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**MINUTES OF THE
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**

**MEETING OF
March 27, 2025**

A meeting of the Historic District Commission was held on March 27, 2025 in the Community Development Conference Room at Salem Town Hall.

PRESENT: Mike Banks, Chair; Pat Good, Vice Chair; Beverly Glynn, Secretary; Howie Glynn; and Jacob LaFontaine, Planning Director

ALSO PRESENT: Brian Flannagan, Salem Historical Society

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

H. Glynn made a motion to accept the minutes of October 28, 2025, seconded by P. Good.
Vote:4-0.

Chair M. Banks noted that this is a general meeting of the Historic District and gave an overview of the agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS

300 MAIN STREET – SEVMAR/ADEP

Jocelyn and Kelvin Severino and Joanne Simone from Sevmar and ADEP were present to represent the project.

J. and K. Severino provided the Commission with a general review of the proposal to offer prepared food for takeout. No meals to be prepared on site, only sales or prepared food.

Potential change of use will require plan review with the ZBA and Planning Board, with two possible paths: variance and overlay district. An overlay district could open up for more mixed use (res/office/retail).

It was noted that there is an approved site plan for office use, and that any change of use would require a variance due to the Residential zoning.

There was discussion on adopting an overlay district to encompass the Historic District with regulations like the Business Office Districts that would make it easier for modest retail uses in the District. The proposed use would be retail, as food would be prepared off site and there would be no seating. Currently this would require a variance.

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1 C. Severino discussed revitalizing the site and bringing more life into the area. The building was
2 purchased mid-2024. He said his desire would be to have a “grab and go” style retail use with
3 Sevmar food produced at the 401 Main Street location. Typical food would be grape leaves,
4 chicken bowls and hummus, all fresh Mediterranean meals. A fast, healthy, convenient
5 alternative to fast food, prepared daily. The key point is there would be no on-site kitchen. There
6 is no seating, no public restrooms, and the food will come from Sevmar’s kitchen, right down the
7 street. Business at the 401 Main Street location is very busy, expanding into the Historic District
8 would be a big help.

9
10 The intent is to preserve Salem’s charm in the Historic District and connect with Veterans Park.
11 There will be no facade changes to the building, signage will meet the zoning requirements. C.
12 Severino noted that they would likely only do a face change for Sevmar’s Grab and Go logo.

13
14 C. Severino mentioned having two to three staff members, not much to assist the customers,
15 cashing them out and educating them on the options. The hours have not been finalized, but
16 similar hours to restaurant are being considered, which are 11am to 9pm. It’s anticipated that the
17 lunch and dinner crowd will be the busy times.

18
19 Chair M. Banks asked if outdoor seating would be an option. J LaFontaine said that this would
20 have to be reviewed with the Health Officer, and the septic system will be the limiting factor, as
21 the property is not on Town sewer. Chair M. Banks asked about a portable restroom on site. J.
22 LaFontaine said that he could discuss this with the Health Officer.

23
24 C. Severino noted that the proposal is for healthy convenient option for Salem, and the location
25 benefits from being across from Veterans Park, so visitors can grab food while they're visiting
26 the area such as at nearby churches. The site is conveniently located less than one mile from
27 South Broadway. He noted that food would be cooked fresh daily less than a mile up the street.
28 C. Severino highlighted his plan to offer discounts for first responders, veterans and active-duty
29 military. C. Severino asked for HDC input and is looking forward to working with the
30 Commission.

31
32 The feedback from the HDC was very positive. B. Glynn asked the applicant to discuss outside
33 lighting to keep area safe while open in the evenings.

34
35 M. Banks noted that a 14-month master plan was just wrapped up with Utile Design, and that the
36 Historic District was highlighted as an area the Town wants to enhance. He said that this
37 proposal was consistent with the Master Plan and would fit perfect. It would attract people from
38 the park.

39
40 J. LaFontaine noted that a variance, possible adoption of an overlay district, and discussion with
41 the Health Officer on outside seating are follow-up items. He also noted that review from the
42 HDC would still be required if a variance is granted.

