

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

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| <b>Board or Committee:</b>  | <b>Design Review Board, Regular Meeting</b>   |
| <b>Date and Time:</b>       | <b>Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at 6:00 pm</b>   |
| <b>Meeting Location:</b>    | <b>120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room</b>   |
| <b>DRB Members Present:</b> | <b>Chair Paul Durand, Ernest DeMaio, Glenn Kennedy, Chris Dynia, David Jaquith, Helen Sides, J. Michael, Sullivan</b> |
| <b>DRB Members Absent:</b>  | <b>None</b>   |
| <b>Others Present:</b>      | <b>Andrew Shapiro</b>   |
| <b>Recorder:</b>            | <b>Colleen Brewster</b>   |

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:10PM. Roll call was taken.

**Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review**

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- 1. 75 Washington Street (Mr. Crepe):** Discussion and vote on proposed installation of signage.

Leo and Camila Souza of Mr. Crepe was present to discuss the proposed signage.

Mr. Souza stated that the new sign against the building will match the existing signage material and lettering size. The blade sign will be 32" wide by 16" high with raised lettering and the smaller lettering will be flat; the existing aluminum bracket will be painted black and have black grommets.

Chair Durand asked if there will be lighting. Mr. Souza replied the existing lighting at the storefront will remain.

Mr. Souza stated that a new rear louver, 36" high x 38" wide, will be installed above the two rear windows.

Sullivan stated that fans behind them might generate noise. Mr. Souza replied no, one will be exhaust and the other make-up air. Kennedy asked for the CFM and noted that they need to consider the existing A/C units location when they determine which will be exhaust. Mr. Souza replied that it was unknown at this time.

Sides asked if the louvers could be the same anodized bronze color. Mrs. Souza replied yes, regal brown is the closest color option available, but it can be customized to match the weathered look of the window. A sample will be provided to Andrew Shapiro.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Sides: Motion to recommend approval of the proposed installation of signage and exhaust louvres (Regal Brown – or to match window trim).

Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 7-0.

### **North River Canal Corridor Projects Under Review**

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- **16-18 Franklin Street (Juniper Point Investments):** Discussion and vote on proposed multi-family residential development. [16-18-20R Franklin Street]

Shapiro provided an overview of the DRB process and role in projects located in the NRCC zone. He stated that projects requiring site plan review are referred to the DRB, who then provides a recommendation to the Planning Board. DRB members respond only design elements proposed they do not design the project. Public Comment is welcome.

Atty. Joseph Correnti, 63 Federal Street, was present to discuss the project and represent Juniper Point Investments.

Atty. Correnti noted that they have had two planning Board meetings and will go back again on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>, and ZBA approval is also required, as well as Conservation Commission. The City has engaged traffic and civil peer reviews. The Notice of Intent for State Permitting (Ch. 91 license) will get filed with DEP. The CMU shack that is over 50 years old might need Historic Commission approval for a demo delay permit. The property is owned by Ferris Realty Trust and they are proposing riverfront condominiums, although the site is very restrictive. Starting in June the Ward 6 Councilor asked that they present the plans to the neighborhood and three meetings were conducted.

Frank Wardley of Pitman and Wardley Associates was present to discuss the project.

Wardley stated that the site restrictions determined the proposed design. There is a very small frontage on Franklin Street with two areas to build, along the water or towards the baseball field, and they want to give the residents the best water view. The site is across the street from a vacant lot and diagonal from a car dealership. The site is a close walk to downtown, adjacent to the park, and close to the neighboring residential area. The proposed design will clean up the site that has been an eye soar over the years.

Wardley stated that the site has environmental concerns which means higher building costs and a higher number of units are proposed to make up for the cost. The waterfront setback doesn't work well for the site and the very little frontage of the triangular lot creates concerns for how the buildings will address the street. The buildings were designed to accommodate to the features of the site and neighboring site. The flood plain is the highest liability and the first floor level must be 5 feet above grade. 4 feet in height was added so the First Floor level is now 9 feet above grade and parking for 50+ vehicles has been added below the structures to help conceal them.

Wardley stated that the proposed buildings are three flats and two townhouse structures fanned out/staggered along the site so that windows aren't looking across to a

neighboring parcel that has dredging equipment, but towards more of the site. The outer edge along the waterfront flows into the outer edge of the ball field. Wardley noted that the proposed sidewalks enter into the sight and neighbors have raised concerns with access to the site.

