

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

**Board or Committee:** Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting  
**Date and Time:** Wednesday, July 13, 2022, at 6:00 pm  
**Meeting Location:** Virtual Zoom Meeting  
**SRA Members Present:** Chair Grace Napolitano, David Guarino, Christine Madore, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Dean Rubin  
**SRA Members Absent:** None  
**Others Present:** Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development  
**Recorder:** Colleen Brewster

**Regular Meeting**

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**Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. Old Town Hall – Julie Barry had been working with Culture House the past few months on broader programming to maximize its utilization and that concluded at the end of June, and an analysis of their findings will be available in August. Their programming options were well received by the public.
2. Essex Street Project – The city decided to not make the proposed changes to the intersection.
3. Downtown Outdoor Dining – Mr. Rubin asked at the previous meeting about the expended dining at Boston Burger which Ms. Newhall-Smith explored and their extended dining area was allowed via the COVID allowances and is temporary.

**Board Membership**

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**1. DRB Appointment** – Sarah Tarbet replacing Helen Sides

Mr. Daniel stated that Helen Sides, who served on the DRB for approximately 20-years has decided to step down from her DRB appointment and focus solely on the Planning Board (PB). Sarah Tarbet, who is also a member of the PB, had expressed interest in joining the DRB. She is an architect with Jones Architecture and her name would be given to Mayor Driscoll for consideration after tonight's meeting.

Ms. Tarbet thanked Ms. Sides for her explanation of the continuity of the SRB and DRB and noted her excitement in contributing to future design conversations.

Mr. Daniel noted that the DRB was created as an advisory board to the SRA and took on some advisory roles to the PB for projects along the North River Canal Corridor and certain projects along entrance corridors. Sign review downtown is also under SRA's review and approving DRB recommendations was delegated to the Executive Director. If applicants don't agree with the DRB's recommendation, they can go before the SRA. Ms. Newhall-Smith also prepares thorough Staff Reports that refer to the Design Standards. For buildings over 50-years of age the

SRA refers to the Salem Historical Commission's Guidelines Notebook and the Secretary of the Interior Standards. For buildings less than 50-years old the standards in the Downtown Renewal Plan and the City's Commercial Design Guidelines are used.

Mr. Guarino thanked Ms. Tarbet for her willingness to serve and thanked the DRB for their hard work and recommendations. Chair Napolitano noted that serving on both boards is a significant commitment, but one that greatly helps the review process.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to support sending Sarah Tarbet's name to the mayor for her appointment to the City Council to have her join the DRB. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.  
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

## City Initiatives

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### 1. Heritage Trail Update

Kate Fox, Executive Director of Destination Salem, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Daniel stated that this is a joint project with the city of Salem and Destination Salem on the heritage trail.

Ms. Fox stated that they've been working to update the heritage trail for almost two years. The heritage trail was the red line painted through the of Salem, which they didn't think was appropriate for their historic sites and historic locations. A committee and small working group were formed, including Councillors Hapworth and Merkle, as well as a large group of interested parties. Councillor Watson-Felt and a representative for the Salem Historical Society were also involved. Essex Heritage, the Witch Museum, Historic Salem, Inc., and Patricia Kelleher (City of Salem Preservation Planner,) Julie Barry (Senior Planner of Arts & Culture), Elizabeth Peterson (Salem's Pioneer Village), and Susan Russo from the National Park Service are also involved. The group chose a gold color from the city of Salem seal rather than red. The paint took over one-year to arrive due to COVID-19 supply chain delays. During that time, they located other opportunities to highlight along the trail to make it a resource for residents and visitors that walk along Salem. They looked at trail practices used in other communities and hired a company called MuseumTastic, a consulting firm started by Julie Arrison-Bishop a former House of Seven Gables and Philips House employee. A new website was created that launched this week, <https://salemheritagetrail.org/>, a compass graphic was created, and the Massachusetts Tribe was consulted to ensure it's appropriateness. The trail is inclusive and represents the history of Salem with 10 initial sites to interpret around the downtown area. An app and QR codes will provide information about the sites. A dashed line has been placed around the city as a placeholder to identify the route. Organizations and businesses will be given the opportunity to become a heritage site using a model like Historic Salem, Inc.'s historic house plaques, but each will need to meet the criteria and be reviewed and approved by a committee. They've given themselves a deadline of 2026, in line with Salem 400, but once signage is installed there should be an increase in the interest. MuseumTastic shared a project recap and recommendations which they using to move the forward.

Mr. Rubin noted is surprised with the heavy emphasis on the "witch" aspects of in the city when there are so many other aspects of the city that make Salem great, particularly when its maritime

history was the city's biggest economic driver. He was curious about where to place the emphasis. Ms. Fox replied that 85% of visitors are coming in part to learn about the Which Trials of 1692 and Salem's association with witches. They want to give visitors what they are expecting as well as to share Salem's full history at each location. The information provided is the history of the building, who resided there in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whether the family was affected by the Salem Witch trials, as well as what else occurred at the site. The Salem Witch Museum has been on of Massachusetts top visited sites for the past 50 years, and all 10 selected sites fit the criteria, but not all sites relate to the Witch Trials, such as: Charlotte Forten Park, Salem Maritime National Historic Site (the first National Historic Site in the country), House of Seven Gables, and the Charter Street Cemetery. This helps visitors realize that Salem is real and a living history museum, and not a Disney movie set. This is an opportunity to hook visitors and provide them with an indigenous and historical heritage of Salem. The criteria list has been provided in the program summary.

Ms. Madore was happy to see this move forward but raised concerns with the accessibility of the trail. Ms. Fox noted modifications that bring the trail down Hawthorne Boulevard and Artists' Row rather than Orange Street, which is very narrow and residential. Ms. Madore asked if accessibility advocates were engaged to ensure the trail was navigable by those with accessibility challenges, whether the font styles and colors selected for signage were appropriate for those with visual impairments, and whether the app was accessible to those that cannot read with their eyes by reading the text aloud. Ms. Fox replied that they have not, but they will approach the task force and Sperling Interactive who created the website about making them interactive. She noted that the signage font was chosen based on the city standards used in their wayfinding signage, and their audio tours are fully accessible.

Ms. Madore suggested including the immigrant experience as a theme, noted the fee for businesses to become a heritage site which could become exclusionary and a competition for various businesses. Ms. Fox replied they've discussed this topic since costs will be incurred to maintain consistency throughout the site. The city of Salem paid \$40,000 for the initial website and the remaining funds will be used for future signs. Financial support is needed to grow the project and they hope that businesses don't buy their way onto the site. Their fail safe is that businesses must fit the criteria and will be reviewed by a committee. Their development will be slow but intentional to maintain control. The immigrant experience will be a theme that is not yet included in their interpretation, but themes will be added as they expand.

## **Projects in the Urban Renewal Area**

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- 1. 73 Lafayette Street and 9 Peabody Street:** Schematic Design Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for the demolition of existing building at 73 Lafayette Street and construction of new, mixed-use structure with 35,000 square feet for the North Shore Health Center, pharmacy, and urgent care facility and for income-restricted senior housing residential units. Construction of a new mixed-use structure on 9 Peabody Street with income-restricted senior housing residential units, commercial and gallery space, request to continue to August 10, 2022.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to continue to the August 10, 2022, regular meeting. Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

2. 43 Church Street: Small Project Review - Construction of a one-story addition on the rear of the building to extend the restaurant's dining area. A portion of the proposed addition is located on land owned by the Salem Redevelopment Authority, Request to continue to August 10, 2022.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to continue to the August 10, 2022, regular meeting. Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

3. **5 Higginson Square/10 Derby Square** Small Project Review – Replacement of building's windows on the north façade of the third floor

Michael Proscia of Jones Architecture was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Proscia stated that there were two previous window replacement projects, the first along the fourth floor and the second on the third floor that was approved in the spring of 2022. The current proposal is for the third floor along the east façade facing Old Town Hall and the west façade facing Higginson Square alley. The existing windows are wood with single pane glass with two-tone green and slate blue, and they would be replaced with new windows though preserving the existing colors. The trim detail will be slightly different and one window on the west elevation is a single pane glass, and the new windows will have 6 over 6 configurations to match. The main differences are that the new windows will be inserted into the existing wood frames so another perimeter line will be visible, and they will be clad in aluminum in a color to match the existing.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Madore made a motion to refer to the DRB with a recommendation for approval.

Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Daniel asked what will happen with the old windows and old glass. Mr. Proscia replied that the third-floor windows were salvaged and used by the first-floor tenant. They would try to salvage these windows as well.