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304 MAIN STREET – VETERAN’S PARK AT SALEM COMMON

Pam Russel and Pat Hargraves from Project Salem were present to represent the plan.

P. Russell noted that the committee is now called Project Salem, but was previously the 9/11 memorial committee, and she introduced the Board - Pat Hargraves is President, Ron Aslin Vice President, Christine, and Cathy Stacy are also on the board.

P. Hargraves noted that the area is not currently ADA compliant, the pathways are not easily navigated – there are issues with access to the gazebo and the back of the monuments. The gazebo and cannons are not being altered. There’s going to be a slight incline coming all the way down to where the flagpole is now. We’re tearing that down and putting up three flagpoles there. We’ll hopefully have the Women’s Garden Club help us make that area beautiful. The four trees along Bridge Street will be removed. The stones are not being destroyed, and we’re taking all the Vietnam Veterans stones out around the small ones. We’re removing those, putting them on pallets, and taking them to the American Legion. The American Legion is going to place them in the Salem Depot.

They’re not replacing the stones except for “Big Birtha” (the Supreme Sacrifice monument) which will be moved close by. With input from B. Flanagan from the Historical Society, we’re going to match that wall to the wall that’s covering guard in the cemetery, it’s going to match perfectly. B. Glynn liked the proposed wall style. Chair M. Banks confirmed that the wall will be authentic, not veneered stone wall over concrete.

P. Hargraves said that as we head towards the memorial, the memorial itself is 8 feet tall, black granite, in a circular shape. The granite is coming from India. Once the order is placed, it’s a 8-to-10-month delivery. P. Hargraves clarified that they will not be interrupting anything for the 275th celebration, and that they likely can’t do anything until September or October of this year. “Once we order the granite then we’ll have a timeline based on a construction meeting coming up on April 1st. We’ll start sometime in October and hopefully we would be partially done by Memorial Day 2026. We’re not touching the Christmas tree. We’re leaving that alone. With the current configuration, access to the backside of some monuments is difficult. It’s just a dishonor to our veterans that passed away. The big Memorial Stone (Supreme Sacrifice/“Big Bertha”) is being moved down slightly, we’ll clean the stone and make it look brand new again.”

He showed where the 9/11 memorial is located on the plan and said that Committee had discussed whether they wanted to end the walkway there – “we’ll have the walkway come out and do an L-shape towards the 9/11 memorial.”

P. Hargraves said “once we start digging, we’re planning to go down 18 inches for the pathways because we need a good platform. B. Flanagan from the Historical Society asked us to once we get into this area, that’s where the original town hall used to be. We will very carefully dig it up and observe the disturbed material to see if we unearth any artifacts.”

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1 B. Glynn asked, "if there is a cellar hole, if there is a foundation, but then what happens?"

2
3 P. Hargraves, said "if we find something, we stop work and contact the Historical Society to
4 direct us on the next steps."

5
6 B. Flanigan noted "the building moved 150 years ago. There would have been a dirt foundation
7 in those cellars, so I don't think we would find a cellar, but it could be some cornerstone or
8 something like an l-shape. I think, like Pat said, it's going to be spoons or China or things people
9 discard over the years."

10
11 P. Hargraves said "while facing the large, curved monument, you're not going to hear vehicles
12 going by. You'll have an opportunity to reflect at the monument. All lighting will be in the
13 ground, all wiring will be buried, at night, if somebody walks by they will see it. They're walking
14 inside here. There'll be lights coming up underneath, flashing up against the wall, separate
15 lighting or all three flagpoles, and no overhead spotlights. This is a \$350,000 project with \$0
16 taxpayer money, like the 9/11 memorial. This is a memorial for the people that passed away and
17 will correct a couple of injustices on it such as misspelled names, missing names, etc. The way I
18 research it is, I go straight to Washington, verify service, death info, location, etc. On the back
19 of the black granite monument, it will be engraved with the uniforms of the soldiers from the
20 Revolutionary War all the way through Afghanistan, the uniforms that they wore during that
21 period of service, and that's all going to be in the front. And then I have a little light that will
22 showcase the memorial for those that drive by."

