

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: 120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room
Members Present: Chairperson Grace Harrington, Conrad Baldini, Robert Curran, Christine Madore
Members Absent: Russell Vickers
Others Present: Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development, Andrew Shapiro, Economic Development Planner
Recorder: Colleen Anderson

Chairperson Grace Harrington calls the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

New / Old Business

Executive Director's Report:

- a. The City-wide visioning project called "Imagine Salem" has begun. A working group will conduct a series of small group meetings/conversations outside of City Hall to discuss how residents envision the City in 2026, when Salem turns 100. The goal is to identify shared values among the residents focusing on housing, transportation, and employment in the context of inclusivity and equity. An Imagine Salem website has been established with a survey for participants to take. A city-wide meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2017 at Salem High School. Training on how to lead the discussion is being provided. The school department will have their own visioning meeting later in March, but in future the two groups will work together.
- b. Daniel stated that the legislation to transfer the Superior Court and County Commissioners buildings to the SRA was passed on January 3, 2017 and has been signed by the Governor. Shapiro is organizing a kick-off meeting in March with: The Secretary of the Commonwealth, Register of Deeds, DCAMM, A&F, Senator Lovely, Representative Tucker's office, and Mayor Driscoll to discuss the project and to clarify the process. There is a requirement for the Registry of Deeds to be located within the Superior Court building and to occupy 18-20,000 square feet. An RFP for the reuse of those properties will be developed and the SRA will oversee that process.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. 99 Washington Street (Honey Dew Donuts): Discussion and vote on installation of signage

Shapiro stated that the applicant's proposed signage includes: two building signs, one (36 inch x 20 inch) blade sign mounted on horizontal black metal bracket, and a (36 inch x 21 inch) building sign mounted above the middle storefront window. Two vinyl thin sign bands will be placed at the top of the two storefront windows and a vinyl decal logo on the glass of the entrance door were also proposed. The DRB asked that the high wall mounted bracket be reduced in size so that the sign has 1 inch of space both above and below, and to change the blade sign bracket from a scroll bracket to a

side mounted, and for it to be mounted in the center of the sign band. The applicant has made these changes, so the DRB is recommending approval.

Baldini: Motion to approve as recommended by the DRB.
Seconded by: Curran. Passes 4-0.

New / Old Business

1. 65 Washington Street (Former Salem District Court Property): General project updates

Daniel stated that the LDA was executed at the end of January. The Housing Development Incentive Program Plan and Zone proposal is moving forward and a public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15, 2017. SRA representation and comment is encouraged. The Church Street lots were grouped in with the project because the program requires that at a minimum two contiguous parcels be included, but they are not being redeveloped despite the interpretation of the recent newspaper article on the project. Arrowstreet is working on a conceptual study of the City-owned lot adjacent to the MBTA station, which will eventually solicit redevelopment proposals via RFP.

Shapiro noted that the DRB began their review of Diamond Sinacori's proposal in January and comments were given; design of the Federal Street corner, less parking, less retail, having an engaging streetscape, and comparisons between the previous CBT design and their new design were discussed. The project will continue to be reviewed by the DRB in February. The DRB's focus will be on the general design concepts; massing, site layout, preliminary materials, etc. Their approval will allow Diamond Sinacori to move onto the final design that both the DRB and SRA will need to review and approve prior to the review of Construction Documents. The project could return to the SRA as soon as April 2017.

Chair Harrington asked what would happen if the City Council does not approve the HDIP. Daniel replied that the zone and plan would need to be approved prior to Diamond Sinacori applying to the program. If the Council chooses not to enter into tax increment exemption agreement with Diamond Sinacori, the feasibility of the project will be in jeopardy and an alternative plan needs to be considered. Shapiro added that the contamination revealed during the due diligence process that Diamond Sinacori took on would also present a challenge to any developer seeking to redevelop the site, and that the Council would need to recognize that when reviewing the HDIP. Daniel added that the cost of locating the remediation was a risk that Diamond Sinacori took on. Madore asked if the Council would approve the zone as is or if they could add or remove parcels. Daniel replied that that would be possible but is unlikely since only publicly owned parcels are included. If it is adopted it could always be amended.

Chair Harrington opens public comment.

Barry Neely, of 15 Lynde Street. Mr. Neely stated that members of his neighborhood are concerned about the parking after that article was published stating that underground parking would no longer be included. His building has 18 resident parking spaces serving 113 units and when new businesses come to the area they are given the right to visitor passes for them and their staff. Similar to Derby Lofts, it needs to be in writing that this new building will never be able to receive resident passes. The availability of parking is tied to property values which decrease when new developments are approved with fewer than the required parking spaces and then the new residents purchase parking passes which takes away spaces from neighboring residents. No one is enforcing the use of the passes and both the Salem Police Department and the Parking Department refuse to address it.

Chair Harrington closes public comment.

2. Discussion on SRA/DRB sign review and approval process.

A draft of the streamlined process was reviewed. Shapiro stated that in an effort to streamline the signage process, small signage projects and signage for single tenants will be reviewed by Tom Daniel, who will act on behalf of the SRA (as he is the Executive Director) to review and approve of proposed signage. This new process of approval will eliminate applicants in the Urban Renewal area from having to wait two weeks for SRA approval, subsequent approval by Tom Daniel, and then the Building Inspector, before the applicant can have their sign(s) fabricated and installed. Simpler signs that comply with all standards would undergo this new Administrative Review by Tom Daniel. Chair Harrington asked when a sign approval would come before the SRA and what would happen if the DRB approved a sign that did not comply with the sign ordinance. Shapiro replied that applications for larger signage projects and projects that don't comply with the signage regulations would still be discussed at regular SRA meetings. Some approved DRB signs are conditional upon the applicant receiving a variance for a proposed sign(s) that don't comply with the sign code.

Chair Harrington: Motion to adopt the new Signage Administrative Review process.
Seconded by: Madore, Passes 4-0.

3. Discussion and vote on reappointment of Helen Sides and Christopher Dynia to the Design Review Board.

Baldini: Motion to approve the reappointment of Helen Sides and Christopher Dynia to the Design Review Board.
Seconded by: Chair Harrington, Passes 4-0.

Minutes

The minutes from the January 11, 2017 regular meeting were reviewed.

Chair Harrington: Motion to approve as amended.
Seconded by: Baldini. Passes 4-0.

Adjournment

Madore: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: Chair Harrington.

Meeting is adjourned at 6:35PM.

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