

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes – Annual Meeting**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Annual Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, December 8, 2021 at 8:10 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

Annual Meeting

Mr. Daniel stated that this is also the fiscal report for 2021.

They want to refresh the by-laws and move the annual meeting closer to the end of the fiscal year. They will set goals each year, a previous goal was the courthouse project which is moving along. They also began a better notification protocol and he thanked Ms. Newhall-Smith for setting up that process. They continued their orientation sessions with the City Council and held a joint meeting to introduce the Winn team to the Council. They've collaborated with affordable housing trust and their work with Winn on affordability with the courthouse is along those lines. Mr. Rubin suggested that the Lafayette and Peabody Street affordability projects also be included.

They've added an expiration date for approvals. They've created a system for reviewing and allocating funding for public activation activities at Charlotte Forten Park. Salem Main Streets is the only entity to make use of those funds to date. To increase that usage in the future they will determine how best to structure the process.

Private sector projects such as the Grimshaw House have planned future revisions, the 285 Derby Street building had a couple sets of improvements and with new tenants. The Essex Apartments project on Essex Street was completed, they worked with the applicant on what is appropriate for the proposed 38 Norman Street project through Schematic Design and the applicant is now in the PB process, and the 73 Lafayette & 9 Peabody Street projects have also started their review.

The city did not allocate funding through the storefront improvement program since those funds went to COVID response. There were no new small business loans.

There were several signage improvements, Ms. Newhall-Smith assisted in the 2021 outdoor dining program and is currently mapping out outdoor dining for 2022, although that may shift depending on future rule changes. Several small façade improvements were made throughout properties in the city. Salem Main Streets and Creative Collection were part of the Economic Development Recovery and Revitalization Task Force that focused on COVID response. Salem Main Streets returned the farmers market to Derby Square, and organized last year's winter activation known as "Winterlude," masonry

work is underway on the Heritage Trail through Destination Salem, and Julia Barry is managing Old Town Hall, although the space was largely focused on the COVID response since it was used as a testing site. Ms. Barry is also working on a capital improvements plan for the building and opportunities for other utilization.

The SRA was able to move forward with many goals and made a lot of progress. The Board noted that a lot has been accomplished in only 12 meetings and thanked everyone for their hard work.

Mr. Daniel reviewed the SRA goals for 2022.

1. Continue to focus on the courthouse and crescent lot projects
2. Continue to communicate with and update the City Council
3. Collaboration with the Affordable Housing Trust
4. Update bylaws and procedures, accounting system, etc. and make any necessary modifications.

Mr. Guarino asked if the Board can vote on these outside the annual meeting so other members can be included, such as Board members not present at the current meeting. Mr. Daniel replied yes.

Mr. Guarino suggested the Chair appoint a sub-committee to work on these tasks, so the SRA be even more proactive with potential development projects, such as the Witch City Mall, advertising on umbrellas, etc. That way ideas be workshopped to further their position in a proactive way. Mr. Daniel replied that it can be considered, although it's a bandwidth problem and the progress many only be incremental. The community engagement for the north end of Washington Street was a result of the ULI panel 3-years prior. New development opportunities, such as funding the downtown parking study or the Church Street lots aren't reflected in the new SRA goals.

Mr. Rubin stated that a better dialog with the City Council is great to continue into the new year, since they work so closely with other entities. They can help generate activation where needed and work together on it. He asked how to get others to comply with regulations and decisions, such as the Witch City Mall. He asked if Mayor Driscoll has goals for the upcoming year that they should also focus on. Mr. Guarino suggested inviting Mayor Driscoll to a meeting as well as enforcement entities to discuss delinquent property owners. Mr. Rubin suggested another joint meeting.

Ms. Nina-Soto stated that collaboration was on her goal list for City Council and other Boards. She questioned how to work with property owners to make sure issues get addressed and noted that a conversation with Mayor Driscoll is important to ensure we are all working towards the same goal.

Elections of Officers

Ms. Newhall-Smith reviewed the current positions, and all are open to keeping them. Mr. Rubin stated that his term ends in April and if the Board is required to return to in-person meetings, his travel schedule means he won't be able to attend all of them.

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to maintain the same positions.

Seconded by: Guarino

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

Meeting Schedule

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the regular meetings are proposed to continue on the second Wednesday of each month.

VOTE: Guarino made a motion to approve the meeting schedule as presented.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto

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

Adjournment

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by: Guarino

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 39 §23B and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033.