

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, June 8, 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

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. Downtown Salem is active, the Arts Festival was last weekend and was well attended, and the Farmer's Market will start on Thursday at 3PM. It's great to see the programming activities.
2. The review of the Essex Street Improvement Project will be continued to July. Mr. Rubin asked that the presenter address the lack of visibility due to a large tree at the end of the traffic island on Washington Street which makes it difficult for drivers headed North to see pedestrians.
3. He explained that tonight's review of the Crescent Lot is the initiation of the final Design Review and there will be no final vote. Large projects undergo Schematic Review by the SRA, then the DRB, and back to the SRA followed by Final Design Review, which is the same SRA-DRB-SRA process.
4. Chair Napolitano asked about the outdoor dining on the sidewalk at Gulu Gulu and if it still falls under the Covid allowances. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that the city will soon inform restaurants that regulations will return to normal next year. Mr. Rubin noted that Boston Burger added 6-8 tables to their dining and now extends to Derby Square and other restaurants have also broadened their footprint and created difficulties for potential handicapped people. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that each applicant will require seating plans that they must comply with, but she will determine if the accessibility requirement is being met. Chair Napolitano stated that while she is in favor of outdoor dining, the business owners need to be on notice for next year, so they aren't blind-sided. She also mentioned the continued use of advertisers on umbrellas that aren't allowed.

City Initiatives

1. **Essex Street Improvement Project** – Sidewalk bump-out and elimination of one crosswalk, Request to continue to July 13, 2022.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **301 Essex Street:** Schematic Design Review – Erect a 3 ½ 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, Request to continue to July 13, 2022.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to continue to the July 13, 2022, regular meeting. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

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

2. **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 July 13, 2022.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to continue to the July 13, 2022, regular meeting. Seconded by: Guarino.

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

3. **0 Derby Square:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for the renovation and historic restoration of Old Town Hall.

Don Mills, Architect from Mills Whitaker Architects, and Julie Barry, Salem’s Senior Planner for Arts and Culture, were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Barry stated that they are looking to restore and renovate Old Town Hall. The building hasn’t been utilized to its full potential due to the condition of the building, it is not entirely accessible, multiple events cannot be held at once, and it doesn’t receive regular upkeep. They are planning a restoration that will isolate the floors with acoustic baffling, increase accessibility, and provide additional shoring in the basement to increase the number of occupants. They will gut the basement to install a classroom/multi-use room, storage, etc. so they can create a thriving center for arts and culture to showcase and support local artists.

Mr. Mills stated that the market house was originally built in 1816 and was renovated in 1933. The brick piers in the basement don’t allow for the potential occupant load so new columns will be installed under the colonnade columns. Much of basement has restricted usage and is mostly storage. The proposed will provide improved bathrooms, accessibility, a catering pantry, classroom, meeting room, and mechanical room. The first floor will separate the north stair by building a wall and doorway. The second floor will make the stage accessible with an inclined wheelchair lift, have stage lighting and audio-visual improvements. The exterior will include in-kind repairs that respect the lines of the building, masonry repairs, and the reuse of the ventilation cupola for the new HVAC system. A ground source heat pump system will be installed with underground piping and the addition of one new manhole cover in Derby Square. They will also reset loose brick and repair the concrete paving. Structures North is consulting on the project and assessing the structure and structural needs. The site changes include extending north entry walkway and curb 18-inches for wheelchair accessibility purposes.

Mr. Mills added that the building has a geometry indicative of the period, and they want to maintain the history at the south façade and not create a monumental stair out of the three sets of stairs. They want to create a new accessible entry to the basement level. This entrance would

provide handicapped access if an event was in process on the ground floor and direct access to the basement pantry for catering and for public bathrooms. At the north facade, the accessible walk would be refined and made safer. In addition to widening the entrance by 18-inches, new granite plinths with battery operated push button would be added to either side of the front step and the curb would need to be moved 18-inches further away from the door. Each granite plinth could have a button to open the opposite door to allow for maneuvering into the building and in the interior the push buttons could open both doors.

Mr. Rubin asked who would monitor the batteries. Mr. Mills replied building maintenance staff.