4. **5-9 Summer Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of Photovoltaic Roof Mount System

Lindsay Grindle of The Boston Solar Company and Dick Pabich, owner, were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Grindle stated that approximately 86 modules will be roof mounted and the DRB previously requested to keep conduits and equipment out of public view so they will be placed on the interior, except for a fuse disconnect that the fire department requires to be at the exterior and accessible 24/7 in the event of an emergency. The DRB required a 12-inch boarder at the perimeter of the roof which they have maintained. The panels will be flush mounted using racking with a small space below each panel, and the panels will be black on black, so they blend in with each other and appear seamless. Their preferred location of the exterior disconnect is behind a fence and the second option to place it at the exterior corner of the building, and there

will be no visible conduit, it will connect through the wall at the back of the equipment. A 1-inch exterior conduit will be installed at the rear of the building and into the electric room.

Ms. Nina-Soto appreciated adding solar panels to a historic building, asked if solar shingles were considered rather than solar panels due to the visibility of the roof from the street, as well as the clearance from the shingles to the panel. Ms. Grindle replied that the building owner would need to make that determination, that is not a product that explored or that they install. When choosing solar products, shingles aren't as efficient and systems that will cover a large percent of consumption on site. The panels will sit approximately 5-inches above the roof. Mr. Guarino noted the visibility of the nearly the entire roof from the Essex Street intersection. Ms. Grindle agreed. Mr. Pabich added that he investigated solar panels which are prohibitively expensive and would require him to re-shingle the entire roof.

Mr. Rubin noted we are at the crossroads of technology, sustainability, and old buildings and the SRA's mission is to try and preserve the character of downtown and he wrestles with seeing solar panels on historic buildings. Shingles may be a good option, although they may not be practical for this application. He agrees that we need to move toward sustainability. Ms. Grindle replied that it is a fair comment that is shared by many, they do solar installs in other historic communities and do not want to deface anything historic or take away any of their charm, so they work closely with customers to ensure that exposed equipment is minimal, hidden, and aesthetically pleasing.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that they refer to the Salem Historical Commission's Design Guidelines for building over 50-years old, which has a section on how to address solar panels.

Mr. Pabich stated that the design approved for 15 Summer Street became live on Friday, July 8, 2022, it's functioning well, and they should look at how minimally visible the panels are because the installation on this building will be very similar.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that Mr. Pabich made a proposal to the DRB with a different company and layout, received a positive recommendation if the panels were all oriented the same and the 12-inch boarder was maintained at the perimeter. The applicant withdrew that application without prejudice and has returned with a new company which honors the DRB's original recommendation.

**VOTE:** Guarino made a motion to approve subject to DRB restrictions made on the previously approved project. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

- 5. 301 Essex Street:** Schematic Design Review – Erect a 3-1/2 story addition above the existing building (known as Jerry's Army & Navy Store) with ten (10) residential units and twelve (12) onsite parking spaces located inside the building at the first-floor rear with retail space fronting on Essex Street, continued from 4/13/22.

Attorney Scott Grover of Tinti & Navins, P.C., Daniel Ricciarelli of Seger Architects, Michael Becker and Carissa Vitas – owners, were present to discuss the project.

Atty. Grover thanked the Board for their patience with the delays needed to ensure the project met zoning requirements. Jerry's Army & Navy occupied this corner for years and over 1-year ago Ms. Vitas and Mr. Becker purchased the property with plans to redevelop the site and they are aware that any development needs to have a thoughtful approach due to the building's historic nature and location at the entrance to both the McIntire District and downtown Salem. Input has been received from abutting owners, HSI, the Ward Councillor, and a preservation consultant. The proposed project is an approximate 6,000 SF mixed-use building of retail and commercial on the basement and first floor along Essex Street and 10-residential units, 2 on a new second-floor constructed within the framework of the existing building, and the remaining 8 units in the new 3-1/2 stories to be constructed in the addition above. Covered parking for 12 spaces will be constructed on the first floor behind the retail space with access from Summer Street. Two additional spaces were secured through a long-term parking lease with the Salem Wesley United Methodist Church 1-block away to comply with the 1.5 parking space requirement per unit for the 8 units in the new building and the one space for the remaining 2 units in the existing building. The density, scale and massing are less than what is allowed via zoning to minimize its impact on the adjacent residential neighborhood. The downtown urban renewal plan was used to conceive these plans and the preservation and restoration of the existing façade is the centerpiece; the addition was designed to compliment the historic structure. The overall goal was to take an underutilized property and create new residential opportunities and enhance the existing non-residential portion to benefit the city, residents, and visitors.

