

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
SRA Members Present:	David Guarino, Chair Grace Napolitano, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Christine Madore, Dean Rubin
SRA Members Absent:	None
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. At the May meeting he shared that two RFPs were released: one for programming at Old Town Hall in October (a new approach) and another for programming at Charlotte Forten Park. Three proposals were received for Old Town Hall with the contract awarded to the previous tenant, History Alive, who will perform their Bridget Bishop story, as well as other programming that will provide more public access to the building. The Charlotte Forten Park programming has not been awarded but an update will be provided at the July meeting. Board member Dean Rubin has been part of the working group for Charlotte Forten Park and the call for artists' was put on hold until the National Endowment for Arts was requiring a certain level of historic review. Information was provided by the city's Preservation Planner, Patti Kelleher, along with an environmental review previously completed by the city. The call for artists has now been issued and proposals are due in August 2023.
2. Artists' Row is up and running.
3. The Salem Arts Festival was in early June and despite the weather it was enjoyed by many.
4. The parking study by the Traffic and Parking Department is continuing, he and Ms. Newhall-Smith meet regularly with the consultant team from Stantec, David Kucharsky and Christina Hodge, the city's Director and Assistant Director of the Traffic and Parking Department. Data has been shared and they are building out their model.
5. Ms. Newhall-Smith has been working with Anna Freedman, the city Finance Officer, on managing the SRA's financial system. It was placed on hold while the city budget was being finalized, but that work will reengage soon.
6. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that there has been activity at the following downtown businesses:
 - a. Jenny Stuart, jewelry design, now located on Church Street is moving to the former LIV space on Front Street, which will be her retail operations, and she is opening a second location in the Lightshed Photography space on Washington Street, where she will meet with clients and design her jewelry.
 - b. Lightshed y is relocating to the moose building on Grove Street.

- c. Daily Table is still working towards a September 2023 opening and seeking to hire local staff, and she can provide contact information.
- d. Couch Dog Brewing will open in the next few weeks.
- e. Annie's Asian Mart will also open soon.
- f. Habanero Bikes, currently an online bike fabricator, is purchasing 264 Washington Street, former Art Corner store.
- g. Salem Flea is now open at 11 Dodge Street Court. It's the same concept as their open air market, only it will have an interior location open on the weekends.
- h. Amazing Pizza will relocate to the former Salem Spice store at Pickering Wharf and it will be an 84-seat restaurant.
- i. Longboards is moving into the former Finz space.
- j. The Salem Witchery is taking over the former Salem Dipity space, so one space will be used for events, and workshops and the other will be retail.
- k. Outside the Urban Renewal District: AMP Cannabis Dispensary is open on Highland Avenue. On the Grind Café has opened on Jefferson Avenue. Starbird Cannibus opened in the former Stromberg's Restaurant space. A tattoo studio will soon open in the Residential Records space on Bridge Street. Ms. Newhall-Smith also noted that she spoke with a commercial realtor who is working with 6-7 businesses all looking for 1,000 – 1,200 square-foot spaces.
- l. Ms. Madore noted that the SRA approved a dance performance at the East India Square Fountain several months ago. She saw the performance on Sunday, June 11th which she felt was fantastic, mesmerizing, and it changed her opinion about the fountain. She encouraged the approval of more performance art.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **23 Summer Street:** Modification of Approved Design – Request to remove slate roof and replace it with GAF Slateline fiberglass/asphalt shingle, continued from May 10, 2023, request to add skylights to the east side of the roof, and request to change from Hardie siding to LP Smart Siding.

Michael Becker (Owner) and Thomas Mayo (Architect) were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Becker stated that he had the existing slate roof evaluated, which he originally planned to patch, and the consensus from the roofers was that it would be disastrous to patch and an on-going problem. The roof will need new flashing around the chimney, new penetrations, which could lead to potential roof leaks. He investigated replacement and the structural engineer stated that it was not a good idea based on the structure. Mr. Mayo noted that the letters from the roofer and structural engineer were included in their packet. Mr. Becker noted his efforts to pursue other options, what exists is fully depreciated and a replacement with like or in-kind material is not in the cards. Mr. Mayo noted their earlier structural concerns and additional snow load due to the roof insulation code requirement. Snow and ice slipping off the slate roof are also a hazard to the public sidewalk and parking on Mr. Becker and the neighbor's properties. He believed new asphalt would be best to match the shingles on the new addition.

