

Salem State University Neighborhood Advisory Committee

February 17, 2016 – Minutes

Attendees: Dominick Pangallo, Adria Leach, Richard Riggs, Marcia Lambert, Ben Szalewicz, Councillor Steve Dibble, Polly Wilbert, Shawn Newton, Councillor Josh Turiel, Officer Harry Rocheville, Jeff Parrish

Guests: Councillor Tom Furey

Absent: Councillor Robert McCarthy, Maureen Call, Dana Lothrop, Jack Hoar

Welcome

- **Approval of January 20, 2016 Minutes**
 - One update on a typo
 - Approved

Construction Updates

A. **Sophia Gordon Center for the Creative & Performing Arts** (*Elizabeth from Daniel O'Connor*)

- Working on utilities in courtyard area
- Expecting National Grid to arrive on Saturday to get two poles in
 - Another crew will come to connect the power
 - Neighbors will be notified when they are doing this and of any outages that may occur

Questions/Comments

- Chairman Pangallo asked how long the National Grid outage would be. Elizabeth advised she believes 4 -8 hours but was unsure and that would be up to National Grid. She also added they may not even have an outage.
 - Adria advised if SSU receives advance notice of an outage, she will let the neighbors know.
- Councillor Dibble requested that having the utilities placed underground be looked into. Adria & Ben both advised that this most likely cannot be done, but they will confirm.
 - Polly suggested that this be done for every project the university does.
- Polly asked if the utility pole had a light on it. Elizabeth advised it does.
 - One pole is being added, there will be two poles now. Chairman Pangallo will check into which one has a street light.
- Jeff added that there was a fire a few years back due to the tree branches reaching over the pole and a transponder caught fire.

B. **287 Lafayette Street: update on noise mitigation** (*Ben, SSU*)

- Equipment has been installed
- Work will begin on screening
- Ben got notified the original sign application did not go before the historical commission, so it has been resubmitted.
 - Was submitted by the 2/16 to be discussed at the March 3 meeting

Questions/Comments

- Polly – is it just the sign or is it also the emergency light? Ben – that is up to the commission but both are on it.

- Marcia asked what was being done about the fact the students are still parking all over Lafayette. Councillor Turiel added there has been residence parking only on Summit and that SSU is pushing the O'Keefe lot.

Old Business

A. Garage update

- Many of the problems with the lights have been resolved
- They are at 40% with the only exception of 50% on the roof
- Exploring options of not having the lights effect the neighbors

Questions/Comments

- Polly – “Can we take a look at how this happened, why the lights are going into the neighborhood, why they weren’t working the way they were supposed to.” - Ben “We’ve been looking at it internally as to if there was a miscommunication.” - Polly “We thought we’d be able to have the lights off when no one was there, this has not been successful.”
- Councillor Dibble advised that SSU should be able to turn off the lights when school is not in session. 80% if occupied. He would like to see a commitment from the university that they turn the lights off when commuters aren’t in school.
- Councillor Dibble requested a status update on the landscaping and screening.
 - Adria advised that most of the neighbors have completed their mitigation with the school and SSU is now working with Rainbow Terrace and other neighborhoods.
- Councillor Dibble requested an update on what they are doing for landscape.
 - Adria is not sure if individual plans can be shared.
- Polly pointed out that this was another example of how neighbors did not get what was promised. Professional landscapers had come in and presented a plan, and now that is no longer happening.
 - Adria advised that all neighbors will have plans, but they may not want their backyards displayed at a public meeting
- Councillor Dibble asked if there is screening going up and if there were electrical outlets in the garage?
 - Adria advised that the building inspector denied the request to have screens put up and that there are outlets.

B. Residence Life survey of Viking Hall students

- Where did students live before?
 - Resident campus – 83%
 - Lived at home – 14.2%
 - Off campus apartment in Salem – 2.2%
 - Off campus apartment outside of Salem - .6%
- Population of Dorm
 - First Years – 1.4%
 - Sophmores – 69%
 - Juniors – 21.6%
 - Seniors – 7.1%
- Councillor Turiel commented that this study is not showing anything yet. People aren’t going to move from an apartment back into a dorm, once they’ve already left a dorm. What has

happened is the capacity has expanded. 350 students that are on campus have come from somewhere. Year one you are not going to see those kind of results. You'll be able to see it in future years, when instead of kids going to off campus housing they are going to this new dorm.

- Chairman Pangallo added it's a longer term study, "did you live off or on campus last year?" You would want the trend year over year to show that there is less and less living off campus.

Questions/Comments

- Audience – is there a requirement by SSU to live on campus?
 - Shawn and Adria advised there is no requirement
- Jeff stated that more data is needed to support this. As the school continues to grow it would be a good idea to consider having mandatory freshman live in dorms, and can't live off campus. Also agrees that students are not going to live off campus then come back to live on campus.
- Ben stated that they are trying to retain students and want them to live on campus. He interested in finding out if students would have lived off campus or are living on campus because they like their new options.
- Polly asked if students are going off campus because there is not enough campus housing, especially for upper classman.
 - Ben advised that SSU has engaged a consulting firm to determine where they are on housing; do they have enough, do they need more, if so what kind?