Mr. Rubin requested clarification on the new ramps. Mr. Mills replied that the monumental stair was shown because they need to show how the historic fabric would be destroyed by making all southern entrances complaint. The DRB and SHC didn't like the exterior ramp proposed to the west, so that lead him to design a basement ramp which saves the historic fabric. They will need a variance for the ramp width to maintain the curb width but are only seeking conceptual approval at this time.

Ms. Madore stated that she is not comfortable voting on the proposal based on the significance of the changes and she is also confused regarding what is currently being proposed, particularly at the southern staircase. Ms. Barry noted that this is their first presentation with the SRA. Mr. Mills added that they are not proposing a monumental stair because the three separate stairs show the history the of an older configuration and a monumental stair would drastically change the history of the façade. Ms. Madore suggested that a wider stair would have greater appeal by those that sit on the stairs and the story of the early history of the doors should be told since that story is not well-known. Mr. Daniel reiterated that the monumental stair plan was only shown to determine what it would take to make the entrances fully complaint but that is not what is being proposed, only the basement ramp is being proposed. Mr. Mills noted that the left basement stair was removed to install the elevator but both removed doors lead to the basement. Ms. Madore noted that an expansion of accessibility has the same logic and is also improving the building.

Mr. Rubin noted that a public comment letter that was received which spoke to traffic flow around the building and that the DRB should address this traffic concern as part of its review. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that the DRB reviewed the letter at their May meeting but did not express the same traffic concerns. The DRB issued a positive recommendation and requested the proposal go to the SRA for final review. Mr. Mills noted that the DRB approval included a condition to install gates at either end of the new ramp and stair.

Mr. Guarino shared the concerns raised by the Board and noted that some applications go before the DRB several times before they go before the SRA, making this a lot to process for the first time. He suggested the application should have been sent to the SRA first, but he is glad that it will be sent back to them again when final design plans are ready for review.

Ms. Nina-Soto asked if the DRB had any specific requests related to the comment letter. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied no. Mr. Rubin asked if the applicant received the comment letter. Mr. Mills replied yes, but the traffic is slow around the building, bollards could be at the curb line, and valid comments were made. Mr. Rubin noted the changes will increase the use of the facility as well as traffic will increase, and the design needs to be sensitive to that because he doesn't want to see the new construction damaged.

Ms. Nina-Soto suggested the SRA taking their time to think about the proposed design. Ms. Barry replied that it would require them to push out submitting it to the state Architectural Access Board, which meets on a two-week cycle. The contracts with the project manager and project architect both expire at the end of July, and the architect needs time to generate a cost estimate, and there is no budget to extend the project.

Ms. Nina-Soto suggested the applicant take a closer look at the increased traffic.

Ms. Madore suggested restricting loading for events to Front Street to keep them out of the alley. Ms. Barry replied that vehicles load both through the alley and Essex Street. Mr. Rubin noted that as a resident across from 20 Central Street, vehicles go through the alley throughout the day and some vehicles belong to residents that can park there. Ms. Barry noted that the distance between pole and curb is 19 ½ feet which is sufficient, but they will work with the Traffic and Parking Department to address it.

Public Comment:

Darlene Melis, 115 Federal Street, Chair of Tree Commission. Raised concerns with blending of south side stairs into one stair. Ms. Barry replied that the monumental stair is not being proposed, and the south will remain three separate stairs. Ms. Melis asked if the chandeliers would remain. Ms. Barry replied yes, they will be restored.

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. Raised concerns with the freeze/thaw cycles of snow and ice on the handicapped ramp had been considered, as well as snow falling off the roof. Mr. Mills replied that a cross slope will be applied to the ramp to help with drainage and a large catch basin will be added outside the basement entry door. Ms. Barry added that snow rails will prevent snow sliding off the roof.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Mr. Rubin stated that he was comfortable with it moving forward knowing it will return to the SRA.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to approve as presented with a return to the SRA for final details as recommended by the DRB. Seconded by: Madore.

Rubin made an amendment to include the applicant reviewing the project with the Traffic and Parking Department. Seconded by: Madore.

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

Mr. Mills stated that they must submit an ADA consultation form to MHC; however, the Salem Historic Commission has no direct authority over the exterior of the building the SRA does. He requested a letter with the vote and the SRA having authority over the exterior changes to include in their application to the state. Mr. Daniel replied that it could be handled administratively.

