

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, August 11, 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. Downtown Activity: Businesses are reporting better sales which means more visitors to Salem. There was a Board of Health mask mandate that goes into effect on August 23rd. Salem is asking for proof of vaccination for employees or two tests per week to prove no infection. Vaccination numbers are lagging for those under 29-years-old, and they want to increase the vaccination of that demographic since many of that age are restaurant staff, etc., to create fewer opportunities for the virus and variant to spread.
2. Sec. Kennealy, Head of DHCD, was in Salem last meet for a round table discussion. He’s appreciative of the work done by the city and there may need to be some changes to business protocols for their employees and customers.

Mr. Guarino thanked the city staff for their hard work and for Salem being a model for how to deal with this pandemic.

Acting-Chair Rubin stated that agenda items 2 and 4 will be combined since they have the same address.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **140 Washington Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for façade modifications including new paint, exterior lighting, and signage.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the DRB looked favorably on the proposal, requested paint colors, DRB member Glenn Kennedy assisted with the detail, and the DRB recommended that the SRA vote to approve the project.

Mr. Guarino noted that the DRB had concerns with the brightness of the colors and he agreed with their assessment.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to approve with the DRB recommendations.

Seconded by: Guarino second.

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

2. **217-221 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for installation of rooftop cellular infrastructure for Verizon

Daniel Klasnick, Attorney representing Verizon, was present for the discussion.

Mr. Klasnick stated that he met with the DRB, and their comment was to look into the use of an existing conduit that serves the condenser and that conduit for an existing condenser will be painted. Verizon currently has two antennas painted to match existing equipment near the front of the buildings and four antennas at a false chimney at the south-west corner. They are proposing to increase their capacity by adding two side-by-side mounted antennas near the front of the building painted to match, stack mount two antenna next to it, add a new sector with four antennas at the rear of the building, replace the antenna in the chimney, and the antennas in the stealth canister. Views from the neighborhood show that there is minimal visibility due to neighboring buildings and trees, although there is some visibility of the antennas and conduits from Essex Street that could be painted to match the brick. He noted that Verizon wants to utilize the existing structures rather than create new areas.

Mr. Guarino appreciated the proposed efforts to blend the antennas into the existing structures.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Guarino made a motion to approve with DRB recommendation of installation of rooftop infrastructure.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto

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

3. **217-221 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of rooftop cellular infrastructure for T-Mobile

Timothy Greene, representing T Mobile, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Greene stated that as part of their network upgrades, T Mobile wants to scale back what exists and replace nine antennas, eliminate three microwave dishes, replace twelve remote radio units with six, replace five cable runs with three. The 20-year-old mounts will be replaced, the new antennas will be shorter but wider, and the chimney that can't support the antennas and will be upgraded structurally for bracing purposes.

Mr. Rubin asked if the supports will be visible. Mr. Greene replied yes, and he recommend leaving all galvanized metal as-is since any applied paint will eventually flake. Mr. Guarino suggested it be recommended for DRB review. Acting Chair Rubin stated that he wanted to make sure it won't be visible. Mr. Greene replied that the addition of brackets across the chimney may be visible but could be painted red to blend in with the chimney.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Guarino made a motion to refer the application to DRB for review and approval with the SRA recommendation to paint the brackets red.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

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

4. **38 Norman Street:** Schematic Design Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for the construction of a new mixed-use building with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above.

Ryan Whittig and Matthew Moore (developers) and Attorney Scott Grover of Tinti & Navins.

Atty. Grover stated that the Board refereed it to the DRB for Schematic Approval, they went to the DRB in July and received constructive revisions that warranted schematic approval. The DRB appreciated the reduction of the size and recommended the project return to the SRA for schematic approval but would want to see the project again during the final approval process in conjunction with PB review.

Mr. Guarino requested their thoughts on the DRB comments. Mr. Wittig replied that the DRB felt that 2x2 windows were more appropriate than the 6x6 proposed, the bay windows should be more contemporary rather than traditional, the cornice looked busy and could be more streamlined with less ornamentation. There was discussion regarding

including an accordion style door at the commercial level for indoor/outdoor space but they would need to coordinate that and the kitchen design with the Board of Health.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that she's received two new public comment letters since the DRB meeting.

Mr. Guarino asked if the design team has heard from their direct abutter and if any of the issues had been mitigated. Mr. Witting replied that there has been some open dialog with Roberta, they've committed to replacing her fence and have given her permission to pass through their property to access her backyard. He offered to host another community meeting outdoors at the garage and agreed to get in touch with Councillors Madore and Hapworth to see if there is interest. Their traffic consultant will update their study next week and will factor in tourists.

Acting Chair Rubin stated that it's fortuitous to get the traffic study done when more tourists are in the city rather than less. He had concern with traffic as well as cut through traffic from the strip mall across the street. Crombie is a narrow street and neighbors may still want the vehicular entrance on Crombie.

Mr. Daniel asked about the PB application plans. Atty. Grover replied that they hope to apply in September or October once they receive the engineers report.

Ms. Nina-Soto echoed what had been said and appreciates them continuing public comments opportunities and encouraged them to continue discussions with their direct abutter.

