

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee: Design Review Board, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: 98 Washington Street, Large First Floor Conference Room
DRB Members Present: Chair Paul Durand, Ernest DeMaio, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Helen Sides
DRB Members Absent: Chris Dynia, J. Michael Sullivan
Others Present: Matt Coogan
Recorder: Colleen Brewster

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

Urban Renewal Area Projects Under Review

- 1. 81 Washington Street (Mr. Crepe):** Discussion and vote on proposed signage (sign permit) scheme and outdoor café permit.

Camilla Souza of Mr. Crepe was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Souza stated that they applied for new outdoor seating plan to add two tables and four chairs in front of their store and an A-frame sign to make their location more noticeable. The sign would be all black and would allow them to highlight their seasonal specials and it will not have their logo.

Jaquith stated that they need to be careful not to allow the tables to block the sidewalk to maintain handicap access. Chair Durand noted that the A-frame will be in-line with the existing street tree which will also help maintain handicap access.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Kennedy: Motion to approve as submitted.
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes: 5-0.

- 2. 155 Washington Street (Adriatic Restaurant):** Discussion and vote on design modifications of approved awning.

Kennedy recused himself.

Vini Kurti, owner and Glenn Kennedy were present to discuss the project.

Kennedy stated that he felt like they were not getting enough information on the proposed design and he checked the current code to determine what can receive approval. The initial design was for a canopy awning 10-foot high from the sidewalk to the bottom of the front of the awning, but the code requirement was 8-feet, 10-feet would have put the bottom of the awning at the top of the windows. The awning manufacturer was on site today and the issue was whether the awning could be safely mount the back of the awning to the building, the preferred mounting would be underneath the top trim piece of the sign band. Kurti has purchased the awning but the height can be adjusted based on what is approved by the DRB, and he would like approval on the entire structure, including the side panels, which may not be purchased and installed until September 2018. The side panels may be three long panels or individual panels at each section of awning.

Kennedy presented views of the proposed awning opened and closed, and noted that when open, there may be a black bar to support the middle of each awning will be visible when the awning isn't in use. The building angles away from the street so a straight on view from across Front Street would be skewed and the associated paring of posts would be at an angle at each section of awning. The three awnings will be 10-feet, 9-feet, and 8-feet away and perpendicular to the building. Because they are different lengths they will not be at different pitches they will only extend out further than the one next to it, which correlates to an approximate 2" difference in height at the front of each awning which is negligible. This way each awning section will step back but they will all be at the same pitch. They reviewed extending the awning and frame closest to the entrance door down to the end of the window but that would reduce the sidewalk width from 4'-3" to 3'-8" which they can't do. The existing fence will be removed and integrated into the new awning structure, and as a result some sidewalk will be lost at the end but gained at the other end.

Kennedy stated that the structure would look best mounted below the sign band where the electrical conduit is located, but the manufacturers recommendation is to mount to the top of the sign band. There may be an iron bar behind the sign band which would leave a mounting to an L bracket as the best option, because in his opinion the awning should not be mounted higher than the sign band. The awning would be mounted to a plate that gets mounted to a tube and those tubes site on top of the post structure. Brackets can't be installed in the panels above the window wall openings that might prohibit them from opening. An L-shaped piece of steel could be installed above the panels above the window walls, but they aren't sure what is behind that either. A test hole will be drilled to determine the best method for installing the awning framework, but their preferred method will be investigated first.

Chair Durand asked what will happens at the awning to the far left. Sides noted that the awning partly spans over the etched glass and asked if it is seen from the interior. Kennedy replied that there is no bar and it will return to the wall and attach to a post mounted to the brick with a corner angle at the top, and the etched glass is in the kitchen. Chair Durand noted the awkward end connection. Kennedy added that when the side panels are installed the far left end will also receive a panel. The panels will roll up, the material will be a soft fabric and not plastic. Since the name of the restaurant in the sign band will no longer be there the owner would like to add the restaurant name in etched glass similar to what is at the Kitchen, to the glass at the front of the building. When the time comes to do that the owner will return and present his signage options.

Kennedy added that the proposed awning color is almost an exact match to the existing yellow paint color at the sign band.

Kennedy stated that the owner is looking into the cost of including an integrated lighting. If it is not cost effective he will install a less expensive string lighting and the conduit already exists, and they are seeking approval for either option. Chair Durand and Sides preferred the string lighting, but either is fine. Kennedy noted that the current plan is to roll up the awnings in the winter and not use them all four seasons and they will use heaters at the beginning and end of the winter only.

Sides stated that the option look great and the unanswered questions have been answered. Even with the possible modifications she is in favor of the proposed design. DeMaio stated that he missed the previous presentation and is not in favor of this solution. The awning interaction with the building, in the elevation and at the window, are awkward compromises. He can live with the interaction at the middle of the window but the sign band is one of the strongest elements of that building, it and the cornice create two horizontal lines around the building, and interrupting it in that way creates an awkward resolution. He doesn't understand their reasoning and the technical issues, but it has a negative impact on the architecture. At the first meeting he would have suggested they find a way to solve the technical challenge. He knows that this is not the way Kennedy would have wanted to resolve this issue. Kennedy replied that if he was on the Board side of this he too would have asked that they find a resolution. Chair Durand noted that the structure is considered temporary. Sides agreed. Jaquith stated that the cornice will carry through and he prefers the higher location to make the roof pitch stronger. Kennedy replied that the roof pitch will not change only the length. Chair Durand stated that this also activates the sidewalk. DeMaio stated that the awning should be given every opportunity to stay visible.

Kennedy stated that Kurti will remove the etched lettering at the Kitchen and make it an opaque panel so it fits in better or add it to the left hand side of the window only. DeMaio replied that it will make it less noticeable but it is not approving what would be detrimental to the façade.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith: Motion to approve as presented with the conditions that the awning noting that the preferred method of fastening would be below the cornice band, and if that were not possible it could be mounted on the band.

Seconded by: Sides. Passes 4-1.

3. 65 Washington Street (District Court): Discussion and vote on final review of development project

Merrill Diamond (Diamond and Sinacori), Jeff Hirsch (VP of Operations for Urban Spaces and Senior Project Manager), Steve Tise (Architect), Lucas Strum (Lumen

Studio), and Haley Foye and John Kirby of Boston Art were present to discuss the project.

Diamond previously stated that they would reveal the name and the overall branding of the building at this meeting and the artwork; however, the marketing team wants to launch the name through social media along with the floor plans and other project information. Additional time is needed so that information will not be provided at this meeting.

Hirsch stated that the project is being reviewed by the SRA and received approval from the Planning Board and the City Council approved the HDIP Zone and their TIE agreement. At the last meeting they discussed some things the DRB had brought up; the review of the Washington Street banners and building medallions and how their color worked with the building and those have been revised, the views from the east of the alleyway that show the courtyard, views of the Federal Street artwork and how it integrates with the building and their marketing theme, branding, and interior design, the lighting plans which were designed by Rick Stern, and the rooftop mechanical screening. They have building material samples, lighting components, and the main entry canopy details to present.

Tise stated that the banners have been changed from blue to deep Essex Green. The lower left-hand panel on the front of the building previously had a logo as a placeholder and suggested the succession of panels to be placed along Federal Street. They worked with the public art working group to refine the Federal Street panel designs and the free-standing sculpture at the corner of Washington and Federal Streets. The medallions to be inset into the brickwork will be 12"x12" glazed pre-cast in a star motif in an oxidized green and entry canopy details have been provided.

Tise presented an analysis of their exterior lighting strategy. Lucas stated that the lighting design is understated, and the lighting will be integrated as much as possible into the architecture. Individual fixtures will be integrated into the coffers to provide underlighting. Strip lighting will be incorporated into the back side of the Federal Street art panels aimed at the wall to highlight and make the recess glow. The fixtures will be hidden from direct view. The previously proposed strip lighting traveling down the façade would have come into view. Lighting will be incorporated under the benches to create pools of light at the seating nodes. Recessed downlights will also be integrated into the overhang. The two walls at the recessed ramps will have a back-lit acrylic walls that will glow. Tise added that lighting at both concealed ramps will be illuminated to discourage loitering. They will be 10-foot high polycarbonate panels and a sample has been provided. They are fixed translucent white panels with birch branches integrated into the bottom 3-feet that will taper off into pure white above. The lighting behind the panels will be adjustable LED strips at the perimeter of each panel. There will be a 2-foot wide access door at the interior to service the panel lighting.

Tise stated that from the courtyard view at the back alley, the interior façade material will change to a lighter cement system and at the top floor the aluminum lattice system will continue. The curved form at the base is the ramp to the lower level parking of the garage, with a planted landscape roof. The upper terrace is the communal open space for the residents. The interior courtyard will house the remaining balconies while the street sides get bay windows.

John Kirby, President and Founder of Boston Art was present to discuss the public space artwork. Suzi Hlavacek and Haley Foye the Project Manager from his office created the proposed design. These recessed art panels are on the Federal Street side of the building and will be highly visible as this façade is a gateway to the City when traveling from the MBTA station. They are still refining the details, but the ideas came from the goals set by Suzi and the working group. The goals of the panels were that they should be dynamic and contemporary, forward thinking for this prominent location which is the gateway to downtown, something to display the vibrancy of Salem, with place making qualities, sets a vibrant and exciting tone, can be experienced as pedestrian, motorist, and commuter, and is unexpected yet evocative of Salem.

Lucas Strum of Lumen Studio stated that they've come up with cut metals, lighting perfectly suited to the ultimate design, flush texture that is close to the wall, and something that will wrap the building and connect the two facades. Both a daytime and nighttime look will be created with the lighting.

Strum stated that the process begins with a preliminary look at the ways the façade is viewed. Deb Greel, Public Art Planner, stated that she and Suzi went back and forth on both their ideas and they went above and beyond what the RFP required of that garden space. Kirby added that they explored various themes including water and maritime, but the introduction of branding and various collaborations allowed them to tailor their design. They will use different penetrations in the metal, there will be negative space, it will be thoughtfully lit, abstract with a modern reference to the branding and interior artwork being considered. Six of these panels will be installed on Federal Street and a seventh at the corner of Washington Street. Everyone will look at the panels and see something different. Foye added that they wanted something clean, textural, forward thinking and something that everyone can appreciate. They will be installed in recessed niches and standing off the wall that will cast shadows in the daytime and glow at night since they are black-lit. Lucas noted that the panel colors haven't been determined and various color combinations are being considered.

Tise stated that planted panels will be the back-drop to the two bench areas at the request of the Planning Board. Diamond noted that the artwork in his opinion is an abstraction of bricks and the branding will in some way be a celebration of the structure. Its simplicity is important, and he believes it will be successful. Lucas noted that the darker panels will have a different perforation level than the lighter ones and the remaining negative space will also play an important role in the artwork. Tise added that the metal panels will be folded back and read as 2" deep so the edge of the panels won't be visible.

Lucas stated that the contemporary powder coated building material sculptures of Peter Bradley Cohen are being considered for the interior work. Hlavacek added that his pieces are also being considered for the exterior sculpture at the corner of Federal and Washington Streets which to tie-in with the rest of the building. It would feel "authentically Salem" yet clean and contemporary to push them into the future.

Tise stated that the mechanical locations are still being determined but their screening will be done discreetly and will be visible from the upper levels of adjacent buildings only and not from the ground. The screening will be done with a version of the aluminum panel in a shiplap style siding. The panels come in various shapes; the 2" version will be used as the shutter pieces next to the windows and a 5" tubular version will be used as

vertical screening. The shiplap style version of this aluminum will be used as siding around the top floor of the building.

The construction drawings are being developed. The entry canopy will be powder coated steel tubing, welded with ¾" flat plate glass above, and an obscure glass skirt with the same band dimension as the stone band of the building. There will be an aluminum closure at the top and a street numbering at the front face.

Diamond noted that there was some internal discussion by their joint venture about the banners, and the question about whether the banners were necessary. From his perspective, he likes the verticality they provide, the framing of the main entry they provide, and the Essex Green will compliment the brick. He asked if the Board shared those feelings or if they felt they could be eliminated. Chair Durand replied that they could go either way, but he liked that the entry was defined, and it provided a softness to the hard façade. Jaquith stated that it provided a human touch to the structure and he liked the Essex Green. Kennedy stated that he liked them but there is no need to commit to a color at this time, they should install the artwork and then define what else the building needs. Diamond agreed. Tise added that he sees them as relating to the harbor and would detail them with nautical attachments.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Beth Girard, Ward 6 Councilor. She's very impressed with the proposed design.

Jessica Herbert, Salem Historic Commission. Asked whether there will be some control over the window drapery. Hirsch replied that that will be written into the condominium documents.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Jaquith stated that this is one of the best working sessions they've had, and he congratulated the architect and developer for working hard to get a very difficult building. Chair Durand agreed and added that they've set a high bar for redevelopment work in Salem and their efforts and details are appreciated. Kennedy stated that the color of the medallions has improved, he doesn't understand the connection to Salem in the final artwork but many see it and find it interesting. The structure is new and can fit in well but the border/frame around them makes it appear very heavy and takes away from the artistic element when it's the element that should be the focal point. Tise agreed that those elements should be subtle so the sculpture on the corner to be the focal point.

Coogan stated that the level of detail for the Federal Street public art is not at a level of detail that staff would recommend DRB recommendation to the SRA and ultimate approval. He suggested that the DRB may want to continue the review of the project for a final review of the artwork. Kennedy asked when signage would be reviewed. Diamond replied that signage can be reviewed in the field and requested an approval at this meeting since deadlines are fast approaching. Chair Durand replied that he would be comfortable with granting that approval.

Jaquith: Motion to approve the final plans as presented.
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 5-0.

North River Canal Corridor Renewal Area Projects Under Review

1. **16, 18, and 20R Franklin Street (Ferris Junkyard):** Discussion on design changes to proposed five building, 48-unit residential development.

Attorney Correnti was present to discuss the project and represent Juniper Point Investments.

Atty. Correnti noted that this project has been undergoing review by the Planning Board for more than six months and they've been adjusting the plans to address the Board and neighborhood concerns. The latest plans are the current iteration of what's proposed. The changes are substantial including; the relocation of a mid-rise building from the park property line in which the feedback stated that it was over-shadowing the field, a reduction of the massing, the creation of townhouse units along the streetscape, scaling the project down towards the neighborhood, reducing the building heights, and the addition of some amenities.

Architect, Ryan McSheara, of Red Barn Architecture, and Frank Wardley of Pitman and Wardley Associates, were present to discuss the project.

McShera stated that the mass along Furlong Park has been removed and the drive aisle width increased which accentuated the views to the river, they've created a section cut of how the massing interacts with Franklin Street and created eye-level perspectives of the buildings from the street. The townhouses are still proposed along Franklin Street but the buildings have been reduced from 5 units to 4 units which allows for more greenspace, provides less of a pinch point between the two buildings, encourages pedestrian access, and provides more site lines between the buildings and for vehicles turning into or out of the site.

McShera stated that the footprint of the mid-rise buildings have also changed and a floor was removed, so they now meet the 50-foot height limit. He presented a plan showing the overall reduction of massing throughout the site which also allow for more maneuverability for vehicles on-site.

McShera noted the small landscaping strip added in front of the Franklin Street townhouses to soften the edge. The site entrances which have been recessed along the street and the second floor of those townhouses have also been stepped back 2 feet to reduce the massing. A comment about the front roof decks was made at the previous meeting and their design team feels they are appropriate aesthetically and helps reduce the massing. The height of the townhouse along the street is 48-feet before it slopes up towards the roof ridge.

McShera stated that the tree buffer along Furlong Park will remain beyond their proposed fence, landscaping, drive aisle, sidewalk and second row of townhouses. The mid-rise buildings at the center of the site have been carefully stepped back so they rise in height as the buildings move towards the waterfront. Along the river deck and patio spaces have been added for city views, common space areas, and for massing concerns. Parking will remain at the ground level and there will be four stories of living space above.

McShera noted that a site analysis for how the site will interact with the neighboring buildings was done to highlight the buildings within a 250-foot and 500-foot radius, showing the commercial properties in red and the residential in blue. They also indicated the scale of the buildings across the river.

Kennedy asked what lowering building height did for the overall massing of the buildings. McShera replied that a full story has been removed, the ground floor parking was driving the depth of the first level which they tightened as best they could while leaving very little flexible space. The number of overall units has been reduced from 48 to 42 and kept the same number of parking spaces. Kennedy replied that the stepping back should be more significant, 5-feet for example.

DeMaio stated that while he appreciates the smaller scale urban design techniques of reducing the height and setback at the buildings along the street and moving the mid-rise building away from Furlong Park, which has improved the massing and proposed plan. More architectural development is needed, and the end walls of the townhouse become critical moving forward since they are important facades for the building and neighborhood, whether or not that open space being created becomes a gateway to the site and for pedestrian access.

Sides appreciated the plan improvements address the density concerns of the neighborhood into account. She agreed that that end walls of the façade will become a critical point. The two building types don't go together, and she'd like to see more cohesion in their materials. More can be learned from the larger buildings in terms of what can be used at the smaller buildings and more fenestration is needed. The Planning Board will provide commentary on the landscape design which is critical to the property and how nice of a spot that area between the end walls can become.

Jaquith stated that the site plan has improved, he agrees that the exterior needs architectural work, and the landscaping can be used to reinforce the site plan and the route through the site and out to the water. He asked if the public will be allowed to walk through the two distinct routes. Wardley replied that there are no barriers, so people can walk throughout the site; however, the main aisle and walkways are wider and more inviting although the corner between the townhouses does feel more private for resident use. Jacquith noted that there is no perspective from the center drive circle indicating landscaping being used as a focal point or seating.

Chair Durand stated that the plan is much improved, they listened and addressed a lot of the concerns. The site plan does provide an opportunity for a good landscaping solution to make it fit into the neighborhood. The trees dividing the site from Furlong Park are dense and will provide good screening. He agrees with much of what has been said, is pleased with the reduction in mass, the site plan and the connections to the water are successful. Details of the future architectural solutions will need to be reviewed for the proposed structures, but from a planning point of view it has come a long way.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

Victoria Ricciardiello, 5 Foster Street. Asked for clarification on building orientation of the townhouses along Franklin Street. McShera replied that the front of the buildings and the roof decks both face Franklin Street. There will be a couple steps up to the entryway which is on the same level as the garage, with living spaces on the two upper

floors and master suite on the top level. The roof deck will be 48-feet from grade to the edge of the roof deck. The second townhouse building is identical but will face the park. The three mid-rise buildings are now all 5 stories with parking at the ground floor and four floors of living space above. Ricciardiello stated that they would prefer 3 stories to maintain the height consistency with the other buildings at The Bell at Salem Station or 9 South Mason Street. The site is still very congested for having between 1.25 and 1.5 acres of land with 5 buildings proposed. The proposed road on the site is also only 20-foot wide which is also congested. Kennedy noted that he went to the site and placed a drone at 40-foot high to see what the proposed front building height would look like. The elevation of the homes across the street are higher than the base elevation from the townhouse so the tops of those houses are almost the same level, which wouldn't make a big difference in regard to sightline. The mid-rise buildings were reduced from 60 to 50-feet in height and their height is roughly the same as the parking across the canal. Ricciardiello replied that it's that height that doesn't fit into the neighborhood and asked how high the land will need to be built up. McShera replied 1-foot.

Judy French, 16 Foster Street. Agrees with Ricciardiello. The building height should come down because it doesn't fit with the neighborhood and will set a precedent for this whole area. There should also be fewer units.

Beth Girard, Ward 6 Councilor. She's happy to see the direction these buildings are headed and the reduction in massing will be a better fit in the neighborhood. The landscaping still needs to be worked out and she'd like to see more greenery.

Emily Udy, Historic Salem. Agrees that the site plan is strong, the contemporary architecture will provide a real opportunity for the site, and she looks forward to seeing the details since the site is very visible.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Chair Durand noted that the progress has been great, the height investigation using a drone was very helpful. The height will set a precedent, but it has also been reduced from what the NRCC allowed which is a major milestone. It may be bigger than what many would like but that also allows the builder to add more aesthetically, through landscaping, and the quality of the homes, of which there needs to be a balance so there can be amenities added. The site details such as the proposed trellis are positives provided by the applicant.

Sides stated that the distance diagram was helpful and could be expanded and it will hardly be seen from so far away and there will still be views of the water beyond. The height is less of a concern and the density is more appropriate. Chair Durand was correct about the money being spent and the money made which impacts the quality of the project.

DeMaio stated that they are conscious of setting a precedent; however, every project is considered for its own merits and site, approving the height to a developer at this location doesn't mean that other developers will also get approval, each project is evaluated individually.

Kennedy stated that he's heard several times about encouraging access throughout the site and to the water; however, the water access is at the neighboring park and not

through this site which isn't that large. He would not want to walk to or through the buildings to access the water when there is a park with access right next to it. Creating that access shouldn't encouraged or discouraged, it's just not where someone would want to go.

Jaquith: Motion to continue to the next regular meeting on June 27, 2018.
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 5-0.

Old/New Business

Minutes

The minutes from the April 25, 2018 regular meeting were reviewed.

Sides: Motion to approve the minutes with Chair Durand, Kennedy, and Sides' edits.
Seconded by: Jaquith. Passes 5-0.

Adjournment

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by: Sides. Passes 5-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 8:00PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-2033.