

**City of Salem Massachusetts  
Public Meeting Minutes**

**Board or Committee:** Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting  
**Date and Time:** Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at 6:00 pm  
**Meeting Location:** 93 Washington Street, First Floor Conference Room  
**SRA Members Present:** David Guarino, Dean Rubin, Gary Barrett, Russ Vickers  
**SRA Members Absent:** Chair Grace Napolitano  
**Others Present:** Tom Daniel (Executive Director), Matt Coogan (Principal Planner)  
**Recorder:** Colleen Brewster

Russ Vickers calls the meeting to order. Roll call was taken.

**Projects Under Review**

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**Executive Directors Report:**

A. Daniel stated that;

1. The Washington and Dodge Project has been reviewed and approved and will finish with the Planning Board this month.
2. The District Court project is still being reviewed by the DRB.
3. The park at 289 Derby Street is under construction.
4. The continuation of the Pedestrian Mall brickwork has begun. The City Engineer met with the business owners to discuss the project. Rubin asked whether the patches of black asphalt will be replaced. Daniel replied yes.
5. The Witch City Mall has seen slow response from property owner and the Building Department will handle the matter.

B. Presentation on Downtown Salem Historic Resources Survey Project

Ms. Patti Kelleher stated that the Planning Department just finished the survey with the help of a consultant. Kelleher stated that May is preservation month which is why this meeting was selected for this presentation. There are more than 4,300 properties documented on the Historic Resource Form for Buildings, Structures, Landscapes, Objects, and Burial Grounds. The information collected will be made accessible on the Massachusetts Historical Commission website or in paper copy at the Planning Department. The Massachusetts Resource Information System (MACRIS) website is searchable.

These items were last documented in the 1970's but there was little to no architectural or historic information and there was no documentation of recently constructed resources. There are currently 140 resources documented in urban renewal area and they've identified property that is eligible for the Nation Registry of Historic Places.

Their survey focused on historic integrity and property associated with Salem's Urban Renewal Program and buildings vulnerable to development. The areas indicated in yellow on the map were recommended by a consultant for expansion.

Rubin asked what information is on the form. Kelleher replied that a new form was developed. The consultants went to each property and took current photos to include with the old photos. Also documented: construction date, architect, cladding, foundation and exterior cladding, roof material if it was visible, a map to show the area in context, a description of the architecture of building, architectural style and elements, ownership, the use of any commercial storefront over time, deed research of ownership history. The consultants were asked to look at the 1970's changes made after the urban renewal plan to demolish most of the City's downtown changed to restoration.

Kelleher noted that this study and the process may serve as a model for other communities with urban renewal districts. The 1970s buildings are almost approaching historic status for the National Register of Historic Places where buildings need to be over 50 years old, the year 2023. The urban renewal program included the system of streets and traffic flow, parking, pedestrian routes, and plazas. During the 1970's there were two main goals of the urban renewal program, to restore the existing buildings and to do in-fill development that was respectful to the history of the downtown but also to be contemporary.

Board member Gary Barrett arrives.

Rubin asked if inaccurate information on a form can be corrected and if property owners with known history can have that information added to the form. Kelleher replied that consultants reviewed Salem's files and found that not all of the information was relevant, but the files will have the ability to be updated at any time. The early properties consisted of early 1800's residences.

Kelleher noted that a final report was included indicating how the city can move forward including: locating more records for the urban renewal program, expanding Salem's downtown historic district to encompass more of the urban renewal area, extending the boundary of Salem Common Historic District to include Hawthorne Boulevard East and more residential properties within urban renewal area and the commercial areas as part of the Downtown District, documenting the hardscape features of the urban renewal program, much of it was designed by John Collins and other landscape architects, and documenting areas such as Derby Sq, Essex Street pedestrian mall and East India fountain for when future changes are needed because the landscapes may be preserved.

