

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, May 10, 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 city issued an RFP for programming at Charlotte Forten Park and for October programming at Old Town Hall. They are close to awarding both.
2. The Arts Fest is first weekend in June, so Artists' Row, and Derby Square will have a lot of activity.
3. They are working on shade structure at Charlotte Forten Park with the landscape architects that initially worked on the park design.
4. Ms. Newhall-Smith added that she met with Anna Freedman the Financial Director and a consulting auditor, that had great suggestions such as, memorializing their process and adding in some checks and balances. Ms. Freedman volunteered to review the document (before July 1st) and she will return with new information in July and August. They are also looking at insurance requirements and a separate tax ID for the SRA.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **304 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB Recommendation for the painting of the exterior trim and adding window boxes to match the exterior of The Good Witch of Salem that fronts on North Street.

Ashley Tina was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the applicant went before the DRB that they gave her proposed plans a positive recommendation.

Ms. Tina stated that she occupies the rear unit and will expand into the northern corner unit, using the same White Main Sail paint color and replacing any damaged wood. She will also add in the previously approved window boxes at all storefront windows. The previous condition to lower the sides of flower boxes to meet accessibility requirements will be followed. There is sufficient space between window and lamppost at Essex and North Street, and she will keep 83-inches of the pedestrian walkway clear to remain in ADA compliance. The window box color shall be Bow Pink.

Ms. Nina-Soto asked if the window boxes would have legs or no legs. Ms. Tina replied legs to stay in compliance.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked if the new lease had been signed. Ms. Tina replied that the purchase for the second unit will go through this month and the windows will be painted right away.

Acting-Chair Rubin asked if there was a plan to remove brick between the spaces. Ms. Tina replied no and noted her difficulty with regulating the temperature as the space is.

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.

2. **23 Summer Street:** Small Project Review – Modification of Approved Design – Request to remove slate roof and replace with GAF Slateline fiberglass/asphalt shingle.

Thomas Mayo, Project Architect, representing Mike Becker, Owner, was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Mayo stated that the new addition has been framed and sheathed. The structural engineer, Daigle Engineering, found insect infestation and water leak damage at the roof framing and sheathing, which means roof repairs are needed. He presented a statement letter from the structural engineer, highlighting that the slate roof is old, there is significant damage around the chimney, and he recommended replacing the existing slate roof with asphalt shingles to reduce the weight. Regarding energy conservation, the old technique was for heat to rise and melt the snow on the roof. The current code requires (R-49) insulation, and they will use spray foam insulation which does not allow heat to escape. The weight of the slate roof combined with the snow load is considered problematic and the structural engineer believes the roof can't hold the additional weight. The Owner would like to expose some of the interior beams. The slate shingles need repair, there are visible roof dips from rot. They proposed to replace the slate with asphalt GAF Slateline shingles to match the new addition, since the roof is minimally visible from the corner of Chestnut Street to eliminate the snow load concerns. At the rear of the existing building (east elevation facing Norman Street) the owner is proposing to add 2 skylines to provide more interior light, which will also be minimally visible.

Ms. Nina-Soto asked if the new addition's roofing material had been approved. Mr. Mayo replied yes, early on, and they want to match the manufacturer's material and color.

Ms. Nina-Soto asked if reinforcing the structure if the existing interior support beams can't hold the weight. Mr. Mayo replied yes, to bring it up to code they would have to build a new structure to support it to alter the existing historic structure.

Ms. Madore asked if they were proposing to replace the entire roof, not just the rear roof. Mr. Mayo replied that the same deteriorated condition on all four sides. Ms. Madore requested their logic to not seek advice from the Pres Planner or HSI. Mr. Mayo replied that they felt it would be best to come to the board first.

Ms. Madore stated that the skylight was not requested in the application and several other modifications have been required. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the skylight would be the third request. Ms. Madore noted that a change in window orientation was the first request and a change in roof was the second. She requested that advice be sought from the Preservation Planner or HSI. She asked if Mr. Mayo was aware of the letter from the Preservation Planner who suggested the applicant seek guidance for structural enhancements. She noted that the SRA needs to know more about the impact of this change since they don't take this kind of change lightly. Mr. Mayo noted that he was not aware of her letter. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that it had been submitted late that afternoon.

Ms. Madore reiterated that the skylights were not on the agenda and would need to be a separate request and any possible future changes should be considered now because the SRA doesn't want to keep changing what's already been approved. Mr. Mayo replied that they didn't realize it would be an issue until the structure engineer reviewed the roof and structure in detail and determined the level of rot. They cannot build on the existing structure and would need to add new structure. Ms. Madore noted that while she is not an architect, she is unsure if moving from slate to asphalt is the only option and she was concerned with compromising the character of the building. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the letter was sent at 4:30PM today and she can provide it to Mr. Mayor. Mr. Mayo noted that he will follow up on possible modifications. Ms. Madore requested that more information be provided for the Board to consider.

Acting-Chair Rubin noted that he was more concerned with preserving the historic exterior character than the interior appealing to possible renters. He wanted to preserve the feel of buildings in the downtown area. Mr. Mayo asked if GAF Slateline would be acceptable or if an alternative would be preferred. Acting-Chair Rubin requested a new shingle that would and noted that it was unfortunate that this wasn't discovered earlier. Mr. Mayo noted a rubber shingle that resembles slate but is less weight. Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the Salem Historical Commission guidelines notebook has a section on roofs with alternatives that she will provide it to the applicant.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to continue to the June 14, 2023, regular meeting. Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

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

New / Old Business

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

Mr. Daniel stated:

Historic tax credits are a key part of courthouse financing. In 2022 a partial window survey was completed, MHC had questions and now requires a full window survey from the exterior and interior, which DCAMM was reluctant to approve. There is no path forward to satisfy MHC's request without the survey, and DCAMM will be allowed to complete an exterior survey. The

mechanical systems will also be evaluated along with the elevator and Winn will work with DCAMM to arrange that work.

Winn is bringing on a partner in Urban Smart Growth, who will present to the SRA at the June meeting. Matt Zahler will evaluate their financials and provide a report within an Executive Session. If the SRA approves, they will move forward with their own team to evaluate the building. Urban Smart Growth will consider concepts and meet with other stakeholders in Salem.

MBTA: They hope to close on the sliver parcel by the June meeting. Ms. Newhall-Smith has been managing that process. She noted that they received the funds going to the MBTA, but those funds haven't changed hands yet.

UPP: Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the Underutilized Property Program provided a \$600,000 grant and they are working on the money exchange. June 2, 2023, is the deadline for the next round of funding and an application is being submitted for construction funds.

Mr. Daniel noted that Winn had a second architect for the courthouses, Cube3; however, Winn is looking at a couple proposals from other potential architects since Adaptive Reuse is not the niche of Cube3. An architect may be selected by the next SRA meeting. The team will do some community outreach to get to know Salem and others in the community and they will make those introductions. It's a creative group and it's an organic process of sharing ideas for the various spaces.

SRA Financials:

Mr. Rubin asked whether the remnant parcel payment has been processed. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that there was a \$50,000 deposit from Winn, Winn overpaid by \$1,000 which was returned to Winn, and the withdrawal of \$49,000 hasn't been updated. Those funds will go to the MBTA upon closing.

Other:

Charlotte Fortin Park: Mr. Rubin stated that planning on a call for artists but the National Endowment for the Arts (major funder) says they can't move forward until they complete their review.

Ms. Madore requested to add a regular update on businesses coming and going from the downtown to the SRA meetings. Ms. Newhall-Smith agreed and read through a list she prepared for Acting-Mayor McCarthy.

1. Biss: New, sells housewares and house plants.
2. Silly Bunny: New, will sell children's toys and books. Owned by Wicked Good Books.
3. Whimsey's (formerly Maria's Sweet Something's): Maria retired and sold it to two new owners. Business is operational and requires signage.
4. Anne's Asian Mart: New, owned by Koto, will open in May.
5. Hallowed Ground: Same owners as Opus, rebranded.
6. Boston Hotdog: Same owner, may do a rebrand as Au Gratin.
7. Black Cat Curiosity Shop: New business in the Former Army Barracks location. Will be retail and museum space.
8. Gyro Spot: Washington Street (former Kushco Bistro), has been open for a while.

9. Couch Dog Brewing Co.: Derby and Lafayette Streets (Former T Mobile location). Hope to open in May or June. Owner received a small business loan from the city for brewing equipment.
10. King Louis Engraving and Gift: Derby Street. Like Something Remembered, they do engravings.
11. Artists' Row: Will have new tenants.
12. Wolf Moon: Witch City Mall, took over the massage/wellness location. Sells vegan products and home décor.
13. Adias's: Lafayette Street. The previous owner sold the business to a friend who rebranded it as Ray's and will provide food with Caribbean flavors and spices.
14. Liv: Front Street. Closed. There may be a new tenant in that space.
15. Mr. Rubin stated that the Main Street Pub while still operational, has removed their signage, possibly to refresh the façade.
16. Ms. Madore stated that Settler may move from Lynde Street into Brix. Mr. Daniel added that they are seeking a liquor license but would keep the existing space.
17. Mr. Rubin noted that Rivalry has moved in below the Hampton Inn Hotel. He asked about the proposed signage at the hotel which has not been installed. Mr. Daniel noted that the applicant was fine with what SRA approved, ZBA denied the variance, and that is what the owner is appealing. It's unfortunate that it hasn't been resolved outside of the courts.

Approval of Minutes

1. Review of April 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes

Continued to the next regular meeting.

Other

Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:15PM.

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