Mr. Ricciarelli stated that this highly visible site is on the corner of Summer and Essex Streets, currently a 1-story commercial building known as Jerry's, and it has had a commercial use since 1897. Years ago, the building was a 3-story Federal style building like others along Essex Street and before the current structure was constructed in 1897 very little has changed. They are proposing to refurbish the existing façade and build a 3-story addition above. The building footprint is nearly to the lot lines except for an alleyway next to The Salem Inn. The addition's Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is less than what is allowed via zoning.

Mr. Ricciarelli stated that the full basement will remain part of the commercial space and will add approximately 5,000 SF of retail in the basement level. A rear opening behind the storefront on Summer Street allows for 12 covered parking spaces. A civil engineer designed the parking spaces to meet turning radiuses, the drive aisles are 24-feet in width and each parking space meetings the zoning standards.

Mr. Ricciarelli stated that along the Essex Street façade a lobby will be introduced within the existing footprint, an existing window will be replaced with a new door to provide access to an elevator and stair along the party-wall at Bonchon. The Building Inspector agreed that the mezzanine/second floor is part of the existing building because its being constructed below the parapet, and 2 units will be located on this floor. Three units will be placed on the third floor, and it will be set back between 6 and 8-feet more than the floors above it, to provide breathing room and preserve the visual between the existing parapet and the new addition from the street. There are three additional units on the fourth floor that cantilever over the third floor, and 2 units of those units will have a penthouse level. The massing conforms to the zoning regulations, the upper addition is 2.3 FAR and it's 1 to 1 or less at the existing building. The façades will be set back to emphasize the base and keep the fabric of Jerry's familiar. The existing building is

mostly brick with expressed cast iron columns with a heavy metal sign band that will be used to influence the design, but not mimic, of the addition; however the materials on the existing façade cannot be carried on the addition because those materials are no longer manufactured. Window proportions will create the glass façade above along Essex Street, which will better suit the downtown expression, so the addition will have a lighter feel and highlight Jerry's below. The glass façade of the addition will wrap the corner onto Summer Street and align with the end of the existing first-floor storefront. The façade will then transition to a more residential feel next to The Salem Inn and the adjacent McIntire District. The new garage opening has been introduced along Summer Street where an addition appears to have been added because the brick is different and at the interior there is also a transition of materials and structure. It will also keep the garage opening away from the intersection. The existing openings along Summer Street will be reopened and the addition above will be setback another 6-8-feet to ensure Jerry's prominence. Many buildings on this block of Essex Street are 5 stories or more, so massing-wise the proposed structure fits the area, despite the 1-story Bonchon next door which is an anomaly.

Atty. Grover added that Robert Griffin is missing from the meeting but will be present for the Site Plan Review by the Planning Board and for peer reviews for traffic and parking.

Mr. Rubin asked if the penthouse a separate residence or part of a residence on a lower level and what value it brings to the development besides additional square footage. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that the penthouses are the upper levels of two townhouse units. Mr. Becker added that they haven't finalized the layout and have previously discussed adding a third penthouse to create 3 townhouses rather than two. The upper floor will provide spectacular views for a possible master bedroom or living area.

Mr. Rubin noted that the garage entrance is portrayed as a closed door and raised concern about the back-up of traffic for drivers waiting for the garage door to open so a vehicle can enter, since this intersection is already a traffic concern in Salem and the Traffic Department may need to review it. Mr. Becker replied that some garage door openers work from multiple houses away, but a faster door opener can be selected. Mr. Rubin raised concerns with the numbers of residents trying to enter and leave creating more of a traffic back-up. Mr. Ricciarelli added that they hope the building will be a good fit for commuters using vehicles on the weekends. with only 12 vehicles allowed it should not cause a lot of back-ups, and possible improvements to the intersection could be a benefit.

Mr. Rubin stated that a modernization looks a little out of place relative to the neighborhood across the street with so much glass. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they will work closely with the DRB to refine the design.

Mr. Guarino also raised concerns with the addition not fitting in, particularly the setbacks and the cantilevered structure and asked if the façade below would not have been able to be saved if the façade were flush. Mr. Ricciarelli replied yes, they wanted to protect the façade and make sure it expresses itself as a volume, bringing the addition too far forward would compete visually with the zero-lot line. The cantilever allows them to bring the façade more in line with the street line along Essex Street, making the third floor only slightly less visible than the cantilevered floor.

Mr. Guarino asked if the second-floor mezzanine will have windows. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that their view will be the back side of the parapet which is why they are providing 6-8-feet of deck space for natural light and ventilation.

