

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

**Board or Committee:** **Redevelopment Authority, Special Meeting  
Joint Meeting between City Council and SRA**  
**Date and Time:** **Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 6:00 pm**  
**Meeting Location:** **Virtual Zoom Meeting**  
**SRA Members Present:** **David Guarino, Dean Rubin, Cynthia Nina-Soto**  
**SRA Members Absent:** **Chair Grace Napolitano, Russ Vickers**  
**Others Present:** **Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community  
Development  
Kate Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner**  
**Recorder:** **Colleen Brewster**

**City Council Present:** **Arthur C. Sargent III, Domingo Dominguez, Christine  
Madore, Stephen Dibble, Megan Riccardi, Conrad  
Prosniewski, Patricia Morsillo, Ty Hapworth**  
**City Council Not Present:** **Robert McCarthy, Timothy G. Flynn, Josh Turiel**

**Presentation and Project Update**

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Meeting with the Salem City Council Committee on Community and Economic Development co-posted with the Committee of the Whole to provide an update on the redevelopment of the historic courthouses and the crescent lot.

Mr. Daniel stated that a quorum of SRA members is present. Mr. Rubin stated that several years ago when Councillor Madore was on the SRA she suggested they create goals, and this meeting is in line with two of those goals. #1: To continue building a relationship with the City Council and to update the Council on projects in the pipeline within the Urban Development area. #2: Select a development team, finalize concept and begin to redevelop the two courthouse buildings and the crescent lot. Winn Development was selected after being thoroughly vetted through an unbiased process. Mr. Daniel noted that no action is being requested at this meeting; it is an opportunity to update the City Council.

How Did We Get Here? A Presentation by Tom Daniel

Mr. Daniel stated that the work goes back to the 1990's and this is a long-term project that took several acts of legislature. They hosted ULI with public meetings as well as community meetings to receive input.

**Vision and Goals Development – Synthesized Goals**

- **Historic Preservation:** Top priority was preserving both buildings for adaptive reuse, as well as protecting and preserving the character-defining interior spaces through a preservation restriction.
- **Public Realm:** Redevelop and reuse of the courthouses, make them compatible with the surroundings and neighborhood through scale, use, design, and character.

- Project shall create a well-designed functional and beautiful space.
- Project shall improve the intersection of Washington/Bridge Streets.
- Economic Vitality: Creating new jobs, housing, and tax base.
- Create a financially stable community for the long term.

Mr. Daniel stated that this process began with an RFQ where 8 teams submitted qualifications, 4 teams were interviewed, and 3 submitted full responses as of June of 2020. All three teams put forth a lot of time and effort and approximately 12 meetings were held to discuss the project and WinnDevelopment was selected. He thanked Ms. Newhall-Smith for her work to date and noted that they are working on the LOI and other disposition documents, timelines for each property, and Winn has asked the SRA to investigate the design of the crescent lot and the DRB participated in a workgroup and provide input.

#### WinnDevelopment Team

Matt Curtin, Senior Project Director

Larry Curtis, President and Managing Member

Michael O'Brien, Executive Vice President

Adam Stein, Executive Vice Principal

Trevor Samios, Vice President, Connected Communities, WinnCompanies

Adam Giordano, Assistant Project Manager

Christina McPike, Director of Energy and Sustainability, WinnCompanies

Mr. Curtis stated that Cube 3 and Seger Architects will be the architects for the project. They have had a large focus on gateway communities in the past five decades, housing development for the past 20+ years, as well as underwriting.

Mr. O'Brien stated that he has been with the company for seven years and worked the past 10 years in civil service. His focus will be on Winn's working with the community and government, and he's ready to work side by side with the City of Salem. He will see this project through all of its tasks, design construction, adaptive reuse. They have fifty knowledgeable and dedicated people on their team that will work to create viable spaces so that will get this project national recognition.

Mr. Samios stated that he's worked for certified historic preservationists and local recourse agencies, etc. The community engagement process is ongoing and their focus on six outcome areas, #1: Connecting to Salem through Housing and providing rent and utility help, #2 Employment: they've helped 200 households receive unemployment during this pandemic, #3: Education, #4: Healthcare: providing housing pilots to hospitals, #5: Economic mobility: providing affordable housing and financial coaching services to 150 households in the past year, and #6: Community Engagement: helping residents reach polling places to cast their votes in elections.

#### RFP Submission Recap:

Mr. Curtin stated that they used the SRA goals as their mandate to reuse the existing spaces to provide public access. At the crescent lot they will be cross-subsidizing work at courthouses and will create a visual gateway to the downtown befitting of the neighboring structures and compatible with its surroundings. Both areas will provide areas for public activation, transit accessibility will be leveraged, they will provide equitable housing and middle-income housing.

Courthouse: 19 units are proposed, 15,000 square-feet of commercial space including the large courtrooms and Law Library, which require public activation. The Museum of Justice has a vision they believe in and the East Regiment Beer Company has expressed interest in occupying space at the Federal Street courthouses. At the crescent lot, 110 units are proposed and 10,000 square-feet of first floor commercial space. Between the two sites the development will provide mixed-income housing with a meaningful number of market rate units.

Notable Expertise: The energy and sustainability team at Cube 3 has sustainability committee experience to provide background on high energy efficient buildings. They will balance high performing building features and systems with historic details to be retained at the courthouses. The crescent lot will provide an opportunity for sustainable design with super low-energy high performance design to reduce long-term carbon emission and water consumption.

Climate Resilience: VHB has waterfront construction experience, they will lead coastal storm flooding modeling with their knowledge in crucial fields. They will use site design and building materials to mitigate the impacts of flooding. They will raise the ground level above the flood plain and install floodproofed parking. The design will not preclude additional flood resiliency measures onto neighboring properties and all occupiable spaces will be located on Bridge Street.

#### Post Developer Designation

Courthouses: Mr. Curtin stated that the Registry of Deeds feasibility analysis is underway, and they have spoken with Salem State University's President Keenen about their potential use of the space.

#### Additional Milestones:

Historic Tax Credits: Part 1 of the application has been submitted to Federal and State and they will work on the filing of part 2.

Public Art: They will work with local artists as well as the Planner for Arts and Culture to install art at the plazas.

Community Preservation Committee: They have successfully submitted an application for CPA funding via the Creation of Community Housing with the key milestone of a municipal financial contribution as a pre-requisite for DHCD.

MBTA Engagement: The collaboration for remnant parcel acquisition is in the preliminary negotiations stage for a parking agreement with the MBTA Design and Construction Review.

Public Realm: The collaboration with City Engineering Department in pursuit of Massworks Funding for the Washington and Bridge Street intersection is underway.

Ch 91 / Municipal harbor Plan: They have been communicating with the Salem Harbor Committee on the North River waterfront

Salem Design Working Group: This informal group has been meeting to provide preliminary design guidance.

- Impetus for Formation: The SRA received feedback from residents, civic organizations and municipal leaders who stated that the crescent lot proposed design did not reflect the cities desired aesthetic.
- Design Working Group Mission: Include members of the SRA, DRB, PB and their design team. Their mission is to use the community engagement process to create an alternative conceptual design, so the building matches the design standards. They will arrive as a new “baseline” to present to the appropriate boards and commissions.
- Crescent Lot opening guidance: One building on a prominent site. To create exciting and memorable visual moments for all users from North and South Salem, pedestrians, and drivers, and to reinforce pedestrian movements and access to the building. This will become a pedestrian bridge, so they need to explore timeless façade materials and glazing solutions.

Step 1: Determine the pedestrian path and how to move the volume of people across the site. Make the path visually pleasing, orient the plaza towards the North River, provide a connection to North Salem, embrace the grade change while bringing the building up to Bridge Street.

Step 2: Massing and building articulation: Respect the height limits and neighboring heights and to capture the commuter rail traffic by bringing it toward the train station.

Step 3: Exploring façade treatment and view corridors.

Step 4: Explore the pedestrian experience, orienting the plaza to capture attention from all sides. Determine how people will move about the site, located potential gathering spaces and programming space. Determine the grading of the staircase at the lower Bridge Street entrance as well as the multi-modal entrance to be located closer to the MBTA station. Lastly, to provide prominent views toward the North River.

#### Anticipated Schedule:

Conceptual Design: First Quarter 2021 – First Quarter 2022

Pricing Plans: First Quarter 2022 – Fourth Quarter 2022

Finalize Construction Documents: Fourth Quarter 2022 – Fourth Quarter 2023

Property Acquisition: Fourth Quarter 2023 – First Quarter 2024

Construction: First Quarter 2024 – Second Quarter 2025

#### Community Engagement Kick Off - What is to Come:

Charette groups, neighborhood meetings, public hearings, One-on-Ones, business associations, civic organizations. Additional information can be obtained at [info@salemgateway.com](mailto:info@salemgateway.com)

Mayor Driscoll thanked the SRA and Planning Staff for their stewardship. She stated that this quadrant of the downtown is important, and the reuse of this area is an integral part of northern downtown. This has led to other developments at this end and numerous non-functional courthouses so they need to be looked at as an entire corridor. The sites and permitting are complex and she agreed with SRA's developer choice. A community driven process will result in a much better project and the surplus courthouses in need of redevelopment will bring much needed vibrancy. The efforts of engaged community members will do a lot to reconnect this disconnected area of the downtown and recognize what we have.

Councillor Madore thanked the developer for their presentation and reaching out to stakeholders. She hoped that level of engagement continues until tenants are in the units. In regard to resiliency, she asked if they have thought beyond building materials and high-efficient mechanicals, have they thought about the future of utilities since preliminary market studies have determined that electric heat is better for the environment than gas which releases carbon monoxide into the atmosphere. Mr. Curtin replied that Covid-19 market study results may not be accurate, but they intend to look into it further, although this development is transit oriented. Mr. Curtin noted the walkability of the site that should feed on itself and aid the retail stores downtown. He added that a market study would be completed. Ms. McPike noted that in regard to physical sustainability, there will be a robust operations maintenance plan used to create green residence manual for each residential and commercial tenant. In regard to sustainability, Winn pushes the energy use beyond the Stretch Energy Code, and this will be incorporated into preservation of the courthouses. They will work with design team on window sizes, greenhouse gas emissions, etc. Preservation is the most sustainable resource, and they will capture existing uses and repurpose them.

Councillor Madore encouraged the commercial tenants provide jobs for Salem residents. She encouraged contracting with minority owned business owners found in the new Northshore Diversity Catalog that need a start to build their resume. Mr. Curtin replied that they are still in preliminary stages, but they are aware of the catalog. Mr. Curtis added that they have local on-site personal and hiring goals, as do their contractors.

Councillor Riccardi agreed with Councillor Madore's resiliency concerns and noted that the crescent lot is part of her ward and it is a tough connection to make to North Salem. She noted her excitement about the community engagement process since many residents are interested in the project and thanked them for their efforts. She asked how pedestrians would approach the site from North Salem. She appreciated the equity proposed in the new construction and ask if that would be carried over to the courthouses. Mr. Curtin noted the site grading to North Salem is an 18-foot change in grade change, so they are looking into adding a decorative and well-lit staircase as well as a multi-modal path around the contours of the site that will also be handicapped accessible with views to the North River. Accessible residential units will be provided at the courthouses accessed through the main entry connector where the elevator is already located. He agreed to speak further with Councillor Riccardi on accessibility related to the projects.

Councillor Prosniewski thanked them for their presentation and asked if they considered the use of the abandoned tunnel to move pedestrians across the street. Mr. Curtin replied that it came up during the interview process and they are committed to researching the feasibility of it, as they will with other MBTA items. MassDoT is already working with City Engineers on that corner. Mr. Curtis noted that the vibrancy comes from keeping pedestrians at the street level and using the tunnel it will raise security concerns and lessens commercial activity by directing pedestrians elsewhere. It would also be at an enormous cost, the housing economics don't support it, and funds are needed to make it happen.

Councillor Prosniewski noted the development on a flood plain and the concerns of providing a sufficient number of parking space for the residents. Mr. Curtin replied that a parking demand analysis will be completed as well as a traffic impact assessment. They need to advance the design which many change the unit count and number of parking spaces. They want to promote a transit-oriented development.

Councillor Hapworth noted his concern with economic sustainability and asked if the developer has studied the commercial spaces and what is needed for Salem since many of these spaces sit empty for a while. He stated that he is unsure about the sustainability of the Museum of Justice in the courthouse

space and what else could be in its place. He wanted to see a modern design but urged them to look at Halstead at Salem Station while also considering the history of what was once there. Mr. Curtin replied that they have significant time to determine uses of the commercial space and several entities interested in taking over the spaces particularly the courthouses. Mr. Curtis stated that the use of those spaces is key to the successes of the development, and they will seek out tenants that will make use of the retail space and underwrite the tenants that can advance the goals of the SRA and provide vibrancy years into the future.

Councillor Dibble thanked the developer for their presentation and welcomed Winn back to Salem. He noted his parking concerns given that 75-80 existing parking spaces will be lost to the public and the developer is seeking to use spaces in the MBTA garage. He asked if any lower-level parking was proposed and if the Conservation Commission will have issues with flood plain construction and protections, even if the building will be green and he hoped they won't use natural gas. He was pleased that the historic architecture of the courthouse will be preserved and that the Registry of Deeds wants to use the building. Lastly, he requested public comment. Mr. Curtin replied that they want the Registry of Deeds to be located at the courthouses. Below grade parking was explored but the budget cannot accommodate it with the income restriction units proposed and there are also engineering challenges due to its proximity to the waterfront; there will be parking at grade, under the building. Ms. McPike added that they have reduced the building development load and provided insulation to reduce outload. They intend to use all electric for heating and cooling but there is no commercially viable central hot water source available. The units will be electric ready with a gas domestic hot water to allow it to be electrified while planning for that future load. Electric is 3 - 5 times more expensive than gas but the benefits outweigh the costs. Mr. Curtin noted that the designs are always custom, they want the building to look as if it belongs in Salem and have completed recent similar sized buildings with the same methods. He noted that the images shown in the proposal and presentation were just a placeholder for a future design.

Councillor Morsillo asked if the crescent lot will include a community space for residents since many spaces aren't sufficiently sized for public meetings. She also requested the proposed affordability mix. Mr. Curtin replied that a community space will be one of the amenity spaces. Mr. Curtis replied that the percentages shown in the presentation are the maximum numbers based on income mixed. The middle, affordable, and lower-level housing have their funding maxes, so they came up with their unit mix based on funding availability. They will start with that housing then work their way to market rate.

#### Public Comment:

Anne Sterling, 29 Orchard Street. Echoed Councillor Riccardi and Mayor Driscoll's desire for pathways from North Salem that include a pedestrian bike path. She appreciated Councillor Dibble mentioning the loss of parking spaces while gaining even more residences and Councillor Morsillo's mention of their need for community space concerns. Mr. Curtin noted that Chapter 91 describes the requirement of publicly accessible spaces and that will be explored on the crescent lot. They are not proposing a no parking solution; however, they will need to generate concrete parking solutions.

Councillor Dominguez thanked everyone for their participation and comments.

#### Adjournment

Councillor Dibble made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting.  
Seconded by: Councillor Riccardi.

Roll Call Vote: Sargent, Dominguez, Madore, Dibble, Riccardi, Prosniewski, Morsillo, and Hapworth.  
8-0 in favor.

Rubin made a motion to adjourn the joint meeting.

Seconded by: Guarino

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

The Joint Meeting ended at 8:15PM.

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