C. North Campus RFP review

- RFP was advertised today
- Looking at every building on North Campus, looking at moving Horace Mann to South campus and then figuring out how to use that building best
- Long term looking to move Alumni House and Dining Hall

Questions/Comments

- Councillor Dibble asked if the library was included. Ben advised they did not include the library as it is a brand new building that has already had a lot of work put into it. The main driver behind this is figuring out the Horace Mann switch.
 - Adria handed out a list of ideas for the designers to look at it. They are open to any and all ideas, and did not limit the amount of meetings with the designers.
- Polly suggested that the university obtain a master planner so that the planners do not have to keep relearning at every project. Ben advised that they have to go through the RFP process.
- Polly asked how the city interfaces with the Horace Mann move. Ben advised the city is looking at Horace Mann to fit into Harrington, SSU will do the other side of it, and work together. Both need space right away.
- Polly asked what the timeline on the RFP is.
 - Ben stated hoping to have someone on board in April and study wrapped up in October.
- Adria asked how can SSU better engage the neighborhood in this better then they have in the past?
 - Polly suggested public meetings, after the garage and people are unhappy, people are not trusting.
 - Chairman Pangallo suggested public meetings, notices, notification of when decisions are made and why they were made.

- Councillor Dibble stated he would like to see two meetings on this. One when the designer is on board and another before its final. Have it be a public meeting.
- Chairman Pangallo added it will be an agenda item every month.
- Chairman Pangallo added having a separate meeting, with the consultants, and making it a public information meeting would be helpful.
- Adria informed the group once a firm has been chosen, they will share it with the group. Also open to suggestions on how to provide information that is more user friendly then the construction blog.
- Councillor Dibble stated the University should be thanked publically for taking Horace Mann off the back burner and putting it at the top of the list.

D. Neighborhood disturbances

No Calls

- Polly stated there was an 80 Person party in the basement, 87 Roslyn Street.
 - Officer Rocheville & Shawn advised they have not been notified of this.
- Jeff asked if the University or City provide landlords with FAQ's about renting to students?
 - Shawn stated they do not have any formal language. Something is sent out to all students about being a good neighbor, and expectations. SSU does not give anything directly to the landlords. It is hard to identify who the landlords are.
 - Councillor Dibble added that most students would list their parents address as their address.
- Polly suggested creating a one sheet tips on housing. The sheet would create a structure of what is allowable and what could get them into trouble. Suggested having it ready for September.
- Chairman Pangallo added the police department has started a landlord outreach program.
- Jeff asked if it is reported back to the school if students get in trouble off campus.
 - Shawn advised the city sends the school the name of any student who gets in trouble and they school follows up with each student that has been reported.
- Chairman Pangallo advised that the University police are more then just safety officers. They make arrests.

New Business

A. O'Keefe Center rink replacement

- Rink bed to be replaced this summer right after graduation.
- Project will run until October
- Communication on project plan and traffic impacts will begin after contractor is chosen.

Questions/Comments

- Chairman Pangallo asked if this project was strictly interior. Ben confirmed it is. Also added there may be one day when 30 trucks have to come in to lay the concrete.
- Audience – Will there be vibrations issues like there was the theater?
 - Ben advised that is a question for the contractor, once one is hired.
- Chairman Pangallo added there there is a meeting on March 22nd at Salem High School with AECOM about putting a MBTA stop in South Salem.

B. Change to regular meeting date and time to 3rd Tuesdays at 6pm

- Chairman Pangallo proposed changing the meeting to the third Tuesday of every month.

- That would make meeting the same night as the neighborhood meeting which would not work logistically.
- Group agreed that 7:00 time works to allow people to get to meeting from work.
- Meeting schedule will stay as in for now while committee decides if a new schedule is needed.

C. Membership structure

- Chairman Pangallo asked group if they want to term members.
 - Appointments are open ended right now
- No decision made during meeting

Questions/Comments

- Polly requested that as work is going at O'Keefe there is a parking plan in place.
 - Adria advised it will be part of the logistics plan.
 - Polly suggests to have it put on the agenda whenever is relevant.
- Councillor Dibble asked for an update on the Habitat of Humanity project.
 - Ben advised they are still waiting on DECAM to provide case manager. It will take legislation to get the house down.
- Councillor Dibble asked, on recent purchases on homes, on how the homes were purchased? He stated SSU emailed him and advised they were purchased through a bond. How does the school get the funds to pay the bond back?
 - Adria stated she believes 75 was part of the Viking hall bond, not sure on 210. Councillor Dibble asked to please find out.
- Councillor Dibble asked for commitment to turn the home back into private residence.
 - Adria advised they will not make a forever commitment on that
 - Councillor Dibble would like to have the President reconsider and make that commitment to the neighborhood, especially with neighbors unhappy with the garage.
- Councillor Dibble presented an updated plan for the bike paths and plans to meet with the Mayor. He met with several people on the plans and is pleased with the input on the plans. 40 – 45 people have looked at the plan. It will not cure the problem but make it better.
 - Jeff stated the crosswalks on Loring Ave need to be looked at studied. People are texting while driving, students are walking while texting.
 - Councillor Dibble added the new plan shows the crosswalks going from 5 to 3, with many more street lights.
- Polly asked if students could be encouraged to turn on their cell phone flashlights when they are crossing, as it is so dark.
- Polly asked with the bike path updates is a light going to be added? Chairman Pangallo stated that there will be flashing beacon light.
 - Polly added lights are needed on the bike path on Lafayette, noting someone just got hit.
- Councillor Furey stated the neighborhood was shocked when the garage came, neighbors need to notified now of the Horace Mann school so that they are not shocked. Get out in front of it.

6. Adjourn, next meeting **Wednesday March 16, 6:00PM**