- 4. 28 Federal Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for the installation of ductless A/C units with associated conduit and consideration of SRA Pre-Approval for future installation of ductless A/C units.

Bill Yuhas and Charles Anzalone were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Yuhas stated that they met with the DRB who approved the project with some conditions. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the conditions were to maintain the screening which Mr. Yuhas said their property is looked after by a maintenance person. Mr. Guarino noted the additional condition for the color of the future units to be tan or cream and not white. Mr. Anzalone stated that the units are grey but photograph as white. Mr. Yuhas stated that painting the units might affect the warranty and the paint would peel.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to approve the current mini-split installations with the following conditions: screening (vegetation, fencing, etc.) to be maintained and replaced as soon as possible, the color of the ground units be a color alternate to white or provide screening if a color change is not possible, and to adhere to the conditions listed in the New Salem Condominium Association conditions that they have prepared themselves, and removing old A/C units and installing new units as voted on and approved at their May 16, 2022 meeting. This approval would also apply retroactively. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Ms. Madore disclosed that she is an abutter but has no conflict with the proposal.

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

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to approve future unit mini-split installations that are not currently presented, that if future owners at Units A1, A2, A3, A4, B1 and C1 would like to install ductless mini-splits air conditioners with the following conditions: screening (vegetation, fencing, etc.) to be maintained and replaced as soon as possible, the color of the ground units be a color alternate to white or provide screening if a color change is not possible, and to adhere to the conditions listed in the New Salem Condominium Association conditions that they have prepared themselves, and removing old A/C units and installing new units as voted on and approved at their May 16, 2022 meeting. If the owners are not able to adhere to those conditions they must apply to the SRA for a small project review for their suggested method of installation. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

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

- 5. 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, continued from 5/11/22.

Kathi Turner and Jim Turner of Turner’s Seafood, Tyler Youngblood of Niemitz Design Group, and Matt Hamor of Landplex were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Turner stated that the addition proposed at the rear of their building is on SRA property that will further enhance their courtyard. The abutters made some requests which they accommodated and there is flexibility with the construction, but they need some direction before they can proceed. The outdoor dining restrictions will change so this is a pre-emptive and they began this process 3-years ago.

Mr. Youngblood stated that they are looking to add an outdoor element to the restaurant with a 3-season patio with roll-down sides for outdoor seating. They currently have approval for seating

but there is no shielding from the elements or the sun. They want to maintain the existing ramp and improve the egress by adding another rear egress for service and customer use. The raised planter will be maintained but they would regrade for accessibility, maintain a 48-inch clear walkway that has been approved by the abutters.

They have questions about the permanence of the support structure which they would prefer to be permanent with a hard roof and gutter. The structure wouldn't be attached to the building, bi-fold doors would be added to the two rear storefront openings closest to Washington Street, and the additional egress can be used by the patrons of the upstairs ballrooms that use the existing back stair as a second means of egress. The existing rear egress door would be moved closer to the alleyway between the restaurant and Salem Five rather than outside the bathroom doors, and the old doorway would be in-filled with brick. They are proposing a metal screen to conceal the HVAC equipment on the roof of the building. The new seating area would be divided with a metal chain rail painted black to match the trim of the building. The roll-up sides would have a 12-inch black Sunbrella border with clear openings for visibility. The decking would be wood, and they would prefer to attach it to a new concrete slab, but there is a drain and older shut-off valves in that area they must provide access to or move provide an alternate location. Their questions are regarding the level of permanence for the structure that is holding up the roof, and if it will need to be disassembled or can there be a foundation/frost wall and concrete slab.

Ms. Turner noted that they've reviewed this project with the Fire Department and other groups and paid to remove an out of service fire hydrant and two dead trees.