Daniel stated that this will be a great resource for the city and the SRA. Properties more than 50 years old that are looking to seek historic status will provide good information for people and businesses that are not making exterior changes, so it will be good to let people know about this resource. May is National Historic Preservation Month and it was kicked-off with a brunch on Monday for elected officials and several preservation partners to celebrate the value of history and many of the projects that others in the City have worked on. Guarino noted that it will be great to look up the historic record on a building that correlates with the agenda.

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. Asked if the documents can be word searched, specifically by category, or for downtown properties recommended for preservation. Kelleher replied that the MACRIS website has a drop-down menu with many categories such as use, materials, address, architect, and use to search through. A preservation plan was recommended to separate downtown Salem from the rest of the neighborhoods. Rubin asked if properties can be searched by their address and who paid for the project. Kelleher replied that each property has an ID number to find each property and a Massachusetts Historical Commission planning grant and City funds paid for the project.

**1. 203-209 Essex Street (Hotel Salem):** Project update on remaining façade restoration and related SRA approvals

Rich Cooper was present to discuss the project.

Daniel noted that he met with Cooper and Shawn Shea 2 weeks ago to discuss the remaining items. Cooper stated that they contacted Ivan to review the proposed restoration work and met with local concrete workers and the mason conservator the City recommended. Kelleher and Daniel can either be present for that meeting or he can update them. The painting at the top will start on Monday, the sign band is in production, and he will let the department know when the meeting has been scheduled.

Daniel presented photos to indicate the remaining items to complete; cleaning of the brick façade, replacing the zinc sign band between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors, failure at cornices, missing masonry below window sills, and questioned the original coloration intent at the decorative masonry areas. Cooper replied that those areas will be examined and they want to make sure the façade work is completed before the rooftop opens.

**2. 283R Derby Street (Notch Brewing):** Discussion and vote on small project review.

Chris Lohring was present to discuss the project.

Daniel noted that this project was first reviewed by the DRB. Lohring stated that their original space is 5,000 SF and they have taken over the space next door, the former Segway rental space, to use as production space. They are also taking over the façade and want to match the materials and look. They are proposing a garage door with an integrated man door and no new signage. The previous façade alternated between garage door and windows.

*Chair Napolitano opens public comment.*

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Napolitano closes public comment.*

Guarino: Motion to approve as presented.

Seconded by: Barrett. Passes 4-0

**3. Higginson Square:** Discussion and vote on proposed artistic lighting of alleyway

Deb Greel was present to discuss the project.

Greel stated that the Public Art Commission discussed engaging smaller spaces such as Higginson Square Alley. With a neighboring business being broken into several times and rental tenant located just off this alley, this creates an opportunity to add wayfinding and lighting. They are working with a lighting designer. Mayor Driscoll, and Police Chief Butler are excited about adding light to these dark areas. They have a plan and hope to have permission by the end of the week, and are meeting with an installer on the City's list but haven't selected one yet. The City will pay for the lighting along private buildings, and they will use the same template in the other alleys by securing any attachments into the mortar. The lighting will be on a timer so it does not disturb the one residential tenant at 10 Derby Square. The lights will be LED and the electricity will be provided by a new pole to be installed by the City to plug in the lights. The lights will also be provided by the City.

Rubin stated that the lights will make the alleyway safer; however, the existing bollards and garden at the end of the alley makes it look like a dead end, it should be removed to create a true throughway if it's not going to be maintained by its owner. Greel replied that the City may own it. Daniel stated that they will determine who owns it. Gary Gill noted that the greenspace was created for the residential neighbors and asked if the rear façade of 10 Derby Square could be painted. Greel stated that she has spoken to the building owners about that and the owners of Rockafellas about enclosing their dumpster like Ledger did. They will work with Boston Architectural Center (BAC) students on wayfinding and Boston Burger is moving into the end of the alley may want outdoor seating at the rear. Daniel noted that the City received a technical assistance grant through Mass Development to work with BAC students to look for opportunities to strengthen the alleyways and pedestrian including Central Street, Essex Street, Derby Street, and East India Square, to find other options and see what may work better. They will return with other temporary ideas. Coogan stated that the BAC will come to Salem the last week in May for an on-site charrette. Greel noted that parking lot locations and how to get people around downtown using lighting and pop-up elements will also be reviewed. Guarino asked if there had been any resistance. Greel replied that all the owners are in favor and a notice was sent to all condominium owners at 10 Derby Square, and they don't want to keep people awake.