Ms. Nina-Soto echoed Mr. Rubin's comments regarding traffic and the tight garage space, and she is concerned with vehicles entering and exiting the garage at the same time causing a back-up. She also raised concerns with the top hat of the building that doesn't fit the downtown and she would prefer a continuation of the design below, because a modernized stand-alone portion takes away from the building given the neighborhood it's in. Mr. Becker replied that both the top hat and setback were incorporated to provide outdoor space for the tenants on the first new floor of the addition.

Mr. Ricciarelli stated that the base of Jerry's is quietly ornate with finial details, expressed columns, and metal cornice and those proportions and volumes were used to define the upper floors of the addition to make them consistent with the base. Many historic buildings with additions follow the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation respect that new interventions should not mimic the existing and compete with the historic aspects, which they are trying to do. The new windows are sized to the proportions of the existing first-floor storefront windows, but the design has a long way to go, since this is only the first introduction. They will work with the DRB on colors and materials to hopefully create a successful project.

Ms. Madore stated that this is exactly the kind of compact urban infill development that is perfect for a downtown environment and adding residential units is great. She had no issue with the proposed setback which follows the design guidelines for the SRA's downtown renewal plan, since the setback accentuates the historical detail around Jerry's façade, and she appreciates its thoughtfulness. The setbacks also make the massing less overwhelming where Essex Street creates a valley effect with the taller buildings, and the setback on the corner softens that transition. Providing outdoor space for residents is also a plus downtown. She noted HSI's comments about the continuation of Essex Street columns and she's interested in the DRB's comments on that. The garage door timing on Summer Street is less of a concern but she would like to see more transparency rather than using a solid garage door since it will create a risk for pedestrians an already busy area. She asked if the solid section along Summer Street must remain as-is or if there is an opportunity to create more transparency. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that something new could be introduced at the new units to make it look less monolithic, and the DRB can assist with that design, but it would change the façade. Ms. Madore noted that quantity of texture and character on Summer Street but as Jerry's it's a flat brick wall and more openings could make that façade more interesting and inviting.

Ms. Madore asked about the unit mix. Mr. Becker replied that it hasn't been decided but they want to equalize the size of the units, most will be 2-bedroom with the penthouse units possibly having 3-bedrooms. Mr. Ricciarelli added that 2-bedroom with 2-1/2 bath is the mix they hope to achieve.

Mr. Rubin stated that he agreed with most of Ms. Madore's comments, but he doesn't agree with the addition not trying to stand on its own and compete with Jerry's, because the front part with the glass that's very modern looks completely different and as if it is competing with Jerry's. The design may not be too far off. Ms. Madore replied that she agreed with Mr. Rubin and her comments were about the general massing and not the façade, and she's interested to know the DRB's thoughts, but this is pretty good for an initial review by the SRA.

Mr. Rubin stated that he is also not a fan of the top hat which does have an economic impact on the developer, but outdoor space could still be provided. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they set back

the top hat to limit visibility and noted that they have not determined a finish material. Mr. Becker noted that they've created approximately 10 earlier iterations of the proposed design with the guidance of various design professionals for refinement. Mr. Ricciarelli presented images of historic Boston buildings and their additions such as the Old Stone Bank in the South End with a glass addition above, a building on the corner of Causeway and North Washington Streets, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and the Cambridge Public Library, many of which used historic tax credits and the design was respectful of the historic building without mimicking.

Mr. Daniel appreciated the goal of respecting but not mimicking the historic structure, but felt the cantilever was introducing a new element not seen elsewhere in Salem that is out of character with the downtown, and it is not successful. The other images shown didn't introduce new elements, there are ways to add something new while retaining that integrity and celebrating the historic but with a different approach. He understands the desire for open space but doesn't fully understand how the mezzanine units interact with the space but suspects there are other ways to accomplish that, or perhaps the mezzanine can serve another use. He asked about the functionality of the garage door and whether it can be used by a vehicle entering and exiting at the same time. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they've addressed this at his previous firm on Boston projects where the spaces are very tight and signalization was used inside and outside, and a stop signal would light up to alert an exiting driver that a vehicle will be entering. This is designed by parking consultants and pedestrians are also given a signal light and sound to alert them of vehicles exiting the building. The garage door could be set back to help with queuing from the nose of a vehicle. Mr. Daniel stated that there is no room for two vehicles to navigate around one another and he believed that it requires more analysis. Even on a quieter street it would be a key issue and Summer Street is a primary corridor with many pedestrians.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the DRB isn't a design working group, they review presentations and provide recommendations, not trouble shoot design concerns. In the past that may be why many projects have needed so many DRB meetings to receive approval. She wanted to be considerate of the Board and staff's time when it comes to reviewing multiple iterations of projects, and that of the public that follows these projects. Staff comments include concerns about circulation within the parking area particularly without formal comments from the Traffic and Parking Department and some of the spaces don't see as if they will work and there are elements in the way such as stairways. From an economic development perspective, housing is great but it's sad to see so much of the commercial space removed when the entire building is currently commercial. She noted an interest in seeing the elevation drawings for the other façades, particularly over Bonchon if the owner of that 1-story building were to build up and questions what that would look like. There is confusion over the mezzanine units and what they would be like, ceiling heights, windows that look at the back of the parapet, and if they have access to the outdoor deck space.

