

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: 120 Washington Street, Third Floor Conference Room
Members Present: Chairperson Robert Mitnik, Conrad Baldini, Robert Curran
Members Absent: Russell Vickers Grace Harrington
Others Present: Lynn Duncan, Andrew Shapiro
Recorder: Colleen Anderson

Chairperson Robert Mitnik calls the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Duncan noted that she had no other substantial updates other than what she would be discussing in item number two under new business.

New Business

1. Discussion and vote on reappointment of Paul Durand to the Design Review Board.

Andrew Shapiro explained that Paul Durand, who has been serving as the Chair of the Design Review Board (DRB) for several years, has an expiring term. He is a licensed architect whose business is based in Salem. He's worked locally for several years and has reviewed a great deal of projects as a Member (and Chair) of the DRB, and prior to that, as a Member of the Planning Board. He would like to continue to serve as a Member and as the board's Chair.

Baldini: Motion to nominate Paul Durand for reappointment to the Design Review Board.

Seconded by: Curran, Passes 3-0.

2. **50 St. Peter Street:** Discussion and vote on providing funding for the design and/or construction of the parking lot at the Old Salem Jail.

Executive Director Duncan explained that the City Council had recently voted to approve a new parking area in front of the Old Salem Jail development, not to exceed 17 spaces. The intent was to provide support to third restaurant operation that soon would be entering the ground floor space – a bar arcade with food service.

She noted that a sale of the property had also gone through, and as a result, the Salem Redevelopment Authority was paid \$100,000, per the land disposition agreement that was signed with between the SRA and the original property owner. The money has been deposited.

Duncan stated that they are estimating \$70,000 for construction of the parking area and \$30,000 for design. Duncan added that design is a high percentage, despite the fact that this is a small project.

Duncan stated that the \$30,000 for design would go towards; plantings, a parking kiosk, and a retaining wall would be needed for the change in grade. Duncan added that protecting the historic wall that separates the property from the cemetery has always been a concern, and would be addressed in the design phase.

Duncan noted that Beta Engineering firm was working for the Engineering Dept., estimated that this work would cost \$130,000.

Duncan stated that she would have suggested \$100,000, but she is aware of the Boards concerns with keeping some of the funds for other projects, studies, or reports in Salem.

Mitnik stated that he also had a phone discussion with Russ Vickers regarding this project. Mitnik noted that New Boston Venture may be the firm that provided three alternative plans, so he knows that some design work has been done for this project.

Mitnik questioned whether the same design professionals, who are familiar with the project, could continue the design work. Mitnik added that Vickers thought it would be best to continue with the current design work and to use that design to generate a realistic cost estimate, prior to an additional discussion regarding allocating additional funds for the project.

Duncan stated that it would be wise to keep a small amount of money for other projects.

Duncan stated that it would be appropriate to use the majority of the funds in question because they come from the Old Salem Jail. Duncan added that the previous goal of the Community and the SRA was to have a mixed-use building, which has been an obvious struggle, and parking is a significant factor: in both reality and perception, because of the proximity of the building entrance in relation to available parking. Duncan stated that using the funding to provide parking will increase the likelihood of it becoming a mixed-use building.

Duncan added that the proposed use; a restaurant/bar combined with a vintage arcade, could make the space a destination, instead of another restaurant, of which Salem has many.

Shapiro noted that the arcade will make the space unique, and that they already have a following, which will draw a crowd. Shapiro added that this will be their first attempt at a permanent location, because in the past they have only done pop-up locations. Duncan added that this establishment will not lease the space unless there is parking.

Duncan noted that in regards to the funding of the design work, the City's Engineering Dept. had to move forward with the design, and the project will need to be bid the project with construction proposed in the spring.

Duncan agreed with Mitnik, in that one of the previously designed plans should be used. Mitnik stated that the plan should be creative and designed by someone with a background in design. Duncan added that incorporating public art has been budgeted for the project, and that the SRA could provide additional funding if Chairperson Mitnik felt it was critical to the project.

Mitnik stated that this area is more than just a typical parking lot, it is a gateway to the City of Salem and should be treated as such. Duncan agreed.

Duncan stated that this area is in the Urban Renewal area so the DRB will need to review and recommend a motion to the SRA. Duncan added that the SRA will have to approve the plans, and that the feelings of Chairperson Mitnik can be carried forward into the design.

Mitnik added that review and/or comments from both the DRB and SRA should be implemented during the Schematic Design phase, and not just during the working drawings stage, especially if using funding from the City. Mitnik noted that it is easier to make changes early in the design process than towards the end.

Duncan added that the vote of Council was that this project also be subject to the approval of the Conservation Commission and Planning Board. Duncan added that the Conservation Commission will need to review it because it is in the FEMA flood hazard zone. Duncan stated that the Planning Board would not have had jurisdiction, but now it does, and a Landscape Architect is currently on the Planning Board.

Duncan added that coordination of all of these Boards will be needed to move this project forward. Duncan noted that reviewing the Schematic Design is a reasonable request.

Duncan questioned whether the SRA would be willing to hold a special meeting to help move this project along, although the project's timetable is unknown at this time.

Duncan stated that although an exact price is not known it will more than likely increase, the Board would like to hold onto some of the funds, and the plan will more than likely be on the simpler side and may not need the requirements of the Boards required to review it.

Duncan added that the SRA will not be funding the entire project, that funding be provided to a certain dollar amount for design and/or construction. Mitnik questioned why the SRA cannot commit to the design at this time and discuss the construction funding at a later date. Duncan responded that the potential tenant, new property owner, and the City, want to know that there is funding in place for parking. Duncan added that they do not want to invest in design if there is no money for construction.

Mitnik stated that he had a previous discussion about committing to a certain dollar amount for this project. Duncan responded that Vickers may be valid but that should be present at the meeting if he wanted to weigh in on the subject. Shapiro added that the SRA and DRB are both valuable with their input into the design, and with SRA funding which will kick start the process.

Duncan added that in addition to their input into the conceptual design, that if the Board felt strongly enough, she would have no issue with the Board saying they would contribute a

certain dollar amount towards construction, instead of both design and construction, and that the City would have to find the remaining funding elsewhere.

Curran questioned whether this much funding is necessary for just a few parking spaces. Baldini added that the amounts do seem high for 17 parking spaces. Duncan responded that this project is being controlled by Engineering and they have done the parking calculations, and the number of spaces is accurate.

Baldini noted that the previous tenant has moved to Beverly is doing very well in their new location. Duncan added that parking at this location is an issue. Baldini stated that when this space was the Great Escape Restaurant, the area in question was originally designated as parking, but that was prior to when the Counselor and neighbors voicing their dissatisfaction with the location of the parking.

Mitnik noted that the vote regarding parking at the original meeting was divided, 4 – 4. Duncan stated that New Boston Ventures original parking total was for 37 spaces but at the meeting they reduced the number to 13 or 17.

Duncan stated that the parking would be owner by the City and not the business, and that is why money is budgeted for a parking kiosk. Duncan noted that the lot will be public parking used by customers and residents only, and not commuters because of the kiosk parking meter. Duncan added that the new lot would have to be managed.

Duncan stated that her earlier conversations with Vickers regarding this project resulted in his support of providing initial funding to support the project. Duncan recommended the Board provide \$80,000 to assure that there was some funding in place for construction, but another source would be necessary for both design and the remaining construction costs. Shapiro added that approximately \$25,000 would be the balance if \$80,000 in funding is provided to the parking lot project.

Mitnik questioned why there was a need for an immediate decision. Duncan responded that the potential restaurant would like to lease the space, but need to know that there will be parking. Duncan added that the Mayor is supportive of this project, as was the SRA, three years ago during the original push to provide additional parking on the site.

Baldini: Motion to provide \$80,000 for construction of the parking lot project.

Mitnik: Motion to include the review of the Schematic Design and Construction Documents by the SRA and DRB.

Seconded (both) by: Curran, Passes 3-0.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

3. 10 Front Street (Curtsy): Discussion and vote on proposed installation of blade sign

Shapiro explained that a new store “Curtsy” an accessory and gift store is opening in the location of the former location Boston Bead Company. Shapiro added that this will be a second store for the Owner, who also owns J Mode across the street.

Shapiro stated that the Owner is requesting one (36"Wx22"H) blade sign that will be attached to the existing blade sign bracket. Shapiro added that a smaller (32"W x3"H) pendant sign will hang below the proposed blade sign. Shapiro noted that both signs would have black raised acrylic lettering, and the larger blade sign would have gold leaf decorative carvings.

Shapiro noted that the sign is in compliance with the City sign ordinance. Shapiro added that the DRB recommended the approval of the proposed signage.

Curran: Motion of approve proposed signage.
Seconded by: Baldini. Passes 3-0.

4. 265 Essex Street (Fingerprint Innovations): Discussion and vote on proposed installation of signage

Shapiro stated that this business was on the ground floor of the Chamber of Commerce office building. Shapiro added that they have a fingerprint identification business for background checks within the state of Massachusetts.

Shapiro noted that their partner, ItendoGo, requires signage so customers can find their location. Shapiro stated that many people come to their office.

Shapiro added that allowing window signage for a ground floor office space is an unusual case, but it has been approved by the DRB. Shapiro noted that identical signage, one for Fingerprint Innovations and another for IdendoGo, both with clear back decals, would be placed in the outside corner window. Shapiro added that one set of signs would be visible from the street and the second set would be visible from the parking lot.

Shapiro noted that the DRB was hesitant to approve window signage. Shapiro added that the applicant returned for a second meeting with the building Owner, Patrick Deiulis, who is currently allowing the tenant to place signage in the windows, and supports their signage proposal.

Shapiro noted that the Owners approval was only due to the nature of their business and will not allow this for any other tenants in the building.

Baldini: Motion to approve the proposed installation of signage as accepted and recommended by the DRB.
Seconded by: Curran, Passes 3-0.

Minutes

The minutes from the February 10, 2016 regular meeting were reviewed.

Curran: Motion to approve,
Seconded by: Baldini. Passes 3-0

Adjournment

Baldini: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Curran

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