

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee:	Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time:	Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Virtual Zoom Meeting
SRA Members Present:	Chair Grace Napolitano, Dean Rubin, Cynthia Nina-Soto
SRA Members Absent:	David Guarino, Russ Vickers
Others Present:	Tom Daniel – Director of Planning and Community Development
	Kate Newhall-Smith – Principal Planner
Recorder:	Colleen Brewster

Regular Meeting

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Daniel stated:

1. **Economic Development Recovery and Revitalization Task Force:** They've returned to weekly meetings, the indoor mask mandate was discussed, ambassadors will be out this year to work with businesses and ensure that they have a supply of masks for employers and customers, and visitors. The business activity downtown is still high. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that there will be a webinar on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 9AM for businesses and their employees, hosted and moderated by Mayor Driscoll, with Dr. Dave Roberts, Omar Santiago, RN, and Health Agent David Greenbaum. They will speak to current COVID trends and how to stay safe.
2. **Haunted Happenings:** Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that on Thursday, September 16, 2021 there will be a meeting to plan for Covid measures this Halloween season.
3. **Tourism:** Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that on Tuesday, September 21, 2021, there will be a morning meeting for the business community, hosted by the new Police Chief Miller to discuss safety in the tourism sector.
4. **Mr. Daniel stated that several new businesses have received signs and are open or will be opening soon, which is exciting to during a pandemic.** Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that she works collaboratively with the Chamber and Salem Main Streets to provide resources and assistance to new and existing businesses and echoed that it's great to see new businesses opening their door. She note that the store Die With Your Boots On is opening a second location at the Witch City Mall.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **300-302 Essex Street:** Small Project Review – Façade modifications including repairs to the brick façade and stone/concrete landings, removal and replacement of windows and doors, installation of new exterior lighting, and new signage, continued from 7/14/21, request to withdraw.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the architect for the project has stated that it has been put on hold indefinitely and has requested a withdrawal without prejudice.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to accept the request to withdrawal without prejudice.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

2. **141 Washington Street:** Small Project Review – Review of DRB recommendation for window replacement.

Jamie Morin, of Renewal by Andersen, was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that the DRB reviewed this project in August and recommended replacement of the windows with simulated divided lights and muntins on the exterior of the sashes. Six windows will be replaced in total for the one condominium unit, they will match the remaining windows as closely as possible. Morin noted that the muntins will be factory applied.

Mr. Rubin asked how many windows will remain unchanged. Ms. Newhall-Smith estimated 9. Mr. Morin noted that only unit 3 owners are interested in new windows. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the window pattern will be similar, but newer.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to approve as recommended by the DRB.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

3. **14 New Derby Street:** Small Project Review – Modification of rear and side elevations to include restoring window openings, adding a residential entrance, and exterior lighting.

Peter Pitman and Zach Malay of Pitman & Wardley Associates were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Pitman stated that the application is for the rear warehouse space for the former Delande Lighting space as well as the space above the rear Santander entry. The existing chimney is not stable, and the owner would like to remove it. Behind the bricked over openings are existing metal framed window mullions and the existing interior steel framework will be removed. The old painted signs along the interior of the fire station wall will be preserved. They will add industrial awnings over the exterior black glass and a new black solid door for the residential entrance, a gooseneck light fixture next to each door, repoint and clean the exterior brick, add simulated true divided lite window in the existing window openings with only minor modifications for alignment purposes. The windows will align with the new second-floor residential unit. New windows on the alley side of the garage are subject to building department approval because they are -within 3-5-feet from the fire station wall, will be nearly impossible to see, but will provide light.

Mr. Rubin asked the applicant whether they discussed removing the chimney with HSI since the building is historic and removing the chimney will change the look of the rear of the building. Mr. Pitman replied that while the building is historic, it is not within a historic district, they didn't speak with HSI. The owner would rather spend the money on quality windows than repair of the non-functional chimney that was used for a coal burner heat stack. Mr. Rubin replied that the application is before the SRA where members can evaluate projects to determine if the proposals are consistent with the goal to retain historic character. He asked how far the residential units extend into the building. Mr. Pitman replied they are at the back half only and noted that they are only seeking a conditional approval to move onto their review with the DRB but will bring any concerns back to the owner. They've installed faux chimneys elsewhere to retain the historic character of a building. Ms. Nina-Soto agreed with Mr. Rubin because the chimney tells a story, and she suggested they consult with DRB, Salem Historical Commission, and HSI.

Ms. Newhall-Smith asked how the window openings will be modified. Mr. Pitman replied that there were minor adjustments to the dimensions of the bricked in windows, no new openings will be created. Mr. Rubin asked why the left side windows have a different window pattern. Mr. Pitman replied that there is a cathedral loft on that end and the building has different components and openings they want to emphasize.

Mr. Daniel noted that the building was once a post office and he asked how far back the chimney's existence goes because the buildings inventory form doesn't speak to it. Mr. Pitman replied that he did not know. Mr. Daniel stated that if the SRA feels the chimney should remain, they have the option to mandate that as a condition in their motion. The Board discussed mandating the chimney to remain through either stabilization or reconstruction. Ms. Nina-Soto asked if the chimney is retained, how would it impact the interior space? She also asked about the feasibility of removing the interior portion of the chimney and retaining the portion above the roofline. Mr. Pitman replied that a faux chimney at the roof could be constructed, he would prefer to keep this matter within the purview of SRA and DRB only rather than discuss the matter with the Historical Commission and HSI. His team will study options on how best to keep it. The result would be a similar chimney with different brick and mortar. Chair Napolitano stated that while she's not adamant about the chimney remaining, she would be in favor of it.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to refer to the DRB with the condition to include keeping the chimney.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

New / Old Business

1. FY22 Community Preservation Plan – Request for Comment/Input

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that if there are comments on funding priorities to forward them to her by October 13, 2021, and she will send them to Jane Guy. Mr. Rubin suggested the changes from the previous year be provided in an executive summary. Mr. Daniel agreed with that suggestion and noted the SRA requested only minor adjustments several years ago.

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

- DRB: Mr. Daniel stated that the applicant went before the DRB in August and will come before them again in September. Staff believes it may wrap up in September so it can go before the SRA in October to wrap up their Schematic Design Review.
- Check In Meetings: The city continues to meet with the design team weekly and DCAMM every other week. They met with MBTA last week to discuss the land disposition of the remnant parcel, P&S process, conveyance to Winn, the P&S agreement between the city and Winn, permitting.
- Community Outreach: The design team met with North Field Neighborhood Association to discuss opportunities for connection.
- Chapter 91: The team met earlier today with DEP to discuss how to include Chapter 91 requirements for public activation and open space. Seth Letrell from the city has been very helpful.
- Registry of Deeds: There have been no updates with the Registry of Deeds. They need to determine the Registry's space needs as well as how to include the space requirement of other potential tenants. Mr. Rubin asked if the Registry is causing the delay. Mr. Daniel replied that it is a combination of things including staff issues due to Covid, not hearing back in time, and difficulty coordinating with the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Compliance with the legislation is also being refined and they need to define terms of the lease too, but there are upcoming meetings within the next month that should provide more clarity. Mr. Rubin suggested that the developer may ask for a deadline to be set for a decision so they can move forward on their end. Mr. Daniel replied that there are many overlapping goals, some of which are shared, and some of which are not; managing the goals can be difficult.

3. SRA Financials: The Board received the financial report.

Approval of Minutes

1. August 11, 2021: The Board agreed to continue their review to ensure that Mr. Guarino, who was present at that meeting but absent from this meeting, could review the minutes.

Adjournment

VOTE: Rubin made a motion to adjourn.

Seconded by: Nina-Soto.

Roll Call: Nina-Soto, Rubin, Napolitano.

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.