

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

**Board or Committee:** **Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting**  
**Date and Time:** **Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 6:00 pm**  
**Meeting Location:** **Virtual Zoom Meeting**  
**SRA Members Present:** **Chair Grace Napolitano, David Guarino, Dean Rubin, Cynthia Nina-Soto**  
**SRA Members Absent:** **Russ Vickers**  
**Others Present:** **Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development**  
**Kate Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner**  
**Recorder:** **Colleen Brewster**

**Regular Meeting**

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**Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. Three webinars were held last month for the business community. The city is active, and businesses are reporting good numbers compared to 2019.

**Projects in the Urban Renewal Area**

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1. **17 Central Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for the repointing of brick façade restoration and façade elements.

Mr. Rubin recused himself as a resident of 17 Central Street.

Mr. Newhall-Smith stated that the former police station is proposing an in-kind repair of a portion of the brick façade of the parking area, a replacement of lintels, failed bricks, repointing of quoins. The mason will save what bricks he can and replace what is deteriorated, including custom cut fan bricks above the windows. All windows and doors to remain. The DRB reviewed the application in September and recommended the use of a mortar to match the existing color tone and salvaging as much fan brick as possible. The mason agreed.

Mr. Nina-Soto asked if the quoin detail will remain or be replicated. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that they will remain but will be stabilized.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Nina-Soto made a motion to approve as presented and with DRB recommendations.

Seconded by: Guarino.

Roll Call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Napolitano.

Mr. Rubin returned to the meeting.

2. **32-50 Federal Street:** Schematic Design Review – Review of DRB recommendation for the restoration of historic courthouses and development of mixed-use structure.

Ramie Schneider, Adam Giordano, Adam Stein of Winn Development, and Steve Prestejohn of Cube 3, were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that Winn Development completed their DRB review of the Schematic Design in September and there were a few items for the design team to review.

Mr. Stein stated that they last met with the SRA in July, had 4 meetings with the DRB, as well as several neighborhood meetings and meetings with HSI. They have learned a lot and made meaningful changes. He thanked the city for their help with the review of this project.

Mr. Prestejohn noted the abundance of constructive feedback they received and that the meetings that took place have pushed the project in a positive direction. He noted that the feedback they've received was to: define the base, middle and top, elaborate on the public realm design, and define the garage level. They developed the design and defined the following contextual elements: the vertical connection, creating a meaningful street edge, creating view angles by carving out building elements/mass, and carving out the levels of the building. They've updated the renderings by using a darker tone, wood-like material to contrast the dark stone cladding at the upper stories which add contrast, break up the building, and manage its scale/height which made the banding less overwhelming. The Washington Street intersection's plaza connects to the sidewalk and invites the public into it. The river view highlighted the monumental stair, parking area below and broken-up building façade. The roof and cornice lines around Salem reinforce the volumetric forms that for the most part remain steady, and like the court buildings on Federal Street, have evolved over time. They are proposing a natural façade panel, wood-like panels at the lower level, accent panels at the lower level, wood-like column covers that meet the ground, casement windows, and metal coping edge to provide a cornice. The dark natural stone panels at the upper floors with accent panels at the balconies have a different window style what will help manage the height.

#### Public Realm Design

To ensure the courtyard has a strong public character, the landscaped areas that the DRB felt was too blobbed and created organic pathways, planters, and landscaped areas. They also integrated the shared use path to include relevant design standards. a monumental stair with deeper landings, planters, and place for people to sit. The bottom of the ramp curves to slow the speed of bike riders and providing them a space to pull off to the side and out of the way for others. The large open space at northern tip creates a gathering area to look at the waterfront and connects to the building entrances. The boardwalk goes under the building and includes bollard lighting, bench seating integrated to the floor design, that leads to the open plaza with bench seating and public art that links it to the public space. This will connect to the court plaza across Bridge Street and have ADA ramp access to revitalize the urban space.

#### Parking Garage

The original plan called for 36 spaces and the current proposes 62 with a two way in and out and 5 exterior parking spaced. They've planned for a 100-year flood scenario by elevating building

systems above the garage level by several feet to keep the areas dry. Those areas could also be waterproofed or have the equipment placed on pads, but they will continue to refine the design. Specific points to refine are a finalized accent color, refining the façade materials along Bridge Street, and to study the streetscape along Bridge Street slip ramp.

