

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, February 14, 2024, at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
SRA Members Present:	Christopher Dunn, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Dean Rubin
SRA Members Absent:	Chair Grace Napolitano, Christine Madore
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Daniel provided his monthly report.

1. An update on the Charolette Forten Park shade structure will come later in the meeting. The artists selected for the sculpture was in Salem and had some public engagement opportunities that went well. Having the artist here makes the project seem real.
2. Salem So Sweet occurred this past weekend, but it was warm, so the ice sculptures melted quickly, but it was a successful event.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **98 Washington Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of one exterior security camera at the rear entrance of City Hall Annex

Captain Fred Ryan of the Salem Police Department (in charge of technology, grants, and other police duties) and Gregory Salamida (Assistant Building Inspector) were present to discuss the project.

Captain Ryan stated that the Salem Police Department has been working with the Building Department to install cameras at the City Hall Annex, to provide a safer environment. They requested approval to install an exterior camera of the Sewall Street parking lot, wall mounted and centered above the existing entry/exit door, below the City Hall Annex sign.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked if the camera would be mounted onto anything historic. Captain Ryan replied no and added that the Building Inspector called the building owner who gave permission to mount the camera.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve as presented. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.
Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, and Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

2. 289 Derby Street: Small Project Review – Construction and installation of seasonal shade structure at Charolette Forten Park

Newhall-Smith was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that she, along with Mr. Daniel, and Julie Barry, Senior Planner for Arts and Culture have been working on the conceptual design for a shade structure over the past year, and they are preparing construction documents. The city would like to install a shade structure, with footings in the grassy area, that cantilevers over the hardscape. They will relocate an existing tree to the berm closer to the river. The bid package will include an alternate to include lighting underneath the shade sails. The sails will be removed every fall and stored for the winter months. The height of the new structure will range from 13-feet at the ends to 17-feet at the center. The existing play pipes will need to be moved closer to Derby Street and existing park lighting will remain in place. She presented renderings of the shade structure and a shadow study highlighting the transition of shade to be provided throughout the year. Newhall-Smith noted that the proposed shade color is a Light Blue and is manufactured by Shade Systems. The project will go before the SRA and DRB next month, with RFP to send out in early March, and they anticipate spring construction.

Acting-Chair Rubin raised concern with the amount of shade provided in the autumn vs. summer.

Ms. Nina-Soto questioned the life of the sunshade and any discussion regarding installing solar panels since more electrical capacity is needed. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that they didn't explore a solar canopy, noting that the added weight would require designing the structure for snow loads. Mr. Daniel replied that the sunshades would last multiple years with winter removal.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked who would install and remove them. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that she hopes to include a maintenance line item for the park with this year's budget, that includes installation and removal of the shades, in addition to other park maintenance needs.

Ms. Nina-Soto noted that the park gets a lot of sun, and she wants to consider the future use of solar. Ms. Newhall-Smith agreed to discuss the matter with the project landscape architect and reiterated that solar inclusion would mean re-engineering the project. Acting-Chair Rubin suggested adding small solar panels to the tops of the posts to provide some electrical power. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that during the planning process, Ms. Barry suggested solar lighting, such as LED's and possibly solar LED's.

Acting-Chair Rubin stated that the park attracts people looking to get into trouble and suggested the use of materials that will allow the quick removal of graffiti.

Public Comment:

Russ Tanzer, Property Manager of 289 Derby Street. Stated that the proposed project looks great but wants to be certain that the large posts would not block the view to the side of their building during summer months. He requested some reduction to minimize the size. He noted that with no conventional roof system the sail cloth material looks lite and solar is a great idea that would need some engineering. He requested the column dimension. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that the steel columns are 12" x 12" square.

Bill Golden, Real Pirates Museum Director at 289 Derby Street. Stated that while the proposed design looks good, the activation of the park is significant for them. The lack of shade within the park is also a significant issue, as the surfaces radiate heat making it not widely used. He asked if this location has been coordinated the location with the company that runs the park activation to make sure it works with their needs and meets their electrical requirements. He added that the viewshed is important to them and this end of Derby Street can be a dead zone unlike the crowds elsewhere in Salem. He asked if this area was not considered a park under city regulations, since services to the area aren't a top priority and it doesn't seem to receive proper care and attention, noting that there should be more resources, like at Salem Common. He suggested a site visit with Newhall-Smith and the SRA.