Ms. Madore stated that after reading all the material submitted, some of her comments from the May SRA meeting still stand. She was hoping to see more documentation, or a better case built, the structural issue as a priority, and material options to retain the look of the slate roof. She hasn't seen any effort to explore the options listed in the design guidelines such as porcelain roof tiles or synthetic slate. She asked if there had been any consultation with the Historic

Commission to exhaust all options. Mr. Becker replied that Ms. Kelleher noted that the roof shingle proposed has been previously approved at properties within the historic district. He noted that it is the same shingle proposed on the addition so it will provide cohesiveness. Mr. Mayo added that the price of synthetic slate products is just about as expensive as actual slate. Mr. Becker added that the additional cost would not be economically viable given that this is a rental property.

Mr. Guarino stated that after reviewing the May SRA minutes, he wanted to know why this wasn't considered earlier in the project and if the comments from HSI about the not laying out a case for why keeping the existing slate is not a viable option. Mr. Becker replied that the existing slate roof is beyond patching and repairing. His own building has a slate roof that requires patches and repairs each year and the more someone walks on it the more slate needs to be replaced and he's spent the cost of a new roof just on repairs.

Mr. Mayo noted that the Design Guidelines state that shingles such as GAF Slateline asphalt fiberglass shingles are an acceptable alternative. Mr. Becker stated that neither simulated vs. Slateline are actual slate and if one is acceptable to the SHC he doesn't why he shouldn't use it if it's been approved for the rest of the building.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the design guidelines state the following.

- a. Repairing and restoring the original slate roof is desirable
- b. Alternative slate roof is an option if the original slate roof cannot be repaired, such as SlateTec, Nu-Lok, porcelain tiles or synthetic tiles.
- c. There should be a differentiation between modern additions and historic structures, to know what is historic and what is new. The difference in roof material isn't necessarily a bad if the historic look of the original structure is preserved.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the Commission has approved the GAF Slateline shingles on historic structures.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted other design guidelines standards for the skylights and the change in siding, but the focus is the roof. Both were additional requests added to this meeting.

Mr. Mayo noted that the two skylights are proposed on the east facing roof and they would be hidden by the new addition along Norman Street and the new 5-story building to be constructed next door. Mr. Daniel clarified that 38 Norman Street will be a new 4-story development.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the Preservation Planner, Patricia Kelleher, submitted a second memo for SRA review. She recommended the applicant provide photographic evidence of the deteriorated slate, if the deterioration is enough where it cannot be preserved, the SRA could request the preservation of the slate on the street facing sides and use an alternative slate material for the side and rear. The replacement of some of the slate with an alternative slate product would comply with the Commission guidelines. Mr. Mayo asked if the GAF Slateline was listed as an alternative material. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that GAF Slateline is not one of the four options listed in the slate roof section of the design guidelines.

Ms. Madore noted that this is what her comments were based off and she hoped to see more documentation. Mr. Becker replied that he provided photos from the street and noted that on site he can see uplifted metal flashing at the corners, uplifted and broken slates throughout the field, patches in various colors, missing slate next to the chimney, patched slates are held in with J-hooks, and he's provided photos of all four sides of the roof.

Mr. Guarino questioned whether Ms. Kelleher thought the photos provided in May were sufficient to prove the slate was damaged beyond the point of preservation. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that while Ms. Kelleher wasn't specifically asked that question, she did review all materials provided prior to composing her most recent memo. Mr. Becker offered to provide additional pictures of the damaged shingles.

Chair Napolitano noted Ms. Kelleher's memo from June 10th regarding the SHC needing to approve the removal of the slate. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that it only applies to buildings within a historic district an approval of by the Commission may be because they would review the removal of a roof.

Mr. Becker noted that the east roof is only visible from across Norman Street.

Chair Napolitano questioned how to determine what constitutes so much deterioration that the shingles cannot be salvaged, which typically occurs through a hardship. She suggested seeking the input of the DRB. Mr. Becker noted that he consulted a roofer, the roof has been leaking incessantly, there is extensive rot around the chimney that has caused leaks. While he's not a roofer, the roofer said that by the time all the repairs and new conditions are in place the act of walking on the roof will lead to more shingle damage and ongoing repairs.