Mr. Rubin thanked them for the time spent refining the design and for their presentation and asked if the DRB has reviewed the materials proposed. Mr. Presetjohn replied yes, at the previous 3 meetings. Mr. Rubin noted that the slip ramp appears to be compressed and he hopes people still find it open and inviting. While the public realm is wonderful, he asked if the crosswalk be moved and where will be provided for the courthouse plaza. Mr. Prestejohn replied that people would need to turn right and then left after crossing the crosswalk to maneuver around a fence that would provide protection at that corner. An ADA ramp would also be required. Mr. Rubin noted his concern with a bottleneck being created at that intersection. He asked what hasn't been addressed in neighborhood meetings, what suggestions have they rejected, and what things you cannot do. Mr. Prestejohn noted the concern with the lack of brick proposed despite them proposing a natural feel to the building. Mr. Giordano added that their conversations with the DRB allowed them to arrive at the current design because the DRB wanted this building to have its own identity and it's that logic that helped them win over the other groups.

Ms. Nina-Soto thanked the design team for nearly doubling the parking. She suggested widening the crosswalk to allow for proper traffic flow since many will want to immediately cross the street from the higher crescent lot courtyard. She appreciates the wood-like elements but noted that the red accent panels are very modern. The North Street façade mimics features of the court building, and they could include more of those details to help tie in the new building. Mr. Prestejohn replied that the red will be a darker color that ties it to the county commissioners building.

Chair Napolitano agreed with the accent color selection that looks orange and noted that the Washington Street intersection looks busy.

Mr. Guarino agreed with all comments raised, particularly with respect to the accent color. He noted that parking and public spaces have shown significant improvement.

Public Comment:

Ms. Newhall-Smith acknowledges the comment letters submitted since the July SRA meeting. 15 were submitted and are available on-line.

Emily Udy, HSI & 8 Buffum Street. Sent in comment letters, appreciates the design team's willingness to meet, noted that she heard similar comments from the SRA, they are looking for changes to the Washington and Bridge Street elevations which are very busy and don't easily relate to buildings in the downtown. The North Street façade is more grounded and elegant and has more character. She noted the concern with the pedestrian experience along the slip ramp, which is not part of their projects, so they have minimal impact on it. She asked the SRA to consider how the city or state oversight can provide oversight into the site design since it will be used despite the monumental stair on the north and considered a public/private partnership. She noted that she looks forward to the design work at the court buildings across the street.

Chair Napolitano asked if the slip ramp is considered part of 1A. Mr. Daniel replied that the Bridge slip ramp is state jurisdiction but that can be confirmed with the Engineering Department.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Mr. Rubin asked what the SRA is being asked to do since they've now heard numerous questions and concerns. Mr. Daniel replied that Schematic Design review projects will return to the SRA for a final design review. The applicant will file concurrently with the SRA and PB and changes that impact the design can be incorporated into the final review. All comments offered will be addressed in the next round of review in 2022 with the final design plans that should address all open comments. There will be further refinements before returning to the SRA.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve the DRB's recommendation for the schematic design and they ask that the developers reflect all comments heard.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Guarino, Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

Mr. Guarino left the meeting.

3. **234 Bridge Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for the installation of cellular infrastructure on existing light pole

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

Atty. Klasnick stated that Verizon want to install a small cell equipment, they worked with the DRB to eliminate their original replica decorative lighting and investigated locating the proposed cellular infrastructure on an existing signal pole, which they did and found it to be feasible. The DRB provided enthusiastic support. The proposal is for a single antenna on top painted black to match the existing traffic light post, a decorative shroud to cover the bracket, exterior cabling painted black, an enclosure with radio and load equipment, and a utility meter to track the usage.

