

The Container Store to open first New Hampshire location

Jessica Kisluk, WMUR Jan 19, 2023



SALEM, N.H. —

A popular store for storage, organization and customization will open its first location in New Hampshire.

The Container Store is opening in Salem at Tuscan Village on Saturday.

The 15,500-square-foot store will have organization items, and organization and design services.

The Container Store will host opening activities the weekend of Jan. 28, including live demonstrations and giveaways.

The Salem store will be the 96th store location in the country.

Reflecting On ... Building projects, zoning questions, major growth & more than a few battles

'Even-handed' Planner Ross Moldoff retires after 40 years

January 20, 2023

By Darrell Halen
Salem Life Writer



Retiring Planning Director Ross Moldoff spent three rewarding years teaching his "craft" to his successor, Jacob LaFontaine. Photos by Darrell Halen

During the nearly 40 years that Ross Moldoff worked for the Town of Salem, 700 major development projects were approved by its planning board.

As a result, 12 million square feet of commercial and industrial space and 4,400 residential units were added in the community.

"It's a tremendous amount of development for a community of 30,000 people," said Moldoff, who as the town's chief planner witnessed that growth on his watch.

Moldoff, whose last day working for the town was Dec. 30, concluded a near- four-decades-long career that included not only some major commercial development projects – namely The Mall at Rocking-

ham Park and Tuscan Village – but also efforts to improve the town and some challenges to make that happen.

"I've worked on so many different issues with so many good people. I feel I'm leaving with a great sense of satisfaction and gratitude," said Moldoff, who decided that at age 65 it was a good time to retire from his planning director post.

Moldoff graduated from Portsmouth High School in 1975, majored in environmental studies and economics at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and earned a master's degree in regional planning at UMass Amherst.

He spent about two-and-a-half years in regional planning, first at the Strafford Regional Planning Commission in Dover, followed by the Rockingham Planning Commission in Exeter. At the second commission, he worked on some transportation projects for Salem and someone told him about a planning job at Salem Town Hall.



"I knew some of the people down here, I knew some of the issues, so I applied for the job and was hired," said Moldoff, who moved to Salem about six months after starting his new position.

"I wanted to get down to the local level. I really wanted to help solve problems and I wanted to get involved in the nitty gritty, the local stuff," recalled Moldoff, who started working for Salem on Dec. 12, 1983. "By the way, maybe after 10 years of that, I joke with people, I was ready to go back to regional planning because there's enough already (here) – there's a lot of detail work, you've got all sorts of conflicts with people who don't like what you're telling them but I stuck with it."

A lot of Moldoff's time was spent meeting with property owners, developers, engineers and surveyors to discuss and review proposed development projects before they were formally submitted to the planning board.

"Early on, I had to become very knowledgeable about the town's zoning. It's a 100-page document. There are all sorts of rules and regulations the town has adopted to control land-use development. So, I had to become very familiar with that, very conversant with it," Moldoff said.

Applicants had questions for him. Will they need variances? Are there regulations they're not meeting? Which zoning regulations apply to their plan? Will something be an issue at the planning board?

"They'll ask me, 'What are the potential problems? What do you think the boards may think about this?'" said Moldoff, who for many years was the staff liaison to not only the planning board but also to the zoning board and the conservation commission.

"A lot of times I'm aware of traffic issues, drainage issues. I'll look to see if there are residential abutters nearby that might be concerned about what's happening. Is the (proposed) building too tall? Is it too close to the property lines? Is it a commercial use that's right next to some residential uses? Do they need screening? A fence, trees things like that," he continued. "We'll have some discussions, and it's usually not just one meeting, it's a couple meetings. If it's a bigger project it might be more than a couple meetings."

"Ultimately they'll get the plan in shape and they'll say, 'We're ready to submit' and I'll review that plan to make it sure it has all the information that the planning board's regulations require," he added.

Moldoff came to Salem a year after John H. Sununu, a former Salem Planning Board member, was elected governor in November 1982. Board members talked about him.

"They would tell me that he would open up a plan, he would glance at it, he'd shut the plan up, and then he could recite details. I don't know if it was true or not but this is what they told me," Moldoff said. "I always thought it was pretty neat."

Moldoff – who has kept newspaper articles about local planning issues over the years – was involved in what he regarded as efforts to make improvements in town.

Among them: an updated wetlands ordinance meant to protect sensitive natural resource areas; simplifying, shortening and clarifying the sign ordinance; and the imposition of impact fees – which over the years brought in millions of dollars to support schools, recreation, roads and public safety.

Some of the ideas drew strong opposition from opponents, including developers, and there were mailings and advertisements urging voters not to go along. And some of the developments that have been proposed in town were controversial, too.

"Salem approves most of the development that comes in, but every now and then they deny something and someone would be mad, take us to court," Moldoff recalled. "There were all kinds of controversies like that."

Moldoff worked through some times of turmoil between selectmen and town managers, working for approximately 15 town managers and roughly a half-dozen temporary ones through the years.

He doesn't credit his own longevity in his Salem job – which was originally called Administrator of Development before the name was changed sometime later in the 1980s – to any particular skill. He said he tried to treat people well.

"I tried to work really hard to help (planning board members) do their job, and that probably helped a little bit. I focused on that," he said.

Larry Belair, a home builder and land developer who served on the planning board, recalls that he and Moldoff had some spirited but friendly debates over the years.

"We frequently saw zoning issues from a different point of view," said Belair, who spoke at Moldoff's recent retirement party. "I was in the for-profit business of earning a living and he was committed to doing what he thought was best for the community. We would debate the merits of the different things he would be proposing."

"We built a friendship over the years, recognizing sometimes we just didn't agree. But for the most part we could find ways to understand each other, maybe approach things a little differently," Belair continued. "He always gave me plenty of opportunity to respond to his proposals. As time went on, he won more than his share of battles, and he made a big difference in how things are done in Salem."

The Mall at Rockingham Park added about 1 million square feet of commercial space, and Tuscan Village's size will probably end up being around 4 million square feet of mixed-use, according to Moldoff.

"When Tuscan Village came along, I think it was his best challenge, his big from challenge," Belair said. "We were fortunate to have him in that (role) at that time. Nobody saw that project for its total impact at the outset. Ross was aware of the challenges. Ross was the right guy at the right time for that project from the town's standpoint."

Other changes during Moldoff's tenure – which began without the use of computers – include the re-development of the Coca-Cola bottling plant on South Broadway and the re-use of the Rockingham Park racetrack after a 1980 fire.

And Moldoff's work included carrying out some unusual tasks, too.

"I dealt with adult businesses. They didn't teach me about that in grad school. I got to go into some of these places and I had to decide whether they were obscene or not," Moldoff said. "Who does that type of work?"

"All the new rides that came in had to get approval from the planning board," he said about Canobie Lake Park. "I had to review the plans for amusement park rides. It was kind of fun, it was very different."

Linda Harvey, a former planning board member who serves on the conservation commission, describes Moldoff, who she's known since 1999, as straight-forward and helpful at meetings.

“He’d give you background information, but never make the decision for you,” she said. “With other people, I’ve heard, he was very even-handed, never taking sides. In that position, you have to be that way. You have to walk a middle line, you have to be helpful. You have to help people navigate the process the town has established.”

Harvey also credits Moldoff with supporting cluster zoning, in which open space is achieved by allowing buildings to be placed closer together.

“He was definitely involved in trying to preserve as much of Salem as possible,” she said.

Moldoff’s wife, Amy, who currently teaches music at Barron and Fiske schools, will be retiring in June. They have two daughters.

The couple plans to travel and visit two grandchildren in Brooklyn more frequently, and might spend winters in a warmer state.

“I very much want to write down about my experiences in Salem,” he said. “I’ve collected a lot of material. I’ve kept those clippings, for example. I don’t want to sell a book or anything. I just want to write the stories down to kind of get it out of me. Some of the people in Salem might be interested in some of those stories.”

Sharing stories frequently with his replacement, Jacob LaFontaine, is something Moldoff has done since LaFontaine was hired as assistant planner three years ago.

The workload had been getting heavy – dealing with the Tuscan Village development was a part-time job in itself and code enforcement needed more attention, Moldoff said.

“He came on to help out with the workload, particularly with code enforcement, and to basically be trained as my replacement,” Moldoff said. “To teach someone your craft – I found that very rewarding.”

DEVELOPMENT

Tuscan Village seeks to add 600 more housing units

■ A public hearing on the proposed changes is tonight at 7 p.m.

By Jonathan Phelps
Union Leader Staff

The developers of Tuscan Village in Salem want to replace a significant amount of office space with 600 more housing units and entertainment options.

This would bring the total number of housing units to 1,785, which includes a mix of condominiums and apart-

ments, according to Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine.

The housing will replace 286,400 square feet of planned office space, according to Mark Gross, director of permitting for Tuscan Village. The market for big corporate office spaces has "gone by the wayside" at least for now, he said.

"What we found through COVID is that residential has really taken off, especially in the rental market," Gross said.

The massive 170-acre development is being built at the former Rockingham Park

► See **Tuscan Village**, Page A10



PROVIDED BY TUSCAN VILLAGE

Tuscan Village developer is planning to build an 8-story building with 300 apartments and an entertainment complex. On the plans it is identified as building 4000.

Tuscan Village

From Page A1

racetrack and includes the Central Village, North Village, South Village and a life science district. The ordinance is flexible in terms of how much housing will be allowed, but does require reviews by the planning board, LaFontaine said.

"We've seen the market shift over the last three or four years with COVID," he said.

A public hearing is set to take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Salem Town Hall for the proposed changes to the sprawling development's master plan to include the residential units and other tweaks to the master plan.

The major changes involve two buildings and parking garages in the Central District:

- Change a two-story 88,000-square-foot retail/office building to a six-story 488,277-square-foot retail/residential building with 300 units.

- Change a five-story 299,900-square-foot retail/office building to an eight-story 473,835-square-foot retail/entertainment/residential building with 300 units.

- One parking garage will change from four to six levels and a new garage with five levels will be added for a total of about 1,100 spaces. Another 100 spaces will be built underground.

One of the buildings will include 61,272 square feet of entertainment space and 61,363 square feet of restaurant and retail space, which could include some sort of entertainment, Gross said.

LaFontaine said many will likely be excited to hear

more entertainment will be added back into the development after previously being nixed. Previous plans called for a two-story building with bowling alley and comedy club before being eliminated altogether.

"When they eliminated it we did receive some public input," the planning director said. "They said they moved into the development hoping they would have that entertainment component."

The uses will likely be a small concert venue and virtual golf, Gross said. These types of businesses have recovered well from the pandemic, he said.

"It has come full circle," he said.

Developer Joe Faro also decided to change 91 luxury apartments into 70 luxury condominiums in the same building as a Marriott-branded artisan hotel with 165 rooms, which is now under construction.

The plans for the mixed-use development were presented to the planning board in December 2015. The project includes 4 million square feet of development.

Faro has previously said the development is about 50% complete.

About 625 housing units are now occupied, LaFontaine said. Apartments at Hanover Tuscan Village range from \$2,422 a month for studio and \$7,362 a month for a three-bedroom with two bathrooms, according to apartments.com.

"A lot of the units will be in the Central Village, which is currently under construction," LaFontaine said.

Some of the shops include Homesense, Sierra and Market Basket in the North Village and L.L. Bean, Old Navy and Pottery Barn in the South Village. Mass. General Brigham opened both primary and specialty care offices this fall.

The Container Store opened its first location in New Hampshire last Saturday in the South Village. The 15,000-square-foot space is the chain's second small-format design, according to the company.

As part of the project, artifacts from the old racetrack will eventually be on display in various pocket parks and other public spaces, according to the plans.

The planning board approved changes to the master plan about a year ago with conditions to add more recreation areas and workforce housing equal to at least 10% of the new residential units on or off-site, according to project filings. Workforce housing is tied to the area median income level.

Plans have already been approved for 74 units on Main Street, which will cover the requirements for one building. A proposed second building with 54 units on Main Street will cover the rest, according to the filing.

The property will likely see more changes as the market continues to shift, LaFontaine said.

"It speaks to the fluid nature of the development and the 80-plus meetings that we've had," LaFontaine said. "It is a large, exciting development, and it's kind of always in flux."

Tuscan Village seeks to add 600 more housing units

Office building plans scrapped for more residential

January 25, 2023

Jeff Feingold NH Business Review

Developers of Tuscan Village, the massive multi-use development in Salem, have switched gears on one aspect of the plan: They want to replace nearly 300,000-square-foot of proposed office space with another 600 housing units.

The added units would bring the total number of housing units at Tuscan Village to 1,785, a mix of condominiums and apartments.

The Union Leader reported the added housing will replace 286,400 square feet of planned office space. Mark Gross, director of permitting for Tuscan Village, told the newspaper, "The market for big corporate office spaces has "gone by the wayside" at least for now, he said. "What we found through COVID is that residential has really taken off, especially in the rental market," Gross said.

The proposal involves replacing two planned two-story, 88,000-square-foot retail/office building with a six-story 488,277-square-foot retail/residential building with 300 apartments as well as a previously planned five-story, 299,900-square-foot retail/office building with an eight-story 473,835-square-foot retail/entertainment/residential building with 300 units.

The massive 170-acre development is being built at the former Rockingham Park racetrack and includes the Central Village, North Village, South Village and a life science district. The ordinance is flexible in terms of how much housing will be allowed, but does require reviews by the planning board, said Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine.

New retail, restaurant space in the works in Salem

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Mar 7, 2023



Plans are in the works to redevelop the site at 370-374 North Broadway into mixed retail space

SALEM, N.H. — Officials have accepted a plan to redevelop the site at 370-374 North Broadway into 10,000 square feet of mixed commercial space.

The proposal has six units, including a coffee shop with drive-thru and restaurants, at the Salem Sign Company location.

The concept was first reviewed in July 2021, according to Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine.

Eddy Sfeir of Sfeir Realty is the site applicant. Rob Hannon of RWH Architect and Karl Dubay of The Dubay Group presented the plan on his behalf at a recent Planning Board meeting.

Hannon said five of the units will range from 1,300 square feet to 1,400 square feet. A restaurant with a small outdoor patio is intended to take over the largest unit, measuring just under 3,000 square feet.

Renderings show a 68-space parking lot in the front. A drive-thru lane long enough to accommodate a line of nine cars loops behind the building with an adjacent bypass lane.

A smaller, secured parking lot with 18 spaces will be provided for DJ Rogers Collision and Service Center next door, which also owns land around the property.

Sidewalks will be put in to connect to Route 28 sidewalks and greenery will also be added around the building.

A resident at the public meeting had concerns about pedestrian safety.

The proposed building is across the street from the Windham Rail Trail parking lot, and the resident believes many people will try to cross the street to go eat.

She said right now there is no safe crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists on Route 28.

Board member Joseph Feole agreed that if there will be restaurants, a crosswalk would be needed.

Dubay said the New Hampshire Department of Transportation should be consulted about that addition.

Another citizen was worried about debris cluttering the land.

Dubay said Sfeir will continue to clean up the property, they said. Five large dumpsters have helped removed piles of debris already.

Lafontaine noted the Conservation Commission and New Hampshire Wetland Bureau still need to approve the plan because some wetlands are impacted, specifically a man-made drainage basin that overflowed.

The board will continue talks with Hannon and Dubay regarding the site's redevelopment at an upcoming meeting.

Shake Shack, Tavern in the Square to Open First NH Locations at Tuscan Village

By Grant Welker • Published March 21, 2023 • Updated on March 21, 2023 at 8:08 am



Tuscan Village, which is developing into a major retail destination in southern New Hampshire, has landed the first Granite State locations of two restaurant groups and a high-end furniture retailer.

Boston's Tavern in the Square and New York-based Shake Shack will be among the latest retail tenants at Tuscan Village in Salem, the development announced Monday.

West Elm, a high-end furniture chain, is also set to open there.

Those three retail names highlight a slate of new tenants at the [former Rockingham Park race track](#), which already includes a Market Basket, L.L. Bean, Homesense, Pottery Barn and Tuscan Market, a food market that also offers sit-down dining.

Tuscan Village will also be getting a hotel, a 164-room property called The Artisan Hotel that's slated to open this summer. It will be the first Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel in New England.

Shake Shack, new hotel opening at Tuscan Village this summer

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Mar 23, 2023



A rendering of Tuscan Village that remains under construction today.

SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village continues to add to its expansive property along Route 28 with more restaurants, retail stores and a hotel planned to open this year.

Tuscan Brands announced the newest additions as the 170-acre site continues to become a “live, work, stay and play” destination.

The Container Store open its first New Hampshire spot at Tuscan Village this January and more national and regional chains plan to do the same.

Restaurants Shake Shack and Tavern in the Square and West Elm, a home and decor store, will debut this summer with the chains first Granite State locations.

Shake Shack is a casual, family-friendly burger spot with fries, frozen custard, shakes and different hot dog and burger options.

Boston-based Tavern in the Square is a full-service restaurant and bar with locations throughout New England.

This summer will also bring the first hotel to the property.

The Artisan Hotel is slated to be the first Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel in New Hampshire.

The hotel is considered the centerpiece of Tuscan Village.

The 164-room hotel will feature its own restaurants, a rooftop bar and luxury pool. It will also include a 12,000 square-foot banquet and event space and full fitness facility.

New England-based restaurant The Friendly Toast, Buff City Soap and Sugaring NYC are in the works. It is unclear when they will open, according to the Tuscan team.

The new eateries, retail store and hotel join several businesses added to the property in 2022.

Those are LensCrafters, TMobile, Crumbl Cookies, Emerald Jewelers, the Sam Adams Beer Garden and a Mass General Brigham regional medical facility. J. Crew Factory was also added this winter.

Plan in works to change Jocelyn's restaurant to cigar bar lounge

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com Mar 27, 2023



SALEM, N.H. — Plans are in the early stages to convert Jocelyn's Mediterranean Restaurant & Martini Lounge at 355 S. Broadway into a cigar bar lounge.

There is no timeframe when the switch would happen.

Owner Richard Sfeir and Anthony Bistany, Sfeir's attorney, presented a change-of-use request for the restaurant before the Planning Board on March 16.

"He (Sfeir) has been considering this for some time," Bistany said about Sfeir. "He's ready to move forward."

Jocelyn's opened in 2009 when it took over the site of the old Phoenician Restaurant along Route 28. It is a popular family-run business serving Mediterranean cuisine and specialty cocktails.

Bistany said Sfeir has helped the restaurant grow to become a staple in the Salem community.

Although he has run a successful restaurant, Sfeir has recognized the local demand for cigar bar lounges. He is also ready to make the transition to a new venture.

"It will diminish the kitchen stresses and focus on a more laid back atmosphere," said Bistany.

Nothing will change structurally to the building. Bistany said there are no proposed construction plans for the site.

The furniture and décor will change inside the space to reflect a relaxed vibe, he added.

Sfeir said there won't be a dining room. Tables will be taken out and replaced with couches.

No food will be served.

Food sales are prohibited in a cigar bar lounge per state regulations, Bistany said.

Kitchen appliances will be removed from the property. The kitchen would remain intact, but not be used.

Board member Sean Lewis suggested a site plan might be in their best interest.

The building has changed hands throughout the years. Lafontaine provided information that showed a site plan hasn't been updated since 1985.

Bistany said to his knowledge the building has always been used as a restaurant. The layout has not changed.

There's no plan to alter the building itself, Bistany added, and thought a floor plan update would better serve the Planning Board.

Planning Director Jacob Lafontaine said Sfeir should take into account any capacity increases that would come with removing tables and creating more space inside.

He said there's a demand for this type of business and wants to make sure there's enough parking.

The Planning Board requested Sfeir return with projected capacity, hours of operation and parking calculations.

Dick's Sporting Goods seeking expansion of Salem store

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com Mar 30, 2023

SALEM, N.H. — A conceptual plan submitted by Dick's Sporting Goods, located at the Rockingham Mall, proposes a turf field and track in the old Sears parking lot as part of a new interactive store experience being rolled out across the country.

The sporting goods company wants to renovate and redevelop its current location at 77 Rockingham Park Blvd. for the experimental concept called House of Sport.

Pending approval, the project could be completed by July 2024.

Salem Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine said a discussion about the proposed project is scheduled for the April 11 Planning Board meeting.

He anticipates a formal project application to follow.

LaFontaine said Planning Board members and Dick's Sporting Goods representatives have been discussing the project since last year.

There are currently three operational House of Sport locations. The closest is in Rochester, New York, with another planned in Boston.

The experimental stores have interactive spaces like turf fields, tracks, rock walls, putting greens and batting cages.

House of Sport locations were created “as a place where you can fuel your passions, try new things and connect with your community,” according to a statement on the Dick’s Sporting Goods website.

The conceptual site plan for the Salem location only shows the field and an outer track. It will be used for athletic demonstration purposes.

It is unknown if more amenities found at the other stores will later be added to this site plan.

The synthetic turf field planned for the store is about 10,200 square feet, LaFontaine said. It would occupy 55 spaces in the former Sears north parking lot.

The entire enclosed area with the track surface is about 18,500 square feet.

The proposed site plan would require updates to pedestrian walkways to access the athletic field, indoor renovations to the retail space and some utility renovations.

Langan Engineering and Environmental Services completed a parking study to ensure removing 55 parking spaces to install the new field would not affect the flow of mall traffic during busy times.

They found this retail redevelopment would not impact mall parking.

The circus is coming to Salem

• By Brian Butler | BriButler@Comcast.net Apr 28, 2023



Flip Circus is coming to Salem, N.H., next month.

SALEM, N.H. — Flip Circus will host its circus from May 19 to May 29, various times, at the Mall at Rockingham Park, 99 Rockingham Park Boulevard.

Salem Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine said this is the first time to his knowledge that a circus has come to town.

They will set up their big tent in the parking lot adjacent to South Policy Street.

The circus will run every day. Performances during the week will be at 7:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday will feature three shows, 1 p.m., 4 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets range from \$25 to \$75.

Salem officials approve funds to design new police station

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Apr 13, 2023



Capt. Jason Smith said the Salem Police Department would benefit from a larger dispatch center at its station at 9 Veterans Memorial Parkway. Courtesy photo

SALEM, N.H. — Selectmen have initiated the first step toward building a new police station by approving up to \$500,000 to develop a design concept.

The funding will take \$350,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act and \$150,000 from public safety impact fees for the engineering and design study.

Board of Selectmen Chairwoman Cathy Stacey said that without the vote to use ARPA funds, the design project would not move forward.

Stacey said a finalized conceptual plan could come as early as July.

“The governing body for the town is taking a serious step toward addressing the shortcomings of the current building and infrastructure of our agency,” Capt. Jason Smith said in an email to The Eagle-Tribune. “The town and department have long recognized the need for a new station.”

Selectmen determined that the best location for the project is at the existing police headquarters, 9 Veterans Memorial Parkway.

The station was built in the mid 1960s, and 20 years later a building addition was constructed. Several trailers have been brought in to address space issues in recent years.

An add-on trailer was built for the Investigations Division 15 years ago. However, Smith said that unit is failing and needs constant maintenance.

A new station would provide much-needed space not only for staff, but police records and equipment, according to Smith.

The town and police department first made a serious push for a new station with a few design models proposed in 2003.

Other ideas have circulated since, but residents have rejected each at annual elections.

The result is makeshift, temporary solutions. That includes some holding cells repurposed for record storage.

Some files are stored off-site and out of state, and also require payment with each visit by an officer to retrieve files.

The department also lacks adequate space to conduct witness and victim interviews. Back-up interview rooms serve as offices when not in use.

“We have to kick someone out of to conduct a recorded interview if our primary interview room is in use,” Smith said.

Police need a larger storage space for evidence and agency files, too.

The existing station lacks public bathrooms and locker rooms for staff.

Smith said the dispatch center needs more room to function properly. It operates now in a space one quarter of the recommended size for the agency.

Numerous maintenance issues also plague the building.

Plumbing, heating, ventilation and electrical systems are failing or outdated.

Smith recalled a time that officers needed to shut off water to the K-9 sheds outside because of a pipe failure.

He said the department is happy to have the support of town officials on a potential new build.

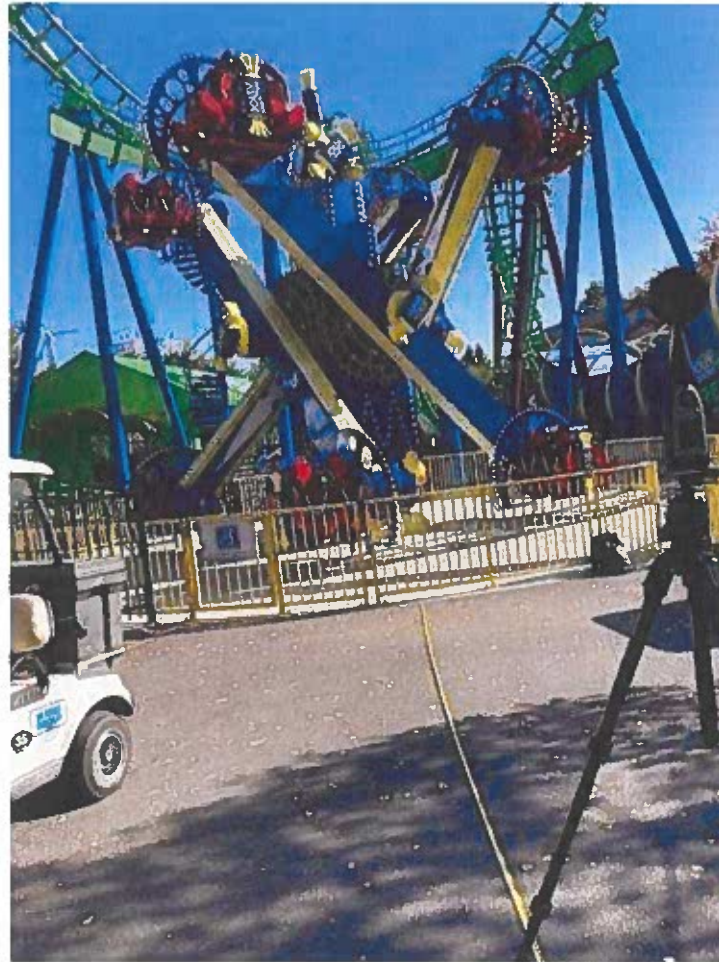
Stacey said the board's approval is critical to move the design concept forward. Plans will be made available for residents to review well in advance of next year's town election.

Stacey stressed it will take more than a design, however, to garner resident support for a new police station.

She said, "There may be an opportunity to form a committee in support of the new station made up of community members to educate fellow town residents on the project resulting in a successful vote to support it next March."

Canobie Lake Park to put in new ride next to 'Untamed'

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com | May 30, 2023



Pictured here is Hersheypark's "Mix'd Favored by Jolly Rancher" ride, which is identical to what "NebulaZ" at Canobie Lake Park is projected to look like.

SALEM, N.H. — "NebulaZ," a new family ride, is coming to Canobie Lake Park with construction set for this summer.

The ride is projected to be installed next to "Untamed," a Canobie roller coaster, and behind the "Star Blaster" and "Antique Cars," according to plan renderings.

The 35-foot tall ride will feature four rotating arms that spin riders around to give the illusion that the arms intertwine.

The ride will be able to accommodate up to 32 guests each time with its eight gondolas that hold four people each.

Five hundred visitors will get to ride it every hour.

George Fredette a planning engineer for SFC Engineering Partnership, who represents Canobie Lake Realty Corp., sent a letter to Salem Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine saying “NebulaZ” will maintain the overall experience at Canobie Lake Park.

LaFontaine said Canobie Lake Park has yet to determine an opening date for the ride.

What is known now is where the family ride will be found in the park.

“NebulaZ” was originally intended to replace part of the Canobie Express train station. The amusement park informed the Planning Board in November 2022 of those plans.

LaFontaine told the Planning Board at its May 23 meeting that the park has proposed a new intended home for the ride next to the popular “Untamed,” and in front of a park maintenance building.

Most board members did not have any concerns with this location.

However, Alternate Member Linda Harvey voiced her concerns that the park is starting to put roller coaster rides closer to residential areas, instead of going with an interior park spot.

She said this could potentially cause noise complaints by neighboring residents.

Canobie hired planning consultants from Burlington, Massachusetts, to study an identical ride at Hersheypark in Hershey, Pennsylvania, to better understand how the ride operates and noises it makes.

A sound study was completed at the same time and found the ride would not violate limits set by the Salem Town Ordinance.

Dick's Sporting Goods sheds light on Salem store's turf field plan

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com Jun 23, 2023



SALEM, N.H. — Dick's Sporting Goods met with the Planning Board to discuss more details for its plan to construct a multipurpose field outside its store at The Mall at Rockingham Park.

The proposed project is part of a larger plan to transition and redevelop the location at 77 Rockingham Park Blvd. into a Dick's House of Sport and provide interactive experiences for customers.

For Salem, that includes renovations to the existing space — both inside and outside.

Dick's Sporting Goods previously met with the Planning Board in April, presenting a preliminary conceptual plan regarding the project and its intentions to construct a field for athletic demonstration purposes in the parking lot of the former Sears building.

At the board's June 13 meeting, representatives shed more light on the field and store updates.

The enclosed synthetic-turf field, including an outer track, will span 18,500 square feet. It will have an Olympic-grade running surface and mondo synthetic turf perimeter.

The field will be secured by an over three-story tall fence, combining chain links and mesh netting, which will curve over the field.

The new area will take up to 57 parking spaces and relocate handicap spaces closer to the building.

Patrons will be able to access the field from the first floor of the store only. The company recently purchased another part of the building which includes the floor below where Dick's Sporting Goods currently occupies.

Customers can try out the equipment they look to buy and use the field for that purpose.

Site applicant Dan Clarey of Langan Engineering and Environmental Services said other Dick's House of Sport have used similar fields for small classes and clinics as well.

The field will also be available to the community for different activities.

The company additionally plans to enhance the store with indoor and exterior renovations to improve shopping experiences and make the exterior aesthetically pleasing. Trees and shrubbery will be planted around the field and its sidewalk.

Although it is not confirmed, the multipurpose field has the potential to have an outdoor ice skating rink built on top of it during the winter.

The rink was first brought up in an April meeting and pitched again as a possibility by Clarey.

Dick's representative Shannon Yeakel echoed that idea, saying other Dick's House of Sport stores convert the field to a rink for children's hockey.

A Salem resident at the June meeting asked if there would be an area near the field for parents or others to watch their kids at any of these demonstrations or potential clinics.

Yeakel said there will be bleachers adjacent to the field for spectators. A window above the field, inside of the store, will also overlook the field.

It will be secured by an over three-story tall fence, combining chain links and mesh netting, which will curve over the field, Yeakel added.

She said the fence isn't as high as its other locations.

"We just need to protect the public getting in and things flying out into the parking lot," said Yeakel.

Talks regarding the project will continue at a future date.

The plans have already taken into consideration concerns from previous talks including a better location for a pedestrian crosswalk to safely get over to the field area.

A site plan has been submitted for final approval, but Salem Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine said some outside traffic and engineering reviews are still pending.

Tuscan Village developers seek 600 more residential units

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com Jul 21, 2023



SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village representatives will propose changing the use of two buildings and adding 600 more residential units to the expansive site during a public hearing before the Planning Board on July 25.

The proposal is part of an update to its Master Development Site Plan.

Tuscan Village's last major changes to its Master Plan was approved in February 2021.

This update would result in a total of 1,785 residential units for the entire 170-acre site, Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine said in an email.

LaFontaine said major updates include adding more levels to two different buildings.

One building will change its square footage from 88,000 to 464,564 square feet when four more levels are added to it.

Building 1300 — as it's referred to — currently stands at two-stories and is a mixed retail and office space building. The proposal looks to make it a six-story building with 300 residential units, retail space, along with a new five-story garage.

The second building, labeled as Building 4000, will change from a five-story mixed use building to an eight-story complex for residential, entertainment and retail purposes.

That building would increase to 471,835 square feet. A garage associated with the building would be built up two more stories to increase parking availability.

Three hundred residential units are planned for Building 4000.

Talks about the project have been ongoing.

Mark Gross of Tuscan Village Development brought the proposal before the Planning Board on Jan. 24.

At that meeting, the public and board weighed in on the development plans.

Some residents were concerned about the impact these additional residential units would have on Salem School District. Another resident was concerned about polling locations when it came time to vote.

The biggest issue surrounded the Fire Department and if this development would put a strain on its staff.

PREP PAYS OFF FOR NEW PLANNER

LaFontaine shadowed predecessor Moldoff for 3 years and hits ground running

July 19, 2023

By Darrell Halen
Salem Life Writer



In addition to three years spent working as the town's assistant planner, Jacob LaFontaine, 34, says experiences on planning boards, with economic development projects, as a landuse technician and even working with at-risk youth all prepared him for his new role as Salem planner. Salem Life photo by Darrell Halen

"I was thrilled to have the opportunity to train him. ... We talked a lot, he learned a lot."

Former longtime town planner Ross Moldoff, of workdays spent with his eventual replacement Jacob LaFontaine

Jacob LaFontaine might have faced a steeper learning curve when he became Salem's planning director in January had he not spent three years working for his predecessor – the man who had spent nearly four decades in the job.

LaFontaine came to work for the Town of Salem as the assistant planner/code enforcement officer in December 2019. Ross Moldoff, who was the longtime planning director at the time, was planning to retire.

Moldoff stepped down at the end of last year. Over the three years they worked together, LaFontaine learned a great deal from Moldoff, who he credits for being a "great mentor."

"The fact that I was here and had that transition period made it immensely helpful," LaFontaine said. "If it wasn't for the fact that Ross was here and I was here three years shadowing him, I think it would have been incredibly difficult."

LaFontaine, 34, brings to his service in Salem a graduate degree, along with experience working in land-use planning at the municipal level and several years spent serving on a town's planning board.

He graduated from Milford High School in 2007 and earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Keene State College in 2012. Three years after graduating from college, he joined the planning board in Milford, serving first as an alternate member and later as a regular member.

"I was always interested in the built environment and planning principals, and I was interested in different developments in the community," recalled LaFontaine, who was 26 when he joined the group.

The five years he spent on the board, LaFontaine said, was good experience for his job in Salem. One of his current responsibilities is being the staff liaison to the town's planning board.

"I've been in the board members' shoes and I can understand some of the decisions they make or the perspective that they carry," he said. "It's ultimately a benefit."

LaFontaine earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of New Hampshire in 2022.

He interned in Tilton during the summer of 2019 through the Municipal Management Association of New Hampshire. He worked with the town administrator on a variety of tasks, and spent much of his focus on the revitalization of the town's historic downtown.

He attended regional economic development meetings, conducted a storefront survey to determine storefront occupancy rates, and drafted standard operating procedures for several departments to ensure compliance with state laws.

Following the internship, LaFontaine stayed on in Tilton part-time, working several months as a research assistant in the town administrator's office and as a landuse technician in the planning department, before coming to Salem.

A classmate in the MPA program had told him that Salem was looking for an assistant planner.

Moldoff recalled that LaFontaine came to his job interview nervous but well spoken. Although his professional work in planning was limited, he had the unique experience of having served on a planning board. The fact that he was working toward his master's degree in public administration was appealing, too.

"I was thrilled to have the opportunity to train him," Moldoff said. "He asked great questions. We talked a lot, he learned a lot. I tried to teach him as much as possible. We talked about all sorts of things."

As the Code Enforcement Officer, Moldoff said, LaFontaine had to deal with people violating – or perhaps violating – zoning regulations, and it can be difficult to get them to cooperate to come into compliance. He believes that LaFontaine's experience working at a home in Nashua for at-risk youths helped him in the role.

"You've got to learn how to work with people, communicate with them, to try to move them in a certain direction," Moldoff recalled. "He did well with that."

Moldoff applauds the selectmen who several years ago supported his request to add the assistant planner/code enforcement officer position to the town's budget.

The development of Tuscan Village on Route 28 was requiring more work, code enforcement needed more attention, and it was important to have a succession plan in place for the top planner's job.

LaFontaine said he was not officially designated as Moldoff's replacement when hired in 2019, but later interviewed with the town manager for the planning director position.

"I'm excited to continue to be in the community of Salem," he said. "We have a lot of great things going on in this community. I'm excited to play, albeit a small part, in improving the quality of life here."

He jokes that despite all the time he spent with Moldoff on the job, he could have called him every day after he retired.

"What I think I appreciated the most – his approach to everybody was consistent and his objective was to function in the best interest of the town," LaFontaine said. "He talked about trying to make Salem a better place. I know that was his intention and how he approached the job."

LaFontaine and his wife, Shay, and their 2-year-old son Gage live in Goffstown. The couple moved there in 2020, and LaFontaine serves as one of the town's representatives to the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission.

"I wanted to stay involved in some capacity on a volunteer basis," he said.

LaFontaine also works part-time for the Nashua Children's Home as assistant residential director. The facility provides care and stability to children who are unable to live with their families as well as special education services and housing for young people who have "aged out of care," according to its website.

LaFontaine had worked there full time, starting as a residential counselor, from 2013 to 2019, left briefly, and returned in 2020. Going back allowed him to re-connect with the children and co-workers he had interacted with.

"I really enjoy the work that they do and it's very important work. But it was difficult to do on a full-time basis. I think this is a nice balance," LaFontaine said. "It's good to have the contact with the residents obviously and all the employees I worked with for a long time."

Crosswalk approved for Veterans Memorial Parkway

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Jul 20, 2023

SALEM— Pedestrians will soon have a way to cross Veterans Memorial Parkway safely thanks to a crosswalk that the Town Council approved at its latest meeting.

The crosswalk is intended to connect Chasers Poker and Casino Room at 7 Veterans Memorial Parkway to their proposed expansion on the other side of the street.

Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine presented the plan to the council who unanimously approved the crosswalk's construction on July 10.

The crosswalk comes from a condition of Chaser's change of use to turn the former Kmart building at 167 South Broadway into an 800-seat charitable gaming facility in July 2022.

LaFontaine told the Town Council it's not an ideal proposal, but the road needs a crosswalk. It will benefit those already crossing the busy road to and from businesses like Ocean State Job Lot and Market Basket.

"We have to cross people somewhere on Veterans (Memorial Parkway)," said LaFontaine.

He noted people illegally cross the street in that area on a regular basis.

Councilor Paul Pelletier said he's noticed senior citizens trying to carry their groceries across the street from the Market Basket plaza.

Pelletier discussed the lengthy talks that the planning board has had regarding this crosswalk. He added this is the safest spot for one on the parkway.

"It's important that this council keep our town and our pedestrians, whether they are residents or not residents, as safe as possible in our town so we don't have any casualties," Pelletier said.

Similar crosswalks are already implemented in locations around the Mall at Rockingham Park and throughout Tuscan Village.

The crosswalk will be equipped with flashing beacons to alert oncoming traffic that people are using it.

A median island will be installed for those who can't fully make it across the four lanes of traffic in one cycle, LaFontaine added.

Town Council Vice Chairman Joseph Sweeney said he'd like to see some grass or mulch added to the refuge area for drivers at night to make the island more visible.

Town Council approval of the project was previously stalled on June 26 when a councilor wanted a perspective of what a driver would see on Veterans Memorial Parkway approaching the crosswalk.

Town Council Chairman Robert Bryant said the Planning Board has gone through all the necessary traffic reviews and gained input from the town's fire

and police departments. He would have approved it two weeks ago to get it moving along.

Bryant said, "No more delays."

Tuscan Village residential plan undergoes scrutiny

• By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Jul 28, 2023



A rendering of updates to Tuscan Village in Salem, N.H.

Salem Planning Board

SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village's master plan update to add 600 more residential units faced backlash from residents and the Planning Board on Tuesday.

Mark Gross of Tuscan Village Development presented updates which includes changing the use of two buildings to mixed use to add residential units. The new units would ultimately add more stories to the buildings.

Planning Board members were not in favor of moving the plan forward as presented and decided to continue talks on the project to a future meeting.

The conceptual designs involved buildings in the central village of the massive, 170-acre property.

One building would have two floors dedicated to retail spaces, restaurants and entertainment. Three hundred residential units would sit above those floors, creating an eight-story building.

The other building would be six stories after adding 300 units to it.

The units would be a combination of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and some three-bedroom spaces, and approximately 600 to 1,000 square feet each.

Gross said they are required to build 10% affordable or workforce housing units for every unit.

There is an affordable housing unit on Main Street under construction which has 74 units. Fifty additional units are proposed to meet requirements for 600 residential units.

During the meeting, residents voiced concerns on the topic — largely on the height of the buildings.

A few felt adding these high-rise buildings will take away from the town feel of Salem and create a city vibe.

Other concerns focused on traffic and parking, tax impacts and affordable housing.

Planning Board Vice Chair Joseph Feole asked why the updates increase residential units.

Gross said it is driven by commercial aspects for the development and the changing economy since the project started.

“The office market is dead,” Gross said. “Retail is not great.”

National brand tenants are looking to come to Tuscan Village if they have the residential component in the same building as them, he added.

The idea is to have residents be able to go downstairs from their rentals and not have to leave the building to grab items like groceries.

Planning Board Member Sean Lewis wanted to know who the target market is on these new units.

Gross told him they hope to attract young professionals and millennials and keep them in the state.

“It seems it’s going to become an enclosed area for wealthy individuals whether from Salem or the immediate area,” Lewis said. “It’s just a place I get to occasionally buy my groceries. That’s where it feels like it’s heading.”

Planning Board members added concerns about workforce housing with members agreeing it should be on-site.

Planning Board Chair Keith Belair said the drain on Salem Fire is still a big issue for him and has maintained that view since the beginning of the project. He added if Tuscan is set on these residential units and not amendable to their plan, this update may not go through.

Gross stood by increasing the residential space.

“We are not going to build something that doesn’t make sense,” Gross said. “It will end up being dirt.”

Tuscan Village decreases housing increase to 300 units

By Jonathan Phelps Union Leader Staff Aug 1, 2023



A rendering of proposed apartment building at Tuscan Village. Tighe & Bond

The developers of the sprawling Tuscan Village in Salem will eliminate an eight-story building which drew opposition from residents and cut its latest proposal for new apartments in half.

The plans call for reducing 600 apartments to 300.

After receiving feedback from the planning board and residents last month, developer Joe Faro eliminated plans to build an eight-story retail/entertainment/residential building with 300 residential units. The building will continue to have

entertainment/retail/restaurant uses on the first floor and office/research and development on floors two through five as approved in 2021.

The planning board will continue to consider a change to the master plan to allow a six-story 439,041-square-foot retail/residential building with 300 units. The building will require a site plan review.

“Residential uses increased significantly with people leaving the metropolitan and suburban areas of Boston and with companies implementing the ‘work from home’ mandates, the demand for additional residential housing increased,” Faro said.

The massive 170-acre development is being built at the former Rockingham Park racetrack and includes the Central Village, North Village, South Village and a life science district.

Currently, Tuscan Village has 537 apartments and 85 townhomes fully occupied, according to a presentation on July 25. The 300 units will bring the total count to 1,485.

On July 27, Faro sent a letter to the planning board announcing the changes.

Mark Gross, director of permitting for Tuscan Village, said there is a housing shortage of about 25,000 units in the state.

At the July 25 planning board meeting, several residents spoke against the eight-story building that was being proposed.

“It should not be a city like Boston on one side of 28 and Salem, New Hampshire, the town, on the other,” said Ball Avenue resident Marie Cammarata. “It will look ridiculous.”

Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine told residents the ordinance is flexible in terms of how much housing will be allowed, but does require reviews by the planning board.

Gross told the planning board the number of residential units are being driven by the commercial aspects of the project.

"There are a lot of national or nationwide tenants that will come if they have that residential component right above them," he said. "These are national brand tenants that would not come to this community if they were standalone."

The master plan allows for "specialty grocery."

He said the entertainment district wants "a captured audience" from residences on the property.

Faro said the changes eliminate concerns over building height and the number of units.

Plans for a Life Science District will likely be eliminated in future revisions to the master plan. Gross said some uses could include medical offices or sports venues.

The pandemic changed previous uses of a corporate office park and assisted living, which were impacted by the COVID-19 shutdowns, according to Faro's letter. The demand for housing has increased with many companies offering work from home options.

Faro mentioned construction costs, increasing interest rates, fewer financing options, supply chain issues and labor shortages as challenges.

"These factors all contribute to the continuous reevaluation of the project's programming in order to maintain a viable, financeable project and to keep it moving in a forward trajectory," Faro said.

08/01/2023

2023's Top 10 Retail Experiences: No. 2 Tuscan Village

Chain Store Age picks physical retail's most engaging centers



[Al Urbanski](#)

Real Estate Editor & Manager

A mixed-use project has brought new energy and excitement to Salem, N.H.

Through the entire 20th Century, Salem, N.H., was a popular entertainment destination for Bostonians who regularly made the 30-mile trip to its famed Rockingham Park Race Track, where Seabiscuit once galloped to glory. That changed when the track closed in 2016.

But just seven years later, the burg is bustling once again. Tuscan Village, a 170-acre mixed-use project with multifamily housing, a lake, the first [Mass General Brigham medical center](#) in New Hampshire, and tenants like Arhaus, Nike, Pottery Barn, and the Sam Adams Beer Garden bringing crowds back to Salem.



Tuscan Village draws music lovers from 50 miles around for its Thursday-through-Sunday concerts every weekend in the summer.

"I could pretty easily say that there are 2,000 to 3,000 people walking around on the property every day," said Tuscan Village's senior VP of leasing [Mike Powers](#), who previously performed the same role at Top 10 alumni Easton Town Center and Crocker Park. "And at full build we expect to have 5,000 people living here."

In the meantime, crowds continue to pack the site for a calendar-crowding series of events such as the Summer Wine Fest, Fourth of July fireworks, The Tiki Takeover, Spritz O'Clock, Trivia Tuesday, and paddle-boarding and kayak demos at the L.L. Bean store on the lake.

During the summer, Tuscan Village's activation strategy does not limit itself to one-off special events. Its Summer Concert Series runs every Thursday through Sunday, presenting popular Boston metro bands, live DJ's, and themed programs such as The Italian Music Festival. It's a

known happening, and people throughout the Boston area check the lineup on a weekly basis.

During the holidays, Tuscan Village presents an outdoor Winter Market featuring 40 to 50 booths for crafts sellers.

“Our events calendar keeps building on itself. It started out very experimentally and exploded into a packed 12-month program,” Powers said. “We’ve become a destination for people who make 40-to-60-minute drives from Boston and Portsmouth.”

Powers and Tuscan Village’s owner, local food product manufacturer and restaurateur Joe Faro, have been busy building on the project’s success in planning Phase 3 of the project. Twenty tenants have been signed that include The Artisan Hotel, West Elm, and Shake Shack.

Tuscan Village cuts 300 new units from residential plans

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Aug 8, 2023



A rendering of updates to Tuscan Village in Salem, N.H.

Salem Planning Board

SALEM, N.H. — The owner of the massive Tuscan Village mixed-use project are downsizing plans to add 600 more residential units after Salem officials and residents voiced concerns over the expanding project.

Joe Faro, owner of Tuscan Village Master Development, sent a memo to Salem Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine and the board stating that the number of residential units will be cut in half, to 300.

After the community responded negatively to the potential 600-unit high-rise at the planning board's July 25 meeting, Faro said plans for the building will revert back to its use approved in the 2021 master plan.

“Building 400” had a conceptual plan to add 300 residential units along with three additional stories. Faro said the building will stay at five stories — which doesn’t exceed any current building in Tuscan Village.

Plans to add 300 residential units to “Building 1300” will move ahead. Faro noted the building’s height will not be any higher than a different building under construction on the site.

The memo also addressed concerns over the lack of on-site affordable housing.

Under zoning ordinances, affordable housing is required to be built for 10 percent of the residential units on the 170-acre parcel.

Workforce housing requirements for the proposed 300 additional residential units will be satisfied with a 74-unit housing project on Main Street, Faro said.

In the future, he wrote, the Tuscan Village project will provide affordable housing on its property.

Several factors over the last few years, such as labor shortages, rising construction costs and supply chain issues have forced the Tuscan Village developers to reevaluate the project, Faro said.

“The economic changes that have occurred over the past two years necessitates this project to continually pivot and evolve,” Faro wrote.

Faro added the pandemic changed the project’s original plans for a corporate office park, while assisted living and senior housing were affected by Covid shutdowns.

He said his team will work with the town to complete the project, which includes assistance to address public safety concerns regarding the town's first responders and revising impact fees.

Tuscan Village developer: Whole Foods to come if more apartments approved

By Jonathan Phelps Union Leader Staff Aug 10, 2023



A Whole Foods is expected to open at Tuscan Village in Salem if this new six-story building is approved. Rendering provided by Tuscan Village

The developer of Tuscan Village in Salem says Whole Foods Market will open at the massive mixed-use development if plans for another 300 apartments win approval.

Joe Faro also said several new restaurants are coming, including The Capital Grille, Friendly Toast, Tavern in the Square and Sweetgreen. Faro's Tuscan Kitchen will move to the development from its spot on Main Street.

Faro wants to add 300 apartments to one of the buildings previously proposed for retail and office space. The new plan changes the building from two stories to six stories.

"Whole Foods said Salem will never be on our radar," Faro told the planning board Tuesday night. "Well, ladies and gentlemen, if you bless us with this update, you will have a Whole Foods in the middle of Tuscan Village in Salem, New Hampshire. It took us five years to get them to agree to come here."

The first Whole Foods in New Hampshire opened in Nashua in 2014, and the Amazon-owned chain since has added locations in Bedford and Portsmouth.

The planning board will continue its review of changes to the master plan, which would allow a six-story, 439,041-square-foot retail/residential building with 300 units. The building will require a site plan review before proceeding.

The 170-acre development at the site of the old Rockingham Park racetrack includes the Central Village, North Village, South Village and a life science district.

Current commercial tenants include Chick-fil-A, L.L. Bean and Pottery Barn. Mass General Brigham operates a clinic on site.

Faro said a development of this size is bound to change, given economic conditions.

"The market has changed over the last five years," Faro said. "It's changed dramatically."

The proposal for this phase of the development originally called for 600 apartments across two buildings, including one of eight stories.

The number of apartments and the height of the building caused a stir among some in town, with many residents venting on Facebook. Faro has since reduced the number of apartments to 300 and eliminated the eight-story building.

"I agree. It was too tall," Faro said. "We looked at it. We heard you. We heard the board. "

Building 4000 will revert to a five-story commercial building with no residences. Its use is expected to include entertainment.

Mark Gross, director of permitting for Tuscan Village, said the eight-story building was "a little aggressive."

The 300 apartments being proposed are necessary to secure Whole Foods as a tenant.

Whole Foods has taken the same approach elsewhere in the country.

In June, Whole Foods opened in a six-story, 323-unit mixed-use apartment building within the 66-acre redevelopment of the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

During his presentation, Faro said it can be tough to attract key commercial tenants.

"Four years ago, I called Capital Grille and they said to me, 'The Salem Witch Museum? I don't understand what you are talking about. We would never go there,'" he said. "I want to let you know they outbid Ruth's Chris Steak House for that space."

Shake Shack to open first location in New Hampshire at Tuscan Village

By Jonathan Phelps Union Leader Staff

Aug 13, 2023

A



Shake Shack is slated to open at Tuscan Village in Salem this summer.

Shake Shack is expected to open its first New Hampshire location at the Tuscan Village in Salem this summer.

The sprawling development at the former Rockingham Park race track also offered a construction update this week, saying a 164-room Artisan Hotel (part of Marriott), a rooftop lounge, cafe and event center are also on the way.

The first Shake Shack opened in New York City in 2004. The menu features made-to-order Angus beef burgers, crispy chicken, milkshakes, house-made lemonades and beer and wine.

The company has 290 locations in 32 states and 150 international locations.

Massachusetts-based Tavern in the Square, which just opened a location in Tyngsborough, Mass., is also expected to open this summer, becoming the chain's first location across the border. Another is planned in Bedford.

West Elm, a home and decor store, will also open this summer.

J-Crew Factory recently opened at the development.

Tuscan could add Whole Foods with 300 more apartments

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Aug 12, 2023



A rendering of updates to Tuscan Village in Salem, N.H.

Salem Planning Board

SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village developers held the allure of a Whole Foods grocery store over the heads of the Planning Board and public as they attempted to win approval for their latest Master Plan updates to the development project on Aug. 8.

Talks, however, will continue to the next meeting.

The Tuesday meeting was night and day from two weeks ago when their plan to add 600 residential units faced backlash from the board and community.

While a few residents addressed recurring concerns, there was overwhelming support from people who spoke in favor of the project and what Joe Faro, Tuscan Village Master Development owner, has done for Salem.

Faro along with Mark Gross of Tuscan Village Development provided revised updates to the Master Plan. Faro called it a “project of unprecedented proportions.”

“And it’s a project taking place with unprecedented events in it,” Faro added as economic and social factors have evolved the original plans over the years.

Faro said they took concerns from the community and board members from the last meeting and slashed the number of residential units from 600 to 300 units.

The biggest development of the meeting came when Faro announced Whole Foods wanted to build on the property if the 300 units receive approval.

“It took us five years for them to agree to come here,” Faro said.

Mark Gross of Tuscan Brands Development hinted at previous board meetings that a national brand grocery store was interested in the location if more residential units were built.

“If you bless us with this update, you will have a Whole Foods in the middle of Tuscan Village in Salem, New Hampshire,” Faro said.

Residential units are also no longer planned for “Building 4000,” which will revert its planned height and use back to the approved 2021 Master Plan.

Future buildings will not exceed the height of current buildings either in construction or already standing.

The other main updated included future residential proposals that will provide 10% affordable housing on the Tuscan Village property — not at the affordable housing construction project on Main Street.

Faro said future tenants at Tuscan Village would enjoy amenities like spas, and popular restaurants like Sweetgreen and The Capital Grille.

The new tenants are all part of a “downtown” developers are trying to create. Faro highlighted wide sidewalks and green space to make a walkable Salem — and one that’s inviting to the public, not just Tuscan residents.

The project so far is 33% completed. The “downtown” opening will put the project at 60% finished once the Artisan Hotel opens in the fall and the Mercantile building next year.

“You don’t build a downtown in a year,” Gross said.

Tuscan Village looks to add pickleball courts

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Aug 24, 2023



Tuscan Village developers plan to add a pickleball court to the right of a playground at Rec Park in Salem, New Hampshire.

SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village developers caught the pickleball bug with plans to add courts to current and future parks on the massive property as they tweaked updates to their master plan that was conditionally approved by the Planning Board on Tuesday.

It was approved by a vote of 6-1-0.

One condition includes site plan approval for “Building 1300”, which would add 300 residential units.

The Planning Board heard the new recreation plans at the Aug. 22 meeting during the fourth meeting discussing Tuscan’s master plan.

Some of the plans included expanded recreation space for the 120-acre project.

Joe Faro, Tuscan Village development owner, presented the recreation plans to the board.

Planning Board Director Jacob LaFontaine said the board recommended enhanced programming for Rec Park. He added the board was pleased they are willing to dedicate part of the property to providing more recreation.

Faro said they took into consideration those recommendations and public comments about the need for more recreational spaces at Tuscan Village.

“We hear you and continue to adapt the project as it progresses,” Faro said.

The growing development project has recreation spaces at Tuscan Lake, Linear Park and Lake Park where different activities are hosted for both residents and the public such as walking trails and fitness classes.

“Pocket parks” are already popping up inside the park like a life-sized chess board for anyone to play Tuscan’s Rockingham Park Gardens has also started taking shape which pays homage to the property’s roots with artifacts and statue of Seabiscuit.

They plan to add a pickleball court along with some fitness equipment to Rec Park which sits between North Village and Tuscan Village. Faro said they redesigned plans for the park after hearing those concerns from the board and public.

They decided a pickleball court there would benefit both Tuscan residents and the public.

The court, including sidelines, is projected to be 30 feet by 60 feet.

“I think the fitness equipment will be great for joggers,” Faro said. “They can stop and utilize the fitness equipment and then keep going. Pickleball will be great for residents and folks coming to the development.”

Four additional pickleball courts and a basketball court will be constructed at Overlook Park which is situated adjacent to Tuscan Lake. The park is five times larger than Rec Park and is a prominent public space at Tuscan.

“I think this is another great opportunity for us to utilize a public recreation space,” he added.

Planning Board member Linda Harvey suggested Faro consider potential indoor pickleball courts knowing there’s no place to play in town during winter.

Planning Board Chair Keith Belair said recreation had been a sticking point for the board.

“I think you answered the call,” Belair said to Faro.

300 more apartments OK'd at Tuscan Village in Salem

By Jonathan Phelps Union Leader Staff Aug 28, 2023

Changes to the master plan for the sprawling Tuscan Village in Salem will pave the way for 300 more apartments and a Whole Foods Market.

The plan also calls for installing pickleball courts and other recreation areas open to residents and the public.

The planning board last week approved the master plan changes to replace a two-story office building with a six-story retail and residential building. The new "Building 1300" will have a Whole Foods on the first floor.

Before construction can start, the developer must get site plan approval for the new building, which they hope to break ground on in November, according to Mark Gross, director of permitting for Tuscan Village.

The changes include:

- No residential units will be proposed in Building 4000;
- All future development will not exceed approved building heights;
- Tuscan Village will agree to an update impact fee schedule for new projects;
- Future residential proposals will include 10% workforce housing on site.

The site plan review will consider detailed plans for the new six-story building, including building materials.

As part of the public hearing process, Tuscan Village officials nixed plans to build an eight-story building with another 300 units. The density and height of the building stirred up much debate.

Along with Whole Foods, the development has announced The Capital Grille, Friendly Toast, Tavern in the Square and Sweetgreen. Developer Joe Faro's Tuscan Kitchen will move to the development from its spot on Main Street.

The 170-acre development at the site of the old Rockingham Park racetrack includes the Central Village, North Village, South Village and a life sciences district.

More recreation

As part of the request for changes to the master plan, town planners offered examples of recreation options at similar developments across the region.

Faro committed to adding a pickleball court and fitness equipment at an area known as Rec Park.

The plans also now call for adding a new park with four pickleball courts and basketball court to be called Overlook Park.

"Pickleball is extremely popular," Faro told the board.

Changes could also be coming to the proposed life sciences district in the future.

"If life sciences changes, other uses will go in," Faro said. "That property will not be empty."

Gross said they hope to break ground in November of this year if the site plans are approved.

"We would be opening in late 2025," Gross said.

Salem looks to add electric vehicle charging stations

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Sep 20, 2023

SALEM, N.H. — Electric car owners may soon have more charging stations around town to power up their vehicles.

The Planning Board discussed two possible locations in Salem where new electric vehicle charging stations could be installed or updated.

Planning Board Director Jacob LaFontaine said the town is starting to see more requests for electric vehicle charging stations come in because there are more federal grant funds available for them.

He said Salem has no more than a dozen charging stations. Most are at Tuscan Village or The Mall at Rockingham Park or car dealerships. A few were also approved in recent months at two gas stations.

LaFontaine told the Planning Board at its Sept. 12 meeting of two different plans.

He said Tesla sent a request to install 12 electric vehicle charging stations at The Mall at Rockingham Park.

These charging spaces would occupy a row of parking spaces in front of the former Lord & Taylor department storefront adjacent in the parking lot surrounded by South Policy Street and Pleasant Street. LaFontaine spoke with a Tesla representative about the idea.

In the same mall parking lot, there is a separate charging station run by Electrify America. Both the projected Tesla station and onsite charging station would be compatible for different car makes and models.

Planning Board Chair Keith Belair asked if the board will need an electric vehicle charging ordinance in the future.

Salem does not have any regulations on electric charging at this time. LaFontaine said while informal approval has worked, formal regulations might be something to consider.

Town officials developed a solar ordinance in 2021 when solar panels and energy became popular. LaFontaine expects a similar ordinance with adopted regulations for electric charging.

“It’s an emerging technology,” LaFontaine said. “We are learning the same thing with solar which has exploded in town. We are getting a handle on that.”

He said other communities try to have charging spaces in less utilized areas. LaFontaine said he asked the Tesla representative to consider tweaking where the station will go for it to be further away from a mall entrance than the rendering shows. This would be moving the charging station to the other side of the drive aisle.

At the same meeting, LaFontaine presented another request by Key Hyundai of Salem for another EV charging station at 470 South Broadway.

The dealership has two charging stations. They want to relocate the two stations, put one in a service bay and add an additional station with a faster charging capability at another spot on the property.

Board member Beverly Donovan wanted to know the fire department's thoughts on internal charging stations and fire risks associated with them. She was concerned with future development plans which could include charging stations in enclosed garages as they become more popular around town.

The planning director said he'll raise the concern with the fire department's building inspectors as it could be a new thing for them to focus on.

Belair added the board's job is to approve site plans. Building inspectors and the fire department will make sure these charging stations are safe.

NH mausoleum looks at expansion

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Oct 12, 2023



Salvatore Diprima, owner of Eternal Light Memorial, has been granted conditional approval for the expansion of a longtime mausoleum in town to make room for more crypt space. STAFF FILE PHOTO

SALEM, N.H. — The Planning Board granted conditional approval for the expansion of a longtime mausoleum in town to make room for more crypt space.

The approval for Diprima Eternal Light Memorial, 23 Pond St., to construct a 2,100 square foot addition came at the board's Oct. 10 meeting.

The board unanimously approved the proposal presented by GPI engineer Chris York on the property owner's behalf, but it was met with certain conditions involving tree clearing and wetlands restoration.

York said Salvatore Diprima, its owner, is running out of room at the existing mausoleum and needs more space for urns and memorials. The mausoleum holds one to two services a month.

The mausoleum has been there since 1974 and sits on 18 acres of land. The original variance for it was approved nearly 50 years ago, Planning Director Jacob LaFontaine said.

He explained how some land clearing took place last winter and some wetlands and their buffers on the property were disturbed.

One condition of the building permit approval is to mark the buffer and revegetate the wetlands.

Residents in attendance voiced concerns about pine tree clearing near their homes which are adjacent to the property.

One resident said the property lacked erosion control when land was previously cleared. Another resident said they cut into wetlands near her home and took down several pine trees.

The board decided, as a conditional use, the owner will have to submit a wetland mitigation plan which will then be reviewed by wetland scientists before further planning board approval on the project.

Board Member Damon Norcross said this is the second consecutive board meeting where residents have come forward and raised concerns about land clearing near their homes.

“There’s a missing piece in the way we are handling taking down trees,” Norcross said. “I think there are some discussions to be had regarding clearing trees and going through some sort of approvals that mitigate some of the issues that we’ve heard.”

Board members and the planning director also discussed the lack of a designated parking lot for the mausoleum.

York said he doesn’t see parking increasing as the number of services each month will stay the same and isn’t expected to increase traffic around the site.

Board Vice Chair Joseph Feole raised concerns about American Disability Act compliant parking at Diprima Eternal Lights Memorial since the site was approved before ADA was enacted.

LaFontaine said the fire department will review parking to make sure it’s accessible and the building permit will also need engineering approval as part of the conditions granted.

Planning Board talks recreation at Tuscan Village

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Oct 17, 2023



Tuscan Village developers plan to add a pickleball court to the right of a playground at Rec Park in Salem, NH. Courtesy photo/Salem Planning Board

SALEM, N.H. — As the Planning Board continues discussions on Tuscan Village's proposed 300 additional residential units and Whole Foods to its property, the board advocated for diverse recreational spaces to accompany them.

The board wants to see something similar to playgrounds in Boston's Seaport, like Martin's Park, which they said they feel fits Tuscan Village's overall aesthetic for the expansive property's Central Village.

The issue came up at the board's latest meeting.

Planning Board Director Jacob LaFontaine said the board sent Tuscan Village representatives photos of what they envisioned on the property relating to play areas.

The applicant came back with conceptual pickleball courts added to Rec Park and Overlook Park, he told the board.

LaFontaine said he recognizes there is a high demand for pickleball play right now, but wants to see recreation plans diversified at Tuscan Village.

Conversations on the subject were sparked by a conceptual recreation space nestled between two buildings, including building 1300, which will add 300 residential units, a Whole Foods grocery store and other retail space.

The conceptual area in the middle of the buildings would be a flexible recreation space with a fountain as its focal point, according to Mark Gross of Tuscan Village Development.

Gross explained play area equipment would be at one end of the open park, with a large open space in the park's middle for potential pop-up, retail use throughout the year.

He presented some conceptual play structures like train- and horse-themed equipment, but said he can't see a full playground there.

"That doesn't make any sense," Gross said.

Gross said they have to be mindful of where a play area would go on the property. He stated there are 41 children living at Tuscan Village among all the occupied developments.

In relation to these two buildings and a restaurant like Tavern in the Square coming, he said it wouldn't be appropriate to construct a playground there based on restaurants like Tavern in the Square in adjacent areas. They conceptually put some playground equipment in the site plan at the opposite end of the open park where family restaurant The Friendly Toast will be opening.

Still, the Planning Board stressed a future playground for Tuscan's consideration.

"We've been advocating for something along those lines," Vice chair Joseph Feole said. "I appreciate the play area components, but I'd like to see more of a park, more of a play area."

"I think a fountain looks nice, but I don't see the recreation in the fountain," he added.

"It would be a benefit for the applicant and community if there were more thoughtfully-programmed play structures," LaFontaine said. "If it doesn't belong here, that's OK. But maybe consideration should be given to Overlook Park or Rec Park."

Gross stressed Rec Park has already taken two years to settle on its uses.

He's seen people utilize workout and play area equipment at the park, but said Joe Faro, Tuscan Village Master Development owner, and developers will work on a solution to make everyone involved in Tuscan planning happy about future recreation sites on the property.

Board member Damon Norcross encouraged a conversations between Tuscan Village developers and the Recreation Committee to focus in on what would be most beneficial to the community.

Artisan Hotel at Tuscan Village opens its doors

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Oct 21, 2023



The exterior of The Artisan Hotel at Tuscan Village in Salem, New Hampshire. Courtesy photo

SALEM, N.H. — Marriott International's Tribute Portfolio has expanded into the New Hampshire market with the addition of The Artisan at Tuscan Village, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel that opened earlier this month at 17 Via Toscana.

It is the first Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel in the state.

The new property is an upscale boutique hotel located in the heart of Tuscan Village. It offers a community-hub destination for locals, curious and modern-day travelers to experience meaningful connections and enduring memories.

There are 165 modern-designed guest rooms and suites. The scenic hotel property features a luxury outdoor pool with lounge chairs and terrace, an indoor-outdoor fitness facility, sundries market and business services.

Patrons also can enjoy dining access to the adjacent full-service restaurant, Tuscan Kitchen, as well as The Rooftop Bar and Cafe Artisan located off the lobby.

Groups can book meetings, weddings and events in the adjacent function center featuring 12,000-square-feet of beautiful indoor and outdoor spaces including a dynamic ballroom offering a blank canvas for custom events.

For more information, visit theartisanhotelattuscanvillage.com or call 603-912-8450.



Audrey Ma

The Tuscan Village Shack menu will feature all the classics, including the ShackBurger®, crinkle-cut fries and hand-spun shakes, and the fan-favorite Hot Menu available until January 8th – including the Spicy Shackmeister Burger, Hot Chicken, and two variations of Spicy Fries.

NEWS > FAST CASUAL

Shake Shack to open 1st New Hampshire location on Monday, October 30, 2023

Located within Tuscan Village, the burger chain to celebrate the momentous opening with live music, family fun, and a donation to CASA NH

Oct 25, 2023

Shake Shack is thrilled to announce it will open the doors to its first New Hampshire location on **Monday, October 30th at 11AM**. The Shack will be part of Tuscan Village at 9 Via Toscana in Salem, NH. Located directly over the Massachusetts border, Tuscan Village is a regional mixed-use destination, featuring over 30 retailers, restaurants, and experiences; the only suburban development of its kind in New England.

The Tuscan Village Shack will be open 11AM to 10PM Monday through Saturday and 11AM to 9PM Sunday. The Shack will celebrate its opening day with a giveaway of specially-designed New Hampshire-inspired Shake Shack merchandise for the first 100 guests, live music from Get Down Tonight Entertainment from 11AM to 1:30PM, and more. Additionally, and as part of the company's larger mission to Stand for Something Good®, Shake Shack will donate \$1 to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) NH from every burger sold on opening day at the Tuscan Village Shack. CASA NH is a non-profit that recruits, trains, and supports community volunteers to serve as advocates for children throughout New Hampshire who have experienced abuse or neglect.

"We are thrilled to open our first Shack in New Hampshire," said **Andrew McCaughan, Chief Development Officer of Shake Shack**. "Tuscan Village is a premier destination and perfect fit for that classic Shack experience. We can't wait to welcome the entire community to come and enjoy delicious, premium quality ShackBurgers and shakes."

"We're honored to welcome Shake Shack not only to Tuscan Village, but New Hampshire as a whole, and bring such a beloved and renowned burger experience into our mix of dining options. As a family destination, it's the perfect fit for our guests looking for a menu that both kids and adults will love. We can't wait for the community to experience the Tuscan Village Shake Shack with all of its signature classics and special new items throughout the seasons," said **Joe Faro, Founder of Tuscan Village**.

Featuring Shake Shack's signature industrial design, New Hampshire's first Shack welcomes guests to enjoy their meal in the dining room or on the outdoor dining patio. Guests can place orders for delivery or pre-order for pickup via the Shack app in the coming weeks.

The Tuscan Village Shack menu will feature all the classics, including the ShackBurger®, crinkle-cut fries and hand-spun shakes, and the fan-favorite Hot Menu available until January 8th – including the Spicy Shackmeister Burger, Hot Chicken, and two variations of Spicy Fries.

ABOUT SHAKE SHACK

Shake Shack serves elevated versions of American classics using only the best ingredients. It's known for its delicious made-to-order Angus beef burgers, crispy chicken, hand-spun milkshakes, house-made lemonades, beer, wine, and more. With its high-quality food at a great value, warm hospitality, and a commitment to crafting uplifting experiences, Shake Shack quickly became a cult-brand with widespread appeal. Shake Shack's purpose is to **Stand For Something Good®**, from its premium ingredients and employee development, to its inspiring designs and deep community investment. Since the original Shack opened in 2004 in NYC's Madison Square Park, the Company has expanded to over 470 locations system-wide, including over 305 in 32 U.S. States and the District of Columbia, and over 165 international locations across London, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Mexico City, Istanbul, Dubai, Tokyo, Seoul and more.

Skip the line with the **Shack App**, a mobile ordering app that lets you save time by ordering ahead! Guests can select their location, pick their food, choose a pickup time and their meal will be cooked-to-order and timed to arrival. Available on iOS and Android.

Learn more: shakeshack.com | IG: @shakeshack | t: @shakeshack
| facebook.com/shakeshack

ABOUT TUSCAN VILLAGE

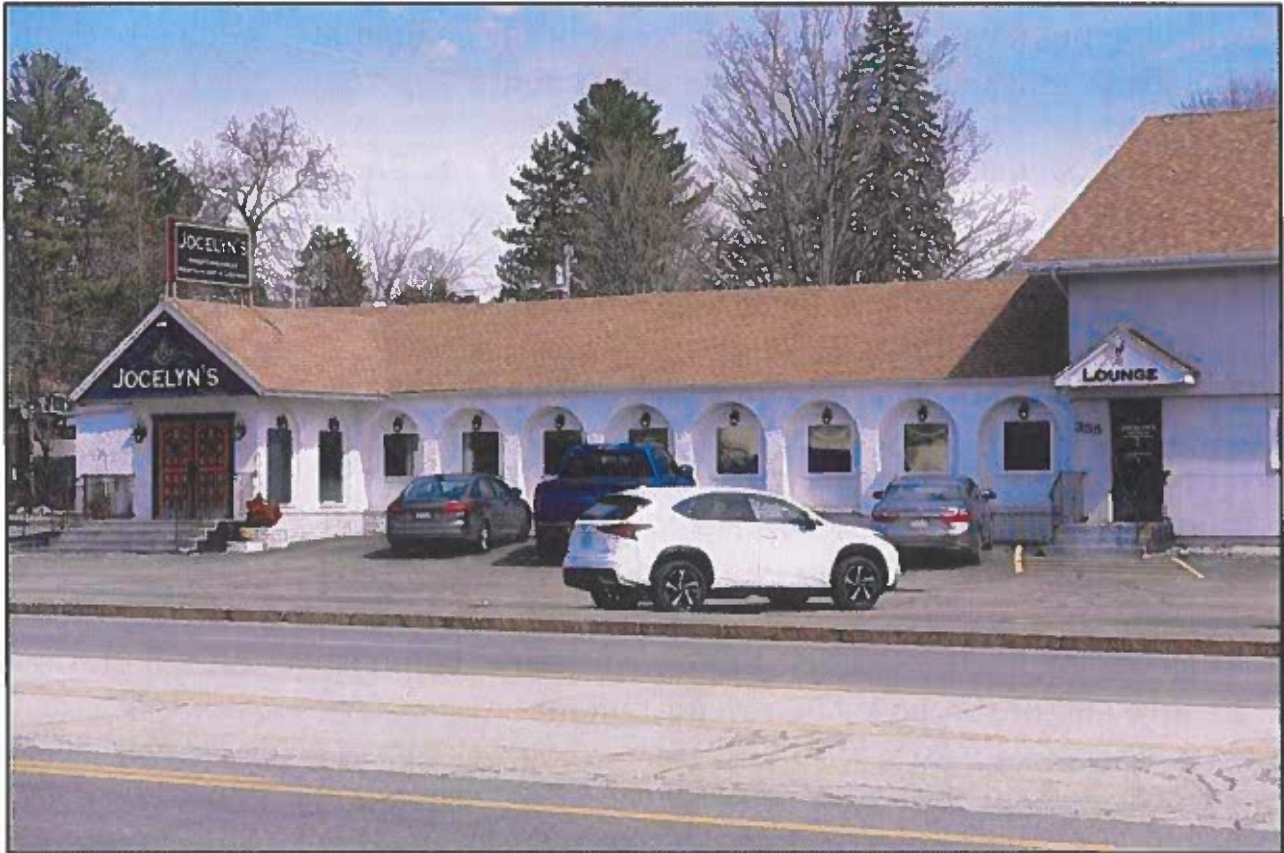
In 2016, Tuscan Brands acquired the 170 acre property formerly known as the Rockingham Park with the vision of transforming it into a 3.8M SF mixed-use super regional destination. Five years later, the development has opened two phases and has exploded with national brands such as Mass General Brigham, L.L.Bean, Williams Sonoma, Pottery Barn, Marriott Hotels, 1200+ Luxury residences, and over 1M SF of state of the art life science campus space. Joe's vision has come to life as a destination where people can live, work, stay and play. For more information, please visit www.tuscanvillagesalem.com .

Source URL:<https://www.nrn.com/fast-casual/shake-shack-open-1st-new-hampshire-location-monday-october-30-2023>

Cigar lounge to become restaurant, again

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Nov 16, 2023



The owner of Puff Cigar Lounge in Salem plans to turn part of the site back to a restaurant.
TIM JEAN/Staff photo

SALEM, N.H. — The owner of a cigar and hookah lounge on Route 28 is looking to revert part of its space back to a restaurant.

Puff Cigar Lounge wants to decrease its size at 357 S. Broadway to include a restaurant with operational hours before the lounge opens at night. The lounge was originally the home of Jocelyn's Mediterranean Restaurant and Martini Lounge, a popular, family-run business.

But according to Planning Board Director Jacob LaFontaine, a restaurant will return to the property. The new restaurant will be called Beiruti. The planning board will hear owner Richard Sfeir's plan at their Nov. 28 meeting.

Kurt Meisner of Meisner Brem Corporation, who represents the applicant, said in a letter to LaFontaine that the proprietor wants to reestablish the long-standing reputation which Jocelyn's had in the community, "adding back one of Salem's longstanding favorite establishments."

Jocelyn's opened in 2009 at the former site of the Phoenician Restaurant. It served Mediterranean cuisine and specialty cocktails.

This past spring, Sfeir decided to go in a different direction with his business and close the restaurant. He had approached the board for a change-of-use site plan to make it a cigar lounge as he said he saw a demand for this type of establishment grow locally.

Under the change, food could not be served and Sfeir planned to remove all kitchen appliances though a kitchen would remain inside.

The building itself will house three businesses: Hannoush Jewelers, Puff Cigar Lounge and the proposed Beiruti Restaurant.

LaFontaine said the intent is to convert the existing cigar lounge back to a restaurant. The former restaurant space closest to Hannoush Jewelers will become the cigar lounge, he added.

Puff occupies 5,154 square feet. Under the new change-of-use plan, Puff Cigar Lounge's size would decrease to 1,831 square feet while Beiruti will take over 3,323 square feet of the current space.

LaFontaine said a conditional use permit for reduced parking will be needed as there are 53 spaces and 78 are required.

Only two of those businesses will be open at the same time on any given day. The business hours will offset each other to combat the parking demand, the planning director said.

Beirut Restaurant will be open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. while Puff operates from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.. Hannoush Jewelers is open until 6:30 p.m. at the latest.

He added the owner will also enhance the property with landscaping and other modifications under a previously approved site plan agreement.

Holiday Shoppes set to return to Tuscan Village

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Nov 16, 2023



Tuscan Village's Holiday Shoppes will return on Nov. 24 and run until Dec. 31 in Salem, NH.
Courtesy photos

SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village is ready to expand its second Holiday Shoppes this year, promising to be bigger and better as more of the property will be utilized to increase vendor offerings.

The outdoor shops will run from Nov. 24 through Dec. 31 and be open Thursdays and Fridays at 4 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 11 a.m. The shops will be open all of Christmas week, Dec. 18 to Dec. 23, and closed on Christmas Day.

Last year's market was held at Lake Park. Planning Board Director Jacob LaFontaine told the Planning Board at Tuesday's meeting about Tuscan Village's plan to have the market in more locations as it continues to grow.

The expanded market this year would take up parts of Via Toscana and the Grand Lawn in addition to Lake Park. The expanded market comes as Tuscan's newest section, called Central Village, officially opened in October with The Artisan Hotel and more restaurants. The market will spread out into the streets around the hotel.

Semi-permanent, seasonal structures will return to house vendors during the market's run and give each their own personal space to customize the pop-up shops. These long structures can accommodate vendors on both sides.

Rina Peselman, director of communications for Tuscan Brands, said there were more than 30 artists, crafters and small businesses all in one central spot at Tuscan Village for visitors to do their holiday shopping.

"We were inspired by European markets where you can shop and support local businesses," Peselman said. "You can get delicious food, enjoy live music, gather and stroll the village, and just enjoy the holiday season."

Vendors offered products ranging from jewelry and clothing to candles and home décor to sweet treats in 2022.

A special appearance by Santa is in the works for every weekend.

A mocked-up site plan of 2023 Holiday Shoppes, presented to the Planning Board, showed the potential place for a carousel near Tuscan's Christmas tree.

Heated tents will offer relief from the chill, along with snacks, hot chocolate, festive cocktails and live music.

Tuscan plans to put barrels on the streets to prohibit cars from entering the market area during the event.

A temporary parking area is planned by Building 4000 with pedestrian access to the market.

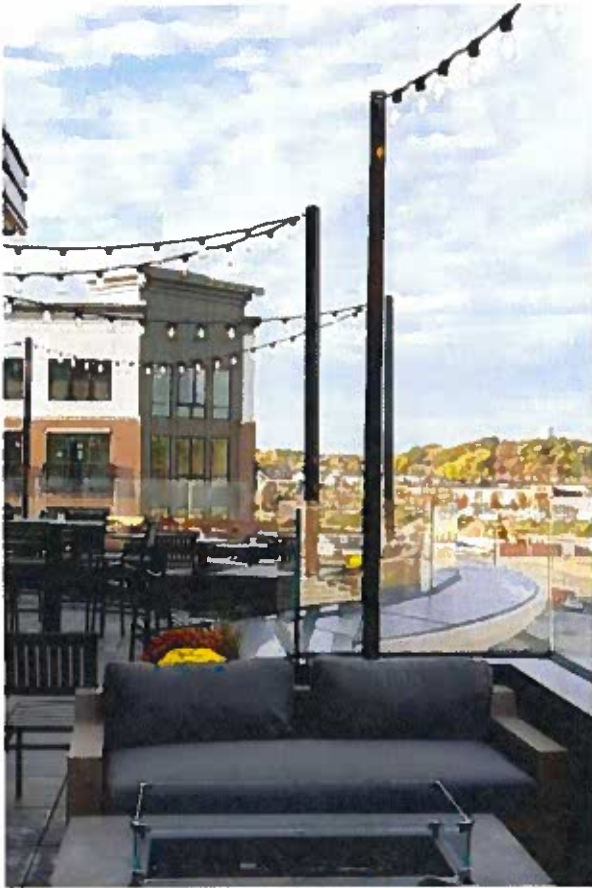
Artisan Hotel Brings Sophisticated Charm to Tuscan Village in Salem, New Hampshire

Jeanne O'Brien Coffey | North Shore Magazine

Nov 17, 2023



The view from The Rooftop bar at the new Artisan Hotel in Salem, N.H. says it all. From one of the comfortable couches in front of a gas fireplace, you can survey the growing Tuscan Village lifestyle complex, as it converts the former grounds of the Rockingham Park racetrack into an appealing destination for shopping and dining – and now getting away from it all. Like the rest of the boutique 163-room property, The Rooftop bar feels like a welcoming yet urbane escape – Italian pop art posters line the walls and every bartender knows how to make a spritz.



The Rooftop is just one of the inviting spots at the Artisan – guests enjoy rooms

with free Wi-Fi, done in a soothing palette of neutrals, and everyone can stop in at Caffè Artisan for breakfast, or the newest Tuscan Kitchen location for dinner.

“Salem needed a place like this – an upscale and sophisticated destination that adds a new dimension to the town,” says owner Joe Faro. “There’s nothing quite like it in the area.”

Indeed, the hotel is just one more piece of Faro’s vision of building a destination for tourists, locals, daytrippers, and anyone else drawn to its dynamic offerings. The property is steps away from Tuscan Market – a trattoria-style restaurant and Italian specialty shop serving salads and pasta and selling everything from a carefully chosen selection of wine to cheese, bread, and handmade pasta to-go. The attached cooking school offers classes many nights a week – you can learn to make the perfect calzone, pumpkin gnocchi, and even mozzarella cheese. And the adjacent outdoor beer garden hosts lawn games and summer concerts.



Not to mention an L.L. Bean, a Williams-Sonoma, and a growing roster of other shops. The 3.8-million-square-foot mixed-use super-regional destination also boasts more than 1,200 luxury residences, and a state-of-the-art life science campus space, in the midst of a pedestrian-centric development featuring outdoor gathering spaces with firepits, a panoramic lake, walking trails, and a Grand Lawn.

Perhaps it's this package of amenities that enabled the new hotel to join Marriott's Tribute Portfolio, a growing global family of independent hotels with a shared passion for captivating design and a drive to create vibrant social scenes for guests and locals alike. The intent is for the Tribute brand to represent spots that build community while focusing on individuality and offering travelers a fresh, often colorful, perspective – the Artisan joins nearly 100 hotels found everywhere from Cartagena to Singapore.

That mission aligns well with Faro's plans. "My vision for The Artisan Hotel is to create a place that transforms Salem into a bustling hub for locals and visitors alike," he says. "We've injected a fresh, vibrant energy into this town, and The Artisan Hotel is a testament to that vision coming to life."

17 Via Toscana, Salem, N.N., 603-912-8450, theartisanhotelattuscanvillage.com

Proposed police station would meet Salem's needs

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Dec 12, 2023



A rendering of a proposed police station in Salem. Courtesy Salem Police Department

SALEM, N.H. — Town officials continue to develop a plan to garner support on a \$38 million police station, which could be on next year's ballot.

The town wants to build a modern police station to replace the aging one at 9 Veterans Memorial Parkway.

The Board of Selectmen approved spending American Rescue Plan Act funds on a conceptual design in April. A rendering of the station's front has been completed as part of the design plan.

The new police station is projected to be a two-story, 40,537 square-foot building with ample space to meet the needs of a growing staff. The square footage includes a training area in the back and six bays for storage and a kennel.

Police Chief Joel Dolan said the main goal in replacing the building and its many additions and trailers is to increase space for the department's staff to efficiently do their jobs.

The police department has outgrown its station, which was originally built in the 1960s.

"All we have done is add on to it," Salem Assistant Town Manager Joe Devine said.

The Salem School District has succeeded in improving the town's schools. Now, it's time for the town to do the same for municipal buildings, he said.

"We know our infrastructure is important," Devine said. "We have a lot of projects in the future."

Since joining the town in 2022, Devine has worked with the Municipal Buildings Advisory Committee to address the needs of the town's buildings. The police department's concerns for a new station have been at the forefront of discussions and why the project has failed in the past.

Deficiencies can be found throughout the police station. Trailers, which house the investigative division, are failing and in constant need of repairs. There is mold, leaking roofs and ventilation issues. Female officers do not have a designated locker room.

The station is also not ADA compliant.

A new station would feature a community room for police training. Dolan said the room would also be available for community and civic meetings, which is something the town lacks.

Other features include increased evidence storage space and eliminate the need for storage sheds outside. There will also be dedicated areas to interview victims, witnesses and suspects and an appropriate locker room for male and female officers among other amenities like a multipurpose tactical training area..

Dolan said a new station will allow Animal Control and the town kennel to be onsite instead of the old wastewater treatment land it is on.

Devine said the town will coordinate with Salem schools to hold informational meetings for residents.

Residents have had a chance to schedule tours to see the condition of the station. Those interested in a tour can sign-up for one through the town's website.

Devine hopes upcoming sessions and tours will allow residents to not only ask questions, but understand the necessity for this major upgrade.

"Obviously, the price tag is going to be scary, but unfortunately we weren't successful in the past when it would have been less expensive," Devine said. "But we can't kick the can anymore."

Chamber unveils mural celebrating racetrack

Eagle Tribune | Dec 12, 2023



The Southern New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce recently helped unveil a new mural at the Mall at Rockingham Park in Salem. Courtesy photo

SALEM, N.H. — The Southern New Hampshire Chamber of Commerce recently celebrated a mural unveiling at The Mall at Rockingham Park, 99 Rockingham Park Blvd.

The mural is a nod to the Rockingham Park Racetrack and the history of the mall property. It was created by a group called Positive Street Art, based in Nashua. The artists were Yvan Quiroz, Christian Ramirez and Munuel Phelany Ramirez.

The mission of Positive Street Art is to inspire a passion for the urban arts in a productive way and to build strong communities through educational workshops, community events and artistic services.

The mall's newest mural can be found on a large barricade in the center, lower level of the mall located between Macy's and Starbucks.

Tuscan Village sets First Night celebrations

By Angelina Berube | aberube@eagletribune.com

Dec 28, 2023



The Artisan Hotel at Tuscan Village will host New Year's Eve celebrations as its first big public events since opening in October. Courtesy photo

SALEM, N.H. — Tuscan Village is preparing to ring in the New Year in style with a full day of events and the first big celebratory events held at their Artisan Hotel on Sunday, Dec. 31 on Via Toscana.

“New Year’s Eve is a time for celebration, and we want Salem, New Hampshire, to be a destination where people come to enjoy a spectacular celebration,” Tuscan Village Master Development owner Joe Faro said in an email. “Our goal is to make Tuscan Village the go-to place for a memorable New Year’s Eve experience.”

The Artisan Hotel will host a handful of New Year's Eve festivities to celebrate its first ball drop since opening this fall, including a dueling piano dinner show starting at 6 p.m. in The Grand Ballroom.

Attendees will take in the music while dining on appetizers, a fresh raw bar, three-course meal, dessert bar and late night snacks. Tickets are \$200 per person and the event ends at 12:30 a.m.

The hotel's rooftop bar gets in on the fun with its own "Sky High Soiree" beginning at 7 p.m. until 1:30 a.m.

The event is for adults 21 years old and older and tickets cost \$175.

Those at the event have exclusive rooftop access all night in addition to snacks, dinner and a welcome drink.

"From the Sky High Soiree on the rooftop bar to the lively dueling pianos show we have in the ballroom inside The Artisan Hotel, we're creating an atmosphere of joy and excitement," Faro said.

There are free activities and live music for people to enjoy around the expansive property.

The day serve as the season's end for the "Holiday Shoppes." Vendors will be on hand for last minute gifts and snacks while children can enjoy fried dough and rides on the carousel.

Live music is planned at Lake Park from 6 p.m. to midnight with varying artists and disc jockeys.

Fireworks are set to cap off the night and shoot over Lake Park.

"We've added the midnight fireworks to ensure that the night is not just special, but truly magical," Faro said. "We invite everyone to join us in welcoming the new year with enthusiasm and joy."