

**City of Salem Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 3, 2015**

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Salem Planning Board was held on Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall Annex, Room 313, 120 Washington Street, Salem, Massachusetts.

Chairman Anderson opened the meeting at 7:12 pm.

Roll Call

Those present were: Ben Anderson, Chair, Matt Veno, Vice Chair (partial), Helen Sides, Kirt Rieder, Dale Yale, Bill Griset, Noah Koretz and Carole Hamilton. Absent: None

Also present: Amanda Chiancola, Staff Planner, and Pamela Broderick, Planning Board Recording Clerk.

Approval of Minutes

October 15, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

No comments or corrections were made by the Planning Board members.

Motion and Vote: Helen Sides made a motion to approve the October 15, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Kirt Rieder. The vote was unanimous with seven (7) in favor and none (0) opposed.

November 19, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes

No comments or corrections were made by the Planning Board members.

Motion and Vote: Dale Yale made a motion to approve the November 19, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Helen Sides. The vote was unanimous with seven(7) in favor and none (0) opposed.

Regular Agenda

Location: CLARK AVENUE (Map 6, Lots 7, 8 and 9)
Applicant: NSD REALTY TRUST
Description: A public hearing for a Definitive Subdivision Plan in accordance with the Salem Subdivision Regulations and a Cluster Residential Development Special Permit per Sec. 7.2 Cluster Residential Development of the Salem Zoning Ordinance to allow the construction of a roadway to serve twenty-six (26) residential lots.

Chair Anderson advised the applicant has requested a continuance until the December 17, 2015 meeting.

ROLL CALL Motion and Vote: Kirt Rieder made a motion to continue the public hearing to December 17, 2015, seconded by Helen Sides. The vote was unanimous with seven (7) in favor (Mr. Anderson, Ms. Sides, Mr. Rieder, Ms. Yale, Mr. Griset, Mr. Koretz and Ms. Hamilton) and none (0) opposed.

Location:	401 BRIDGE STREET (Map 25, Lot 74) and 44 Boston Street (Map 15, Lot 305)
Applicant:	HIGH ROCK BRIDGE STREET, LLC
Description:	Continuation of the public hearing for the petition for amendments to the approved Site Plan Review, Flood Hazard Overlay District Special Permit and Special Permits associated with the North River Canal Corridor Neighborhood Mixed Use District in accordance with the following sections of the Salem Zoning Ordinance: Section 9.5 Site Plan Review, Section 8.1 Flood Hazard Overlay District. The applicant requests the following Special Permit associated with the North River Canal Corridor Neighborhood Mixed Use District (NRCC) Sections 8.4.5 and 8.4.13 North River Canal Corridor Neighborhood Mixed Use District). Specifically, the applicant requests a Special Permit per Sec. Sec 4.0 of the NRCC to allow a multi-story arrangement of a multi-family residential use. The applicant requests amendments to the following approved Special Permits of the NRCC: A Special Permit per Sec. 8.4.12 Retail Use of the NRCC to allow ground level retail use to be amended from the original decision to exceed the 3,000 gross square feet for one retailer. A Special Permit per Sec. 6.0 to be amended from the original decision to allow an eating and drinking place on the premises to reflect the new plan. The applicant proposes to construct two separate buildings including the Community Life Center, a two-story building, and a five-story mixed-use residential/retail on the corner of Boston and Bridge Street with an associated revised parking and landscape layout.

Documents and Exhibitions:

Slide Presentation by Giles Ham, P.E. of Vanasse & Associates

Atty Joseph Correnti, 63 Federal Street, Salem, presented for the applicant. Other presenters included:

- Giles Ham, P.E., Managing Principal, Vanasse & Associates Inc., 35 New England Business Center Drive, Suite 140, Andover 01810 (transportation impact assessment)
- City peer-review services (in attendance for discussion, written peer-review to be presented at a future meeting).
 - Gary Hebert, Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, LLC; 5 Burlington Woods Dr. #210, Burlington, 01803

Atty Correnti introduced Giles Ham of Vanasse & Associates, traffic consultants to the applicant. Mr. Ham provided an overview of the traffic study support by a slide presentation.

Mr. Ham observed the current forecast for the current project with a mix of residents, retail and the Community Life Center (CLC) is 50% less than the traffic volume forecasted for the prior project approved for this site. The higher traffic estimates were based on the medical office building component which is no longer part of the plan. The revised plan for the site includes:

- Right in/right out only driveway on Boston Street, without left-outs or left-ins.
- Full access driveway on Bridge Street located as far from the Boston Street intersection as possible.

- The site location within a mile of the train station encourages use of public transportation, thus is an ideal site for multi-modal access.
- The area generally has good pedestrian support with crosswalks at Boston/Bridge Street intersection.
- Flint Street pedestrian crossing at Bridge Street identified as a location that is not safe for pedestrian and could be fixed.

Referring to aerial photos in the presentation for illustration, Mr. Ham gave an overview of the existing traffic flow on the busy streets abutting the site; Boston and Bridge Streets as well as adjacent Flint Street. He indicated the location of all existing traffic signals, turning lanes and pedestrian crosswalks.

Mr. Ham continued the presentation to discuss the traffic counts done at on Boston Street at the Bridge Street intersection, on Bridge Street at both the intersection with Bridge Street and with Flint Street. Counts were done in June 2015 and represent average conditions. Peak is during the hours of 730-830am and 5-6pm.

- Boston Street is the busier street with about 1600 cars/hour, Bridge Street a bit less with about 1300/cars per hour.
- Accident data reviewed (5 years) provided by MASS DOT:
 - Boston at Bridge Street intersection, about 60 accidents in 5 years, exceeds the average rate for the state, a lot of rear-end accidents and angled accidents as cars stop for pedestrians.
 - The Board requested clarification of an angled accident; Mr. Ham described this with the example of a car southbound (toward Salem) on Boston Street turning left onto Bridge street and encounters northbound through traffic on Boston Street.

Site lines of driveways were reviewed and are considered to be safe. The federal highway standard was used; starting at a point of 14.5-feet from the roadway edge, and measure the site line in each direction. The minimum requirement with traffic at 30 MPH is 200 feet, and for traffic at 40 MPH is 305 feet.

- Site distance of proposed driveways exceeds required minimums and is safe in terms of sight lines.

Traffic generators for the plan are based standard manual for the three proposed components: apartments, retail and the Community Life Center.

- Apartments- weekday morning approximately a vehicle per minute – mostly existing, which is not significant
- Total daily trips forecast 1,925 less than half of prior proposal.
 - Prior proposal was over 4,000 trips per day—driven by medical office building.
- Reduced by pedestrian and transit users to a net of 1636 trips per day.
- Most of the traffic is forecast to utilize Boston Street to access this new development; about 35% of the new traffic will utilize Bridge Street.
- Site generated traffic during peak hours is forecasted to add an additional 30 vehicles per hour, which is not significant.

Recommendations for traffic mitigation:

- Optimize Traffic signal timing at Boston and Bridge Street to better allocate timing
- Provide pedestrian phase to the traffic lights.

- Install pedestrian count down heads on traffic lights.
- Right in/right-out only driveway on Boston Street driveway.
- Optimize traffic signal timing at Flint and Bridge Streets.
- Full access driveway at Bridge (located as far from Boston/Bridge intersection as possible) with lighting so the driveway is easily seen.

The Board asked Mr. Ham to speak to mitigating volume building on Boston Street northbound (towards Peabody from Salem), as far back as Federal Street. He stated this could be mitigated by signal timing at the Boston/Bridge Street intersection.

Mr. Hamm advised the site team is looking at improved pedestrian connections within the site in response to feedback received so far, including internal raised crosswalks.

Board Discussion:

- Ms. Sides raised a concern regarding Pope Street traffic that enters into Boston Street often creating a bottleneck. Should this be addressed with a “don’t block the box” grid? How can we prevent this neighborhood from blocking Boston Street? If a grid is added it should not facilitate illegal left-turns where they are not supposed. Mr. Ham advised a Grid box could help but needs to be properly sized, not too big.
- Gary Hebert (traffic peer reviewer) agreed the Pope Street intersection is a problem. Traffic does clear out on the signal, but a “don’t block the box” grid might be helpful. He recommended traffic counts for this intersection.
 - Mr. Ham advised a supplemental evening count at this intersection would be done.
 - The Board that traffic starts sooner than 4:00pm thus requested these counts be done for the window of 2-6pm and Mr. Ham agreed.
 - Mr. Hebert advised he has no formal peer review presentation for this meeting; the written report is in development. He noted the Pope Street intersection is a concern. He is also concerned the site will be a cut-through from Boston Street northbound to Bridge Street; he emphasized it is important the site plan discourage traffic cut-throughs.
 - Mr. Hebert also spoke to the northbound lanes as Boston Street meets Bridge Street and the discussions over two (2) vs. three (3) northbound lanes on Boston Street. The critical movement is the through traffic on Boston Street (highest volume).
 - Mr. Herbert noted that in the past the thought was to add a third lane to the Bridge Street approach from Boston. One lane for Goodhue, one lane for Boston and one lane for Bridge. However, critical movement is straight through traffic.
 - Adding a third lane to Bridge Street might not be helpful in reducing the queue for through traffic. He observed that signage for the 3-lane scenario to control the lane for Goodhue Street and the lane for Bridge Street in addition to the through lane would be difficult and likely just cause more driver confusion, and there appear to be other safety alternative that could be done instead. He also observed any widening of the intersection increases crossing distances for pedestrians so other solutions might be better overall. He has not yet formulated a professional opinion with regard to northbound lanes, but will provide an evaluation after receiving and reviewing the site plan.
 - He is also looking to see if the traffic data indicates any increase in traffic on Federal Street or other adjacent residential streets. He is also wanting to see if there are any changes to the site plan, particularly driveway locations.

- Ms. Sides observed the southbound Boston Street traffic from Peabody toward the Bridge Street intersection is dangerous for pedestrians. The street is very narrow and cars are right on top of pedestrians making this a very dangerous crossing. Mr. Hebert agreed there is a pinch point near the Flynntan site and Dunkin Donuts where the roadway narrows which is a concern.
 - Collectively the Board asked Mr. Hebert and Mr. Ham to look into how we improve this pedestrian crossing and make it safer. Possibly relocate the traffic light, or compress the intersection. The Board is interested in hearing alternatives to give pedestrians a safer crossing here.
- Mr. Ham noted there is not a crosswalk over Proctor Street adjacent Walgreens and this intersection.
 - Mr. Hebert noted that this intersection needs a crosswalk. The Board collectively agreed this should be added as part of the project.
- Mr. Rieder asked to understand how much flexibility there is in selecting the driveway location on the Bridge Street side of the site.
 - Mr. Ham advised that optimum traffic management places the driveway as far as possible from Boston Street. The curve in Bridge Street as you approach Boston Street will impede sight distances. He advised that if there is a desire to relocate the driveway the site line distances would need to be measured again.

Chair Anderson opened the meeting to public comment:

- Jane Arlander, 93 Federal Street; Agreed Pope Street is a problem. There is also a flooding issue at Proctor and Pope Street. All of Boston Street adjacent the Gateway Center site is flood-prone due to the surrounding topography. Concerned that Pope Street queuing is on the opposite side of the site driveway on Boston Street and will create traffic conflicts and cut-through traffic in Gateway Center from Pope Street.
 - Chair Anderson and Mr. Ham advised the driveway/curbcut configuration will prohibit this via right-in, right-out possibly with a triangle island between.
 - Ms. Arlander followed up to state she is concerned about left turns from Bridge Street into the site; that queuing on Bridge Street for the light could impede access.
 - Adding a third lane on Boston Street to Bridge Street may increase traffic on Federal Street.
- Meg Twohey, 122 Federal Street; asked to know more about plans for sidewalks. The current Bridge Street sidewalk is not usable (utility poles in the middle of it), it is very narrow and too close to traffic. Is this sidewalk being redone? Are utilities going underground?
 - Chair Anderson advised the poles along the sidewalk belong to the utility company.
 - Atty Correnti advised these utility poles are problematic. They are high voltage lines, controlled by National Grid. The developer has no control over this but is in favor of seeing the power lines go underground. A lobbying effort to National Grid is needed to persuade them to do this work.
 - Mr. Rieder observed the poles stop midway opposite the self-storage facility. The corner of Boston and Bridge Streets adjacent the the site does not have these utility poles.
 - Atty Correnti advised the developer will present more information on the sidewalks.
 - Ms. Twohey asked if the land for a third lane on northbound Boston Street will be preserved on the property regardless of whether built now or not.

- Atty Correnti said yes, setbacks will provide the land so it will be available to the city.
 - Ms. Twohey advised the Board the purpose of tonight’s meeting was not disseminated in a timely manner. Neighbors wish to know when the Planning Board plans to discuss the special permits.
 - Director of Planning Lynn Duncan sought to clarify exactly what agenda details the public attendees were especially interested in and confirmed with Ms. Twohey they want to be advised in advance when the Planning Board will discuss the findings for the NRCC.
 - Ms. Twohey clarified the neighborhood is extremely interested in attending the Planning Board meeting when the Board reaches this point in their deliberations as their interpretation of the NRCC Master Plan differs from how the City Planning Department interprets the plan.
 - Atty Correnti advised the applicant position is that these specific project elements cannot be communicated in advance. The flow of information between the Board and the applicant would be impeded if the agenda is defined so narrowly as to limit the discussion to specific aspects of a project.
 - Ms. Duncan advised all parties attempt to do their best in communicating the agenda. When the Board discusses findings they will attempt to signal the public. Interested members of the public are always welcome to contact Planning Department staff for information.
- Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street; concerned about the site elevation in relation to the sidewalk. Is the entire site raised? If so, she is concerned that cars turning in at the Bridge Street driveway will be going uphill, and thus visibility is impeded due to the increased grade. She is also concerned about snow obstructing visibility for drivers turning in/out of the Bridge Street driveway. She asked to know the distance from the current driveway location to the “elbow”, that is, the curve in Bridge Street as a driver approaches Boston Street.
 - Atty Correnti advised the current elevation is a pre-load, portions of the site will be raised.
 - Ms. Wilbert restated the question, is the exit a ramp?
 - Atty Correnti advised the developer will have engineers answer this at next meeting.
 - Mr. Ham advised the distance is an estimated 600 feet from the driveway to the elbow or curve in Bridge Street. This is why the driveway is situated so far from the Bridge/Boston intersection. He will verify and distance it will be presented at the next meeting.
- Tim Jenkins, 18 Broad Street; asked to know how building heights are measured. Is the measurement taken from the pre-loaded elevation or some other method?
 - Atty Correnti advised the engineer will report on this at a later meeting.
- Lou Sirianni, 6 Botts Court; asked about the process and schedule the applicant is pursuing as the project moves through the permitting process. Will the architects be making a presentation to the Planning Board?
 - Atty Correnti advised yes, the applicant is working a dual track with the DRB (Design Review Board) and the Planning Board. They hope to present revisions to the DRB in January. DRB makes their recommendation to the Planning Board.
 - Mr. Sirianni asked if there is a rearranged site plan based on public feedback the applicant has received to date.

- Atty Correnti advised work is being done and will be presented to the DRB. The applicant is listening and trying to take public feedback into account.
- Mr. Sirriani restated his objection to the CLC location as initially presented. It is poor positioning; the building needs to be repositioned on the site. A simple solution is to turn the building 90 degrees.

ROLL CALL Motion and Vote: Helen Sides made a motion to continue the public hearing to December 17, 2015, seconded by Kirt Rieder. The vote was unanimous with eight (8) in favor (Mr. Anderson, Mr. Veno, Ms. Sides, Mr. Rieder, Ms. Yale, Mr. Griset, Mr. Koretz and Ms. Hamilton) and none (0) opposed.

Old/New Business

- **2016 Planning Board Meeting Schedule**

Chair Anderson advised the draft schedule prepared by the planning department staff is consistent with the 1st and 3rd Thursday schedule used in previous years. He called for any requested changes; the Board indicated no changes are needed at this time.

Motion and Vote: Bill Griset made a motion to approve the draft schedule as presented by staff, seconded by Carole Hamilton. The vote was unanimous with seven (7) in favor (Mr. Anderson, Ms. Sides, Mr. Rieder, Ms. Yale, Mr. Griset, Mr. Koretz and Ms. Hamilton) and none (0) opposed.

- **Gate at 28 Goodhue Street**

Staff planner Amanda Chiancola reported the post has been removed from the common pathway.

- **Chair Anderson reported that written notice has been received from Susan St. Pierre Consulting Services on behalf of Salem Willows Yacht Club of a Chapter 91 license application.**
- **CPC (Community Preservation Committee) appointment**

Chair Anderson reported that Helen Sides has resigned her appointment as the Planning Board representative on the CPC. After discussion, it was agreed Matt Veno would serve as the representative.

Motion and Vote: Ben Anderson made a motion to appoint Matt Veno to the role of Planning Board representative on the Community Preservation Committee, seconded by Dale Yale. The vote was unanimous with eight (8) in favor (Mr. Anderson, Ms. Sides, Mr. Rieder, Ms. Yales, Mr. Kortez, Mr. Veno and Ms. Hamilton).

Adjournment

Motion and Vote: Matt Veno made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Carole Hamilton. The vote was unanimous with eight (8) in favor (Mr. Anderson, Mr. Veno, Ms. Sides, Mr. Rieder, Ms. Yale, Mr. Griset, Mr. Koretz and Ms. Hamilton) and none (0) opposed.

Chairman Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.

For actions where the decisions have not been fully written into these minutes, copies of the decisions have been posted separately by address or project at: <http://www.salem.com/node/2186/minutes/2015>

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Broderick, Recording Clerk

Approved by the Planning Board on 12/15/2015

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A § 18-25 and City Ordinance § 2-2028 through § 2-2033.