Acting-Chair Rubin requested the designation of this land. Ms. Newhall-Smith was unsure if it was a park or a square, noting that the SRA controls the budget not Parks & Rec.

Acting- Chair Rubin suggested it may be too late in the process for a site visit. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that they are currently on the permitting path now, they need SRA and DRB approval, but they can make small adjustments to the design and address concerns.

Mr. Golden stated that he previously expressed concerns about proposed plans for the park, hasn't been consulted/or been reached out to provide any input. They are the closest business and have invested millions in their project. Acting-Chair Rubin noted that the structure location has been established based on how the sun hits the property, but he understands Mr. Golden feeling left out of the process.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to send the project as presented to the DRB, noting comments from the public. Seconded by: Dunn.

Rubin suggested an amendment to include solar consideration. Nina-Soto accepted that amendment.

Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, and Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

Mr. Daniel noted prior conversations and the sharing of early plans with Russ Tanzer, so there has been communication and there is an opportunity for more comment at the DRB meeting. There was also a lot of internal work for the structure and to minimize the impact of it, but the structural elements are significant due to the cantilever. The park has graceful elements and they wanted to reduce engineering impacts.

3. 2 Lynde Street: Outdoor Dining – Review of proposed outdoor dining area for Settler

Shanna Chambers, Co-Owner of Settler, was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Chambers proposed patio seating in front of 6 Lynde Street, where 18 seats are proposed, including 1 large round 6-foot diameter table and various groupings of 2-feet x 2-feet tables with 18-inch x 24-inch chairs. She noted that they purchased new tables and chairs last year, and they alternate 4-foot-long planter boxes that outline the area and are maintained each week.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked if the same layout is proposed as the previous year. Ms. Chambers replied yes, nothing that they switched from grey umbrellas to blue and white striped, they are only open for dinner, so the umbrellas are used for decorative purposes only.

Acting-Chair Rubin noted their capacity of 48 and only seating approximately 26 inside, leaving 18 seats outside.

Public Comment:

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Newhall-Smith asked if the SRA would recommend DRB review, noting that the City Council policy assumes DRB review of outdoor dining areas.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve as presented pending DRB approval. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, and Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

4. 125 Washington Street: Outdoor Dining – Review of proposed outdoor dining for Ledger

Kelsey Tenore of Ledger was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Tenore stated that they are proposing the same outdoor seating setup as last year. The city built a wooden deck by the loading zone, the existing patio is still used, they have taken over the brick sidewalk and part of the wooden deck. Their seating area is flush with Rockafellas, and the same furniture is proposed on the patio. They are getting new plain red umbrellas on wooden poles and have 70 seats on their patio, along with planters and lighting for some illumination. The pieces are removed at the end of the season but are secured to the deck when in use. They will also maintain their existing accessible entrance.

Mr. Dunn asked if the decking was provided by the restaurant and if it is inspected. Ms. Tenore replied that the city provided the decking and their engineers installed and maintained it, although they have re-secured some loose planks on their own. The installer specialized in decks, so the decking is long lasting and holds up well. The plan was to make it permanent by building out the sidewalk instead of using wood decking.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked if the additional lighting of the sidewalk is the same as last year and whether it was sufficient for a sidewalk. Ms. Tenore replied that their post lighting is built into the deck and makes a nice addition to the barrier, but there are also bright city streetlights.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked if the lighting was centered or strung. Ms. Tenor presented a photo of post mounting lighting.

Mr. Rubin asked if the new loading area is for any business. Ms. Tenore replied yes.

