

was to meet with the Council regularly. The design working group met again in March and wanted additional thought to go into the crescent lot configuration. The courthouses were toured with Registry staff and they have discussed their programming needs.

Mr. Rubin inquired about the delay with the Winn team meeting with the Registry. Mr. Daniel noted that the design team is still trying to determine a meeting date.

3. Charlotte Forten Park

Mr. Daniel stated that an account was established at the same time as the easement with the adjacent property owner. Their approach was to establish that relationship and the SRA has not had to worry about funds since the Salem Jail funding has provided funding for various studies and projects so far. The account supports and provides for public engagement, but a funding threshold needs to be established with dual signatures. The City will look to the SRA to fund specific limits and will discuss with their partners and check all funding sources. Mr. Rubin suggested they establish guidelines for what to spend the funds on. Mr. Guarino agreed. Mr. Daniel agreed to research similar funding costs and return to the SRA in May with specifics on thresholds.

Approval of Minutes

Review of meeting minutes from March 10, 2021

Mr. Rubin stated that the minutes pertaining to the 38 Lafayette Street agenda item did not fully reflect his push for a schematic review by the DRB or the fact that he didn't fully support the project if the parking concerns weren't resolved. He agreed to provide his own commentary that he requested be included in the minutes. The Board agreed to continue the discussion of the minutes.

Vote: Nina-Soto make a motion to continue the review and approval of the March 10, 2021 minutes to the next regular meeting.

Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

Adjournment

Vote: Nina-Soto motion to adjourn

Seconded by: Guarino

Roll call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin in favor. 3-0 in favor.

Regular Meeting ended at 9:00PM

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