Wardley stated that all of the elevations pay some homage to the site's commercial past. The two townhouse buildings each have two garage doors and their entrances will be partially concealed with shed roofs; the staircases will provide access to the garage. A central corridor has been placed along the Franklin Street facades and the three flat buildings have two units per floor with one garage door entrance. A separate garage structure will house individual garages with storage above since basements aren't an option. A trash room is located at the far end of the garage building.

Wardley stated that the facade will have a Boral base, Boral corner boards in 8-10" bands, and a clapboard facade in a proposed red tone. The windows will be double hung windows and a metal roof is being considered, although they are open to suggestions. The trees along the ball field will soften the look of that facade that faces it.

*Chair Durand opens public comment.*

Arthur Sharp, 29 Orchard Street. He read a quote from the NRCC Master Plan. Believes the proposal doesn't appear to be low density, the height is a concern when many other structures are 3 stories. Wardley replied that its location and desire to increase the number of units can lead to the proposed height, and the proposed structures are transitional and not next to the shorter height neighboring buildings.

Sally Millice, 14 Manning Court. Questioned where the vehicles will enter and exit the site and how many units were proposed. Wardley replied that the two driveways are both entrances and exits / two ways and 43 units are proposed.

Beth Gerard, 49 Larchmont Road, Ward 6 Councilor. Concerned with the height of the structures and some schematic images appear to be double the height of the existing street line. Building 1 is too close to the street and the ball field and that area could be used as the walkway because a walkway behind the building is a safety hazard. The cost should be less of a concern. The proposed project is too overwhelming for the neighborhood. Wardley replied that adjustments are in the works at building 1 to twist and push it back so the front corner will be 11 feet further away from Franklin Street and the rear corner 20 feet away, much further away than the 2 feet portrayed.

Ann Sterling, 29 Orchard Street. Noted that the white line in the site plan is an existing rip rap line and not a path.

Emily Udy, 8 Buffum Street, Historic Salem Inc. Noted that the NRCC requirements state that the applicant must create a street presence and be pedestrian friendly. The proposed design doesn't demonstrate that there have been many changes. Although she understands the marketability of what is proposed the density is higher than what is allowed and the neighbors want something greater that is appropriate to the scale of Franklin Street. The stair towers seem empty because they are not proposing the same residential scaled windows. The buildings are proportionate but the overall the scale is bigger.

Nadine Hanscom, 10 Bay View Circle. The proposed height doesn't fit into the neighborhood and is not in scale with neighboring single and two family houses. She has attended all neighborhood meetings and the neighbors don't want buildings this size and they believe the neighborhood's concerns are repeatedly being disrespected.

Victoria Ricciardello, 5 Foster Street. The buildings are at the gateway to the city; however, the buildings are not in sync with the character and history of the neighborhood. Other sites have done clean-up and constructed buildings of a smaller scale. The proposed design is too dense and short 20% of parking required.

Liz Bradt, 22 Larchmont Road. Resident of the neighborhood. In favor of cleaning up the site but the NRCC states that a low density project should occur at this site.

Diane Robichaud, 7 Foster Street. Seem to be high rise buildings, too dense, and the no left turn onto Franklin Street will divert traffic towards Foster Street.

Tim Jenkins, 18 Board Street. The proposed structures are 5 stories tall and within the Transitional Overlay District; buildings located within 50 feet of a residentially zoned/used parcel shall be a maximum of 40 feet high / 3 stories – the proposed structures are supposed to be a smaller scale since it is so close to a neighborhood. He understands their need to build up but whether the proposed is of an appropriate scale should be reviewed.

Megan Clair Woodcock, 19 Foster Street. Requested that Andrew Shapiro describe the intention of the DRB. She is concerned with exclusivity vs. inclusivity and these seem to be exclusive luxury condos.

Agnes Jacob, 26 Southwick Street. Agrees that this project isn't respecting the neighborhoods concerns. The applicant should pay more attention to the street presence.

Judy French, 16 Foster Street. She is seeing same design and height that was at the Planning Board meeting and thought there would be a redesign with different orientations, etc. At a community meeting it was made known that one of their variances requires 3,500 SF per unit allows for 31 units. The neighboring buildings aren't 50 feet high although some have a third level. She urged the DRB to read past meeting minutes for the thoughts of other boards in regards to this project.

*Chair Durand closes public comment.*

Jaquith agrees with Victoria Ricciardello in that the design should be redone, the buildings appear scattered around the site, the layout is confusing and the buildings and stairs lack organization. Boral is not the best exterior trim, and the landscaping needs work. This site is important and visible from many areas of Salem and the proposed plans do not do the site justice. This site needs interaction and has potential.

