

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

<b>Board or Committee:</b>	<b>Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 6:00 PM</b>
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	<b>98 Washington Street, First Floor Conference Room</b>
<b>SRA Members Present:</b>	<b>Chair Grace Napolitano, David Guarino, Dean Rubin</b>
<b>SRA Members Absent:</b>	<b>Russ Vickers</b>
<b>Others Present:</b>	<b>Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development</b>
	<b>Kathryn Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner</b>
<b>Recorder:</b>	<b>Kathryn Newhall-Smith</b>

Chair Napolitano calls the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

### **Executive Director's Report**

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Mr. Daniel stated that:

- A. Lappin Park: The originally proposed Lappin Park artificial turf pilot program has been put on hold. While the DRB offered a favorable recommendation, communications received from the Lappin family and from a group of local architects that were not in favor of installing the turf has prompted additional discussions. The Mayor met with DPS and Planning Staff to discuss options. For this season the City will install the resin material around the one tree in the test area and will either reseed or re-sod the rest of the park. The city will engage with a landscape architect in the coming months to create a new plan for the park.

Catherine Miller, 15 Warren Street. She is supportive of the City's efforts to revise its plans for the park. She believes that bringing on a Landscape Architect is a positive decision. She encourages the City to also include the Tree Warden in these discussions. She would like to see public outreach and a way to take comments on the design of the park.

- B. Hampton Inn Sign: The applicant proposed a sign that met the tenets of the SRA's approval. Newhall-Smith confirmed that the applicant will be on the ZBA's April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting agenda.

### **New / Old Business**

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#### **1. Request from Village Tavern: Operate a shuttle on the Essex Street Pedestrian Mall**

Ms. Newhall-Smith reviewed the procedural history associated with this application for the Board:

- Mr. Ingemi met with the City Solicitor and with representatives from the Salem Police Traffic Division. Upon suggestion from Atty. Renard, Mr. Ingemi filed a City Council petition for permission to operate the shuttle on the ped mall.
- The Council received the petition and referred it to the Council Subcommittee on Ordinance, Licenses, and Legal Affairs (OLLA).
- Councillor Madore, Chair of OLLA, referred the proposal to the Traffic and Parking Commission for review and recommendation.

- Traffic and Parking met on February 6<sup>th</sup> and offered a positive recommendation for the proposal.
- The applicant is before the SRA seeking another positive recommendation from the SRA before returning to OLLA and the full City Council.

Mr. Ingemi, owner of the Village Tavern, presents his proposal:

- Since the restaurant doesn't have street traffic passing by, he wants to increase visibility.
- Proposal is based on his experience in Florida and using these small open-air shuttles to get around.
- This is an opportunity to serve the tourists in Salem
- The shuttle is electric, open air, 35 mph or less, fully insured and registered.
- The Police Department would like the shuttle drivers to go through their own training program before operations begin.

Chair Napolitano asked if the SRA has the sole authority over vehicular passage on the mall. She also asks about signage on the shuttle.

Mr. Daniel asks about storage of the shuttle. Mr. Ingemi responded that the shuttle will be in use approximately 6 months out of the year. It will be stored offsite in the off-season. When it is in season, the shuttle will be drive onto the VT patio and parked in the right corner behind the hostess stand. It will be covered by a custom-made tarp.

Ms. Newhall-Smith asks about displacement of patio tables and chairs. Mr. Ingemi replies that the 'parking area' does not currently have tables and chairs in it.

Mr. Guarino states that the parking area and entrance thereto is a place where people congregate. Is it safe to drive the shuttle into this space?

Chair Napolitano confirms that operations will end at dusk, not when the restaurant closes.

Mr. Guarino asks if the Police Department had any concerns. Mr. Ingemi stated that he was told that he would need to follow the rules of the road along the pedestrian mall.

Mr. Daniel asks about the vendor tents that are around the fountain and if there will be space to navigate the shuttle. Mr. Ingemi responds that police and fire vehicles can always circulate around the fountain so he shouldn't have a problem.

Chair Napolitano asks how many vehicles are allowed to drive on the mall. Mr. Daniel responds that besides the trolley, delivery trucks and municipal vehicles may drive on it. Delivery vehicles are restricted to certain times of the day.

Mr. Rubin asks about the shuttle's battery and also about the shuttle's route. Mr. Ingemi states that the battery will power the shuttle for a full day before needing to be recharged. He does not have a set route; the shuttle will run on demand. The idea is for the shuttle to be driving throughout the hours of operation. He will not operate it the last two weekends in October since the ped mall is too busy.

