

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, January 11, 2023, at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
SRA Members Present:	Acting-Chair Dean Rubin, Cynthia Nina-Soto, Christine Madore
SRA Members Absent:	David Guarino, Chair Grace Napolitano
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. The Frozen Fire Festival: It was held from December 26th through January 1st. Many who attended had a good time and it was good activation for the park. Ms. Newhall-Smith is finalizing the RFP to find a programming partner from Spring to September.
2. Old Town Hall: Managed by Julie Barry. The model for programming has changed during the pandemic, but the goal is to activate the entire building and create more programming opportunities. Activation proposals are being reviewed and they are working with the Finance Dept. on the capital plan for the facility.
3. Julie Barry also extended an offer for an SRA member to join the committee for Charlotte Fortin Park. Acting-Chair Rubin stated that he informed Ms. Newhall-Smith that he would join if no one else was able but he would need to so remotely.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **41 Lafayette Street:** Small Project Review – Review of Proposal and DRB Recommendation for the painting of a mural on Central Street façade of Barrio, continued from 12/14/22

Acting-Chair Rubin noted that the applicant still has not come forward but could request a withdrawal without prejudice and reapply when ready.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to withdrawal the application without prejudice. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

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

2. **East India Square Fountain:** Aurora Borealis Dance Company Performance – Liquid Spine, continued from December 14, 2022.

Katie Pustizzi was present to discuss the project.

Acting-Chair Rubin believed the presentation would be informative only, but later corrected his statement, noting that SRA review and approval would be required.

Mr. Daniel stated that proposal is for a dance performance in the square which is owned by the SRA. The request includes an approval for a rehearsal on June 9th, 2023, and to perform on either June 11th or June 24, 2023, weather permitting.

Ms. Pustizzi stated that she has returned to Salem as an artist and is preparing a dance performance that is connected to the water systems through the lens of ecology and conservation. This will be a Global Water Dancers event which connects dancers that inspire worldwide conservation awareness, and their focus will be on the everchanging coastline flooding and connection around the world in a modern interpretation. It will be free to the public with professional dancers that will interact with the topography of the fountain and the coastline within the fountain in real time via improvisation. The performance will be free but will last 30 minutes and they will require use of the power supply by the fountain.

Ms. Nina-Soto stated that she liked the video performance provided. Ms. Madore stated that she was excited to see the space activated but was curious about how it will turn out given the treacherous landscape. She asked if there was insurance in case there is an injury and raised concerns with their safety. Ms. Pustizzi replied that the performers sign waivers, and she carries insurance. There isn't set choreography the dancers will react in real time. But she will plan for a variety of possible events given past experiences and will take pictures and allow dancers to get a feel for the space in advance. Mr. Rubin noted that he had the same concerns and asked whether the City has a liability for the event too given it's on city property. Mr. Daniel replied that the city of Salem does carry liability insurance.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

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

3. 2 East India Square: Small Project Review – Review of proposal to maintain installed white lattice fencing around outdoor dining area, continued from December 14, 2022.

Andrew Ingemi was present to discuss the project.

Ingemi stated that they relocated the lattice from the extended patio seating to the low brick wall to prevent children from hopping on top of it and to keep people from entering their patio space. The posts are weighted down with concrete barrels to prevent it from falling.

Ms. Madore asked if the outdoor space was leased to Village Tavern by the SRA. Mr. Daniel replied that Village Tavern has an outdoor dining permit that does not expire, and it was based on prior guidelines, and they must conform to the number of seats and accessibility. The property belong to Marley Properties and the planter area is city property and the low raised brick wall and patio is Marley Property. Ms. Madore stated that if this were on city property she would be concerned with safety, but her current concern is the makeshift look of the screening because the use of the buckets stands out. Safety and aesthetic issues should be addressed, and everything should be painted to blend in. Another option should be explored with Marley Properties, such as

a permanent barrier to stop people from hurting themselves that undergoes a DRB and SRA approval process. Ms. Nina-Soto agreed.

Mr. Daniel stated that pre-pandemic the Village Tavern submitted an outdoor dining café process with a DRB and SRA review, which is standard, and the Board may want to consider that. Mr. Rubin agreed and noted that he too is bothered by the aesthetics, suggested that painting could be an incremental step and asked for the applicants' willingness to go before the SRA and DRB for a long-term solution. Mr. Ingemi replied yes and he's willing to paint it for the time being.

Mr. Rubin raised concern with the precedent of its placement and not wanting this pattern to be repeated, along with the safety issues being addressed, but he's unsure of who that responsibility would fall on as well as ensuring there is follow-up. He suggested a time limit on the completion of the painting of the lattice and a submission for final approval. Mr. Daniel questioned the expense of painting at all since it isn't a new condition, agreed that safety may be the biggest concern but there should be a permanent solution. Mr. Ingemi stated that the safety issue isn't a new concern, and their fix was on Marley Properties and not city property and suggested the screening be removed, noting that the two-foot-high wall is probably safer than the fountain.

Ms. Madore stated that Marley Property is private property and if the applicant feels it's necessary it should have an official city review. Ms. Nina-Soto replied that private businesses request signs for private property which is visible from a public way and agreed that aesthetically it should be reviewed if it were to remain. She did not feel comfortable with taking it down although the current design looks temporary. Ms. Madore suggested it be removed now since it no longer the busy season and a proper proposal be applied for in the future. Mr. Ingemi agreed to remove it for now and return with a permanent solution if desired.

Public Comment:

Polly Wilbert, 7 Cedar Street. Noted that the PEM sets a high standard, suggested that if something were added to the low wall that the Commission consider enhancing the landscaping in the planters to conceal screening if its maintained. Suggested the fix could be an inexpensive opportunity to visually enhance the area to match PEM standards.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

Mr. Ingemi requested a request to withdrawal without prejudice and 2-weeks to remove the lattice.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to accept the request to withdrawal without prejudice. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

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

4. 301 Essex Street: Schematic Design Review – Review of revised proposal

Michael Becker and Carissa Vitas (Owners/Developers of Jerry's LLC) and Daniel Ricciarelli and Sanir Lutfija of Seger Architects were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Ricciarelli stated that they went before the DRB twice, at the first meeting there much support for the 1 story building, so they returned with a scheme with more height. An 18-unit

building is now proposed with a combination of townhomes and flats, and it includes an elevator. The parking requirement has been met with on-site and off-site parking. Mr. Lutfija noted that the DRB wanted them to match elements of neighboring buildings. The interfloor units will include outdoor space at parapet level. They are maintaining the commercial space to 1,500 SF, 12 parking space, 6,000 SF of retail space in basement. There will be 2 levels of townhomes, middle flats, and 2 levels of townhomes at top 2 floors, which has been stepped back to create outdoor space.

Mr. Ricciarelli noted that the DRB wanted more height and more prominence on the corner. They considered 2 façade treatments, curtain walls vs. punched openings and created a revised hybrid building with more glass, melding more of Essex Street onto Summer Street with a bay with similar treatment and cladding. They also added datum lines, removed the cantilever, incorporated banding, and a cornice.

Mr. Becker noted that the elevator was needed because a 4th floor walk-up would not work, and an elevator will increase the functionality by providing basement access for the commercial space.

Mr. Daniel noted that this was an atypical process, the SRA didn't support the initial proposal, the revised version went to the DRB, where the proposal expanded, and the applicant has returned with a revised schematic design review to be referred to the DRB again.

Mr. Becker noted their hesitance to request this much massing without SRA approval and making sure the SRA was comfortable with it.

Ms. Nina-Soto stated that she was pleasantly surprised by the revised proposal, which could balance the corner, she was ecstatic about the additional unit count, and their ability to meet the parking requirement. She raised concerns about the use of this much glass, liked that the top hat was no longer visible, and being comfortable with the use of the interlevel which makes more sense as a townhome. Mr. Lutfija replied that they are still working on the amount of glass to incorporate. Ms. Madore stated that she had no issue with the cantilever and was a fan of the original fenestration and facades. She liked the articulation on Summer Street, but the windows at the middle brick section feels busy with the banding and different window sizes. She noted that the Essex Street façade has improved, and she liked breaking up the pattern with the banding but questioned the white material on the side facing Bonchon. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that the white material would be stucco or Hardi panel and they will wrap the side 10-15 feet with the front façade material before transitioning to the new material. Ms. Madore noted her concern with the lack of detail of the white façade to the east. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they will match up datum lines and apply this to same material and detail to the south elevation too. Mr. Lutfija added that they will use lines that speak to the Summer Street façade. Ms. Madore questioned the material of the setback connector on Summer Street. Mr. Lutfija replied that it would possibly be the same cladding material on the east façade facing Bonchon but with vertical elements and banding. He noted that the window configuration may also change. Mr. Ricciarelli stated that they will discuss the intent of that façade with the Salem Inn owners and suggested a flat board siding with a nickel gap from Hardie.