Public Comment:

Kevin Marchino, Owner of Rockafellas. Stated that he speaks for many business owners in the area. He noted that he was absent when the deck was built, a deck that took eight parking spaces away from the downtown, for a restaurant only open four hours a day and closed two days a

week. Many times, their patio is empty, and the restaurant closed, and during the winter the deck isn't removed. Trucks can barely make deliveries and there is no immediate ramp access so delivery drivers and vendors must walk to either end of the block to access a ramp. He is confused by their deck that takes up so much space, including two parking spaces that were used for valet parking for his business. He believes it makes potential customers think there is no parking downtown, and they tend to leave and go elsewhere. He asked why the deck can't be deconstructed during winter months. Ms. Tenore offered a response. Acting-Chair Rubin suggested the two speak off-line.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve pending DRB approval and to not return to the SRA.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

New / Old Business

1. Review and Consideration of Draft Financial Policy, *continued from January 10, 2024*

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the City Solicitor provided feedback, changes to the document can be tracked, and SRA properties are covered under the city's insurance policy. Bonding for signatures on bank accounts will require more investigation on her part, but the policy states that the SRA will need to bond account signatories in accordance with DOR regulations. Regarding check signatories, the SRA has never needed two signatures and the SRA spends such small amounts of money that needing only one signature will remain in place. The policy is strong and can be amended in the future via a vote of the SRA.

Acting-Chair Rubin noted asking about expense reports at a previous meeting, but this policy does address his comments and there are controls in place, and Tom Daniel must approve the use and the Treasurer must approve the amount. He believed the added sentence can be eliminated. He asked if the SRA properties are covered by the city policy, were edits 2 and 3 necessary. Ms. Newhall-Smith suggested edit #3 be eliminated and edit #2 remain in case the SRA may not want to always be on the city's insurance.

Mr. Daniel stated that the improvements are important. Acting-Chair Rubin and Mr. Daniel thanked Newhall-Smith for her hard work.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to adopt the policy with the edits. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

2. Electrical Upgrade at Charolette Forten Park – Review and consideration of updated project quote.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that she spoke to The Anthem Group, and while Frozen Fire far exceeded 200 amps, this number is the highest we can upgrade the capacity to; more infrastructure in Derby Street would be needed to go any higher at the park. The Frozen Fire used a lot of electricity, but the

day-to-day activation doesn't require that much electrical draw, so 200 amps is sufficient. A large event will require generators and/or help from neighbors.

Ms. Newall-Smith stated that the previous quote missed permitting fees, a new lock on cabinet, and making additional keys, so the quote has been revised. She noted that the new quote is for \$11,182. She requested the Board allow an increase of up to 10% for contingencies.

Acting-Chair Rubin noted that the amp total also needs to be revised.

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to approve the updated budget with 10% contingency as presented for the electrical panel at Charlotte Forten Park. Seconded by: Dunn.
Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

3. **Redevelopment of Historic Courthouses and the Crescent Lot:** Update on Project Status

Mr. Daniel stated that since the last meeting, Winn was awarded funding for the crescent lot project, they will apply to the underutilized property program where they got \$600k previously. They will meet with the developer tomorrow and expect that they start permitting the courthouses in April of 2024. There are two primary programs, the first is a museum, and the second is residential housing in County Commissioners building and mixed uses in Superior Court. Both projects need to move forward at the same time and program 2 is more under Winn's control than the museum use.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that architect Dan Ricciarelli reached out to her. They are working with WinnDevelopment, and asked if the SRA would like to walk through the buildings prior to reviewing the plans and will present dates. She believed they will file plans in March for the April meeting.

Acting-Chair Rubin stated that Chapter 91 review is nearly complete and asked about the flooding at the crescent lot from the recent storms. Mr. Daniel replied only flooding on crescent lot, and the design of building anticipates that, water will flow through the parking area and back out. If water reached the bottom of the structure vehicles would get wet; however, WinnDevelopment requires notifications be sent to tenants about risk of flooding with notification protocols to have tenants relocate their vehicles.

Mr. Daniel stated that they will brief the remaining new city councillors next week.

4. **SRA Financials:** Received and filed.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

Review of January 10, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to approve the minutes from January 10, 2024 with Rubin's edits. Seconded by: Dunn.
Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

Other

Adjournment

VOTE: Nina-Soto made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Seconded by: Dunn.
Roll Call: Dunn, Nina-Soto, Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 39 §23B and City Ordinance Sections 2-028
through 2-2033

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