

**City of Salem Massachusetts
Public Meeting Minutes**

Board or Committee: Redevelopment Authority, Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting
SRA Members Present: Christopher Dunn, Chair Grace Napolitano, Christine Madore
SRA Members Absent: Cynthia Nina-Soto, Dean Rubin
Others Present: Kate Newhall-Smith, Principal Planner
Others Absent: Tom Daniel, Executive Director
Recorder: Colleen Brewster

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated:

1. Charlotte Forten Park: The DRB had suggestions for design improvements so the shade project will return to the DRB in two weeks, and possibly back to the SRA in April. The city signed a contract with the Anthem Group this week. They will offer year-round programming, some of it free, with food and beverages, etc. There is no timeline for the start of the events. Electrical capacity at park: They are working with National Grid, the city, and the contractor to move the project forward.
2. Rockafellas: Their manager reached out about the corner bay window, which was meant to be removed, restored, and returned, but the owner said it the pieces of it were stolen so there is nothing to reinstall. Noting that she hasn't had much luck receiving responses from them, she asked if she should try to work with the applicant on a new application since the current window is no longer a viable option. The Board agreed, noting that Rockafellas is not in compliance, and the owner should provide an update on their progress of providing a replacement window and to request a timeline on their submittal process.
3. This will be the last meeting of the SRA's clerk. She expressed her gratitude for all the hard work and consistency. The Board thanked her for her years of service.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

1. **98 Washington Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of exterior security camera on front façade of City Hall Annex

Captain Fred Ryan, Salem Police Department, was present to discuss the project.

Cpt. Ryan stated that they have been working with the Building Department to install cameras at City Hall Annex, to create a safer working environment. He requested approval to install an exterior panoramic camera on the Washington Street façade, placed above the two L's in the word "Hall." It will be color matched to the building façade.

Ms. Newhall-Smith asked who will install the camera and how it will be color matched. Captain Ryan replied, Wayne Alarm and paint made for plastic will be applied to the camera.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to approve. Seconded by: Dunn.
Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, and Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

- 2. 252R Bridge Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of a small cell wireless facility on a replacement utility pole in the right of way.

Attorney Ed Pare of Brown Rudnick, Boston, MA representing New Singular Wireless (AT&T) was present to discuss the project.

Atty. Pare stated that with the help of National Grid, AT&T will replace the pole and install small cell facilities. A 2-foot-high x 14-inches diameter antenna will be mounted to top of the utility pole, with interior wiring, an equipment cabinet, electrical meter, and shut off switch will be at the bottom. They have installed 6 in Salem and 1,000 throughout Massachusetts. This location is just inside the redevelopment authority line, so the Salem City Council referred the matter to the SRA for review and approval. The wood utility pole is owned by Nation Grid and because there is a need in the area, AT&T will pay for a replacement wood pole. They will bring fiber and power will come from an existing pole across the street. The reason for the change is the capacity issues in Salem and this will provide improved coverage.

Ms. Madore asked if this pole is a newly proposed location near the Bridge and Washington Streets intersection that the Salem City Council pushed back on previously. Atty. Pare replied no, this is a new pole and a different location. Ms. Madore asked if the antenna could be painted black to blend in with the pole. Atty. Pare replied that the antenna comes in a variety of colors direct from the factory. He suggested the brown equipment and cabinet to match the wood pole, noting that they like to distinguish the antenna. The SRA agreed to use brown.

Mr. Dunn requested the life expectancy of the equipment. Atty. Pare replied 5 years, nothing that with new technology it could be replaced before that. Mr. Dunn asked if this application would need to return to the SRA to replace the equipment. Atty. Pare shared that it would need to go back to the city council.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve with the condition that the color be brown. Seconded by: Madore.
Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

- 3. 60 Washington Street:** Small Project Review – Installation of an exterior vent from the second story of the rear façade to the roof

Sanir Lutfija of Seger Architects and Mike Denk (owner) were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Lutfija stated that the owner is rebranding the Boston Hotdog and wants to update the kitchen and install a proper ventilation system with make-up air. The existing exhaust vents above the

front entry vestibule along Washington Street don't meet the current code. They want to install a 2-story stainless steel exhaust duct, 16-inches in diameter, with two access panels. It would only be visible from Lynde Street, along with an existing exhaust duct for Odd Meter Coffee Company, and this path is the least intrusive method possible. They worked with the owner to use some interior space that exists the rear façade and the vent will extend up to the roof.

Ms. Madore was excited about the rebranding but questioned whether the SRA had a preservation easement on the building. She wanted to provide consistent feedback for renovations such as these, raising concerns with the shiny metallic finish of the new exhaust that would stand out. She suggested the use of a different material or painting it to blend in with the brick façade. She noted the presence of an existing vent along the façade and raised concerns about not wanting to add to the visual clutter. Mr. Lutfija replied that the use of a duller finish can be reviewed, noting that they didn't intend to paint it, which he believes would draw more attention to it against the brick façade. Mr. Denk stated that they can't change the material, which is required for cleaning purposes, but agreed to look for a dull finish or to paint it.

Ms. Newhall-Smith stated that she was unable to find documentation regarding a façade easement in her SRA files or online at the Registry of Deeds. If there was one it may have expired.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Ms. Newhall-Smith suggested the application go before the DRB. Ms. Madore didn't see the need. Mr. Lutfija reiterated that the stainless-steel finish will dull overtime.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to approve. Seconded by: Dunn.
Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

4. **90 Washington Street:** Outdoor Dining – Review of proposed outdoor dining for Koto

Leo Liu of Koto (owner) was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Liu stated that the setup will be the same as last year, they will add fencing around the platform that previously took over two parking spaces with an open section for access to the fire hydrant by the fire department. They will also purchase new tables and chairs for ADA compliance. He asked if they can use the umbrellas with promotional logos given to them by their suppliers. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied no, those logos are considered signage.

Mr. Dunn asked if these approvals are for one-year only. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that restaurants get approved through this process, if nothing changes next year, they may only need to sign a statement confirming no changes.

Chair Napolitano asked if they needed to review umbrella colors. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that the applications will go to the DRB for review and approval. There is a start date for the outdoor dining season, but applicants will require other city review before installing their outdoor patios, and the SRA is one step of many. Chair Napolitano asked if substantial changes are proposed or

something was not in compliance, if the applicant would need to return to the SRA. Ms. Newhall-Smith agreed to add that language to the approvals.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve pending DRB approval. Seconded by: Madore.
Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

5. **288 Derby Street: Outdoor Dining** – Review of proposed outdoor dining for Bambolina

Tim Haigh and Elizabeth Childs of Bambolina were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Haigh requested approval for approximately 40-feet x 7-feet of outdoor dining, along their 40-feet of frontage, that would not extend beyond the building edge/property line. Ms. Newhall-Smith asked if they will reinstall the decking. Mr. Haigh replied that they are hoping for a permanent sidewalk extension like the city did further down Derby Street, noting that they won't need to extend their dining as far, since they no longer must account for social distancing measures.

Mr. Dunn asked if the jersey barriers will be reinstalled and if their inclusion was a city decision. Mr. Haigh replied that the Salem Police Department made that decision based on the speed of the road and traffic volume. Ms. Newhall-Smith added that the police department gets triggered on outdoor dining applications to determine barrier count or if they are needed at all. Ms. Madore asked if no jersey barriers were proposed in the application, because she thought they were there due to the patio obstructing the bike lane. She appreciated having the barriers while bike riding with her kids, since the patio location abruptly forces riders 2-3 feet into the road which can alarm drivers. The jersey barriers help make it safe without compromising the patio dining experience. She suggested requesting jersey barriers or realigning the bike lane. Mr. Haigh questioned whether Ms. Madore suggested the jersey barriers along the bike path would be needed while the wood deck is in place or permanently, because he was told that a permanent sidewalk extension would be installed. Ms. Madore replied that the bike lane should be continuous, given the Complete Streets policy where any city infrastructure improvements need to consider accessibility for all modes of travel, noting that the city has been accommodating to outdoor dining but they are also an obstruction to the bike lanes. Ms. Newhall-Smith agreed to forward Ms. Madore's request. Mr. Dunn asked if the permanent sidewalk would be paid for by the city. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that Former Mayor Driscoll told the owners that the cost of the expense could be spread out overtime. Mr. Dunn noted the similar arrangement for Ledger where the additional sidewalk would become permanent.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to approve pending DRB approval. Seconded by: Dunn.
Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

6. **155 Washington Street: Outdoor Dining** - Review of proposed outdoor dining for Adriatic

Vini Kurti of Adriatic was present to discuss the project.

Mr. Kurti proposed to use two parking spots for his outdoor dining platform in the same configuration he has used in past years.

Mr. Dunn asked if this area of sidewalk will become permanent or remain wood decking. Mr. Kurti hoped to make it permanent with a design by Seger Architects.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve pending DRB review. Seconded by: Napolitano.
Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

7. **168 Essex Street: Outdoor Dining** – Review of proposed outdoor dining for Village Tavern

Alex Ingemi and Andrew Ingemi of Village Tavern were present to discuss the project.

Mr. Alex Ingemi proposed the same extension of their existing patio as they've done for the past three years. It would take up the space from the right side of the fountain over to the planting border without getting in the way of the Essex Street right of way. The hostess stand is within that area and a white lattice barrier would surround the perimeter to maintain the alcohol barrier during Halloween and to keep the people out of the street.

Ms. Madore stated that their additional outdoor dining overtakes a space intended for public use, which is concerning. The area has notches intended for public seating that were taken away and the entire perimeter was meant for public use. The city relaxed the rules during Covid for safety, but in the summer the fence was installed and closing off a significant part of the public space which is not in-line with the SRA's interest. She was not in favor of extending their space to the end of the fountain when they already have an existing outdoor patio. She also raised concerns with the SRA's concerns with their use of white vinyl fencing, noting that there was an agreement in place to change it, but it hasn't changed, and it should be more in line with the design guidelines. Mr. Andrew Ingemi had no issue with reviewing and installing materials approved by the DRB. He noted that generally there is no one in the area they use and there is still plenty of frontage around the fountain. This area gives the patrons a place to enjoy the fountain and the people, and they are not interfering with seeing or blocking the fountain. Ms. Madore stated that they have fenced off the entire right side of the fountain for private use, an additional 1,600 square-feet of outdoor dining, the largest area being used without an easement, and over the summer the fencing was up, and no tables were in place. Mr. Andrew Ingemi replied that there will always be someone with the largest amount of outdoor dining, they will have tables in these areas, so it won't be empty, and he reiterated that the police requested fencing. He offered to pay rent to justify the use of the space.

Mr. Dunn asked if the photos of crowds were from Halloween weekends or every day of the month in October. Mr. Andrew Ingemi replied, a typical day in October, and added that summer

weekends are also very busy, and they have the space to accommodate the people. He noted that they are leaving an opening for people to walk in and out of the restaurant. Mr. Alex Ingemi added that the barrier would be in line with the edge of the fountain and a menu would be placed at the barrier entrance, with additional barriers added to corral people.

Chair Napolitano questioned how to handle a police request. Ms. Newhall-Smith suggested the Board review a typical daily pattern/a non-October use, since what the police say in October for crowd control is paramount.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Madore made a motion to refer to the DRB with no approval and the applicant to return to the SRA. Seconded by: Dunn.

Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, and Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that the DRB may have the same concern with materials and color, and she suggested the applicant compile alternative materials for efficiency purposes. She agreed to ask if a DRB member could be available to speak to the applicant.

8. 282 Derby Street: Outdoor Dining – Review of proposed outdoor dining for All Souls

Jen Tran (co-owner) of All Souls was present to discuss the project.

Ms. Tran stated that they will use last year's decking material and footprint, which takes up 2 parking spaces, one space in front of All Souls and one in front of Bit Bar. She noted that they added poles to hold string lights and the jersey barriers installed the first year of Covid, were painted to match their restaurant interior which the DPS can usually return to them each year. They add flower boxes for decoration in addition to their grey tables and chairs, and plain red umbrellas. There are 5 tables with 4 seats at each totaling 20 seats. They will also pay for the use of taking over each parking space. Ms. Newhall-Smith noted that there is a fee per/ square-foot for using a sidewalk and a fee for the use of each parking space; all fees are built into the application process.

Public Comment:

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

VOTE: Dunn made a motion to approve pending DRB review. Seconded by: Madore.

Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

New / Old Business

Redevelopment of the Historic Courthouses and the Crescent Lot: Update on Project Status: Update on Project Status: Ms. Newhall-Smith stated:

Ramie Schneider, the crescent lot Project Manager, will be leaving WinnDevelopement, but she will present at the April 10th meeting, for the first schematic design review of the courthouses, and 75% design drawings of the crescent lot building, "The Exchange." Ms. Madore if the 75% review for The Exchange

includes location of utilities for the commercial spaces. Ms. Newhall-Smith will request civil drawings be submitted. Ms. Madore asked if letters of interest were made available. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied that the spaces aren't large spaces, one is a gym and the other may become a small retail space. She noted that Winn is on track to pursue historic tax credits in April to support the courthouse renovation, noting the significant gap in funding. She added that WinnDevelopment continues to visit the buildings a few times a month with their development team. She is happy to provide tours to SRA members.

BRIX:

Ms. Madore suggested the SRA write a letter of support for the 5-year TIF to help the owners build out the space. She felt that a couple of the councillors had concerns with the space and would like it to pass but feels the vote may be narrow. The deferred tax would be approximately \$30,000, which is very small considering the potential return for the City via increased property and meals taxes. She raised concerns with waiting for another business owner to take over the space that can solve all of the current problems, when it's already been vacant for over two years, and added that she plans to make a public comment at the meeting. Chair Napolitano raised concerns with setting a precedent on a financial ask that affects a specific business, despite the direct benefit of their use of the space, nothing that other businesses may want this in the future. She was in support of a letter voicing the general concern with the extended vacancy while noting that it would be great to see a local business in the space. Mr. Dunn asked if the council is aware of the struggle to find a tenant for the space. Ms. Newhall-Smith replied yes and noted that she received good feedback after the previous city council meeting. She noted that the space has already been purchased by the owners of Settler, who could either sell it or use it as an investment property if the TIF did not pass. She added that is one of the only vacant properties in downtown Salem.

SRA Financials: Received and filed.

Other:

Approval of Minutes

1. Review of February 14, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Moved to April meeting.

Other

Adjournment

VOTE: Madore made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Seconded by: Dunn.

Roll Call: Dunn, Madore, and Napolitano. 3-0 in favor.

The meeting was 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