

## City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

<b>Board or Committee:</b>	<b>Design Review Board – Regular Meeting</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Thursday, November 18, 2021 at 6:00 pm</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>Remote Participation via Zoom</b>
<b>DRB Members Present:</b>	<b>Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras (arrived at 6:30), J. Michael Sullivan (arrived at 6:15)</b>
<b>DRB Members Absent:</b>	<b>Helen Sides</b>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<b>Kate Newhall-Smith</b>
<b>Recorder:</b>	<b>Colleen Brewster</b>

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

### **Signs in the Urban Renewal Area**

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#### **1. 91 Lafayette Street:** Wendy's Signs, continued from 10/27/21.

Kelsi Hall was present to discuss the project.

Hall stated that they kept the Lafayette Street signage at 32.5 SF, which meets the regulations. There is no signage requirement on the driveway side because it's not facing a public way. As proposed, it measures 14.3 SF. She is proposing a 32.5 SF sign on the Peabody Street façade. All signage changed from internally illuminated to halo lit. She also removed the Wendy's name and logo from Enter and Exit directional signs and will remove illumination from these completely.

Sullivan arrived.

Miller asked if the SRA discussed the site design integrating better with the building. Newhall-Smith replied that the design team will use climate zone appropriate plantings and the SRA didn't mandate anything specific to the site. Hall added that they are willing to work with any changes that are suggested.

Kennedy suggested the signs on the side of the building be the same size and slightly smaller than the primary façade sign. Jaquith agreed with Kennedy. Kennedy suggested making the side façade signs 75% smaller than the primary façade sign size. The Board agreed.

Chair Paul Durand opened public comment

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Paul Durand closed public comment.

Kennedy: Motion to approve the Lafayette Street sign as submitted, the signs on the sides of the building to be not more than 75% of the largest sign, all signs to be halo lit, and to use non-illuminated directional signs throughout the site. Seconded by: Jaquith. Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 5-0.

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**Projects in the Urban Renewal Area**

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**1. 234 Bridge Street:** Revised proposal for installation of cellular infrastructure on pole

Attorney Daniel Klasnick of Duval & Klasnick was present to discuss the project.

Newhall-Smith stated that the project was approved by the SRA; however, the City Council voted down the revised option to install the cellular infrastructure on the traffic light pole. The applicant was directed to return to the original light pole option.

Atty. Klasnick stated these are the original plans from February 2021. After the DRB and SRA approved the alternate location, the City Council determined that the new location was not appropriate and directed the applicant to go through the design review process with the original plans. Klasnick stated that there is an agreement between Verizon and the City of Salem to address network service requirements in this area so there are fewer service disruptions during peak times. The proposal is to replace and replicate the design and appearance of the decorative light pole. The grey device in a 12-inch-diameter x 28.7-inch-high canister and lower on the pole is a 22-inch-wide x 12-inch-deep x 48-inch-high enclosure. The overall height will be 32-feet 9-inches. The lower box will be 8-feet above grade and both enclosures can be painted black. No ground equipment is proposed. Verizon Wireless has been able to successfully implement this elsewhere.

Chair Paul Durand opened public comment.

Osvaldo Sanchez, 26 Leavitt Street. Suggested there be solar panels on top of the lights to better light the street. Newhall-Smith requested he send her an email with his comment, and she can forward it to the Attorney for consideration.

NOTE: This comment was made during the public comment period for the Harmony Grove project and moved into this section of the minutes for clarity purposes.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Paul Durand closed public comment.

Miller: Motion to approve as presented. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 5-0.

**2. 73 Lafayette Street and 9 Peabody Street:** Schematic Design Review –  
Redevelopment of 73 Lafayette Street and 9 Peabody Street through the construction of mixed-use structures for affordable elderly supportive housing, compact residential units, the North Shore Health Center, and additional space for non-profit organizations, continued from 10/27/21. *Request to withdraw application.*

Miller: Motion to approve the request to withdraw. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miler, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 5-0.

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## Projects Outside the Urban Renewal Area

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1. **1 Harmony Grove Road:** Entrance Corridor Overlay District – Review of revisions to permitted plans, continued from 10/27/21.

Zach Silvia and Tony Boisvert of DJSA Architecture, Bob Griffin (Civil Engineer) and Laura Rutledge (Civil Engineer), Anthony Roberto and Jeannie Giuggio representing the ownership group were present to discuss the project.

Silva stated that they are presenting modifications discussed at the October DRB meeting. Previously, the Board felt the clubhouse should be redesigned to fit the revised residential design and to also make the residential buildings more horizontal and grounded. The Board felt that the wood tone wasn't appropriate at the entrances and the massing at the roof should be lowered on the south facades.

Perras arrived.

Boisvert stated that the community building design changed to make it more horizontal with a dark brick at the base to anchor it to the site. At the residential building, they changed the color of the roof edge at the bump-outs to match the higher roof color to strengthen the horizontal lines of the building. The front entrance bump outs are lower, darker, and they have been lowered in height to the third-floor level, which helps scale down the building. Along the canal façade, there is an additional bump out on buildings 1 and 2, and to give them a more horizontal look they considered adding paneling between windows to group them, but that changed the look of the building too much, making them look foreign. They hope the darker horizontal roof edge above is sufficient.

Boisvert stated that at the fitness building at far west end of the site, they eliminated the wood tone panels and replaced it with the dark brick. At the community building, they replace the pitched roof with a flat roof, used the same windows and massing style as the fitness building, incorporated the same dark brick base, to make all the buildings cohesive. They also added storefront glass along the canal side of the community building to take advantage of the canal views.