Ms. Madore reiterated that she is not fully informed enough to make a recommendation at this time, and she is leaning towards a DRB referral and when the application returns to the SRA everything will be submitted in advance. She felt that the applicant sending photographs and walking around the building during the meeting was a push to make decisions on the spot, when her preference would be for more packaged information, and she was not ready to decide. Mr. Guarino agreed and reiterated that the Preservation Planner didn't find the information submitted to be sufficient. He was in favor of referring the matter to the DRB but to also request Ms. Kelleher to provide input at the next meeting or provide a new memo based on more recent documentation. Chair Napolitano agreed. Mr. Becker noted that he only wanted to be on site to portray the condition of the roof.

Mr. Becker noted that the LP siding is like the approved Hardie Board siding, but is wood based and sustainable, while Hardie is concrete and fly ash based. He wasn't aware that he was required to use a specific brand name of a composite siding vs. using composite siding in general and didn't believe the two products were so substantially different that they required a separate review process and leaving the house exposed another month. Mr. Daniel replied that the DRB reviews specific materials and it's not unusual for a change in material or color to require a DRB review or a review by the DRB Chair to provide comment.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the SRA sets the parameters for how a project must be developed. The referral, which currently includes the proposal to remove the slate roof, should have clarity regarding the DRB reviewing the roof condition and materials changes, not just to approve a replacement roof.

Ms. Nina-Soto and Mr. Rubin joined the meeting.

Mr. Guarino reiterated that he wasn't convinced the slate roof couldn't be replaced or to give the impression that the SRA is supportive of a non-slate roof. Mr. Rubin stated that he has little

tolerance for developers who purchase properties only to find that the project requires more work than they realize then try to avoid the expense of by looking for lower cost alternatives. There will be pushback on properties within a historic district and the slate is an important aspect of his historic building, and that may mean investing in the supporting structure. Ms. Nina-Soto agreed with the points made by the SRA so far and she has not been convinced that the slate must be removed and would not support moving that forward.

Mr. Becker stated that if the slate roof cannot be replaced, they would not install the skylights and the skylights would only be included if there was an approved change in roofing material.

Public Comment:

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that she received the following public comment letters.

- Historic Salem, Inc, 9 North Street. Dated June 13, 2023

Louis Sirianni, 6 Botts Court. Stated that this high-pitched roof is highly visible along Summer Street, between Essex and Chestnut Streets and the ridges have a heavy copper flashing with provides a distinction in addition to the slate roof, that they may want to retain. One of the design guidelines suggests that the historic component of a development should have its own distinction relative to an addition, which plays into the reason why the slate should be replaced rather than match the asphalt shingles on the addition.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

The SRA discussed receiving input from the DRB on whether the slate roof was deteriorated enough to consider replacement and to provide an assessment, given that retaining the slate roof would be in the best interest of the city. Mr. Daniel clarified that the SRA is leaning towards either preserving or replacing the slate and the DRB can provide their opinion on whether the roof is repairable, but the ask of the DRB needs to be clarified. Ms. Madore replied to remove the slate roof although the SRA is not convinced that that will be the case, and to determine whether the replacement should be slate or the GAF Slateline, with additional input provided by Ms. Kelleher. She noted that the structural concerns are valid.

Mr. Mayo asked who would determine the condition of the slate roof so that he could provide adequate information and raised concerns with whether they would be qualified to make the determination. Ms. Madore replied that many people who serve on city boards can provide an expert opinion and noted that she has seen no evidence that the applicant has reached out to anyone or to someone on this historical commission. Mr. Mayo noted that Mr. Becker has spoken to Ms. Kelleher and requested a list of people to contact. Ms. Madore also encouraged seeking guidance from a member of HSI.

Mr. Becker stated that while he respects the opinion of Mr. Sirianni, there are only a couple pieces of copper left on the roof and most are now sheet metal.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to refer the proposal to the DRB to evaluate the request to remove the slate roof, potential replacement materials if is recommended that the slate cannot be replaced one-to-one, and to review the skylight proposal and the siding. Seconded by: Nina-Soto. Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin – opposed, Napolitano. 4-1 in favor.

Chair Napolitano requested an additional memo from Mr. Kelleher.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the DRB will also provide input on whether the roof is so deteriorated that it must be removed. Mr. Becker requested a determination on whether it would relate to all four sides of the roof on only the front.