Chair Napolitano asks where the Salem Trolleys are stored when not in use. Jim Hurrell, Salem Trolley, responds that they are stored on Broadway Street, behind the McDonalds. He has eight trolleys in his fleet with six operational.

Chair Napolitano states that she is concerned with parking the shuttle on the ped mall and asks if it can be parked in the garage. Mr. Ingemi responds that he does not want to park it in the garage due to the threat of vandals.

Mr. Daniel asks what the shuttle will look like when parked on the VT patio. He also states that most visitors to Salem park in one place and walk around the downtown to experience Salem on-foot. What is the benefit to having a shuttle as described in this proposal?

Mr. Rubin states that he understands the reasoning behind the proposal – it's the novelty of it.

Ms. Newhall-Smith reviews the City's intra-city shuttle initiative, it's proposed timeline and functionality.

Mr. Rubin asks if Mr. Ingemi could use his funds to sponsor the forthcoming City shuttle. Mr. Ingemi responds that his own shuttle will be an opportunity to interact with visitors and share information regarding his restaurant.

Mr. Daniel states that the ability to drive over the ped mall is a Council decision. He is concerned with setting a precedent with this proposal. He believes this presents a conflict with pedestrians and adds more congestion to the downtown streets.

Mr. Rubin is concerned with adding vehicles to the ped mall. He asks if there is a way to limit vehicles trips and/or how many vehicles can be on the ped mall at one time.

Mr. Daniel asks if Mr. Ingemi will operate the shuttle even if he is not granted access to the ped mall. Mr. Ingemi says he will not since the purpose of it is exposure along the mall.

Mr. Rubin asks about the Salem Hotel's proposal to operate a golf cart to bring guests from the parking garage to the hotel. Mr. Daniel states that the hotel did not pursue this. Mr. Rubin is concerned about 'opening the door' to other proposals if this one is approved.

Mr. Guarino states that the 'door is already open' since the trolley is allowed on the mall. He confirms with Mr. Hurrell that the trolley has had no incidences on the mall.

Mr. Hurrell. He is not opposed or supportive of this proposal. He is concerned about the number of vehicles on the ped mall and operating throughout the downtown and how that may impact his business. If there is only one shuttle, then he is ok with that. He is also supportive of the intra-city shuttle.

Councillor Madore. She believes support for mobility programs is a good thing and that Mr. Ingemi should use his funds and energy to support the city shuttle. She questions if the shuttle will solve Mr. Ingemi's visibility concerns and questions if additional signage can be added to help draw vehicular and pedestrian traffic. She doesn't want this to set a precedent for other businesses and would prefer to see all of the ped mall businesses work together on a shuttle initiative.

Mr. Guarino states that the city shuttle and this proposal are two different concepts with different goals and audiences. He is not as concerned about precedent-setting since anyone who wants to drive on the ped mall will need to go through the same process.

Mr. Rubin asks about the route and the range limit. Mr. Ingemi states that it will be a downtown cycle that includes Pickering Wharf. Mr. Rubin continues stating that this proposal is a marketing initiative designed to bring people to the restaurant and have the drivers interact with passengers to promote it.

Councillor Madore. The City has been talking about reimagining the fountain area. If this proposal is allowed now it may impact how the fountain area is either reconfigured or activated/programmed.

Chair Napolitano expresses her concerns: (1) safety along the pedestrian mall, (2) setting a precedent, and (3) lack of input from the Police Department. Mr. Guarino lists his concerns: (1) safety on the mall, (2) maneuvering the shuttle through the area where people congregate in order to park it on the VT patio, (3) lack of comments from the Police Department, and (4) aesthetics of the shuttle, i.e. the tarp, the signage and the burger.

Mr. Daniel reviews the additional information the Board will need in order to make an informed decision: (1) images of the tarp, vehicle signage and the burger, (2) a photo of the patio parking area, (3) clarity on the City shuttle program, and (4) formal comments from the Police Department. He asks that Ms. Newhall-Smith to reach out to the Police Department and to also seek an opinion from the City Solicitor regarding jurisdiction over vehicular travel on the mall. Ms. Newhall-Smith will also follow up with the applicant on the other requested items.

Guarino: Motion to continue this item to the next meeting.  
Seconded by: Rubin. Passes 3-0.

## **2. Superior Court and Crescent Lot: Update**

Mr. Daniel stated that there is no update on this project. He confirms that the RFP is due on April 30<sup>th</sup> and that the Board has the meeting schedule for the review of the documents in the staff report.

### **Minutes**

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No minutes to review.

### **Other Business**

### **Adjournment**

Guarino: Motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Seconded by: Rubin. Passes 3-0.

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 2-2033.