Mr. Rubin asked if this has been done elsewhere. Atty. Klasnick replied that this concept is new and completing their due diligence took time. Mr. Rubin noted his concern with the height of bottom box that could be easily reached. Atty. Klasnick replied that the bottom is 11-feet above the ground. Ms. Nina-Soto asked if the lower elements could be raised to avoid them being damaged because 8-feet above grade is noted on the plans. Atty. Klasnick replied that the metal cabinet was designed for aesthetics. The bottom of the meter would be a 7'-8" above grade, which is a serviceable height.

Ms. Newhall-Smith thanked Atty. Klasnick and the Verizon team for taking the time to evaluate this option.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve as presented.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

4. **14 New Derby Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for the installation of rooftop mechanicals for Flip the Bird.

Ryan McShera, of Red Barn Architecture, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. McShera stated that the mechanical screening will be located at the rear of the building, closer to the municipal parking lot. He worked with the DRB on the size and scale of the screening, which has been moved away from the rear building edge. There will be two areas of screening around each piece of equipment and the fire station will conceal the east view. The screening will be minimally visible at 4-feet-high with an 8-inch reveal, painted black to match the windows.

Mr. Rubin asked if the screening could be combined. Mr. McShera replied that the building owner didn't want to obscure the natural light for the rear tenants. The equipment must be placed separately to minimize the runs and turns of the duct and to distribute weight across the roof.

Ms. Nina-Soto stated that she would prefer to not see it where its proposed and would rather see the screening at the same height from the ground or not at all by moving both the equipment and the screen closer to the front of the building. Mr. McShera replied that the equipment must remain in place; however, the screening can be moved 3-4-feet away from the rear edge of the roof as long as they maintain a 3-4-foot servicing clearance around the equipment.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve with the adjustment to move the front screening back to maintain servicing dimensions of the equipment.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

5. **14 New Derby Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for the modification of rear and side elevations to include restoring window openings, adding a residential entrance, and exterior lighting

Zach Millay of Pitman & Wardley Associates was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Millay stated that the decision was sent to the DRB about the fate of the chimney. The SRA approved the keep the chimney and DRB felt the chimney should be removed since it wasn't adding to the building and created structural concerns. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the DRB reviewed all proposed modifications but had concerns with the chimney remaining and are recommending the SRA allow its removal.

Mr. Rubin stated he assumed the chimney was historic. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted the DRB conversation about the chimney being a later addition but not original to the building. Mr. Daniel stated that the property is historic, and the chimney is more than 50-years-old; however, Mr.

Pitman couldn't determine when it was constructed and no one else has either. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the DRB didn't speak of the 50-year threshold, but the architect noted that the addition of the chimney was for the heating system that was a more modern addition to the building and was not a part of it when it was first constructed. Chair Napolitano agreed that while it is old, it is not historic.

Mr. Rubin asked if the residents would gain more natural light with the removal of the chimney. Mr. Millay replied that the chimney is far away from the windows and will not affect the natural light.

Mr. Rubin noted that respected the DRB's opinion. Ms. Nina-Soto agreed but noted that she would still vote to keep it. Mr. Daniel clarified that there are different levels to historic elements. The SRA discussed asking the applicant to verify when the chimney was added. Mr. Rubin noted his approval with removing the chimney since shoring it up would be a lot of work. Mr. Millay noted that the chimney is crumbling and leaning and would have a significant structural cost to keep it or rebuilt it.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve the removal of the chimney as well as the other DRB conditions.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto not in favor, Rubin, Napolitano in favor.

6. **91 Lafayette Street:** Small Project Review – Façade modifications to Wendy's, including new materials and architectural features

Heidi Hogan of Wertzberger Architects was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Hogan stated that they are proposing several façade modifications that include adding a Nichiha red blade at the front façade, metal fascia on three sides of the building, metal awnings over the takeout windows, and cement siding to match Wendy's new branding. The access ramp will be upgraded to meet ADA standards and the signage would be updated but kept in the same location.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that she has received a sign application for the store that the DRB will review. Mr. Daniel stated that the new signage needs to comply with the codes and regulations. Currently the signage shows internal illumination, which is not consistent with downtown signs; halo lighting is preferred. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the signage, as proposed, is too large and needs to be reduced.

Mr. Daniel asked if any of the site can be converted into patio seating. Ms. Hogan replied that the owner has over 100 Wendy's restaurants and he is looking to add patio space wherever possible. There is no room in the front of the building although she will review the feasibility of adding a patio to the side. Mr. Rubin noted safety concerns with customers needing to cross the driveway.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to refer to the DRB for their review of lighting and signage.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

## **New / Old Business**

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1. **Lappin Park** – Request for permanent patio extension, submitted by Steven Feldman, owner of Gulu Gulu Café and Flying Saucer

Steven Feldmann was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Feldman stated that his restaurant has utilized a small strip of sidewalk off Lappin Park since 2007 for outdoor dining and has been doing the same for Flying Saucer which opened in 2012. The city allowed them to enlarge their outdoor footprint in accordance with the Governor's emergency COVID orders, bringing seating out into the park's pathways, which has been good for their business, and they want to continue the use of it on a more permanent basis.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that this application is the first to go before the Board for consideration of permanent extended outdoor seating. The Board can make a determination as to its willingness to consider the request; if the Board determines that it is open to such an application, the applicant can then refine the request and provide specific details for the project. Mr. Rubin noted his concern with the setting of a precedent if it were to remain, although if it were to be approved, he'd suggest limited hours so the public could still use it. Mr. Feldman noted that the sidewalk out the Flying Saucer slopes which is troublesome for their customers and he's like to explore this option before he went forward with leveling the patio. Ms. Nina-Soto loved the patio seating concept but agreed with setting a precedent and concern for where the use of outdoor seating would stop because the city would be giving away land. Mr. Feldman noted that some streetside seating works better than others depending upon the location and the park was underutilized, but the outdoor seating has brought it to life. Mr. Rubin agreed with rejuvenating the park but suggested public benches and tables. Mr. Feldman suggested the city activate the park in some way to ensure the park remains open and welcoming to residents and visitors.

Chair Napolitano noted the potential liability concerns and suggested the use of a formal agreement if it were to be long-term. COVID-19 has led the city to relax their requirements which has allowed for more activation and providing more seating for restaurants. Mr. Feldman noted his willingness to sign an agreement for use of this strip of sidewalk that extends into the interior of the perimeter of the park.

Mr. Rubin suggested the Planning Department investigate use of space. Mr. Daniel noted the multiple redesigns and modifications, agreed that outdoor dining and activation are good but people that are no longer able to pass through that space is not. The programming needs to be reviewed but repairing the patio could be proposed separately. Mr. Feldman stated that he will create plans for next summer.

Mr. Rubin suggested continuing the pop-up events rather using the space for an individual entrepreneur. Ms. Nina-Soto believed that neighboring restaurants would follow suit and activate

the space as he has successfully done and suggested an activation calendar for multiple users, not just by his business.

2. Redevelopment of the Historic Courthouses and the Crescent Lot: Update on Project Status

Mr. Daniel stated that the SRA approved the Schematic Design for the crescent lot and the Purchase & Sale are still being reviewed by staff. Mr. Rubin requested a Registry update. Mr. Daniel replied that communication hasn't been clear, and they are working toward clarity with DCAMM and Winn Development, and he hopes to provide an update next month.

Ms. Nina-Soto requested an MBTA update. Mr. Daniel replied that the development team is working on the remnant parcel, parking utilizing the MBTA garage at night, and they are looking at the property line between crescent lot and garage to possibly obtain air rights to extend the patio in front of the crescent lot building to the MBTA station outlet at the intersection. If it's included, it will be added into the project and be reviewed by the city boards. They are talking with Transportation Director regarding use of other parking lots, but the MBTA wants to ensure the parking garage is utilized by their customers first. A former DCAMM employee is now working for the T which has helped with communication.

3. SRA Financials: The Board received and filed the information.

**Approval of Minutes**

1. August 11, 2021

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve the minutes of August 11, 2021.  
Seconded by: Nina-Soto.  
Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

2. September 8, 2021 meeting minutes.

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to approve the minutes of September 8, 2021 with Rubin's edits.  
Seconded by: Nina-Soto.  
Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

**Adjournment**

**VOTE:** Rubin made a motion to adjourn.  
Seconded by: Nina-Soto.  
Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM.