

Salem State University Neighborhood Advisory Committee

June 1, 2016 Draft Minutes

Attendees: Polly Wilbert, Marcia Lambert, Dana Lothrop, Adria Leach, Dominick Pangallo, Steve Dibble, Richard Riggs, Ben Szalewicz

Absent: Josh Turiel, Jack Hoar, Shawn Newton

Guest Presenter: Elizabeth Brosnan, Daniel O'Connell Sons; Gary Hebert, Stantec (Formerly FST)

1. Welcome & Introductions – The committee introduced themselves to the room.
2. Approval of May 4, 2016 Minutes – Minutes approved with noted changes.
3. Construction Updates
 - a. Sophia Gordon Center for the Creative and Performing Arts – Elizabeth Brosnan, Daniel O'Connell Sons Construction
 - The curtain wall is almost complete. The missing pieces are on custom order and are being fabricated. The contractor will continue working on underground utilities in the courtyard and will begin working on the new stairs and sidewalk. The main focus of the work at this point is enclosing the building. Interior work taking place now includes walls, pipe and duct work. The project is still on target for a November 2016 completion date.
 - National Grid anticipates completing the power switchover for the university to the new pole on Sunday, June 5, 2016 at 8 a.m., weather permitting. There is no anticipated impact to any abutters to the university. The outage will be for 8 hours and for university buildings only. The contractor is working with Salem Police and Fire for any necessary details and fire watch personnel. Both have been on site daily as required.
 - Saturday work will continue, but the contractor will work to schedule weekend work on the interior of the building as much as possible.
 - Questions/Comments:
 - Several committee members requested that the jersey barriers be removed as soon as possible. – The contractor stated that they are there for safety and will likely be in place until the completion of the project due to the space constraints of the site.
 - An audience member asked if the contractor could replace the reflective striping on the jersey barriers. It appears to have come off. – The contractor stated that she would take care of this.
 - A member complimented the contractor on the patch on Lafayette Street that was put in place after the utility work was complete.

b. O’Keefe Center Rink Replacement – Ben Szalewicz

- Work began on May 31. The contractor is cutting the floor into chunks and is placing them into the dumpsters in the front of the O’Keefe parking lot. They plan to work on Saturday, June 4 to continue the removal of the floor. Weekend work is not anticipated to be a regular occurrence. The first two weeks of the work will be the most disruptive.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Will this work impact the NSMC Cancer Walk? – No. The work is at the front of the lot and the Cancer Walk uses the portion at the corner of Forest Avenue and Lussier Street.
 - Is the fenced area smaller than anticipated? – Yes. The contractor did not need as much space as originally anticipated.
 - Will the parking lot be open in September? – That is the goal for the summer work. If it is not completely open, space reduction will be limited.

c. 287 Lafayette Street – Ben Szalewicz

- The sound attenuation equipment is installed and is working. The owner plans to paint the equipment to reduce its reflection.
- Questions/Comments:
 - The equipment is unsightly and the quantity of the duct work is appalling. Painting the equipment is an unsatisfactory solution for screening.
 - Did the orange pole go before the Historic Commission? – Yes.
 - Councillor Dibble and Dominick Pangallo shared an update on changes to the city’s parking management that will professionalize parking and traffic throughout the city.
 - There will be a new Traffic and Parking Commission that will take over policy and regulation setting for anything related to traffic, including roadway, transportation, and parking matters. They will be empowered to enact, unilaterally, certain types of traffic and parking regulations, while other larger changes would still require City Council approval.
 - The City has created a position for a Director of Traffic and Parking. The Director will have complete responsibility for the policy and operational management of the City’s public parking and transportation operations. The Department’s efforts will be focused on all modes of transportation, including, but not limited to: bicycling, walking, transit and all other vehicles.

4. Old Business

a. Loring Avenue Sidewalk Project – Gary Hebert

- Gary Hebert from Stantec presented finalized plans for the bump out project at Raymond Road and Loring Avenue. The bump out in this area will allow motorists to

come closer to Loring Avenue for better visibility. Planters will be installed 6 inches above grade to streamline pedestrians into the bump outs. There will be a left turn lane into Raymond Road from Loring Avenue, with traffic passing on the right. The bike path crosswalk will become the main crosswalk for this area. A rapid flashing beacon will be installed to allow vehicles to be aware when pedestrians and bikes are in the crosswalk. Traffic in this crosswalk is expected to increase with the connection of the bike path to downtown Salem. The crosswalk over Loring Avenue at Raymond Road will be eliminated. Parking will remain for direct abutters. The presentation will be posted on the city's website. The bump outs are expected to be in place by September.