*Chair Napolitano opens public comment.*

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

*Chair Napolitano closes public comment.*

Rubin: Motion to approve artistic lighting of alleyway.  
Seconded by: Guarino. Passes 4-0.

## **Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review**

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### **1. 32-50 Federal Street (Superior Court and County Commissioners Building):** General update

Daniel stated that there was a small fire at the County Commissioners Building with HVAC system that resulted in smoke damage only and no injuries, which speaks to their concerns with vacant buildings. Rep. Tucker filed new legislation on Monday. The previously approved legislation had a number of constraints, including the requirement to house the Registry of Deeds. Those conditions prevent a feasible development. The properties are a top priority for the Redevelopment Authority and the preservation community.

Elisa Connor, operations manager of Historic Salem Inc., Vijay Joyce, a Director at Historic Salem Inc., and Gary Gill an associate of Historic Salem Inc. introduced themselves. Gill stated that someone showed interested in the Superior Court Building and he wanted to know who owned it. Daniel replied that it is owned by the state and DCAMM has jurisdiction over it and is in charge of the mothballing project. A contract was awarded and a notice to proceed was issued on April 12<sup>th</sup> so mobilization will happen for that scope of work including roof repairs, mortar repairs, securing the buildings, boarding up the windows, and ventilation to prevent moisture build-up. Security will remain. Gill noted that an interested party asked him to look for a grant. He found a grant for \$50,000 from the Commonwealth through Seth Molton for the City of Salem and he inquired about it and was offered \$75,000. Daniel clarified that there may be a \$50,000 study grant to determine a use for it but \$50 million would be needed to renovate the building and the resources and the model to make it sustainable. Gill asked if it can become a museum. Daniel replied that the path is to revise the legislation and make it easier to market the properties. They want a request for qualifications from developers for these two properties to see what comes back to them for a mixture of uses that

will work, since the building has historic assets and interiors and a requirement to maintain public access to that space. The legislation still required the Registry of Deeds as a preferred use. Last year's state commissioned study used the requirements of the legislation that was in place and no development was feasible with the Registry of Deeds there as required. Without the legislation in place, office use was not feasible with the current market and rehabilitation costs unless it was a project of passion. Residential appeared to be feasible with the use of tax credits. Their chosen path is to let the development community return to them with ideas.

Guarino asked if in terms of the legislation, who decides if it's feasible. Daniel replied that the SRA and Sec. of the Commonwealth must agree and it is unknown if the Sec. of the Commonwealth supports the legislation as it is written, but the Registry of Deeds would be identified as a priority use.

Rubin noted that the fire raises the importance of securing the empty buildings; it's good that the fire was caught immediately and put out, and the mothballing and continued monitoring proved itself useful. Daniel noted that the fire at empty jail keeper's house at Old Salem Jail that resulted in the destruction of historic interiors. Kelleher asked if any signage will be erected to indicate that the mothballing is temporary. Daniel replied that that was mentioned and the state may have considered it to be a good idea, but it is unknown if it's included in the project scope. Gill asked if the windows must be boarded up and if so will they be painted. Daniel replied it is necessary to keep the building from deteriorating and preserving its integrity, they will be painted white and the work will be done as nicely as possible.

### **Minutes**

The minutes from the December 11, 2017 ULI Panel discussion were reviewed.

Rubin: Motion to approve December 11, 2017 minutes with Daniel's and Rubin's edits.  
Seconded by: Guarino. Passes 4-0.

### **Adjournment**

Guarino: Motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Seconded by: Rubin. Passes 4-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:00PM.

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