Mr. Becker replied that a civil engineer was hired to design the garage, the drive aisle is wider than the minimum requirement, and the parking configuration was studied to ensure that all the parking spaces work. Residential spaces were added to the mezzanine because the 16-foot-high ceilings height in a garage wasn't useful. A 7-foot-6-inch height garage leaves over 8-feet of height for a living space to use as commercial or residential before the parapet. If Bonchon had to hold the setbacks of 5-feet on each side would leave 12-feet of living area from left to right, so their owner building up doesn't seem feasible without a variance. There is over 6,000 SF of commercial space but there is approximately 1,000 SF at the storefront and 5,000 SF in the basement. A mezzanine area could also be created above the parking area for the commercial

space or there could be office space on the second floor. 6-7,000 SF of commercial space is more than what currently exists not counting the basement. Mr. Daniel was curious about potential tenants for the basement and what that program might look like since it's never been utilized as a tenant space, much like the commercial spaces he proposed at 30 Federal Street. Mr. Becker replied that he's proposed the new built-out space to the current tenant after construction. Upon entering the front door of the nearly 1,000 SF of commercial space there would be a mezzanine level and a stair to the lower level. While there is a lot of space it will not be all on one level.

Ms. Madore stated that preserving and adding more commercial space is great but there are many examples in Salem where the tenant must find capital to construct a build-out, but she is a firm believer is identifying the tenant first and building it out for them rather than building it just to create more commercial space that is left vacant, such as Brix that no one can afford to rent. She doesn't want to see the SRA push for more commercial just to have more of it. It should be intentional and a tenant that serves the neighborhood that is vetted, like another downtown grocery store like Steve's.

Mr. Rubin requested clarification on Bonchon and whether there was a race to see which owner would build first. Mr. Becker replied that he approached the owners about selling him air-rights, though he has not secured them yet. The proposed design has the 5-foot setback and if Bonchon were to do the same on both sides leaving a narrow buildable space, leaving 10-feet of space between the two buildings.

Public Comment:

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the following public comments via. E-mails were received prior to the meeting and are in the project file.

1. Adrianna Neefus, 1 Daniel Street Court, dated July 12, 2022
2. Holly Macone, 3 Bedford Street, dated July 12, 2022
3. Amy Alpert, 8 Lightening Lane, dated July 12, 2022
4. Todd Patton, (address unknown), dated July 12, 2022
5. Historic Salem, Inc., dated July 12, 2022, and received on July 13, 2022

Stephen Larrick, 17 Carrolton Street. Former City Planner for Central Falls, Rhode Island. Expressed support for the project and infill construction and provides more housing in a walkable part of downtown. He expressed his lament that the zoning requires parking for this type of a project within .3 miles from an MBTA commuter rail stop. This is a great opportunity to provide more housing for units that don't require automobiles. Appreciated the comments regarding the garage door, pedestrians, traffic impacts and that we are traffic, but this gets to the root issue that parking is being required when the market may not.

Emily Udy, Historic Salem, Inc. They joined in the concern about the overhang and the HSI internal discussion has also been split, but they look forward to DRB review and how that will be further developed. Their feeling is that the design has a Bourbon Street look rather than Salem and they'd appreciate more discussion on how to make it feel like downtown Salem or New England. They're curious about views from further down Essex Street by the Ropes Mansion and showing what will be visible, the penthouse, railings, and other rooftop unit amenities. The remainder of their comments were provided in the letter.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Mr. Becker stated that Salem GIS shows the Bonchon lot is 22-feet-wide, so subtracting the 10-feet of setback and wall thickness will leave approximately 11-feet of buildable space. He presented a view from Essex Street showing that a view of the proposed penthouse would be blocked by houses and trees and that as you approach the intersection the top hat will become less visible. Mr. Ricciarelli noted that the top hat will receive as much study as the other façades even with its minimal visibility from further down Essex and North Street.

Mr. Rubin stated that he was not comfortable a referral to the DRB at this time and Ms. Newhall-Smith's staff's comments said it best, because they are still in the iteration phase. Mr. Ricciarelli noted they would not use the DRB as a free design service, it's more collaborative but more work will be done on their end before presenting to the DRB. SRA comments received will bring the design to the next level that is will be presented to the SRB, the entire process will be iterative.

Mr. Guarino agreed with Mr. Rubin, but the current design is not a level he would feel comfortable sending to the DRB. Sending projects to the DRB says to them at the SRA is comfortable with the direction of the project. Between the questions regarding the structure, mezzanine units, and parking concerns, he'd rather see answers to the new questions and the applicant return to the SRA with better thought-out responses.

Ms. Nina-Soto disagreed and noted that many of her concerns have to do with the design and parking that the Parking Department will address. The easy solution would be to not require parking but that's not the current requirement. The SRA members are not designers, and they don't design buildings, so she would be okay moving it forward to the DRB for review.

Mr. Daniel stated that SRA feedback received tonight should be incorporated and the applicant return to the SRA to show how the design has advanced. Appreciating the various concerns of the Board, it is work that the architect would be doing anyway so it's worth it for the SRA to review it again, so they are more comfortable with the design before moving it forward. Mr. Rubin noted that the public will also have a much better idea of what design will move forward to the DRB versus something that could substantially change between the SRB and DRB review based upon tonight's comments. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the DRB filing deadline is this Friday at noon that the applicant team may not be able to meet, so there is time for another SRA review without holding up the DRB process. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that the review is subjective, and the Board members still may not agree after seeing any changes, and DRB input is needed to move the design process forward. Atty. Grover raised concerns with what answers to return to the SRA with since he didn't hear many substantive concerns about the concept of the project and its appropriateness on a schematic level within the Urban Renewal District, their concerns were design based. Engineered drawings were submitted regarding the parking and how it complies with zoning, and it's also subject to PB site plan review and the city may request the parking be peer reviewed. The documents submitted indicate that it parking design does work.

Mr. Daniel stated that submitted revised plans to the DRB this Friday does not seem practical and their next DRB meeting would not be until August 24, 2022, allowing time for the SRA to review the revised changes on August 10, 2022. SRA board members are not designers but did raise design questions regarding the cantilever and top hat, which will need to be addressed before the project is forwarded to the DRB. Another SRA review could answer those questions before the August DRB meeting. The Traffic and Parking Department could conduct an internal peer

review and provide comment, to better understand the functionality of the garage. Not having parking is one solution but not the rules they are operating on so it must be provided, and it must work in terms of the space count.

Mr. Becker noted the years other of iterations that don't have a cantilever or top hat that don't substantially change the massing, they have only slightly different windows, designs elements in various locations, brick in other locations, etc. Those can be presented to understand why the final design was selected. Mr. Ricciarelli added that the third-floor façade was originally straight and met Essex Street but recommendations were given to recess it, and opinions have been split but those earlier iterations can be provided.

Ms. Madore raised concerns with a quorum for August since she will be out of the country. The Board discussed their availability, whether there will a quorum, and a possible extension of the remote meetings by the state.

Ms. Madore reiterated Ms. Nina-Soto's concerns on the value of the team returning if the project is already on a path forward, rather than having this conversation over again and arriving at the same conclusion. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that it's all in the timing because if they can't meet the DRB deadline there will be no time lost. Atty. Grover anticipated a couple of DRB meetings to review the plans before they return to the SRA for final design approval. Mr. Ricciarelli added that time will be needed to discuss with consultants and make decisions on what will be presented.

Chair Napolitano stated that clarification the SRA's requests is needed if they want the applicant to return and suggested a list of concerns be compiled and sent to the applicant to give them direction. Mr. Guarino added that Mr. Daniel's comments represented a list of items the applicant needs to provide responses to. The proposed design doesn't look as if it fits, it's a distraction from the façade, and introducing a new design element to that area that he doesn't think fits and that is within the discretion of the SRA. The designer should take these comments and choose to implement them or not, since more than just his vote is needed. He's hung up on the current design and the Bourbon Street look is not what the area needs in his opinion.

Mr. Rubin noted that HSI offered interesting points to consider.

**VOTE:** Madore made a motion to continue the schematic review on August 10, 2022. Seconded by: Rubin.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion request the Planning Department provide the applicants schematic parking design to the Parking and Traffic Department for their feedback prior to the next SRA review on August 10, 2022. Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

**6. 41 Lafayette Street:** Small Project Review – Painting of mural on exterior of Barrio

Mr. Rubin asked if the applicant sought comments from the DRB or if a new application would be submitted since they weren't conforming to the sign ordinance requirements. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that she has been in communication with the applicant and indicated where there were concerns and will encourage them to take a second look.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to continue to the next regular meeting on August 10, 2022 without prejudice. Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

## **New / Old Business**

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

Mr. Daniel stated that the P&S with the MBTA is nearly complete. The project was reviewed by the DRB in June, it was a productive meeting, and they will return to the DRB in July with revised plans. The PB application was filed for Phase I of the Crescent lot, however, there have been quorum issues with the PB, so it won't be heard until September at the earliest. There are also 2 vacancies on the PB that they are working to fill.

### **2. SRA By-Law Review: Project Update, Discussion, and Vote on By-Laws**

**VOTE:** Guarino made a motion to review the SRA By-Law updates. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.  
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

Mr. Daniel thanked Ms. Newhall-Smith, Chair Napolitano, and Mr. Rubin for their work on the By-Law revisions which are important to clean up and update.

### **3. Remote Participation Policy:**

Ms. Newhall-Smith suggested the Board hold off on reviewing the policy to see what happens in the next few weeks. Ms. Madore asked if there is an extension will the Board be required to meet remotely indefinitely. Mr. Daniel replied that as things are currently drafted, each Board can make the decision on how they meet. Mr. Guarino suggested hybrid meetings. Mr. Daniel noted that an extra layer of coordination is needed in terms of staffing a hybrid meeting and upgraded technology in the meeting rooms has been arranged prior to the most recent extension. Mr. Rubin noted that the agendas will need to be published for the public. Ms. Madore raised concerns with remote meetings becoming default and in-person would become the special way of meeting, because as a planner so much of her work is interfacing with the public and there has been a huge sense of loss in that type of interaction. The way Board members carry themselves creates a different tone and comments that could be personal or aggressive might be second guessed. She worries that more organic interactions will become a thing of the past; she values building comradery with her fellow board members. Mr. Guarino agreed but noted more public participation with remote meetings and the lack of public comment on major projects pre-COVID. There also haven't been many contentious debates, remote or in person. Ms. Madore added that hybrid meetings will provide some of that. Chair Napolitano noted that remote meetings have made some things easier but it's harder to get a read on people's thoughts through the screen.

### **4. Historical Commission Guidelines:**

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the guidelines are complete, and she's begun referencing them in the staff reports. The new version is fantastic and provides many visuals, graphics, tips, and

examples. The DRB members were introduced to it at their June meeting, some printed their own copies, and felt it was one of the better examples of guidance in the region. She will continue to use it as a resource for the SRA. Mr. Daniel thanked Patricia Kelleher for assistance with updating the guidelines, which hadn't been updated in over 30-years. The new format is more user friendly and a better tool for applicants, board members, and the public. The Salem Historical Commission was also heavily involved in the update.

5. Chair Napolitano questioned the appropriateness of requesting updates from current applicants such as Mr. Becker, on previously approved applications that don't appear to have progressed, particularly when there was a lot of public participation, and the projects may have been considered controversial. There is a 2-year limit on approvals for future projects, but a lot of time was spent reviewing them. Mr. Daniel replied that they can ask the applicants for status updates and noted that regarding the Almy's Clock, there were concerns with the base/foundation which hasn't been resolved but the city engineer is not involved.

Ms. Madore stated that regarding 30 Federal Street, she received a post card notice that the applicant requested a parking variance to reduce the parking requirements, and a second post card stating that the variance was approved last year but nothing has been done. If developers aren't building what they say they are going to building the city should consider implementing compliance bonds. Mr. Daniel replied that they will seek updates on 30 Federal Street and 38 Norman Street.

## 6. SRA Financials

### Approval of Minutes

1. Review of April 13, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes  
**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve with Rubin's edits as amended. Seconded by: Guarino.  
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.
2. Review of May 11, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes  
**VOTE:** Nina-Soto made a motion to approve with Rubin's edits and noting Guarino's absence.  
Seconded by: Madore.  
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.
3. Review of June 8, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes  
**VOTE:** Nina-Soto made a motion to approve with Rubin's edits. Seconded by: Guarino.  
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

### Adjournment

**VOTE:** Nina-Soto made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Guarino.  
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

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