New / Old Business

1. **32-34 Federal Street:** Consideration of WinnDevelopment's request to partner with Urban Smart Growth (USG) for the historic restoration, redevelopment, and reuse of the two court buildings at 32-34 Federal Street.

Adam Stein and Ramie Schneider of WinnDevelopment and Lance Robbins and Aaron Iskowitz of Urban Smart Growth, were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Stein stated that Urban Smart Growth is their potential partner for the courthouse buildings, and he reiterated their goals since the start of the project. He noted that it is essential to bring in the right partner was always part of their business plan. This partnership will ensure that the buildings are brought back to life, the community's feedback will be essential to the process, and the larger project goals of the city and SRA like historic preservation and public access will be met. USG has shared long-term investment goals and creating long-lasting community programs, expertise in historic adaptive reuse, experience, and capacity to take on the challenge. They would enter a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the courthouses, and they are at the start of their due diligence period. A full-scale window survey is underway to advance the MHC and MPS process, they have executed their DCAMM license agreement to provide additional building access. They've begun several rounds of community meetings and spent over 1-year working together, they have shared passions and USG is a huge fan of the city of Salem and are excited to invest in the buildings.

Mr. Robbins stated that the project is both exciting and in their wheelhouse. They've developed many properties, many of them are significantly larger, but not as complex in terms of architecture. Their philosophy is "good community is good business," and they start at the ground up and speak to local stakeholders. He noted that Hope Artiste Village in Rhode Island has housed a farmers' market for over a decade and presented a short film about their award-winning project in Columbus, Ohio, where they preserved the feel of the building, gave artist a place to express themselves, provided a space to elevate and elevate the academic community.

Mr. Robbins noted that they had a major role in the renovation of the Colt Gun Factory in Hartford, CT, where they spent 4 years completing the project, as well as a similar project in Pawtucket, RI that was more than one million square feet. Hope Artiste Village, in North Providence, was an abandoned former weaving factory that created the parachutes for Normandy invasion. The property started at \$7 /square-foot and is it now closer to \$20. It is a long process that does not happen overnight and phasing in the various aspects is an artform in some ways to ensure the process is engaging and respectful to the community, and his experience at U.C. Berkely taught him that in palpable ways. He's been in this business for nearly 45 years so the process is not new although each project is unique, and this project would be the most beautiful and has the best organized community surrounding it. It would also be the most challenging

because it is so iconic. While this wouldn't be the largest or most expensive project to invest in, it would receive a lot of attention because they respect historic fabric.

Mr. Rubin praised USG's success stories and requested an expansion of the anticipated challenges they would face. He also asked if they had encountered a project that was too much for them and how they came to a resolution. Mr. Robbins replied that he is persistent but not patient and he has never had a project not work, even if it took 20-years to do so. They have overcome numerous issues, zoning being the easiest. He anticipated the biggest challenge to be respecting the finish work being preserved and the five main spaces. The art will be keeping them while still activating the spaces. It will take a while to build demand for those spaces and suggested starting with an events-based operation and let the guests do the marketing, along with artists' who will bring their followers and hosts events. The increase in price at Hope Artiste Village is symptomatic of demand and growth. He noted that determining the physical aspects can be done up front and then determining what partners will do what programming with them to bring in a consistent demand. Progress will need to be slow to make sure it works. They began at 400 West Rich with art studios rented for \$1 /square-foot, they had difficulty staying up with the demand and now they are renting for \$3 /square-foot and legacy artists are not being priced out. There must be a lot of staying power, people must become used to and familiar with it.

Mr. Rubin asked how the public would be engaged in a forward momentum manner early on since many are impatient and will provide negative comments. How will the public be encouraged to hang in while the process is on-going. Mr. Robbin replied that he would tell the public to show up and provide support by throwing events and letting them know what to offer them. They've been known to give the space away for added advertising. If someone said USG wasn't doing enough, he's invited to them partner with him and do more. Given that Salem is a small destination city and use of social media will make or break the project. This be a 1960's, on the ground, power to the people, process to make this happen.

Mr. Guarino asked WinnDevelopment why they wanted to pursue a partnership with USG. Mr. Stein replied that they went into this process with their eyes wide open regarding the need for the right partner. They needed someone with vision, creativity, who's experienced. They signed an agreement with USG in March of 2022, toured their properties, and discussed the project. Overtime they've developed a comfort level, their thoughts towards long-term and community based, how to generate economic stability by investing in the area, programming such as historic tax credits. It's a synergistic approach and USG brings what they don't, the commercial/retail event space, while Winn is good at creating places and mix-uses. They've always used partners in their developments and USG fits the bill.