Mr. Rubin stated that the SRA owns the land and he's all for improvements and activating dead space and said that a sale agreement could be considered. They leased the land with the East Regiment Beer Company but that seemed temporary, and this restaurant is more permanent. Chair Napolitano agreed and noted that the permanence of the proposed patio would make a license agreement difficult to revoke. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that written documents from the Fire Department and the 4-foot clearance provided is sufficient. Mr. Rubin noted that Salem Five also provided a comment letter. Mr. Daniel stated that the city is always there, and property owners change over time so retaining ownership provides ability in the future to facilitate something. A lease could be facilitated but they envisioned something less permanent.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that if a license agreement isn't an option, an easement, like what was done at Charlotte Forten Park with an appraisal to negotiate an easement price could be, but the City Solicitor would need to be consulted. Turner's Restaurant created a lease agreement at their Melrose location, a copy of which was sent to the city for reference, but it is unknown if that was for tables in the parking lot or for a structure. Mr. Turner replied that Melrose did a change of use for that land behind their building. Ms. Turner added that the structure in Melrose is permanent, has plumbing, and is raised 8-feet above grade. It was placed in unused parking spaces and their Salem proposal mirrors what was allowed in Melrose. The ground is uneven behind the Salem location and that's why they are requesting a permanent deck rather than just repaving. Mr. Youngblood added that the patio is only one step above grade. Ms. Turner noted that the current handicapped access was grandfathered in, and they have always wanted to improve that condition. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that all options can be explored.

Ms. Madore stated that the legal pathway for use of the space isn't a high priority, the space has been in productive use for so long with no adverse effects as an outdoor dining space that she can see. She likes to see a positive economic uses, the result should be accessible, safe, and code

complaint with aesthetics that fit the character of the area. Because this is SRA land, if any condition would inhibit any kind of public use, she would be against it and however it is used has to maintain the public space and better public access must be maintained. She doesn't want to sell the land to Turner's, but Turner's should maintain it. She asked whether an easement have an impact of the value of the property as well as a tax impact. Mr. Daniel replied that that can be investigated, but the city prefers to hold the property rather than sell it. Mr. Rubin noted that all options can be shared with the applicant since all the details for each option aren't known at this time. Ms. Newhall-Smith will investigate the process, speak with the City Solicitor, and discuss her findings with the applicant. Ms. Turner agreed to locate and provide what she believes is an easement from the SRA to use the land.

Mr. Guarino supports activating the space and sees the need for the city to have a master plan for all these types of spaces. He is concerned with the process which needs to be more defined to see if something can be worked out, but the legal paths must be determined first, and the risk is with the applicant.

Chair Napolitano stated that she is more comfortable with a lease. Ms. Nina-Soto stated that she is not inclined to an easement, the change would fall with the owner, and she is not interested in letting go of the land without good reason and an easement is quasi letting go of the land, so she would prefer a long-term lease. Mr. Rubin noted that the applicant may have rights through an easement.

Ms. Turner located the document, an easement granted to Turner's on the date of sale to construct a staircase on the side of the building. She also located a licensing agreement from Salem Five and an outdoor dining permit, all of which she agreed to send to the city.

Ms. Madore raised concern with causing delay if the design isn't advanced and the details of the use to be worked out conditionally. Ms. Nina-Soto replied that the instrument used will have great weight on what can be used and suggested the application be continued until there is more information. Ms. Newhall-Smith to ask the City Solicitor about the next steps and to possibly receive a quote for an appraisal too.

Public Comment:

Chair Napolitano noted that Salem Five submitted a comment letter.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to continue to the next regular meeting. Seconded by: Guarino.
Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

6. 252 Bridge Street and 32-34 Federal Street: Final Design Review – The Exchange Salem – Part 1: Redevelopment of 252 Bridge Street, the 'Crescent Lot' into a six-story mixed use building with approximately 7,325 square feet of commercial space, up to 120 residential units that will be offered at varying levels of affordability, creation of public spaces, and site improvements.

Attorney Joseph Correnti and Kristin Kolick of Correnti & Darling, LLP, Ramie Schneider, Adam Stein, and Adam Giordano of WinnDevelopment, Steve Prestejohn and Brian O'Connor of Cube 3, Chris Hagen, Rich Whitehouse, Daniel Sieger, and Mike Santos of VHB, and Chris MacFarlane of Landworks Studio, were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Daniel stated that the SRA has been focused on the adaptive reuse of the historic courthouses for years and the disposition process included the parcel across Bridge Street which has been referred to as the Crescent Lot. In November of 2020, the SRA designated the preferred developer as WinnDevelopment after an 18-month RFP process. He and Ms. Newhall-Smith have been working with Winn team, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, DCAMM, and the MBTA because of a small parcel of land next to the Crescent Lot. The entities are focused on this project which will be phenomenal for the community and bring adaptive reuse of the courthouses and residential uses to the Crescent Lot. In 2021, the Schematic Design review process started with the SRA, followed by meetings with the DRB, and return to the SRA in the fall of 2021 for approval of the Schematic Design. Tonight, is the start of the part two, the final Design Review process. When the SRA is comfortable they will refer the review for the DRB who will vet the project over the course of several meetings before it returns to the SRA for final design approval. The applicant will also undergo a review by the Planning Board (PB), and any changes will be incorporated into the final design reviewed by the DRB. Tonight's meeting will focus on the Crescent Lot only.

