

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, April 7, 2020 at 6:00 PM
Meeting Location:	Zoom Virtual Meeting
SRA Members Present:	Chair Grace Napolitano, David Guarino, Dean Rubin
SRA Members Absent:	Russ Vickers
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development Kathryn Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner Georgie Driver – Planning and Community Development
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Chair Napolitano calls the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

Annual Meeting

Executive Director's Report:

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. The City's Covid-19 response is updated daily at Salem.com/together with categorized topics. The Mayor initiated several task forces for special populations, such as the homeless, senior citizens, food insecure, English as a second language (ESL), immigrants, etc. The Large Employers and Large Institutions task force meets weekly to discuss how to support businesses. He and Ms. Newhall-Smith are involved in the Economic Development Recovery and Revitalization team including Salem Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise Center/Northshore Alliance for Economic Development, Salem Main Streets, Destination Salem, and Creative Collective. They meet twice a week to discuss how to support businesses now and long-term. City wide surveys were sent to businesses and many responded within two days. Programs through the Small Business Administration are offering loans and advances. The Paycheck Protection Program just came out and some have had challenges filing the paperwork. The EDIL loan advance is an existing program that provides grants but the advances of up to \$10,000 but it's based on the number of employees. The program states that funds come from the treasury within 3 business days of an application submittal. The Federal government is trying to get money to businesses to support payroll and keep business going. Smaller banks have been more responsive to processing paperwork faster than larger lenders and some banks are prioritizing their existing customers. The City wants to create weekly updates to share success stories within the business community, such as businesses looking to create or increase their on-line sales presence. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, part of which is currently used to support façade work and loans for businesses and Salem is getting \$646,000 to support various activities, social services agencies, short term rental assistance, grants or forgivable loans. The City just announced today that real estate property taxes are being pushed to June 1st with no fee, penalties, or interest if made by June 30th. At the state level, there will be eviction protection discussion on next week's agenda for residential and commercial tenants.

Mr. Rubin asked about activity at City Hall. Mr. Daniel replied that the City is open for business and most employees work remotely. The Planning Department has a couple people in the office each day and the paperwork is given to the proper department. The City Clerk is open, and appointments are available to file paperwork and licenses. In-office staff is limited and there is virtual access to files. Zoom meetings occur throughout the day.

Mr. Guarino asked about existing projects underway. Mr. Daniel replied that senior staff have a daily call where they discuss construction projects. The District Court, Hampton Inn, and Halstead Housing development projects are continuing with social distancing guidelines. The Artists' Row paving replacement, Essex Street pedestrian way, and sealcoating of the first floor of the downtown garage will also continue at this time with so few vehicles and pedestrians around.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. Tree Replacement Project, Old Town Hall: Planting trees in existing tree pits, adjusting size of pits to facilitate tree growth and success

Deborah Duhamel and Robert LeBlanc (Tree Warden) were present to discuss the project.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the City received a grant to replace missing trees in tree pits and the money needs to be spent by June 30th. To flourish, the trees need more space so the City will remove concrete boarder around each pit to enlarge it then install porous resin material within the pits to allow water to penetrate the surface.

Mr. Rubin asked if the cement surround will be removed, a new four-sided border will be installed or if the tree pit would be enlarged. Ms. Duhamel replied the three concrete bands will be removed; the porous in-fill will be flush with the brick and the color could match the concrete color to give the appearance of a border. The tree pit will remain, and the in-fill material will allow oxygen and water to get into the pit to create less ponding, reducing ability for weeds to grow but also allow the new trees to survive. The existing tree pits are 5' x 5' with a 75 cubic foot root ball, but the new root ball will be 130 cubic feet. 24-inches of structural soil will be added for stability.

Mr. Rubin requested the timing of the tree planting. Mr. LeBlanc replied two weeks or whenever the contractor is ready to move forward. Ms. Newhall-Smith requested the new tree size. Mr. LeBlanc replied stock availability is a concern due to reduced supply, but they want 2 ½ - 3" caliper trees. Mr. Daniel noted that tree planting is part of sustainability goals and tress help with heat island effect.

Mr. Guarino asked if brick removal will be necessary. Mr. LeBlanc replied that all removed bricks will be put back.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that this project is before the SRA to share the plans with them; it will not be going for design review in front of the DRB.

Chair Napolitano opens public comment.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Napolitano closes public comment.

Rubin: Motion to support the tree replacement project.
Seconded by: Guarino. Passes: 3-0

2. 14 New Derby Street: Small Project Review – Façade repair and modifications to storefront system

Marc Moschella, Director of Construction for Goldberg Properties, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Moschella stated this 12,000 square-foot property is the multi-tenant building that once housed Delande Lighting and is adjacent to the fire station. Façade repairs and new windows are proposed.

Santander Bank will move into the tenant space on the left corner. They will create a new tenant space next to it with a new entry. The barber shop and shoe repair entrance will be made ADA compliant and the existing second-floor entrance location will remain. New windows will be installed throughout and at the new second-floor apartments and additional windows facing the parking lot and fire stations could be added. They are studying whether the new window locations would align with the interior floor plans. The current second-floor offices are mostly vacant, and demolition of the second floor would allow them to create 6-8 units. They will add sprinklers, update the fire alarm system, as well as a gas line. Mr. Daniel noted that the SRA has no authority over the use of the building.

Mr. Moschella noted that the front fluted columns will be repaired, and the stone details will be cleaned. Santander will permit their own signage work separately and what happens with the remaining tenant spaces will be determined. Santander will take up 2,500SF and there could be 3 or 4 tenants total. Mr. Daniel noted that the SRA suggests the property owner think about the vision for the building's signage as a whole. The awnings and sign band need to be determined based on the banks allowable sign square footage. Mr. Moschella replied that they will require additional input from Santander, which will also use the rear entry and require signage at that entrance too.

Ms. Newhall-Smith requested any old photographs before the upper level windows were bricked in because they don't like to see new windows added to historic buildings, unless they are going into an old opening.

Chair Napolitano opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Napolitano closes public comment.

Guarino: Motion to refer to the DRB.

Seconded by: Rubin. Passes: 3-0

New / Old Business

1. Village Tavern:

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the applicant has asked to postpone review of the application until the Fall 2020. Napolitano stated that she had trouble determining where he plans to park the van in front of his site and that needs to be determined with dimensions and/or renderings. At the last meeting the applicant attended, they were given a list of things they wanted to see, which Newhall-Smith will remind him of. Mr. Guarino noted that the other items related to his application can wait until the fall as well.

2. Superior Court and Crescent Lot: Update

Mr. Daniel requested they reconsider the submission deadline. Ms. Newhall-Smith reached out the development teams, one was comfortable with the current deadline while others wanted an extension. The deadline was moved to June 30, 2020. That date could remain, or they could modify some of the proposal requirements, such as submitting letters from prospective tenants. They have had regular DCAMM meetings up until two weeks ago. They have stated that they will hold onto the properties for now, until we get further into the developer designation process. The MOA is still pending with DCAMM working to move it forward in the next month. The State is understanding of the City not having the capacity to manage the property during the interim period. He expressed concerns with the real estate industry and the team's ability to put together a financeable plan, which

could mean longer delays, and the economy may affect that. They've received a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the MTBA but he has concerns with the MBTA wanting \$150,000 for the 6,000 square-foot plot of unusable plan. They previously stated that they did not require \$150,000, but with a change in staff, this amount is once again being requested.

The Municipal Harbor Planning process is kicking off. The crescent lot has Ch. 91 regulations and through the Harbor plan they can investigate possible modifications that may facilitate development of the crescent lot. There is an 18-month process for permitting and financing process. A meeting was held on March 12th with MassDOT for their road design project from Washington and Bridge Streets to Flint and Bridge Streets. The stretch of road from North to Washington Streets won't change and can't be widened and all possible modifications were discussed.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted they will need to adjust their RFP review schedule. The June 20th regular board meeting will remain, and she will look to July and August for the review meetings.

3. SRA Vacancy

Mr. Rubin requested an update on replacing Gary Barrett's vacant space. Mr. Daniel replied that Mayor Driscoll knows a 5th SRA member is needed and he will meet with her soon to discuss the matter.

Minutes

Review of December 18, 2019 regular (open session) meeting minutes to be reviewed at the next regular meeting on May 13, 2020.

Rubin: Motion to approve the February 12, 2020 regular (open session) meeting minutes.
Seconded by: Guarino. Passes: 3-0

Rubin: Motion to approve the March 11, 2020 regular (open session) meeting minutes with Mr. Rubin's edits.
Seconded by: Guarino. Passes: 3-0

Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

Adjournment

Rubin: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: Guarino. Passes 3-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:15PM.

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