Public Comment:

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that public comment letters have been received from:

1. Pamela Zamback on July 20, 2021
2. Richard Willis on August 7, 2021

Ana Gordan, 12 Crombie Street. Thanked Ms. Newhall-Smith for answering her question describing the review process, asked if comment letters will be part of the official meeting minutes, and noted that their direct abutter at 18 Crombie Street isn't tech savvy and doesn't have a cell phone, so she should be accommodated. Mr. Daniel replied that all public comments are part of the record and are referenced in the meeting minutes.

Richard Willis, 16 Crombie Street. Noted that their direct abutter at 18 Crombie uses her rear yard for her pets. Concerned that the one-story reduction will still affect his solar panel production in the winter. Proposing to use Crombie Street for their entrance and exit point will cause back-ups and their traffic study should be extended down to Essex Street where traffic backs up. The outdoor dining would be used 3 months a year and

would be vacant for the remainder of the year. Suggested they use one of the curb cuts on Norman Street not only Crombie Street.

VOTE: Guarino made a motion to approve the schematic design plans with the recommendations of the DRB.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto

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

5. **15 Front Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of AC unit on rear of building.

Carol Perry, 15 Front Street, was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Perry stated that the rear of building backs up to the Klop Ally parking lot. It was built in the 1930's and they purchased it in 1994. The building sits entirely on their land and there is no outside space. The existing A/C unit was installed and is custom to their building and couldn't be repaired due to the tight access in the ceiling. The original installer company is no longer in business, and it can't be recreated. They proposed to install a new unit at the rear of the building that is 42-inches high and just over 1-foot-deep and would have a 5-way split to serve 5 units.

Mr. Guarino asked if the new unit could be placed entirely in the ceiling again. Ms. Perry replied that a second part of the unit will be, but this unit must be mounted on the outside face of the building and their mason is also in favor of this location. Ms. Nina-Soto asked if the unit can be painted. Ms. Perry replied yes, and they could paint it red to match the red brick. Acting Chair Rubin noted that the DRB will review the application and recommend paint colors.

Mr. Guarino asked if the unit can be lowered and placed next to the first-floor window. Ms. Perry replied that it could be hit by vehicles and would look best next to the existing vent.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to approve subject to DRB approval.

Seconded by: Guarino.

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

New/Old Business

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

Mr. Daniel stated that the design team presented to the DRB last month along with public comment, they will return for the DRB August meeting, and may wrap up DRB review in September. The city had their weekly meeting with Winn that day and the designs have been revised. Winn also met with the Federal Street Neighborhood Association, have a pending meeting with Northfields Neighboring, and will meet with HSI too. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that there were some comments on design or incorporating masonry but not everyone agreed. Overall it was a positive meeting.

Mr. Guarino noted his surprise that the DRB recommended to take fewer cues from the neighboring buildings. Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that people tend to reference the Ruane Courthouse and parking garage rather than the historic courthouses and there is inspiration to draw from other buildings in the McIntyre District.

Mr. Daniel stated that Matt Curtin left Winn but Winn has hired a new person who will start in September. Their public outreach and design process is continuing, the LDA is still being revised by the City Attorney, and the design team and City met with the MBTA to discuss the remnant parcel and use of the parking lot use at night when commuters aren't there. Connection between this area and the Northfields neighborhood is being defined and DCAMM and Winn do have a Registry of Deeds obligation which is a complex process that is also continuing. The preservation restriction was agreed to by MHC, and DCAMM requested to add some language although the preservation restriction is being worked through directly with MHC. The design team is also working on financing, state and local approvals, which are all lengthy processes but there is good collaboration in the works.

Acting Chair Rubin asked if there was replacement for Matt Curtin. Mr. Daniel replied that a new person was hired, and this project will be their only focus. Adam Stein and Adam Giordano have been helpful since Mr. Curtin left the company.

2. SRA Financials

The Board received the financial report.

3. Updates

Expanded outdoor dining: Acting Chair Rubin stated that umbrellas with signage continue to gain in number even though they are not allowed by current signage regulations. The City should either enforce the regulations or modify them so that other businesses are now able to use them too. Mr. Daniel replied that there is still a suspension of the outdoor dining rules due to the pandemic and Ms. Newhall-Smith is looking toward 2022 to reactivate that rule for umbrellas without advertising, and to determine other objectives such as the reuse of black chains and stanchions and the reuse of parking spaces. The city does have two parklets and outdoor dining is using parking spaces. Acting Chair Rubin asked if those rules would be retroactive or new. Ms. Newhall-Smith

replied that they would be new and that restaurants should reapply once the new standards are clearly defined.

Almy's Clock: Acting Chair Rubin asked how the restoration was progressing. Mr. Daniel replied that the restoration work is largely complete although some work is still needed at the base.

Charter Street Cemetery: Mr. Daniel stated that the cemetery has reopened with the new visitor center. This new welcoming center will help with orienting visitors.

217-221 Essex Street: Acting Chair Rubin commended the owner's restoration of both buildings and the SRA suggestion regarding the location of the electrical box.

City Meetings: Mr. Daniel stated that hybrid meetings will not be an option until at least November 2021.

Approval of Minutes

1. July 14, 2021

VOTE: Guarino made a motion to approve with Rubin's edits.
Seconded by: Nina-Soto.
Roll Call: Guarino, Nina-Soto and Rubin in favor.

Upcoming Meetings

1. DRB: August 25
2. SRA: September 8

Adjournment

VOTE: Guarino made a motion to adjourn.
Seconded by: Nina Soto.
Roll Call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 39 §23B and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033.