Perras agreed with eliminating the panels between the windows on the residential building and the move to a two-material palette, which is stronger than the use of wood tones. The community center changes are also a vast improvement. Sullivan agreed.

Miller stated that she liked the relationship of the lintel being higher and closer to the roof at the front entrance of the fitness center and suggested the same be done at the community center where the lintel seems squished between the windows. Boisvert replied that it created too much of a blank space where there is no other embellishment.

Rutledge stated that she followed the following criteria for plant selection, 1) coordinating the planting with the architecture, 2) site limitations: minimal area for planting, since much of the site are roadways, parking, and buildings, 3) environmental: sun orientation, snow removal, and flood zone, 4) maintenance requirements: the owner wants hearty native plantings that will withstand the new England winters, dog friendly plant beds, perennials that die back in the wintertime but return in the spring, and 6) seasonal

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interest and the owners preference based on their projects and knowledge of which plantings have worked well.

Rutledge reviewed the planting plan. 1) Canal Planting: A 6-foot-wide planting bed with a fence on the other side. The plantings will be grouped grasses and native shrubs. 2) Opposite side of the pathway on the North side of the buildings: A 18-foot-wide planting bed for shrubs and medium-sized native shade trees. 3) Front of buildings: A 6-foot-wide surrounded by hard pavement to place vertical trees and shrubs that bloom and provide seasonal interest. 4) Sloped area adjacent to the residential neighbors on Beaver Street, where deciduous trees and arborvitaes will provide screening at the top of the slope and shrubs and wildflowers along the slope for erosion control. 5) Grove Street Entrance: To the north, vertical trees and flowering shrubs surrounded by a lawn to be used for snow storage. To the south, small vertical trees and flowering shrubs. 6) Fitness Center: Perennials and shrubs. She spoke with the owner about incorporating a dog park to deter the use of the planting beds.

Miller asked if this project would return to the DRB for future review. Newhall-Smith replied that as an entrance corridor project, the Board offers a recommendation to the Planning Board who will ultimately vote on the project.

Miller suggested that they are using too many plantings and too many varieties of plantings for such a small site. She suggested several alternative plantings, recommended that the tight/linear alignment lines of trees be broken down to a more casual arrangement throughout the site, and suggested alternative decorative grasses. Miller specifically offered the following comments:

- Overall there is a good, hardy plant selection. Generally, the planting design could be a little looser, less regimented.
- Trees and Shrubs:
  - The trees are in too many lines/rows. They would suit the site better if some of those lines were allowed to become "drifts" or directional clusters.
  - Consider reducing the number of tree species. Without an in-depth review of each line of trees, the initial impression is that almost every group is a unique species. It would strengthen the design to have some repeating species.
  - Please keep the Nyssa -- a fantastic, hardy choice.
  - Also, the Hinoki Cypress -- an interesting plant. I'd like to see these not by themselves, but in groups of three.
- Other plant material:
  - The hydrangea doesn't fit the plant palette as well as the other selections. But there are many to choose from. Limelight or Annabelle (looser, larger species) might work, but a small showy Nikko Blue would not be appropriate.
  - As with the tree layout, less rows/lines and more grouping of plant material would be positive to loosen up the site. The tall grasses, which are very stiff, might be replaced with Baptisa/false indigo -- a great summer perennial that tolerates snow storage well.

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- Finally, the catmint is a fine plant, but perhaps a hardy Russian Sage would help to pump up the planting -- and would add some texture that the catmint lacks.
- Dog areas: The dog park is a great idea, but the areas that will be damaged are by the doors. The project team might install some strategically placed gravel areas to avoid the patchy grass blight that will occur at entrances.

Perras asked for the nature of crossing the railroad tracks. Griffin replied that it is meant to be a bike and pedestrian path connecting to Harmony Grove Road. It is approximately 10-feet-wide to the west and widens to 14-feet wide at the east to allow emergency vehicles to travel if necessary. Sullivan asked if the path of the train tracks is at grade or a bridge. Griffin replied on grade, the train tracks are used approximately once a week, the train moves slowly down the tracks and is guided by railroad employees that will walk alongside it. Chair Durand asked if warning signs for the train will be incorporated. Griffin replied yes, along with striping at the pavement.

Miller appreciates the incorporation of a dog park and noted that the patch of lawn closest to the front doors is typically the most used by tenants with pets and the lawn will quickly die. She suggested including small gravel areas closer to the entrance in addition to a dog park.

Chair Paul Durand opened public comment

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Paul Durand closed public comment.

Sullivan stated that the project has come a long way and he is willing to approve it with landscaping suggestions only.

Perras: Motion to approve as presented with the landscape and planting modifications suggested. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 6-0.

### **New / Old Business**

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1. Approval of Minutes:
  - a. October 27, 2021

Sullivan: Motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 27, 2021. Seconded by: Jaquith.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 6-0.

2. Staff Updates, if any:

Perras suggested that signage be reviewed at the end of the agenda rather than the beginning, when the Board is more refreshed. Chair Durand replied that signage is

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usually simpler, it's better to keep it first to get it out of the way and suggested the review of signage be more concise.

Newhall-Smith stated that at the December meeting the 2022 schedule will be reviewed. She noted that the city's mandate for remote meetings ends at the end of the year and Boards must decide if they should stay remote or become hybrid so the public will have the option to stay home. The state's emergency Covid regulations will be lifted on April 1, 2022, barring any changes, the Board will be required to return to in-person meetings.

Kennedy stated that he will not be available for the January 2022 DRB meeting.

### **Adjournment**

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn. Seconded by: Perras.

Roll Call: Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, Durand in favor. Passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:15PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City  
Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-203