Ms. Madore asked if the top panel of commercial level windows was covered. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they are currently covered with an insulated panel to save energy, but the desire is for glass to meet the sign band and incorporate a soffit set away from the exterior wall. The lower

level will be a restoration effort since some of that was taken away in the 1980's. Ms. Madore replied that full transparency of glass would be ideal since the corner only had a Jerry's sign which doesn't fit. Mr. Ricciarelli noted that interior signs in the windows have been used to cover some of the glass.

Mr. Daniel asked if the proposed ceiling height at commercial space of 8-foot-6-inch that had changed. Mr. Ricciarelli replied no, however, the DRB and SHC raised the same point. They can increase it by a few feet, but it will come down to the new roof structure, which is currently shown as 18-inches since it hasn't been designed.

Ms. Madore asked if the elevator will provide basement access. Mr. Becker replied yes, and it could have two doors to provide access directly from the commercial space. Ms. Madore asked if the ground floor and basement are one unit or separate. Mr. Becker replied either. Mr. Ricciarelli stated that there will be a trash area and storage in the basement, but it will be mostly for the retail with an 8-foot-6-inch ceiling height. Mr. added that approximately 500 SF of the basement will go to other uses.

Ms. Madore asked how the parking requirement was being met with 18 units proposed. Mr. Becker replied that the 10 townhouses are considered existing and require 1 space each. The new townhouses require 1.5 spaces per unit, and they will either seek a variance or off-site parking. He added that the new configuration now includes a stair that provides direct access to the garage and the main residential entrance will now be off Summer Street, with access from Essex as well.

Mr. Rubin reiterated the SRA's concern with the amount of glass proposed, he was in favor of the new design and height. He requested the aesthetic (material and color) be addressed, because the renderings look like a mismatch, and suggested the addition look as if it's part of the original building due to its proximity to the McIntire District rather than looking so modern. He also agreed with other comments made. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they are discussing how to meld the colors together.

Mr. Rubin noted that the residential entrance isn't shown in the rendering. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that it would be past the first small window on Summer Street.

Ms. Madore asked if any research has been done regarding the original banding colors, which look white in the old pictures provided. Mr. Ricciarelli replied that they are working on the regression of that and will conduct paint testing. Ms. Madore noted that if the red were to change, it could go in two ways, either separate the original color from the new addition or have a unified color scheme so it doesn't look as if it's an addition and suggested that red in the new building may look good.

Public Comment:

Mr. Daniel stated that no new comment letters were submitted but folder of older comment letters is accessible on the cities website.

Emily Udy, Historic Salem, Inc. HSI is in support of the taller scheme with more stories, noted that their design concerns will be addressed during the DRB review, and thanked all involved because the final product will be better for it.

No one else in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to refer to DRB with SRA comments. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.
Roll Call: Madore, Nina-Soto, and Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

Mr. Daniel stated that he will debrief with Ms. Newhall-Smith upon her return so the DRB can be made aware of the SRA's comments. Mr. Becker asked if the missing SRA members have any influence over the motion. Mr. Rubin replied no.

New / Old Business

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

Mr. Daniel stated:

The work continues with the team, DCAMM and the MBTA. The MBTA is looking to schedule a closing for the sliver parcel around the crescents lot within the next 4-6 weeks. Crescent lot plan was approved by the PB on Thursday. They continue to work with the team on the grant from MassDevelopment for the Underutilized Properties Program. He mentioned the developer's interest in working with a partner and their need to discuss the deal structure with the team before they move forward. They team also applied for historic tax credits, they will apply in the spring and the expectation is that multiple rounds will be required.

Ms. Madore asked if a TIF application would be pursued. Mr. Daniel replied no, although a variety of financing tools are being considered. A TIF is complex given the property having two structures. He will have more accurate information after their next meeting. Ms. Madore raised concerns with the affordability being changed because the building design was changed. Mr. Rubin asked if mini-round in the spring will be offered. Mr. Daniel replied that there are a lot of resources through ARPA but there has been an overwhelming demand for funds for projects that far exceeds the programs capacity. There may be an additional round that follows.

SRA Financials:

Mr. Rubin stated that the Board financial are available for the Board to see.

Other:

Mr. Rubin stated that he is delighted to see the Almay's Clock back in place along the Essex Street pedestrian mall. Mr. Daniel thanked Patti Kelleher and noted that the restoration went as planned but the reinstallation led to delays.

Approval of Minutes

1. Review of December 14, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Madore made a motion to approve with Rubin's edits. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.
Roll Call: Madore, Nina-Soto, and Rubin. 3-0 in favor.

Other

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:45PM.

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