Sides stated that the Planning Board felt that this project needed to have a more cohesive vision and relationship amongst themselves and with the neighborhood. The site needs more clarity and to be welcoming when approaching it and celebrating the view to the river. Residential materials on buildings this high don't work. Side requested that Shapiro read a letter from Nina Cohen.

Shapiro introduced and read a letter from Nina Cohen regarding the proposed residential development.

Dynia agrees that the site is too dense and over scaled, and that removing a floor will bring down the height of the buildings. Asked how the public can access the green space and noted that the sidewalk that ends at the property line isn't enough. He noted that there needs to be a better open statement.

DeMaio agrees with what has been said so far. The project is missing photos showing neighboring buildings and context; the next review should include views from Franklin Street and the surrounding neighborhood, since their concerns haven't been addressed/met and they should be a part of this review. He agrees with the number of stories and that the number of buildings should be reduced, but the cost shouldn't outweigh the structures fitting in with the neighborhood. The density and massing will affect the traffic concerns of the neighborhood and how they access 114. 40+ units worth of vehicles will have a large impact on smaller scale neighborhood streets and the number of units proposed is a major concern for a large scale development.

Kennedy stated that he agrees with the height, mass, and density concerns. Its relationship to the neighborhood is important but it is transitional and it can be more inspired but it doesn't need to relate exactly to the neighborhood since it's leaning towards the city side. It's trying to fit in as residential but it doesn't fit at this scale.

Sullivan stated that the site has benefits and it is transitional but should still be a part of the neighborhood. Its circulation should be reviewed and a parking reduction would be great although hopefully people will not use their cars being so close to the downtown. Fewer buildings would be better and the density could be higher, but the height is a concern and reducing the height is prohibitive. The peoples comments should be responded to and all earlier concerns should be included in the presentation.

Sides noted that it is not expected that they would see a new design because the DRB should see what the Planning Board has seen. The site has great assets and wonderful potential to draw the neighborhood to it like what is being done elsewhere in the City. The industrial neighbors are interesting and could be embraced.

Chair Durand asked how much environmental clean-up is needed. Atty. Correnti replied that the current owners have been cleaning up the site for almost a decade. It is a site that can be worked and that a residential use requires the highest level of remediation. The cost needs can be supported by the project. An environmental presentation will be given at a later meeting. This is not a super fund site that neighbors will need to be concerned with living next to.

Chair Durand stated that this site is transitional and in a neighborhood but also adjacent to the downtown. It isn't transparent for people passing by; the density should be reduced by 2 buildings instead of 5.

Atty. Correnti stated that they agree with the opportunity this site provides and the local developer wants to do this project right. No height variance is needed, 50 feet is allowed in this area and the proposed buildings are between 45 and 50 feet high. 10 years ago the B5 zone was changed to NRCC but they are meeting those requirements. 4 stories

are allowed but they are requesting a 5th story to place surface parking at the lower level which will require a variance. The comments are being heard but a drastic reduction will not happen. Eliminating the 70 year old junk yard is a priority.

Chair Durand noted that the height feels imposing and like a wall of tall buildings.

Atty. Correnti noted that this is not an exclusive site and the existing site is being reclaimed so there will be a connection to the playground along the acre length of the site. The proposed design will show the transition to the site from across the water and the bridge.

Kennedy noted that there is no consideration to the property to the right and that is an unknown. Atty. Correnti replied that others have attempted to piece together that neighboring site to the park; however, the City needs to weigh in on its vision for that site because it is not their property.

Sullivan asked if there were any side yard setbacks as it seems crowded. Atty. Correnti replied that there is no side or front setback in the NRCC, although the lots have a limit to what can be built.

DeMaio stated that the frontage changes drastically from one side of the site to the other and how it relates to each side is important. Atty. Correnti replied that 43 units are proposed and 31 are allowed as of right. This project has the highest land areas per dwelling unit of all 6 recent projects.

Sides: Motion to approve proposed signage.  
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 7-0.

## **Old/New Business**

Shapiro noted that the SRA would like to meet with the DRB and are proposing a group meeting to discuss their shared interests. Nov 8th at 6PM.

## **Minutes**

The minutes from the August 23, 2017 regular meeting were reviewed.

Tim Jenkins requested that his comments in the meeting minutes be revised and he submitted a letter to attest to that.

Jaquith: Motion to approve the minutes and strike his comment.  
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 7-0.

## **Adjournment**

Kennedy: Motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 7-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:00PM.

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

DRAFT