Atty. Correnti stated that have filed with the PB and are scheduled to appear before them on Thursday, June 16th, in a process that will take several months. They are seeking a referral to DRB to refine the revised design.

Mr. Stein stated that they are dealing with construction challenged and have asked their preferred General Contractor to review the project for price escalation and compared this project to 16 other jobs in the Commonwealth of similar size and scope. They found escalation from 8-10% on jobs priced 6-months ago, 10-30% on projects priced 1-year ago, and 17-35% on projects priced 18-months ago, compared to today. This is an industry wide challenge and rather than propose a building they couldn't afford to build; they chose to present a project that would reflect the current rise in prices and inflation rates. The updated design meets the same goals presented to the SRA in 2021, maintains a focus on architecture, public space, and connections from Bridge Street to the North River and the MBTA Station, which he argued is a better project. The project shows their commitment to the SRA, Salem and how they operate with an eye on reality and representing this project.

Ms. Schneider stated that since they last presented to the SRA and DRB they've enlisted Landworks Studio in Salem.

Mr. Prestejohn stated that their collaboration with the city and community groups has been lengthy, and each meeting has helped push the project forward. He reviewed the previously approved Schematic Design and they various challenges they uncovered. The first challenge being the elimination of the 5 surface spaces due to challenge with the clearances at the ramp and queuing of the MBTA driveway. The remoteness of the shared use walkway and stair was also addressed, the loading area access led to eliminating the mountable curb, and the limited viability of raising the floor elevation of key infrastructure rooms due to the 100-year flood created issues with ceiling and soffit heights and they didn't want the increased heights to limit the success of the public spaces. They've increased the garage parking spaces from 57 to 60, the high lot coverage is limiting their ability to handle loading, storm water management, flood resiliency, and utilities.

Mr. Prestejohn noted their design goals: 1) to enhance the waterfront experience and visual connection to the water, 2) to strongly define accessible public spaces that enhance the city

experience and strengthen the public realm, 3) to reinforce pedestrian connections to the MBTA, and 4) to create bold architecture that recognizes frontage in all directions, welcomes the public, and created meaningful street edges.

Public Realm

Mr. Prestejohn stated that the ramp and stair are co-located and have a straddled use to create a pedestrian experience through that level and orient the direction across the street. The public realm has two levels to engage Bridge Street and the river at the lower level. The building facilities people come from the area of the bait shop or trail adjacent to the North bridge. Not all people need to come to Bridge Street, many will need to walk directly into the MBTA platform, making their site design deliberate and meaningful experience for both paths of travel. With the help of the traffic engineer, the slip ramp at Bridge Street now includes a widened sidewalk that will slow vehicular traffic making it safer for pedestrians which allowed for the inclusion of a pull off space for deliveries and residential drop-offs but no commercial loading, as well as identifying a front door to the project and improving the streetscape.

Mr. Presetejohn stated that Landworks Studio contributed great concepts and critical ideas to develop the revised scheme. The stairs orient people up the stairway and diagonally through a breezeway that crosses to the Bridge Street sidewalk. They worked with city engineers to develop a strategy that isolated pedestrians from the existing retaining wall on site. The second path of travel is the bike ramp that extends under the building up allows all accessible traffic to rise to Bridge Street sidewalk. There is an internal lobby and leasing office for residents, coffee shop, a retail space, and a lawn and flexible outdoor seating that overlooks the water. A co-working space will also be available to the public through a membership. Several building service spaces will be in a stand-alone area that also serves as a secondary means of entry for the residences with a stair and elevator lobby. The main electric room and domestic water were relocated from the parking level to the Bridge Street level.