Ms. Madore stated that her questions were asked, and she is happy with the answers provided. She had concerns because some development teams present a flashy portfolio as a front, but Mr. Robbins stating that this will be a long-term investment rather than a quick turnaround was reassuring since these projects may not work out within the first 5-years or longer. She requested what missing pieces they determined downtown Salem lacked that this project could fill. Mr. Robbin replied that he did not have an answer at this time because he didn't know Salem that well yet, but they will. They have a history of digging into the community and staying 25+ years. As a family business, they have no outside investors providing input, and their legacy income goes to charity. They've had a tremendous response from locals and a tour on June 21, 2023, for more stakeholders, where they will be asked what is it they want to see or have. As a lawyer, he found the Museum of Justice and the Witch Trials intriguing from an academic point of view and there

is a story to be told, but museums can be dead space. They considered portable video screens to provide different forms, so the rooms were never dull or quiet, and to make the space incredibly flexible and service the client, have it been the client's vision and not the developer's vision. They will set the stage and the client will dance. Issues will be addressed but always in a historically significant, well-maintained project, but it must be demand driven.

Ms. Schneider stated that they met Mr. Robbins and several stakeholders at the courthouses the previous week, Montserrat College, PEM, and Salem Partnership. The following week they will meet with 10 people on the Salem Partnership Committee, Mayor Pangallo, Essex County Community Foundation, John Andrews of Creative Collective, and others. She reiterated that they are still in the early stages of those conversations before they can determine what Salem needs and how to fill that void.

Mr. Robbins reiterated that the 5 main spaces will be minimally touched to make them functional, flexible, and modern. There will be some residential component in both buildings which will provide some commitment, which has been pivotal in his other projects. This is now neighborhoods in New York grew and became some of the most expensive real estate in the world, by bringing in artists and creating spaces people considered chic and wanted to reside in. It takes creative mythology.

Ms. Madore noted that Mr. Robbins touched on another of her questions, regarding starting small and providing easier access without tenants needing to spend money to occupy the space is a good place to start. Salem is a place where people want to be, but artists are being priced out. She asked if that could be mitigated and no business displacement. Mr. Robbins replied that using Wall Street based internal rate of return measurements where every dollar is counted, but they are a family business, but they will not make the last nickel that results in destroying the community. Their operating costs skyrocketed in other communities by over 50% during the COVID pandemic because of insurance costs, taxes, utilities, maintenance, etc. and rents were raised, but they're making efforts far beyond other developers.

Mr. Robbins noted that there is half a billion dollars' worth of new development within 1 mile of 400 West Rich property that wasn't in place when they opened. Included in that new development is the American Museum of Natural History and National Veterans Museum, while the Columbus Science and Industry Museum (COSI) was existing. They provide that the neighborhood was safe enough to walk in, but they do not want to destroy what already exists for ethical or economic reasons. You don't want to drive everyone out or gentrify it to the point where you lose diversity because the mix is what keeps cities vital and makes for creativity and eclecticism, which he values.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Executive Session

Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(6), to consider WinnDevelopment's request to partner with Urban Smart Growth (USG) for the historic restoration, redevelopment, and reuse of the two court buildings at 32-34 Federal Street if the Chair determines that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to enter Executive Session for Consideration of WinnDevelopment's request to partner with Urban Smart Growth (USG) for the historic restoration, redevelopment, and reuse of the two court buildings at 32-34 Federal Street. Seconded by: Rubin.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

Chair Napolitano noted that the Board will reconvene in Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to end the Executive Session and return to the general session with Chair Napolitano sharing the decision. Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

SRA Financials:

Nothing to report.

Approval of Minutes

1. Review of April 12, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to approve the minutes from April 12, 2023 as presented.

Guarino noted an edit to be made. Rubin amended the motion to approve the minutes from April 12, 2023 with Guarino's edit. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

2. Review of May 10, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to approve the minutes from May 10, 2023 with Rubin's edits.

Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

Other

Adjournment

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Madore, Nina-Soto, Rubin, and Napolitano. 5-0 in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM.

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