- Questions/Comments:
 - Councillor Dibble met with neighbors, including the direct abutters to the bump outs. Neighbors were satisfied with and supportive of his recommended changes to the original plan.
 - Where have bump outs improved traffic in other areas of the city? – At New Derby between Lafayette Street and Congress Street. The bump outs shorten the length of the crosswalk and improves visibility for drivers as it prevents cars from parking right at the edge of the curb.
 - Will the rapid flashing beacons be visible on both sides of the street? – Yes.
 - How much will the traffic flow rate be slowed by the bump outs? – Traffic signals govern the flow of traffic through an intersection. Queuing has started beyond the pinch point on Loring Avenue. The left turn only lane will help with this.
 - How long does the rapid flashing beacon take to turn on? – The light turns on immediately when pressed. It is a warning light, not a traffic light.
 - How long does it stay on? – It remains on for a comfortable amount of time for a person to cross the street.
 - Is it the same as the light on Skerry Street near the Carlton School? – No. It's a different type of beacon. The one planned for this project is similar to the one on the rail trail in Danvers at Route 62. It will be on both sides of the street. One press will activate all four beacons which are yellow flashing and can be seen from both sides of traffic.
 - Is there a plan to prevent jay walking? – Councillor Dibble shared that he is working with the city on this project and has requested that the crosswalk from Central Campus to the Canal Street parking lot be removed. The university is considering the removal and is looking into a fence or barrier on the parking lot side to encourage use of the crosswalk at the bike path.
 - The city is studying design and potential to duplicate the rapid flashing beacon system at the Marblehead trail.
 - Who will maintain the planters if the current residents move?
 - A committee member spoke with Salem PD and they did not know of any life threatening accidents in this area. What is the crash rate? – 38 crashes

- It was stated that 40% of the 3,800 cars traveling through Raymond Road is residential. A committee member and resident disagrees with this assumption and that the through traffic to Marblehead is greater than 60%.
- What happens to the telephone pole? – It will stay. The space between the pole and the planter will be ADA compliant.
- How do you prevent someone from trying to go through the beacon? – You cannot. No place is 100% safe. If overtime, the crosswalk traffic warrants a traffic signal, it could be considered.
- Councillor Dibble requested that a campus police detail be put in place to direct pedestrians parking in the Canal Street parking lot to cross at the bike path at the start of the school year.
- The lights at Lafayette Street and Jefferson should be better timed to improve traffic flow.
- Round planter edge into the sidewalk for a smoother transition and guide for pedestrians.

b. Garage Update – Ben Szalewicz

- The lighting study was reviewed by the university and they are moving forward with a mockup of baffles that are designed to shield light for the neighbors. The university will work with direct abutters once the mockups are installed to see if this improves the situation.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Councillor Dibble requested to be included in the meetings with direct abutters.
 - Can barrels be put in place to prevent cars from using upper floors over the summer so the lights can stay off? – The university will look into this.
 - Can the gate be open all summer to allow for summer students without parking passes to park there? There is an increase of cars parking on Raymond Road again.

c. North Campus Precinct Study – Ben Szalewicz

- There is a project kick off meeting next week. The scheduling of the study has been adjusted to go further into the semester per neighborhood input. The completion of the study is expected for the end of November/beginning of December. The university anticipates that the summer work on this project will largely be data gathering, and expects the team to come back to the SSUNAC in the early fall.
- Questions/Comments:
 - A member requested that the wording on the agenda be more clear when there will be a presentation or not regarding this and other projects.
 - A member encouraged that the team not come back to present before September due to summer vacations.

d. Neighborhood Disturbances – Adria Leach

- None have been reported.

5. New Business

a. Summer Projects – Ben Szalewicz

- A new accessible entrance is being installed on the back portion of Meier Hall over the next month or two. There is no impact expected for the neighborhood.
- New carpets are being installed and walls are being painted in Bowditch, Atlantic, Marsh and Bates Halls.