Mr. Presetjohn stated that at the façade facing the Washington Street intersection they had a notion to treat the upper floors differently with the use of a different that turns the corner and runs the length of the building but also touches the ground to create a colonnade and include red accent panels at the balconies. The revised building has increased in length, still relates to the architecture across Bridge Street which are eclectic in nature and layered. It creates a strong colonnade along the street and centers the breezeway.

Mr. Prestejohn stated that the façade facing the river is more meaningful, they maintained the monumental stair, increased the ceiling heights at the public realm to allow them to be lit and catch the eye, the upper façade material extends towards grade and just above the bike ramp. The path along the lower wall felt lonely and the current scheme creates a more meaningful connection between the ramp and stair. Repurposed granite blocks would be placed along the perimeter of the lower site and the diagonal upper platform can be approached from various directions and will use lighting to make it feel like a public amenity.

Mr. MacFarlane stated that they approached the landscape as urban and a continuation of downtown Salem and to the North River. The public realm is comprised of the streetscape having a strong connection to the podium level for access and the creation of the new drop-off area. In Phase 2 they will investigate the connection across Bridge Street and the downtown. The podium courtyard has edges exposed to natural light that move through the building providing respite from inclement weather. The colonnade takes visitors through the space with

an option to head down to the riverfront or to engage with the retail or fitness spaces. The stairs and ramps are meaningful pieces of the public realm, with opportunities for bike parking at both the upper and lower levels. The river plaza has a strong connection to the history and ecology of the site, they want the park to be resilient and to reuse the large granite blocks from the waterfront as benches. The beds will have a river cobble edge with vegetation, the paving will be a precast colored concrete, cast in place concrete at the ramp using colors that connect to the building. Ornamental grasses will be used for a dune type feel with native River Birch trees that will transition to a shade tree along Bridge Street. They are seeking more upright plantings to promote the river views. Art placement is still being considered and should have a strong connection to the site design.

Mr. Prestejohn added that the mountable curb will be located at the lower level to be utilized by movers and trash pick-up. When it's not in use it will feel like plaza space.

Mr. Daniel noted that the design is one aspect of the project, and he acknowledged the strong working relationships that have been formed between the entire team over these many months.

Mr. Guarino noted that the thoroughness of the presentation was wonderful, but it wasn't made available until this afternoon when plans should be received as soon as possible especially for a project of this size. The market conditions are a factor in the project design which some will like, and others will not, he appreciated their trying to maintain overall goals, and the overall the look is in keeping with that area.

Mr. Rubin requested clarification on the drop-off area and widening of sidewalk. Mr. Prestejohn replied that the curb at the slip ramp would vary from 3-feet-6-inches to 7-feet by ending the sidewalk width by narrowing the road and creating a vehicle pull-off area and then narrow down a standard sidewalk width. Two cantilevered slabs supported with steel signify the two entrance points of the building. Mr. Santos noted that the road was 2-lanes but is now 1-wide lane with striping on the left. Reducing the width will help with vehicle speeds and they have spoken with Salem's transportation staff about the intention of their design. Signage for parking regulation and restriping will be required.

Mr. Rubin stated that the overall design is sufficiently different, and more time is needed to internalize it. He asked if the cost saving was coming from using less material or a less costly material, and if the unit count remained the same. Ms. Schneider replied that the unit count within the building increased from 110 to 120 units, and the cost reduction came from simplifying the ins and outs of the building, which is a 70% reduction in labor costs with a more regular building form. They also changed the garage, which was originally open air and more shielded with a wall system on the side, but now the stair and ramp and minimal screen conceal the ramp, but it is on a pedestal system with landscaping and screening. Mr. O'Connor added that they needed to maximize the efficiency of the moves being made and not creating as many unique conditions to maintain the design goals, and the previous layering wasn't contributing enough to the design. Mr. Rubin noted that it is a simpler design which may have more of a historic look.

Chair Napolitano asked if the height of the building increased. Mr. Prestejohn replied yes, by 3-feet to get the viable ceiling heights at the public level only.

Chair Napolitano noted her preference for the simpler design to the previous design that seemed busy.

Ms. Nina-Soto agreed that the current design is simpler and more cost-effective to construct than the previous flamboyant design. The current design doesn't excite her since it now resembles every other building despite its new functionality, and she will need time for it to grow on her.

Ms. Madore stated that the revised design is disappointing and there has been a significant shift from the first schematic design, no inspiring elements are left, and she doesn't see this design growing on her. The revisions remind her of the changes made to Brix and she will need time to consider the design and to catch up before moving it forward to the DRB.

Mr. Rubin stated that the design is more functional, has good flow for people, applauded the widening of the sidewalk for deliveries, integrating artwork, and the color contrast which added dimension. It is a great use of space, and the thoroughway will keep people from needing to walking up the stairs and down again to access the MBTA platform and will lead people to the downtown. Many design improvements have been made but there is a contrast between the current and previous proposal. Ms. Nina-Soto agreed with the use of the diagonal pathway that provides a view to the courthouse, although the previous design looked like a piece of art.

Mr. O'Connor stated that they are receiving good comments, but refinement is needed. This is an important building and location it needs to feel engaging and desirable. They have additional ideas of how to bring some of the flavor from the previous design to the current design to excite people again. Ms. Schneider noted that progress was made at the last DRB meeting, and they anticipate that happening when they return to the DRB again. Mr. O'Connor appreciated the positive feedback on the diagonal pathway to connect both sides of the building which tells them that their bigger moves are working.

Public Comment:

Steve Kapantis, 23 Wisteria Street. Affordability wasn't addressed and he asked if that increased with the increased number of units. He agreed with the presenter that this building has substantially changed in length, height, and design, and suggested opening the project up to more developers for other creative solutions. Mr. Stein replied that the affordability will remain the same pro rata with 40% affordable units. Ms. Schneider noted that affordability equates to those making under 60% AMI, workforce housing for those earning between 80-120% AMI, and market rate, as previously contemplated.

Emily Udy, HSI. Appreciates the advice given to throwing away the first idea or idea is a powerful way to generate creativity which she sees the willingness of in the site design. The original design hasn't had the same benefit of a redesign, the Schematic Design was approved, and this is not the same design, but it was based so heavily on it the first that it lacks its own flair for creativity. She suggested the current design undergo Schematic Design review again, with the hopes to make this project the best it can be and asked that it be sent to the DRB with a Schematic Design type review followed by a final review, so the DRB has a chance to evaluate the changes. This project shouldn't be limited when economic issues mean it should be a different project. The site has improved, particularly the change to the ramp and monumental stair which will achieve the goals of creating a public space better than the previous design. It's hard to determine where the entrances are with the current design with no visual cues. HSI thought cost savings were going to be in a reduction of material quality but since that is not the case they would like to know more about the materials.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that she received comment from the following:

1. Pam Broderick, 28 Federal Street dated June 7, 2022
2. Patricia Murphy, 27 Foster Street dated June 8, 2022
3. Anne Sterling, 29 Orchard Street dated June 8, 2022
4. Historic Salem, Inc. (HSI), 9 North Street, dated June 8, 2022

Tim Jenkins, 18 Broad Street. Praised feedback from DCAMM from Ms. Madore regarding mothballing the courthouse buildings and entrance to the city. This is the most visible site in the city, the previous schematics were details and comprehensive, but this is a major and substantial change. It doesn't look the same, its simpler, not a showpiece, and is not something people will be enthusiastic about. Salem has seen similar designs before where the design radically changes like with the Brix. We are hearing that this is cost prohibitive and there is an affordability component to it but compared to housing prices the differences aren't that substantial. This is an argument for a poorer quality project, and it doesn't showcase Salem. He read the minutes from the July 28, 2021, DRB meeting and what's currently proposed doesn't look at all like what was discussed at that meeting. It should be referred to the DRB once there are proper schematics that people can provide feedback on. He's disappointed and he hopes this process will improve the building design substantially.

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. This is the box that the first building came in, this isn't a welcoming edifice for those first arriving in Salem and there is nothing that draws people in. It's become a large box wall, acts as a fortress to the edge of downtown, and is off-putting. It's been so stripped of design that it forces people to look away. It's critical that the SRA get this right because Salem deserves to have compelling architecture at this arrival point. She's fearful that allowing construction costs to drive this project will not result in a building that signifies belonging in Salem.

Victoria Ricciardiello, 5 Foster Street. Preferred the previous design, located along an entrance corridor it should represent Salem's vision. Salem doesn't have large corporate buildings with a great tax base like other cities, Salem is about Halloween, restaurants, tourists, and people taking the train into Boston. Salem's doesn't have the high earning jobs and the building design needs to reflect what Salem is and it is not a boxy building city, Salem needs to stick to its strengths and vision. The tiered layout reflects Salem and should be reflected. She questioned where people get dropped off for the train station and how people with disabilities will maneuver around the building and the possible use of outdoor glass elevators to accommodate those with disabilities.

Anne Sterling, 29 Orchard Street. A stripped-down version of the previous version has been presented with a monolithic look driven by cost containment in a thriving develop is extremely disappointing. The bait stop approach was a deficit and she's glad to see that flow from lower Bridge Street improve for those that will walk directly to the MBTA station and requested that elevation view be presented in the future. Restrooms are needed in Salem and should be added since there are none at the MBTA garage, particularly with the addition of a shop providing beverages.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Atty. Correnti stated that most of comments spoke to the design and that's why they want to go before the DRB for design review. This is a work in progress, and they want to improve upon and finish the design which is critical to the project. They have a daunting timeline to follow and the DRB's comments are needed to make changes. Chair Napolitano agreed.

Mr. Guarino stated that he is reluctantly fine with that decision even though he would like more time to review it because the changes are jarring. He doesn't want to be rushed to approve a design. Mr. Rubin was also reluctant to go forward, but the applicant is requesting the input of the designers to return with a final design. This is an important project and location, and the SRA wants to get them right, and the DRB comments will help them address the concerns raised tonight.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion forward the application to the DRB for schematic review along with the SRA's comments, concerns, and questions to receive DRB input and to further the design.

Chair Napolitano noted that the request for a final design review. Mr. Rubin replied that this revised design is so different it may warrant a new schematic design review. Ms. Nina-Soto asked what would happen if the return design were the same as the current design. Mr. Daniel replied that the project cannot proceed without SRA approval. If it returns from the DRB and the SRA does not approve it, then the process would continue. The project will also be reviewed by the PB and any changes would need to be incorporated into the design creating a more efficient review process. Specifics are needed in the referral regarding the SRA concerns and where the DRB should dig into the design. Many board members thought the path through the site and ramp and stair changes were an improvement and some are comfortable with the site layout and configuration.

Mr. Guarino raised concerns with sending it to the DRB which signals to the DRB that the SRA approves of the design and the DRB will work on the specifics, but he's not sure he's comfortable with that. Mr. Daniel replied that the DRB must work within the box the SRA approves. Ms. Nina-Soto reiterated that the building is so different than what they previously reviewed, which is the reason for another Schematic Design review. Chair Napolitano asked if that constitutes refiling the project. Mr. Daniel replied that the SRA wants to see new changes, but refiling may not change anything unless specific direction is being provided by the Board. He suggested a meeting or two with the DRB is needed as an intermediate review to vet the project with the Board's comments before it returns to the SRA. Mr. Rubin and Chair Napolitano agreed. Chair Napolitano added that the SRA won't be able to provide the design guidance that the DRB provides so the project shouldn't be held hostage by the SRA.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the DRB meets in two weeks, on June 22nd. Atty. Correnti stated that the design would be largely the same, but the design team can work through changes in July. They are meeting with the PB next week but have many other issues to review. Mr. O'Connor added that the design team will begin working on revision before the DRB meeting and will bring those comments.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to refer to the DRB for design consultation. Seconded by: Rubin.

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

New / Old Business

Due to the late hour, the board members preferred skipping both the discussion of new/old business items and the approval of minutes. These items will be carried over to the July meeting.

1. Redevelopment of the Historic Courthouses and the Crescent Lot: Update on Project Status
2. SRA By-Law Review: Project Update, Discussion, and Vote on By-Laws
3. Remote Participation Policy: Ms. Newhall-Smith stated the July SRA meeting will be the last that is 100% remote, all future meetings will be hybrid as explained in the staff report. Mr. Rubin noted that the May minutes stated that two Board members must be present physically for a quorum when three people must be present. He requested that change be made to the minutes. The Board discussed summer availability.
4. SRA Financials

Approval of Minutes

1. Review of April 13, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes
Continued to the next regular meeting.
2. Review of May 11, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes
Continued to the next regular meeting.

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:00PM.

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