23
24 B. Glynn asked about the cornerstone by the Christmas tree.

25
26 P. Hargraves said they're not going to be working in that area.

27
28 B. Glynn commented on the height of the black monument and is concerned it will block the
29 view of the Christmas Tree.

30
31 P. Hargraves acknowledged that the monument would block some views.

32
33 B. Glynn asked about the creche'

34
35 P. Russell indicated that the creche location will not be disturbed.

36
37 B. Glynn, asked about electrical

38
39 P. Russell noted it would be underground.

40
41 B. Flanigan mentioned that, he prefers an underground box similar to the one at Field of Dreams.

42
43 B. Glynn asked about the sprinkler system

44 P. Russell said "yes, the sprinkler system will be maintained."

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1
2 B. Glynn asked about ongoing maintenance costs. Either a town budget line items, or possible
3 trust fund.

4
5 P. Hargraves said they'll be keeping the granite from the existing knee walls, John Belko thinks
6 he can use all that.

7
8 B. Glynn asked Project Salem to fix the cemetery graveyard knee walls.

9
10 P. Hargraves said they are willing to take care of it.

11
12 Claudia, a concerned resident, said she wanted to speak to the nine Vietnam Veteran stones. She
13 stated "I don't understand how you can't incorporate the Vietnam veteran stones into this new
14 project. We want to make it accessible for everybody, so they can honor their brothers and
15 sisters, but we can't take out the Vietnam Veterans that are alive. It's just. It's not right."

16
17 P. Hargraves indicated that he discussed with the American Legion and did not receive pushback
18 to relocating the stones.

19
20 Claudia said "I talked to American Legion, and I talked to Dale/Gail and she was never there at
21 one of our meetings. She said that that she talked with somebody at the American Legion,
22 and they did not know anything about these stones of being removed and didn't know they were
23 responsible for putting them at the Depot. They weren't aware of that."

24
25 P. Hargraves said "I am a member of American Legion. I told them back in October what we
26 were doing. Dale/Gail has never ever been at one of our meetings."

27
28 Claudia stated, "I still don't think it's right that we remove them. They're there. They're part of
29 Veterans Park. You're taking them out, you're putting them someplace different, not Veteran's
30 Park. The Veteran's Park is for veterans, it's not Veterans Memorial, that is in the cemetery. That
31 is for people that passed away in the war. You want to take these people that served and are still
32 alive and just remove them from Veteran's Park. You're erasing them, you're removing them
33 from Veteran's Park. That's how I feel. And that's how people whose names are on these stones
34 feel about the matter."

35
36 P. Hargraves responded "Ed DeClerc, who passed away a month ago, was a veteran was heading
37 up that Depot project with Roy Sorenson (Municipal Services Director) and the American
38 Legion we had 20 people in that meeting and not one Vietnam veteran said anything about not
39 moving the nine granite markers."

40
41 P. Russell invited Claudia to one of the Project Salem meetings to connect with the team and
42 work it out.

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1 A member of the Historical Society stated “I truly believe that what you’re showing us looks
2 beautiful from my perspective. As someone who's with the Historical Society and does the
3 research, I'm more concerned that we preserve and respect the integrity of the history of Salem
4 by keeping it as historic as possible. I heard you say something about black granite from India. It
5 looks pretty prominent is that what I'm looking at? I'm not sure how the people with the
6 Historical Society feel about it. It takes away from the historic look.”

7
8 P. Russell responded, “B. Flanagan brought a suggestion to us to make it feel and look more
9 historical, that's why the new stonewall is going to match the cemetery. We're bringing in the
10 history.”

11
12 B. Flanagan agreed to be the point of contact for working with Project Salem when/if artifacts are
13 found.

14
15 P. Hargraves discussed work hours: work will start around 9:00am and end at 4:00pm.

16
17 B. Glynn is still concerned with views of the Christmas Tree being blocked.

18
19 C. Stacey said that there are several Christmas Trees - Tuscan, Town Hall, etc., and doesn't think
20 the Christmas Tree in the Historic District is the focus here in the Common.”

21
22 Chair M. Banks asked, “is there an opportunity to make something more defined as far as the
23 area dedicated to the creche?”

24
25 P. Hargraves committed to creating a defined area for the creche.

26
27 B. Glynn said, “the area for the creche should be clearly marked so that we know exactly where
28 that nativity scene is going to go.”

29
30 J. LaFontaine noted that SFC can note the area on the engineering plans.

31
32 Linda from the Historical Society said “we're trying to preserve what little historic part of Salem
33 is left. And that's why the buildings are well taken care of, because there are a lot of people that
34 take care of them. And I think that area is sacred with the buildings and cemetery. I like the wall
35 matches, and I like that you didn't go on to the area where the meeting house building is. I like
36 that that it's just kept plain and simple. It needs to be understood how we feel that it's very
37 important to keep that little area of Salem totally historical in nature. I just want you to say that's
38 why people fight for this small amount of area, because even the cemetery, each headstone is
39 important. We paid a lot of money to get them cleaned and worked on. I want you to understand
40 how important that area is.”

41
42 J. LaFontaine noted that this was the first time seeing the plan, but the proposed plan to update
43 the area is positive. He understands that people are invested in preserving the area, along with

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1 honoring veterans. The HDC should feel comfortable that it has had ample time to review the
2 plan and ultimately vote to endorse the plan for the Town Council to review the plan.

3
4 Chair M. Banks continued to the item until April 3rd so that the Commission could further review
5 the plan.
6

OLD BUSINESS

292 MAIN STREET – OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH

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8
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10
11 J. LaFontaine talked with Project Manager Heidi Parks. They are close to requesting a Certificate
12 of Occupancy (CO). He would like to have a discussion with HDC regarding what was proposed
13 and approved. The landscaping is incomplete. They haven't applied for their CO yet, but he
14 thinks they're going to be coming in soon. Additionally, J. LaFontaine noted that they installed
15 front door handrails. Not required by code, but nice to have, no issue with HDC. Steve Lewis
16 met with the Commission in 2024 about an enclosed screened garden on the west side to enclose
17 the whole-house generator. The Commission will require a commitment from the applicant that
18 the generator will be screened.
19

20 With the applicant close to a Certificate of Occupancy, that will trigger a site inspection by J.
21 LaFontaine to ensure that all the conditions are met.
22

OTHER BUSINESS

Update on various properties and projects:

23
24
25
26 J. LaFontaine noted that Smoke 'n' Barley at 301 Main Street are not in compliance with their
27 signage.
28

29 J. LaFontaine reached out to the applicant, and they responded they are out of the country. He
30 will follow up in early April. It was noted that we need to start enforcing conditions that HDC
31 and the applicant agreed upon, which includes vinyl window dressings with historic images that
32 HDC requested and was agreed upon by applicant. Alternatively, if the vinyl window dressings
33 are not installed, replacement of the awning should be required, and the applicant should remove
34 the nonpermitted signage. Currently, we are not seeing any progress.
35

36 H. Glynn would like to see the awning back up in 30 days if the signage is not replaced.
37

Update on HDC Regulations and Design Criteria

38
39
40 Chair M. Banks brought up the updated draft of the rules and regulations for the Commission. He
41 suggested that we receive feedback from the town attorney and once complete, have it returned
42 to the Commission for vote and adoption.
43

Update on Town Master Plan

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1 J. LaFontaine noted that the Master Plan Steering Committee recommended the Master Plan as
2 presented to the Planning Board for a vote on April 23rd. Additionally, there's a lot of focus on
3 the Historic District and the Master Plan, and hopefully we can seek future grants, with a new
4 master plan.

5
6 Chair M. Banks noted "I would agree that the new Master Plan will help facilitate future grants."
7

8 **Next Meeting:** 304 Main Street (Veteran's Park at Salem Common) – the Commission agreed to
9 meet on 4/3/2025 at 5PM – at Town Hall in the Community Development Conference Room.

10
11 **THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:20PM.**

12
13 Minutes by: Mike Banks, Historic District Chair

14 Approved: Historic District

15 Date: