

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

December 22, 2012

Popeyes to open in Salem next week

By *Alex Lippa*

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— — — SALEM, N.H. — Where one fried chicken fast food chain once stood another soon will take its place.

Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen is moving into the space previously occupied by Kentucky Fried Chicken at 481 South Broadway. The 46-seat restaurant is scheduled to open on Dec. 29.

“We are very happy to see these types of projects,” planning director Ross Moldoff said. “They are spending money and investing in the community.”

The Salem location will be the only Popeyes in the state. Previously, there were locations in Manchester and Nashua, which closed more than a decade ago.

“New Hampshire was in our plans from the start,” said Rob Parsons, a franchisee from Synergy Dining. “When we entered the Boston market, places like Manchester, Nashua and Salem were on our radar.”

Parsons owns five Popeyes franchises in Massachusetts and said they have been among some of the most successful chains in the nation. He expects that to continue in Salem.

“The demographics of Salem and of the surrounding trade area are ideal for Popeyes,” Parsons said. “Not only do we get Salem, but Lawrence, Methuen and Haverhill all use Salem as a market.”

Popeyes applied for and received permits for the location last month.

The restaurant will be undergoing minor changes on the outside and substantial renovations to the inside.

The demand for a Popeyes in New Hampshire has been evident. A Facebook page, created more than two years ago with the title “Bring Popeyes Chicken to New Hampshire,” has had local users posting pictures and updates as the opening draws closer.

“It’s almost cult-like, the following of it.” Parsons said. “People are passionate about this brand. I run into people who remember where they were located in New Hampshire over 20 years ago.”

Although the KFC shut its doors earlier this year, he said he doesn’t believe Popeyes will have a similar fate.

“I don’t believe this location failed,” Parsons said. “I believe the previous owner failed at this location. We are confident in the brand and in our food.”

Moldoff said he's happy to see commercial property reused.

"For the town, it is a good sign about the economy," Moldoff said. "We encourage reutilizing older commercial properties. We've seen quite a bit of that this year."

Since Popeyes was moving into a space previously occupied by a restaurant, it made obtaining permits much easier for them.

"If they wanted to go into a retail space, they would have needed to go through the planning board," Moldoff said.

"This site was designed to handle Popeyes' needs in terms of parking and circulation."

Popeyes operates more than 2,000 restaurants worldwide.

In addition to chicken, the menu also features fried seafood and jambalaya.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

December 21, 2012

Longtime Salem official retires

By Doug Ireland

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— SALEM — Sam Zannini has had a lot of titles and helped a lot of people in his 36 years at Town Hall.

But, most of all, he's made a lot of friends.

Approximately 30 people packed the Knightly Meeting Room at Town Hall on Monday night — with most coming to the Board of Selectmen meeting to pay tribute to Salem's retiring chief building official.

Yesterday afternoon, the 66-year-old Zannini was honored again by approximately 35 fellow employees, friends and family members during a retirement party at Town Hall.

"I'm enjoying it; it's overwhelming," he said. "I never thought this day would come."

Over the years, Zannini has also served as health officer, code enforcement officer and plumbing inspector, to name a few. He's led the town's Building Department for many years.

Zannini's last day on the job is Dec. 31, but don't expect him to be sitting around the house after next week.

Zannini will continue to remain active in law enforcement. He's a part-time police officer with the Salem Police Department and a deputy with the Rockingham County Sheriff's Department — something he has done for more than 30 years.

"I like to stay active," he said.

He also plans to return to Town Hall to help as needed and to regularly visit those he's worked with over the years.

"I will come back," Zannini said. "I'm going to miss the people."

Zannini is, indeed, a true people person, according to town planner Ross Moldoff, who has worked with him for 29 years.

While most people cringe when a town official comes to deliver a violation notice, that was hardly ever the case with Zannini, Moldoff said yesterday.

“One thing that stands out is that Sam has a personality and a demeanor,” Moldoff said. “Sam could hand you a violation notice and by the time he was done talking to you, he would convince you he was doing you a favor.”

That’s because Zannini would help save them from worse, more costly problems if their code violations weren’t addressed.

“He always tried very hard to compromise and help people out,” Moldoff said.

Zannini admitted that many people would actually thank him for giving them a summons instead of becoming angry.

Those who packed Town Hall on Monday night had nothing but praise for the longtime official, including state representative and Zoning Board of Adjustment Chairman Gary Azarian.

“A grateful community thanks you for your service and dedication to the town,” he said. “You are an asset that will be truly missed by all of the community.”

Board of Selectmen Chairman Patrick Hargreaves presented Zannini with a plaque to thank him for his service.

Zannini will not be replaced because Town Manager Keith Hickey eliminated the position from the town budget. His responsibilities will be handled by a part-time building inspector.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

December 19, 2012

Temple of Witchcraft receives approval

By Doug Ireland

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— SALEM — The Temple of Witchcraft has received final approval to expand its operations on North Policy Street, despite opposition from neighbors.

The Planning Board voted unanimously last week to grant the nonprofit organization the permission it needs to relocate from 2 Main St. to a two-story building at 49 N. Policy St.

Neighbors have voiced concern about the increased traffic and noise the project could generate, but not the classes in witchcraft and neopaganism being taught in the former 19th-century home. Some also expressed concern about lighting and a 16-car parking lot to be built on the property.

Temple of Witchcraft co-founder and minister Steve Kenson has said classes in witchcraft would be taught on the first floor and the second floor would be home to three of the organization's ministers. The temple purchased the property in September for \$420,000.

The temple has about 100 to 150 local members, and approximately 300 to 400 worldwide, according to Kenson. Many take the organization's online courses, he said.

Several residents approached the board at public hearings in November and on Dec. 11 to oppose the proposal, according to Planning Board Chairman Robert Campbell. The board approved the proposal last week after being satisfied with the final engineering report and minor conditions met by temple representatives.

A traffic study concluded the temple would generate little additional traffic, but residents are concerned there is already too much congestion, Campbell said. The property is near Canobie Lake Park, which attracts thousands of visitors daily during the summer months.

Christine Davis, a North Policy Street resident with four children, said she doesn't want the additional traffic, noise and a 16-space parking lot to be built next to her home.

"I don't have a problem with their study of witchcraft, it's with the traffic and everything else," Davis said.

She voiced concern about lights from the temple shining on her home and its use seven days a week until 10 p.m., saying it would keep her children awake at night.

Campbell said one condition of approval was that the lights be moved so they didn't bother abutters.

North Policy Street resident Gene Bryant said he is worried the temple would become a distraction in his neighborhood. He questioned whether it's truly a religious organization deserving of a zoning exemption to locate there.

Campbell said the organization meets the proper criteria and the board could not base its decision on the group's religious teachings.

"The Planning Board isn't in a position to make a judgment on that," he said.

Kenson has said neighbors have no reason to worry. He said the "nature-based" organization has been in Salem for two years and holds peaceful rituals on a regular basis at the Masonic Temple.

"They have absolutely nothing to be afraid of," he said. "We're certainly not a threat to anyone. We believe very strongly that our practice isn't for everyone."

Project engineer David Jordan said the organization was pleased to receive approval. He did know when the expansion would begin.

Jordan said some residents are more concerned about future projects considered for the property, including possible use of a barn and construction of another building. Those uses would require further town approval, he said.

But those are just ideas at this point and nothing definite, Jordan said.

"Right now, it's just dreams and planning," he said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

November 21, 2012

Police: Jilted lover falsely IDs rival man as bank robber

Officer traces tip to accuser's cell phone, according to report

By Shawn Regan

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---- — HAVERHILL — A New Hampshire man is accused of calling police and falsely identifying another man as the person who robbed a bank last week in Haverhill.

Investigators said Anthony Drago, 47, 48 Theresa Ave., Salem, gave the bad information on the Police Department's tip line because he was part of a "love triangle." He is angry that a woman he had a relationship with is now living with her former boyfriend — the man Drago identified as the robber, police said.

Detectives said they were able to charge Drago after tracing the false tip to his cell phone.

Drago was arraigned in Haverhill District Court yesterday on a charge of obstructing a police investigation. Police said he called the Haverhill Police Department's tip line to falsely identify Joseph Jennings Jr., 43, of Plaistow as the perpetrator of last Friday's Sovereign Bank robbery.

Police said Drago left them a voice message stating the bank was robbed by Jennings. The tip said officers would find a black ski mask and knife used in the robbery at the Plaistow property where Jennings and his girlfriend live, police said. The tip said the items were in a garage on the property, police said.

Police said they eventually determined the information was not true, however. They said they easily traced the call back to Drago because he used his cell phone to make it.

Police reports said Drago had a short romantic relationship with Jennings' girlfriend while Jennings was incarcerated at Middleton jail, but that Jennings moved back in with the woman after he was released a few months ago. The reports said both men have filed various complaints against each other with Salem police in recent months — Jennings claiming Drago stole his hunting equipment and Drago claiming Jennings threatened him with violence.

Haverhill Detective Carl Rogers said he and another officer went to see Jennings after police received the phone tip about the bank robber. Rogers said they determined Jennings had nothing to do with the robbery after searching the garage and then reviewing Jennings' automobile and body for ink marks from the stolen money bags.

According to police reports, Jennings' girlfriend told officers she was romantically involved with Drago for a short time while Jennings was in jail, and that Drago begged her not to renew her relationship with

Jennings. Police said the girlfriend told them Drago sent her more than 100 text messages stating how much he loves her and that he is better for her than Jennings. Police said Jennings and the woman tried to obtain restraining orders against Drago in New Hampshire courts, but were denied.

“It appears the whole thing was a setup by Drago to harass Joe Jennings,” Rogers wrote in his report.

Last Friday afternoon’s bank robbery happened when a man wearing a mask used a knife to threaten a teller and got away with an undisclosed amount of cash from the bank, located just outside Monument Square. Police searched the area but did not find the man. No one has been charged.

Rogers said that when he called Drago’s cell phone, Drago answered and initially denied calling the Police Department tip line. Drago eventually admitted to making the call, but said he thought the tip line was anonymous, police said. Drago told police he hoped Jennings doesn’t find out about the phone call.

Rogers said Drago refused his request to voluntarily come to the Haverhill police station to speak to officers about the matter. As a result, police arrested Drago yesterday on a fugitive warrant and had him transported from New Hampshire to Haverhill District Court.

At yesterday’s arraignment, Assistant District Attorney John DePaulo told Judge Stephen Abany that police wasted several days investigating the phony information given in the phone tip.

“Officers from Haverhill and Salem spent four days investigating the wrong man over a love triangle,” DePaulo said.

Rogers said Haverhill police take the tip line very seriously and are offended by what happened.

“He used the Haverhill Police Department to harass a person who he has a beef with,” Rogers told the judge.

DePaulo pushed for \$10,000 cash bail, but Abany set it at \$2,000 and scheduled a Dec. 21 date to continue the case.

Drago covered his face with his hands and shook his head during most of the arraignment.

Drago’s court-appointed lawyer, David Stuehr, said his client has a minor criminal record, including three cases that were dismissed and a run-in with the Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife Department in 1996. Stuehr said Drago has lived in the area his entire life and that he is a sheet metal worker at Raytheon in Andover.

Drago faces up to two and a half years in jail if convicted in district court, but prosecutors said the case could be moved to superior court, where he would face a maximum penalty of five years in state prison.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

November 14, 2012

Salem OKs Hindu temple

Hindu center OK'd; witchcraft move pending

By Doug Ireland direland@eagletribune.com

The Eagle-Tribune

— — — SALEM — Construction of a Hindu temple will begin next spring on Lowell Road, but the Temple of Witchcraft's proposed move awaits approval.

Both projects have raised the ire of neighbors, concerned about increased traffic and noise.

Residents opposed the two proposals during public hearings Tuesday before the town Planning Board. The board approved the Hindu temple, but is awaiting an engineering report for the Temple of Witchcraft.

Engineer David Jordan is handling both projects. He said his client, Dr. Deepak Sharma, expects to begin construction of the Hindu temple in the spring.

Abutters of the proposed 17,000-square-foot temple have objected to its size, saying the additional traffic it would attract will disrupt their quiet neighborhood.

Neighbors also opposed the building height. The Zoning Board of Adjustment granted a variance in May that allowed the temple to be 45 feet high — 10 feet higher than zoning allowed. Spires on the roof would be 77 feet high — compared to the maximum height of 80 feet for a steeple.

Residents first voiced disapproval at two public hearings last spring, winning their quest for a rehearing. But the ZBA's decision was upheld. Three people objected to the Hindu temple Tuesday, Jordan said.

Jordan and Steve Kenson, Temple of Witchcraft co-founder and minister, said they are confident it will only be a matter of time before the temple receives approval to move from its current home at 2 Main St. to a two-story, 19th-century home at 49 N. Policy St.

The temple's leaders want to use the first floor to teach classes in witchcraft; the second floor would be home to three of the organization's ministers, Kenson said.

The group's teachings are based on neopaganism, Kenson said. The temple has about 100 to 150 local members, and approximately 300 to 400 worldwide, he said. Many take the organization's online courses.

The organization is seeking preliminary site plan approval, but action on the plan was delayed pending completion of an engineering report and the resolution of issues that include making sure proper screening is provided, according to Jordan and Planning Board Chairman Robert Campbell.

But five North Policy Street residents spoke against the project Tuesday, citing its overall impact on the neighborhood and whether it could be considered a church, which is a permitted use.

They include former Planning Board member Gene Bryant, who is worried the temple will become a distraction in his neighborhood. He questions whether it is truly a religious organization deserving of a zoning exemption.

“I challenged their right to the waiver,” Bryant said yesterday. “Are they really a church?”

Christine Davis, a mother of four, said she doesn’t object to the nonprofit group’s beliefs. But she doesn’t want the additional traffic, noise and an 18-space parking lot to be built next to her home.

The organization would renovate and use a barn on the 5-acre property, Kenson said. The house was last used as a private residence before the group purchased it in September for \$420,000.

“I don’t have a problem with their study of witchcraft, it’s with the traffic and everything else,” Davis said.

She said she is concerned lights from the parking lot and use of the temple seven days a week until 10 p.m. will keep her children awake at night — never mind more cars driving past her home.

When the project was first proposed last month, Selectman Everett McBride Jr. said he received a few emails from people who worried about having the Temple of Witchcraft in their neighborhood.

Kenson, who could not be reached for comment yesterday, has said neighbors have no reason to worry. He said the “nature-based” organization has been in Salem for two years and holds peaceful rituals on a regular basis at the Masonic Temple, he said.

“They have absolutely nothing to be afraid of,” Kenson said. “We’re certainly not a threat to anyone. We believe very strongly that our practice isn’t for everyone.”

Campbell said the proposal could be back before Planning Board as early as December.



More Fidelity loot heads for N.H. New building for group managing Johnsons' wealth

By Greg Turner | Wednesday, November 14, 2012 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | Real Estate

The secretive business that manages billions for Fidelity Investments' controlling shareholders plans to expand in Salem, N.H., with new offices in a secluded setting just north of the Massachusetts border.

The project calls for a three-story office building with about 200 employees located on a wooded site near Interstate 93, according to documents filed Friday with town planners.

"We like the area and we are just exploring future opportunities for the Crosby Group," said managing director Geoffrey von Kuhn in a statement yesterday.

The Crosby operation quietly relocated from Fidelity's downtown Boston headquarters in late 2010 to take advantage of New Hampshire's favorable trust laws. From its rented space in a nondescript office building on Keewaydin Drive, the firm manages the personal wealth of Fidelity Chairman Ned Johnson and his extended family.



Photo by Patrick Whittemore

Privately held Fidelity has a growing campus about 20 miles away in Merrimack, N.H., but spokeswoman Anne Crowley stressed the Salem office "is not a Fidelity project."

Crosby represents an expanding business for Salem, but the project would actually supersede the landowner's previously approved plans to extend Keewaydin Drive and build a major corporate park that could create 875 jobs.

By comparison, Crosby's plan would consolidate three lots and place a single, 75,000-square-foot building on 50 acres — with less than a quarter of that estimated job growth.

Last year, the town of Salem secured a special state designation for the land deeming it an "economic revitalization zone" where expanding businesses can be rewarded with tax credits of up to \$200,000.

"Certainly the more jobs we're able to create, the better off everyone is, but at the same time we're hoping (the project) will be a stimulant for additional economic development," said Salem town manager Keith Hickey.

The project faces a review by Salem's Planning Board. Landowner Robert Hannon, a radiologist with offices nearby, could not be reached for comment.

According to plans filed by a Crosby affiliate, the new building would sit on the edge of a hill and avoid wetlands, "taking advantage of views to the south across Porcupine Brook."

"I've been told that this project is one where security will be paramount ... so they don't want the road to go through," said Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director. "It's very private."

The site is adjacent to a former Furniture World warehouse store that another Crosby affiliate bought for \$6.4 million in 2007. The use for that building, just visible beyond a security gate, is unclear.

Article URL: http://www.bostonherald.com/business/real_estate/view.bg?articleid=1061174605

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

November 5, 2012

Temple of Witchcraft move concerns some

By Doug Ireland direland@eagletribune.com

The Eagle-Tribune

----- SALEM — Some may have thought it was a Halloween joke last week when they were invited to the Temple of Witchcraft for an open house.

It was no joke.

The Salem-based nonprofit organization is seeking Planning Board approval to relocate from its current home at 2 Main St. to a two-story, 19th-century home at 49 N. Policy St.

Representatives from the religious group are scheduled to go before the board Nov. 13 for preliminary site plan approval, according to planning director Ross Moldoff.

The temple wants to use the first floor to teach classes in witchcraft while the second floor would be home to three of the organization's dozen ministers, according to co-founder and minister Steve Kenson.

Its teachings are based on neopaganism, he said.

“The work of the temple is both other-worldly and terrestrial, seeking to strengthen the connections between spirit and matter through inner transformation and public service,” the group says on its website, templeofwitchcraft.org.

The organization would renovate and use a barn on the five-acre property. The house was last used as a residence before the group purchased it in September for \$420,000.

Approval is also needed for a proposed 18-space parking lot, Kenson said.

Selectman Everett McBride Jr. said he's received a few emails from people who are worried about having the Temple of Witchcraft in their neighborhood. He has asked Town Manager Keith Hickey to look into the proposal.

“The neighbors are nervous,” McBride said.

Kenson said the neighbors have nothing to worry about. He said the “nature-based” organization has been in Salem for two years, renting office space at 2 Main St. It holds peaceful rituals on a regular basis at the Masonic Temple, he said.

“They have absolutely nothing to be afraid of,” Kenson said. “We’re certainly not a threat to anyone. We believe very strongly that our practice isn’t for everyone.”

The Temple of Witchcraft has about 100 to 150 local members, and approximately 300 to 400 total world-wide, Kenson said. Many take the organization's online courses.

"We've been looking for office space," he said. "We've been growing very quickly."

Neighbors don't have to worry about dark spells being cast upon them or objects suddenly soaring through the air, Kenson said.

The group's teachings aren't something you will see in a Harry Potter book, he said.

"It's not really much like Harry Potter," he said. "We don't believe in what in some people refer to as dark magic."

Prayer is a very important part of the organization's practice, he said.

To help dispell the misconceptions, the temple held an open house at the proposed site on Halloween, distributing fliers to neighbors to give them a chance to learn about the organization and its teachings.

Only five people showed up. Some asked if they were handing out Halloween candy, which they did, Kenson said.

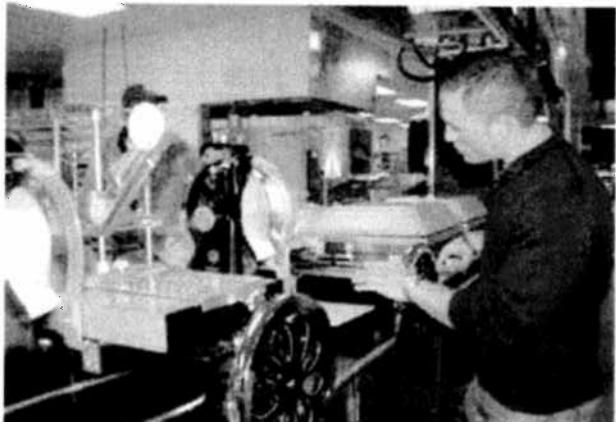
It didn't help that the open house was scheduled only two days after Hurricane Sandy hit the area, knocking out electricity to more than 7,300 residents in Salem.

Moldoff and Kenson said they don't anticipate the proposal to encounter any obstacles. The temple is a permitted use in that area, Moldoff said.

Kenson said the organization is working with the town to make sure it meets all requirements. He said he welcomes questions from residents who don't understand their religion or would like to learn more about it.

Moldoff and Hickey said they weren't aware of any complaints or concerns about the organization in the two years it has been on Main Street.

Experience Italian village shopping in Salem



Owner Joe Faro in Tuscan Market. A grand opening is scheduled for Nov. 3 in Salem. JULIE HANSON /Union Leader Correspondent

People craving a taste of Italy won't have far to travel after the Tuscan Market opens its doors next month.

By JULIE HANSON

Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — People craving a taste of Italy won't have far to travel after the Tuscan Market opens its doors later this week. The 10,000-square-foot indoor marketplace offers customers authentic Italian food made from scratch.

"You really have to go to New York City or Italy to find something like this," owner Joe Faro said. The market is opening next to Faro's Tuscan Kitchen restaurant, located at 67 Main St.

Patrons will feel as if they wandered into the marketplace of an Italian village as they pass through a cobblestone piazza with a working water fountain and a pergola with columns. Gelato is spun daily in the market's 66-seat café, which also offers Wi-Fi and flat-screen televisions. Patio seating is available for lunch or late afternoon visits, but many will choose to take in the sights and sounds of the bustling indoor market.

"It's a unique environment because you get to watch everything being made," Faro said.

Baked bread, homemade pizza, handmade pasta and sauces and panini are made in front of guests. The main bread product takes two days to make because of its long fermenting process.

"It's an Old-World artisan bread process," Faro said.

Cooks will find an assortment of ingredients from various regions throughout Italy, including specialty oils and sauces, olive oils, balsamic vinegar, imported cured meats and cheeses, fresh in-season produce, espresso and desserts. To complement the meal, shoppers can choose from more than 3,000 bottles of imported wine.

Tuscan Market is Faro's way of sharing his passion. His parents emigrated from Sicily in the 1950s, and the family maintains a home there. Faro grew up making and eating authentic Italian dishes. "Everything in here I understand," he said.

The family has been in the food business for more than 25 years. Faro founded Joseph's Gourmet Pasta and Sauce in Haverhill, Mass. His sister owns Joseph's Trattoria Bakery and Café in Bradford, Mass.

Having family in the business makes it fun, Faro said. "We all have different businesses, but we all have passion for food."

Faro's passion led him to open Tuscan Kitchen in November 2010. The restaurant offers a regional Italian menu in an intimate dining atmosphere. Three private dining rooms and an extensive wine cellar enhance the experience and make the restaurant a local favorite.

"I couldn't have hoped for it to be any more well-received than it has been," Faro said. "Our guests are incredible."

Turning his attention to creating Tuscan Market, Faro was not deterred by the slow economy. Planning the market took about 18 months, he said.

“Recession or no recession, I think people want a good product and want something different,” Faro said. “I don’t think it’s a risk at all.”

The “something different” that Tuscan Market offers is authentic Italian meats, pastas, breads and pastries made from scratch and the opportunity to learn more about Italian cuisine. Tuscan Brand’s Corporate Executive Chef Edward Payne will lead cooking demonstrations and classes at the Tuscan Market’s Scuola Culinaria.

The Tuscan Market grand opening event, hosted by Boston radio and TV host Billy Costa, presents an opportunity to meet food vendors and learn some tips of the trade. The event is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 3.

Tuscan Market will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday; and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Julie Hanson may be reached at Jhanson@newstote.com.

William Valentine Park Becomes A Reality

by S. Aaron Shamshoyan

A memorial park, dedicated to a man who loved the Spicket River, now sits on the river's bank in place of an abandon house.

The park, located on Lawrence Road, began about three years ago when the Conservation Commission purchased the property, then containing a house, to use as a flood plane area. The house was often flooded by the river, making it uninhabitable. The house was demolished before crews began work to replace the Lawrence Road Bridge.

Conservation Commission President Bill Dumont said plans were to use the area as flood plane, but decided it would make a great location for the memorial when approached by Scout Brian Picarillo.

Looking to become an Eagle Scout, Picarillo needed to complete a project to become eligible. "A lot of people donated," he said. Picarillo personally donated over 120 hours of labor into the project.

Featuring a bench, picnic tables, and an

informational kiosk, the park over looking the Spicket, Picarillo received many donations for the project, and raised additional money from a car wash.

Commission member Tom Campbell said Valentine loved the river. "The thing that always drove Bill was protecting the river," he said. George Jones, a friend of Valentine, said they served together on various conservation groups. "His passion for clean water and water recreation extended far beyond Salem," Jones said. The two had worked to help clean the Merrimac River also. "Bill loved clean water," he said.

Jones also noted Valentine's recreational use of water. "If he loved anything more, it was his canoe," Jones said Valentine would love to see the Park.

Over 50 people attended the ribbon cutting held Saturday morning, including members of the Conservation Commission, and friends of Valentine's.



Staff photo by S. Aaron Shamshoyan

Brian Picarillo explains information posted in the park's kiosk to other members in his troop.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

September 19, 2012

Scout creates park to honor Salem official

Scout develops park in commissioner's memory

By Doug Ireland direland@eagletribune.com,
The Eagle-Tribune

— SALEM — Former Conservation Commission member William Valentine was an avid outdoorsman who loved to canoe and kayak.

His life was cut short when he suffered a heart attack and died in March 2007. He was 59.

Valentine's love for the town and the outdoors will be remembered Sept. 29 when a new park along the Spicket River is dedicated in his memory.

But if it were not for the dozens of hours of work by 17-year-old Dean Avenue resident Brian Picarillo, fellow Boy Scouts and other volunteers, the William R. Valentine Memorial Park would not have become a reality.

Picarillo, a student at Phillips Andover Academy, took on the endeavor as his Eagle Scout project. He approached Salem officials about putting a boat launch at the Lawrence Road site, which is less than an acre.

“It was just an empty lot of land,” Picarillo said.

But regulatory obstacles, including the state approval needed to remove several trees, made it difficult to undertake such a project, Conservation Commission Chairman William Dumont said.

It was decided that cr

eating a park in memory of Valentine would be a better idea. But it was going to cost money.

Picarillo sought donations and organized a car wash at the Knights of Columbus, raising \$800 for the project.

Then Picarillo and the Scouts from Troop 267 went to work, turning the unused town-owned property into a beautifully landscaped park. They brought in picnic tables,

put up a sign, installed a bench with Valentine's name, and created a kiosk with details about Valentine and watershed conservation.

Picarillo, who never knew Valentine, said he learned a lot from the project, including the importance of teamwork and the need for careful planning to accomplish a major task.

But, most of all, he learned about helping others. He also consulted with Valentine's widow, Kathryn.

"She was real excited and thankful for what I was doing," he said. "It was fun giving back (to the community),"

Kathryn Valentine said her husband would have loved the park. She praised Picarillo for his work.

"I think he's done a great job," Kathryn Valentine said.

She said it was especially appropriate that the park was created along the Spicket since her husband loved kayaking.

"That was a passion of his," she said.

The father of three was a senior programs manager for SI2 Technologies in Billerica, Mass. He enjoyed camping, skiing and ham radios, his wife said. Valentine was a member of the Merrimack River Watershed Council.

Dumont and Salem town planner Ross Moldoff also lauded the 11-year Scout's work.

"It has turned into a nice little park," Dumont said. "Brian has done a lot of work out there. I really like what he has done."

Moldoff, who knew Valentine for many years, said he served on the Conservation Commission for about a decade.

"He was a very nice guy and a big enthusiast for outdoor recreation," Moldoff said. "This will be great for the family and people who just want to sit out and look at the river."

Picarillo is the son of Steven Picarillo and Tina Coco. The dedication ceremony at the park, 114 Lawrence Road, begins at 8:30 a.m.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

September 17, 2012

Salem board OKs new ride at Canobie

By Doug Ireland

direland@eagletribune.com

— — — SALEM — Canobie Lake Park has been granted town approval for its newest attraction.

The Equinox — an amusement that spins and swings riders 75 feet up into the sky — will make its debut in October, according to park spokesman Chris Nicoli.

The Planning Board voted unanimously Thursday to allow the park to operate the ride, town planner Ross Moldoff said.

“It was one of the quickest decisions,” Moldoff said. “There were no abutters there and no issues.”

The board considered whether there would be traffic or noise problems, but was satisfied with the park’s application, Moldoff said.

Nicoli was pleased.

“It went very well and we’re excited,” he said.

The mammoth-sized attraction is now being shipped by boat from London to New York. The goal is to open the ride early next month, before the park closes for the season Oct. 28, Nicoli said.

The Equinox replaces the Matterhorn, a longtime favorite at the park that was retired from use in 2008. A hot dog stand has occupied that spot.

There are 52 rides at the 110-year-old amusement park.

A place to rest



Courtesy Photo

A bench dedicated to the late William Valentine, who was a member of the Salem Conservation Commission, was placed at a small park built at Lawrence Road. The park was the Eagle Scout project of Brian Picarillo.

Dedication

Park on Lawrence Road built in memory of Conservation Commission member

The Salem Conservation Commission announces the dedication of a small park at 114 Lawrence Road, just north of the Spicket River bridge, to honor the memory of William Valentine, a former Conservation Commission member who passed away in 2007.

The park consists of three picnic tables, a memorial bench overlooking the river, a kiosk with information

about Valentine and watershed conservation, and a sign, all constructed by Eagle Scout candidate Brian Picarillo.

Salem Conservation Commission Chairman Bill Dumont said, "Bill Valentine loved to canoe and kayak, so it is fitting that this park in his memory sits next to the Spicket River. We are grateful to Brian for all his work. We know residents will enjoy

the park."

Brian Picarillo said, "I raised the money for this project through a carwash I had at the Knights of Columbus. The Boy Scouts in my troop and my family and my friends helped me with the fundraiser and the project work."

The dedication ceremony will take place on Saturday, Sept. 29, at 8:30 a.m., at 114 Lawrence Road. The public is welcome to attend.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

September 10, 2012

New ride planned at Canobie Lake Park

Canobie seeks approval for new ride

By *Doug Ireland*

direland@eagletribune.com

— — — SALEM — It twists, it twirls and is enough to make you sick to your stomach.

But if thrill seekers and officials at Canobie Lake Park have their way, The Equinox will soon become the park's newest attraction.

Riders will have to hold their hats — and their stomachs — as three large mechanical arms lift them 75 feet up into the sky, spinning and swinging as they go.

“It will be like you are completely gyroscoping in the air,” park spokesman Chris Nicoli said. “When you get off this thing, it’s going to take a while to recover.”

Nicoli said they hope to open the ride next month before the park closes for the season Oct. 28. But first, Canobie needs site plan approval from the town Planning Board.

The board will review the request at its meeting Thursday, according to town planning director Ross Moldoff. He doesn't anticipate any major obstacles to receiving approval.

“It seems like it will be a big enhancement, especially if you are not one who gets queasy easy,” Moldoff joked.

If approved, The Equinox would replace the Matterhorn, a longtime favorite at the park that was retired from use in 2008, Nicoli said. A hot dog stand now occupies that spot, he said.

The Equinox would become the newest ride at the park since the arrival of the popular roller coaster, Untamed, two years ago, Nicoli said. Canobie receives about one new attraction a year, he said.

There are 52 rides at the 110-year-old amusement park.

While Untamed is one of Canobie's most popular rides, the 76-year-old Yankee Cannonball roller coaster is still the favorite, Nicoli said.

When a Hollywood crew descended on the park last month to film “Labor Day,” starring Josh Brolin and Kate Winslet, Brolin and others couldn't resist taking Untamed for a ride.

But the thrill experienced on Untamed is completely different than riding on The Equinox, Nicoli said. He compares The Equinox to the park's Xtreme Frisbee ride, another spinning attraction.

The Equinox, which is portable, is now in London and should be shipped to Canobie in a couple of weeks, Nicoli said. Like Untamed and other new rides at the park, the latest attraction isn't expect to have a negative impact on the neighborhood in terms of increased traffic or noise, he said.

Nicoli would not divulge the price, but said when Canobie learned the ride was available, park officials didn't hesitate.

"When we saw that, we thought, 'We have to get that,'" Nicoli said. "We're really excited."

Nicoli said Canobie tries to constantly upgrade the park.

"We want to continue going strong for another 100 years," he said.

Moldoff said Canobie has been a good neighbor over the years, helping to boost the local economy. No ride has ever failed to receive Planning Board approval, he said.

"It has been a cooperative relationship," he said. "They have been very sensitive to the concerns of the abutting residents."

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

September 6, 2012

Ex-Salem official gets 7-14 years in sex case

Judge: Jeffrey Gray is a 'dangerous person'

By Doug Ireland

direland@eagletribune.com

— BRENTWOOD — Former Salem Planning Board member Jeffrey Gray told a 36-year-old New York woman he only wanted to help her out, paying her airfare and allowing her to live in his home for free.

What the woman didn't realize was that the 50-year-old Windham civil engineer had a fetish for pregnant women and pretending to be a baby. She also didn't realize he would rape her.

Gray, 50, stood quietly before Rockingham Superior Court Judge Marguerite Wageling yesterday as she sentenced him to seven to 14 years in state prison. A jury found him guilty June 19 on single counts of aggravated felonious sexual assault and simple assault.

But the eight-man, four-woman jury acquitted Gray on six other aggravated sexual assault counts and a kidnapping charge.

The victim, who didn't attend the sentencing, testified for several hours over two days during the trial, sobbing at times.

She told how Gary raped her in March 2011 while wearing an adult-sized diaper and acting like a baby. The woman also testified that Gray asked her to pretend to be his mother.

The victim said she was desperate and looking for a new start when Gray answered her Craigslist advertisement seeking an affordable place to live. The Eagle-Tribune does not identify victims of sexual assault.

The woman was seven months pregnant at the time of the assault. The infant died months after birth.

The victim returned to her mother's home in New York midway through the weeklong trial. The defense claimed she lied about being assaulted after Gray asked her to move out when he realized things wouldn't work out between the two.

Wageling told Gray yesterday she believed the victim's testimony, but she had doubts about his and his motive for allowing the woman to live at his lakeside home in Windham.

"I did not find your testimony to be particularly credible," Wageling said. "I didn't believe you were looking for a roommate. I believe you were looking for a pregnant woman to have sex with."

Gray avoided the 10- to 20-year maximum sentence recommended by Deputy County Attorney Thomas Reid. Gray's attorney, public defender Anthony Naro, asked that his client receive three and a half to seven years.

"There are some good people out there willing to help," Reid said. "This isn't that person. What this person was looking for was someone to satisfy his fetish."

He said the victim was too upset to return to New Hampshire for the sentencing.

"She is horrified and devastated by what happened," Reid said.

Naro said Gray was a high school dropout who turned his life around, a 13-year U.S. Army veteran with an honorable discharge who went on to graduate with a bachelor's degree from the University of New Hampshire. He started his own business and was elected to Salem's Planning Board, but resigned following his arrest.

"You have done some things that are good," Wageling said.

But the judge also said Gray was a "dangerous person who should be kept from society for a period of time."

As part of his sentence, Gray must complete a treatment program for sexual offenders and is not allowed to contact the victim.

Gray didn't react as Wageling handed down her sentence, nor when he was led out of the courtroom in his prison uniform and shackles.

After the sentencing, Reid said he still felt Gray deserved the maximum 10 to 20 years. Naro declined to comment.

Gray had been held at the county jail on \$50,000 cash bail since his arrest.

He was the first of three Salem officials to have run-ins with the law since 2011.

Ronald "Tony" Giordano resigned as the town's Zoning Board Chairman following his arrest on drug charges in December. Then, ZBA member Patrick McDougall was charged with obstructing government administration in July.

McDougall's arrest came three weeks after an incident when he allegedly interfered with paramedics and firefighters responding to his home after his wife called 911. He told them his wife, suffering from a severe headache, called them without his knowledge and did not need an ambulance.

McDougall was arrested Friday on three counts of witness tampering and single counts of criminal threatening and disorderly conduct after a confrontation with the town's fire chief.

A stream runs through it



Courtesy Photo

Conservation land purchased from Steve and Linda Gudek includes a stream, woods and upland buffers.

Town buys 16 acres of conservation land

SALEM — The Salem Conservation Commission has acquired a conservation easement on 16 acres of land at 22 Briar Ave.

The easement was purchased from Steve and Linda Gudek. The Gudeks will retain ownership of the land but agreed to restrict any further development, ensuring its preservation as a natural conservation area. The price for the easement was significantly lower than

the assessed value

"This property is fully wooded and contains prime wetlands, a stream and upland buffers," Salem Conservation Commission Chairman Bill Dumont said. "It is next to a larger parcel of town-owned conservation land located behind Lancaster Elementary School on Millville Street. The commission hopes to restore disturbed wetlands and provide flood storage

capacity on the property in the future. We are very grateful to the Gudeks for selling us the easement instead of developing the property for house lots."

The money to purchase the conservation easement came from the Salem Conservation Fund, with no tax impact. Since 1992, the Salem Conservation Commission has preserved more than 100 acres of land using conservation fund money.

7 Salem businesses win gardening awards

SALEM — Seven local businesses will be recognized Tuesday, Aug. 28, as winners of the Salem Garden Club's annual commercial landscaping awards.

The winners are Alek's Auto, South Broadway; CVS Pharmacy, South Broadway; Dunkin' Donuts, Lowell Road; Dr. Azar Korbey's office, Main Street; Penucket Bank, North Broadway; Santo Insurance, Main Street; and T-Bones restaurant, South Broadway.

Other businesses receiving votes include Eastpointe Plaza on Main Street and 20-22 Northwestern Drive. The committee was also impressed with the plantings by Canobie Lake Park on North Policy Street.

The awards, started by longtime club member Doris Flaherty 25 years ago, recognize the contributions of the business community in making the town a more beautiful place to live, work and visit. The awards will be presented at the Salem Planning Board meeting at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

The commercial awards committee is made up of Linda Dobson, Nancy Bernier, Linda LeMay and town planning director Ross Moldoff. They toured commercial sites throughout Salem before selecting the winners.

The businesses were selected for their use of color, texture, and interesting plant materials in creating a beautiful visual display, often in a very small space. Club rules require that previous award winners wait three years before being eligible to win another Salem Garden Club award.

8/17/12
Patrol

Garden Club Commercial Landscaping Awards

submitted by Ross Moldoff

The Salem Garden Club is pleased to announce the 2012 Annual Commercial Landscaping Awards. This award, started by long-standing club member Doris Flaherty 25 years ago, recognizes the contributions of the business community in making Salem a more beautiful place to live, work, and visit. The awards will be presented at the Salem Planning Board meeting on Tuesday, August 28, at 7 p.m., at the Town Hall.

The Commercial Awards Committee, Linda Dobson, Nancy Bernier, Linda LeMay, and Town Planning Director Ross Moldoff, toured commercial sites throughout Salem before selecting the winners.

Seven businesses were selected for their use of color, texture, and interesting plant materials in creating a beautiful visual display, often in a very small space. Club rules require that previous award winners wait three years before being eligible to win another Salem Garden Club award. Winners for 2012 (in alphabetical order) are:

Aleksa Auto - South Broadway
CVS Pharmacy - South Broadway
Dunkin Donuts - Lowell Road
Dr. Azar Korby Office - Main Street
Pentucket Bank - North Broadway
Santo Insurance - Main Street

T-Bones Restaurant - South Broadway

Other businesses receiving votes this year include Eastpointe Plaza on Main Street and 20-22 Northwestern Drive. The Committee was especially impressed with the beautiful plantings by Canobie Lake Park on North Policy Street.



Courtesy photos

*submitted
Success*

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Bob's Discount Furniture Kicks Off Annual 'Ce

submitted by Kelly Whitaker

Bob's Discount Furniture, through its Bob's Outreach program, today announced that it will award \$45,000 in cultural grants to deserving schools across the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states through its seventh annual Celebrate the Arts contest - designed to support and maintain dance, music and the arts in schools. Bob's Outreach is accepting contest entries from August 13 through September 10, and will select nine schools to win \$5,000 grants to support cultural arts programs during the 2012-2013 school year. Each year, Bob's Outreach

selection, the Bob's Outreach Team visits each winning school to award the grant and visit with students and faculty.

Bob's Discount Furniture began the Celebrate the Arts contest in 2006 after observing the scaling back of fine arts programs and cultural arts assemblies across many school districts in the communities it serves. "Cultural arts programs are often the first targets for elimination when schools must make budget cuts," said Cathy Poulin, public relations director, Bob's Discount Furniture. "Bob's

of last year's contest winners. "enabled us to have a local artist our entryway, buy frames for stu and assisted our weeklong celeb reading, which included book gi students and a performance by th Marionettes."

Beginning August 13, applicant contest by filling out a form with t contact information as well as

Business

Business is blooming

Salem Garden Club names Commercial Landscape Award winners

The Salem Garden Club announces the 2012 annual Commercial Landscaping Awards.

This award, started by long-standing club member Doris Flaherty 25 years ago, recognizes the contributions of the business community in making Salem a more beautiful place to live, work and visit. The awards will be presented at the Salem Planning Board meeting on Aug. 28 at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

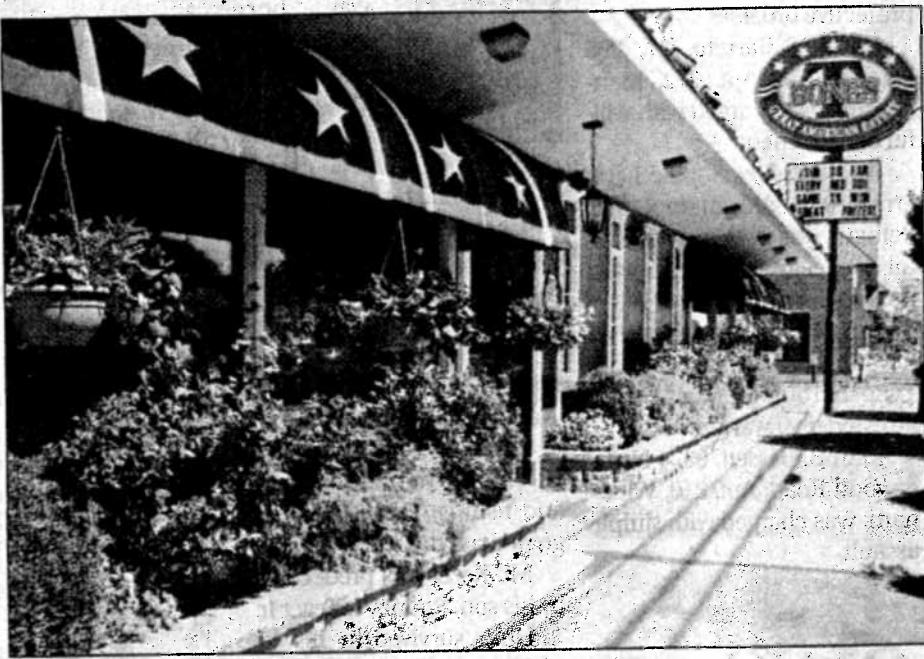
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- Aleksa Auto - South Broadway
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- Santo Insurance - Main Street
- TBones Restaurant - South Broadway

Other businesses receiving votes this year include Eastpointe Plaza on Main Street and 20-22 Northwestern Drive. The committee was especially impressed with the beautiful plantings by Canobie Lake Park on North Policy Street.



Courtesy Photos

The Salem Garden Club will award seven businesses Commercial Landscaping Awards on Aug. 28. Among the businesses chosen are TBones, above; Santo Insurance, bottom left; and Pentucket Bank, bottom right.



EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

August 1, 2012

Salem rail trail may soon be a reality

By Doug Ireland

direland@eagletribune.com

— — — SALEM — The trail has seemed endless for a group of local residents working to establish a bicycle and pedestrian path through town.

But next week, the state's Executive Council is expected to vote on an agreement that could pave the way for the long-awaited, 5.1-mile rail trail in Salem. The project was first proposed more than a decade ago.

That means a historic preservation group, made up of train enthusiasts, can begin removing the old Boston & Maine Railroad tracks, according to David Topham, a member of the Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor. The group has worked for years to help make the rail trail a reality.

The Nevada-based Iron Horse Preservation Society travels around the country and pulls up old track for free. It funds the work by selling the track and equipment to help restore historic railroads.

The Executive Council will vote on the “salvage agreement” when it meets Aug. 8. The deal has been negotiated in conjunction with the state Department of Transportation and the attorney general's office, Topham said.

Salem selectmen voted unanimously this spring to authorize Town Manager Keith Hickey to finalize the details with the state. “We are very optimistic,” Topham said yesterday. “As soon as the ink is dry, Salem will have the OK to bring Iron Horse into town.”

Salem community development director William Scott has said the group would begin removing the track as soon it's given the word.

Topham said his group hoped the work would start this summer, but it may be delayed until fall. They are trying to raise \$30,000 to fund the cost of a required silt barrier, he said. It would prevent silt from contaminating runoff water. “We have had a couple of donors step up, but they are waiting until we have approval,” Topham said.

When the entire project is complete, the rail trail will extend more than 80 miles from Lawrence to Lebanon. Iron Horse removed the old tracks in Methuen this spring, but was forced to halt its work once it reached the state border, Topham said.

The trail also passes through Windham, Derry and Londonderry. The work in Derry is done, it's near completion in Windham, and just in the planning stages in Londonderry. The project is funded through a \$1.27 million federal transportation grant requiring a 20 percent local match.

“The town is basically looking for the funds to come up with the match money,” Topham said. “The money is not coming from the taxpayers.”

Linda Harvey, also a member of the Friends of the Salem Bike-Ped Corridor, has pushed for the project since 1999. She has said she would be glad when work finally begins.

“I will be relieved to see something happening,” Harvey said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

July 31, 2012

Two new ice cream shops open in Salem

Salem adds two new ice cream shops

By Doug Ireland

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— — — SALEM — Some people say you can never have enough ice cream shops.

Not having enough ice cream shops doesn't appear to be a dilemma in Salem. They have that problem licked.

Two new shops have just opened at opposite ends of town — Moo's Place at 15 Ermer Road in North Salem and Jay Gee's at 327 S. Broadway.

They have joined several other ice cream shops in Salem, including Findeisen's Ice Cream and Hawksie's Ice Cream Factory, to name two. But Moo's co-owner Steve Larocca and Richard Giuffrida, one of four brothers who own Jay Gee's, aren't worried about competition.

Both men said they stand behind the reputations they have built up over the years as local producers of homemade ice cream.

Giuffrida and his family have owned and operated Jay Gee's Ice Cream and Family Fun Center in Methuen since 1982.

What better way to celebrate their 30th anniversary than by opening a new shop, he said. It opened two weeks ago.

"The response has been excellent," Giuffrida said. "We've had a warm welcome in New Hampshire."

Larocca and his wife, Christy, bring their business to Salem after successfully running Moo's Place in Derry since 2004.

Although Moo's celebrated its grand opening in Salem on Sunday, it's been selling ice cream at its new shop in North Salem Village since late June, Steve Larocca said.

"We've been up and running," he said.

Both men said when it came time to expand their businesses, they had no hesitation in choosing Salem. Their new locations are seeing plenty of customers, they said.

That was evident yesterday, where some local residents came to cool off with ice cream on a hot summer afternoon.

At Moo's, Jennifer Wilson of Salem and her children, Kaithlyn, 12, Chris, 11, Emily, 8, and Madison, 5, smiled and laughed as they ate their ice cream.

Over at Jay Gee's, Connie and Tim Barnes of Salem enjoyed a cool treat as well.

Both Steve Larocca and Giuffrida said there's room — and enough customers — in Salem or multiple ice cream shops. They're not afraid of competition from the other shops or each other.

"We encourage competition," Giuffrida said. "We think there is room for all of us. I would like to think we can all work together."

Giuffrida operates Jay Gee's along with his brothers, Joseph, Dan and Rob Giuffrida. His son, Jake, and nephew, Joseph, also work for the family business, he said.

Jay Gee's is at the former Hooter's restaurant site. It's also the new home of Jake's Wayback Burgers, which is to open later this month. Jake's is part of a national chain.

Jay Gee's features seven serving windows, as well as a walk-up counter inside, Richard Giuffrida said. The shop serves nearly 70 flavors of ice cream in addition to frozen yogurt and Italian ice.

The new 3,640-square-foot building also includes a large patio with outdoor seating. Giuffrida said they hope to remain open at least through Christmas, selling ice cream and holiday cakes.

Moo's offers more than 40 flavors of ice cream and 24 flavors of soft serve, in addition to frozen yogurt and Italian ice, Steve Larocca said.

The 1,800-square-foot shop has a 20-seat indoor parlor, walk-up window service and outdoor seating with several picnic tables, he said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

July 30, 2012

Salem's Tuscan Kitchen expands

By Doug Ireland

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— — — SALEM — Less than two years after opening his popular Italian restaurant, Tuscan Kitchen owner Joe Faro is expanding his business.

A bakery, market and cafe will soon open behind the large, yellow stucco restaurant building at 67 Main St.

An 8,000-square-foot cobblestone courtyard, or piazza, is also being built to accommodate outdoor events, Faro said.

“There’s quite a bit going on,” Faro said. “There is a ton of exciting stuff on the property.”

Faro, who grew up in Lawrence and lives in Windham, formerly operated Joseph’s Gourmet Pasta and Sauces in Haverhill. He has more than 25 years of experience in the restaurant business.

Work at the site began several weeks ago and is expected to wrap up in October, Faro said.

That work included the demolition of four old buildings to make way for the project. Two weeks ago, an excavator was busy at work, turning the earth to expand the parking lot.

The new 18,800-square-foot Tuscan Market, also bright yellow and stucco, stands at the rear of the property in the former Craftmania building.

Once the project is complete, guests can enjoy a meal at the restaurant, then walk to the market along the rail trail, Faro said. Work on the trail is to begin this summer.

More than 500 different specialties, made with ingredients imported from Italy, will be on sale at the market, he said.

“You can purchase all the foods you can eat at the Tuscan Kitchen to take home,” Faro said.

Walking into the building will be an educational experience in itself, he said.

“You can actually see the chef making bread, the chef making pasta, the chef making desserts,” Faro said.

The cafe will feature couches, flat-screen televisions and approximately 115 seats, including 50 on the outdoor patio, he said.

There's also the piazza, which Faro said will be ideal for outdoor functions. It's expected to open in September, just in time for Tuscan's second annual Toscana Fest.

The festival, a fundraiser for Lazarus House in Lawrence, drew nearly 400 people last year, Faro said.

The restaurant will see an upgrade as well.

Moving the bakery from the restaurant's basement to the newly renovated building frees up space for an elegant, 50-seat, private dining area called The Wine Cellar, Faro said.

Diners will be able to choose from more than 5,000 bottles of wine, he said.

Faro, who declined to say how much the project will cost, is investing in safety improvements at the nearby intersection of Main and Pleasant streets, town planning director Ross Moldoff said.

Moldoff said Faro has helped revitalize the town's Depot area, following in the footsteps of Stephen DeVito.

DeVito, 45, operated a restaurant in the Tuscan Kitchen building until he was killed in a motorcycle accident in June 2008.

Both men came in and offered new hope for the redevelopment of an area that needed help, Moldoff said.

"It's a high-end restaurant," he said of Tuscan Kitchen. "It's not like anything we have seen in the Depot before."

Faro said he's enjoyed his time in Salem, and the restaurant's customer base is steadily growing.

"We are very pleased," he said. "We try to get better every day."

But the key to the restaurant's success, he said, is its artisan Italian cuisine.

"The difference is we make everything from scratch," he said.

Moldoff praised Faro for his work with Tuscan Kitchen and also Tuscan Market. Faro has also proposed mixed-use development for the site, which could include residential, retail and office space.

"For me, it's a lot of fun to work with a guy who has a vision and a persistence to make that vision become a reality," Moldoff said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

July 22, 2012

Local officials' arrests raise question about election vs. appointment

Recent town officials' arrests raise questions about vetting process

By Doug Ireland, direland@eagletribune.com

The Eagle-Tribune

— — — T

he whispering started when former Planning Board member Jeffrey Gray was charged with sexual assault and kidnapping last year.

Then, Zoning Board Chairman Ronald “Tony” Giordano was arrested on drug charges Dec. 30. He later resigned.

By then, former Selectman and Planning Board member Richard Gregory had had enough.

He launched a petition drive to place warrant articles on the Town Meeting ballot to have Planning and ZBA members appointed, not elected. The articles were overwhelmingly defeated by voters in March.

But the recent arrest of Budget Committee and ZBA member Patrick McDougall has again raised the issue of whether these board members should be subject to an interview process and appointed if deemed qualified rather than chosen through popular vote.

“I wish the voters would have voted a different way. I thought if it was ever going to happen, this past March would have been the time,” Gregory said. “Why do people keep electing people like this?”

McDougall, 37, was charged with obstructing government administration July 11 after he allegedly interfered with firefighters and paramedics who responded to his home three weeks earlier after receiving a 911 call from his wife. McDougall told rescue personnel that his wife, suffering from a severe headache, called them without his knowledge and did not need an ambulance.

McDougall said, as her husband, he had the right to refuse treatment for her. He agreed to drive her to the hospital, and later said he couldn’t afford the \$800 ambulance bill.

McDougall claimed he wouldn’t have been arrested if not for the fact he is an outspoken member of the town’s Budget Committee.

Gregory said McDougall’s arrest is just another reason why board members should be appointed. It allows for unsuitable candidates to be weeded out before problems result.

Some say appointed candidates are better screened

Salem selectmen appointed land-use board members until 2006, when voters decided they wanted to elect officials. An effort to reverse that decision was rejected by voters in 2007.

“There’s a vetting process when you have people appointed,” Gregory said. “We’re not doing well in Salem.”

Gregory said Gray, Giordano and McDougall were not qualified to serve and should never have been elected.

Voters often choose candidates because of name recognition, without regard for their experience or personal background, he said.

“It’s a very unfortunate thing, but it’s time for a change,” Gregory said. “I’m baffled by some of the people who run in elections.”

Gregory said he hasn’t decided if he will launch another petition drive to try to change the process.

“I may try it,” he said. “Who knows what else will happen between now and then?”

Zoning Board Chairman Gary Azarian agrees a change is needed. After McDougall was arrested, Azarian said it would be in the town’s best interest if he resigned immediately. McDougall said he had no intention of resigning.

“I know he tries to do his best, but he has had some poor judgment,” Azarian said.

Azarian, who is also a state representative, said the appointment process would allow selectmen to carefully evaluate candidates to determine who would be the most qualified.

“I would like to see it go back to the Planning Board and zoning board being appointed,” Azarian said. “In the long run, I think we get a much better candidate.”

Many people want to serve their community, but will not run for elected positions because they are not interested in campaigning, Azarian said.

Selectman James Keller said he also supports the appointment process and knows of residents who wanted to serve the town, but didn’t want to run for office.

“It’s daunting and not comfortable for folks,” said Keller, a former Planning Board chairman. “There are numerous people who want to serve, but don’t want to be part of the process. I do believe it limits the number of candidates we have to fill these positions.”

For some, election easier than appointment

Before land-use board members were elected, Gray and Giordano became frustrated because they were not appointed, Azarian said.

Giordano led the successful effort to have members elected, saying voters — not selectmen — should be making the choice.

Critics said Giordano pushed for the change because he was only interested in being elected after not being appointed to a full-time Planning Board seat in 2005.

Giordano was elected to the zoning board, but resigned his seat in January after his arrest on felony drug charges. Police seized more than 100 Oxycodone pills from his home after a monthlong investigation. He faces trial after indictment by a grand jury last month.

Shortly after Giordano's release on \$10,000 cash bail last winter, the former state representative was sending letters to newspapers, asking voters to keep the election process intact.

"If this process were to change back to appointing members by the Salem Board of Selectmen, it will open up the doors to nepotism, favoritism and possible corruption within town government," he wrote.

Giordano could not be reached for comment last week.

Gray, a civil engineer surveyor, ran for the Planning Board twice before finally being elected two years ago. He was only in office for a year before his arrest on charges he raped a New York woman staying at his home.

He was convicted of aggravated felonious sexual assault and simple assault June 19 and faces 10 to 20 years in state prison when he is sentenced Sept. 7. Gray admitted during his trial that he enjoyed "role-playing sex" in which he wore diapers and pretended to be a baby.

Gregory said Gray's admission is just another reason why he shouldn't have been allowed to serve the public.

"Give me a break," Gregory said. "How whacked can you be?"

One Salem land-use official, who declined to be identified, said there were "professional concerns" about Gray before his arrest. Other Salem board members declined to comment about Gray.

While some Salem officials back the appointment process, others say board members should be elected in keeping with the democratic process.

That includes three of the five selectmen, Chairman Pat Hargreaves, Stephen Campbell and Everett McBride Jr.

Selectman Michael Lyons, like Keller, has said land-use board members should be appointed.

Campbell said residents should be allowed to choose who they want representing them. As a group, they are better qualified to choose leaders than a board of selectmen, he said.

"I think 3,000 or 4,000 people can do a better job than just five," he said. "I think the positions are important enough that people should put in the people that they want."

Campbell said residents have made it clear they want officials elected and believes that — even after McDougall's arrest — it will stay that way.

In March, residents voted, 3,980-1,885, against appointing Planning Board members and 3,646-2,336 against appointing zoning board members.

Campbell said he remembers years ago when some Salem residents began to distrust their public officials because of cronyism.

"It seems like if you were friends with selectmen, you got appointed," he said. "If you weren't friends with selectmen, you weren't appointed."

Some town officials recalled when, in the mid-1980s, a Planning Board member was convicted of conspiracy to commit extortion and other charges for his involvement in a case that went before the board.

Hargreaves said the decision should still be up to voters.

"It's the choice of the people," he said.

But Hargreaves said he thinks voters will be more diligent in learning about who wants to represent them.

Voters have bigger role at the polls

Budget Committee Chairman Russell Frydryck said he has traditionally supported the election of town officials. But with the arrest of McDougall, Frydryck admitted he's had a few doubts.

"I used to think elected was the way to go," he said. "I'm still for electing them, but not as strong as a few years ago."

Community leaders in several Southern New Hampshire towns said it's not a question of what's the better process — elected or appointed — it's a matter of what voters want.

"I think people should have the opportunity to choose," Hampstead Selectmen's Chairman Sean Murphy said.

Many communities in the region have elected Planning Boards, but appointed zoning boards.

In Pelham, residents voted in 2006 to elect Planning Board members, according to Town Administrator Tom Gaydos.

"There were some people who wanted to be on the Planning Board who thought selectmen would never appoint them," he said.

An attempt to reverse the process a year later failed, Gaydos said.

In Windham, Town Administrator David Sullivan said voters decided nearly a decade ago they wanted to elect their land-use board members.

But it wasn't because anyone was arrested or residents distrusted their public officials, Sullivan said.

"They just wanted to have more say," he said.

Southern New Hampshire University professor Dean Spiliotes said towns are put in a unique position. It tends to be easier to remove an elected official than an appointed one.

"I see both sides of the argument," he said. "I would say you take your chances with the democratic process. More democracy is better, but you have to have a process in place to deal with malfeasance."

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

July 19, 2012

Salem's Green Barn may be on the move

By Doug Ireland, direland@eagletribune.com

The Eagle-Tribune

— — — SALEM — Big changes may be in store for The Green Barn, a mainstay in town since 1969.

A proposal to build a 22,000-square-foot shopping plaza at the corner of Hampstead Road and Main Street could mean the end for the 19th-century building, a former dairy farm.

But the 42-year-old restaurant, which specializes in German cuisine, isn't closing, according to owner Carl Bohne.

"We're staying in business," Bohne said yesterday. "We're absolutely not closing."

But the restaurant may be at a different location, he said, and the big, old green building would likely be destroyed.

"If the project goes through, the building will be razed," Bohne said.

He runs the business with his wife, Margaret. Otherwise, the couple will continue to operate the restaurant at its current location.

If the plaza is built, there's still a chance the former barn could be saved and moved, Bohne said. He just doesn't know for sure.

"It's too preliminary," he said.

Last week, the town Planning Board reviewed conceptual plans for the project submitted by the developer, Thur Ken. The proposal calls for construction of a 13,000-square-foot CVS pharmacy, a bank and a retail store, town planning director Ross Moldoff said.

The project includes three buildings at 389-396 Main St. and 5 Hampstead Road — the current restaurant location, Moldoff said. The Green Barn is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, restaurants in Salem.

Bohne said construction of the shopping plaza would allow him to maximize his property's potential and improve his restaurant. The widely recognized name would not change, he said.

The Bohnes would continue to own the property, along with Thur Ken, and rent out the buildings. The project would create at least 50 full-time and 50 part-time jobs, and include major safety improvements at the intersection of Hampstead Road and Main Street, he said.

There are two possible locations for the restaurant, but Bohne declined to identify them since the project is in the early stages.

"We would prefer to stay in Salem, but the entire Merrimack Valley has been very good to us," he said.

It's the restaurant's strong customer base that has helped keep the business going over the years, he said.

The Green Barn got its start in 1969 when Bohne's parents, Bill and Francis Bohne, bought the Shermer Farm. They started a delicatessen, specializing in sausage and smoked meats. The restaurant opened in July 1970 and the Steinkeller Lounge nine months later.

The former barn building was constructed in 1880 and rebuilt after being struck by lightning and burning in the 1940s, Bohne said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

July 13, 2012

Salem is bustling with business

By Doug Ireland

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SALEM — It's only July, but it has already been a bustling year for business.

After tough economic times in recent years, Salem is seeing a resurgence in development, according to town planning director Ross Moldoff.

A dozen major commercial projects have received Planning Board approval since Jan. 1, he said.

"I think it's a good sign," Moldoff said yesterday.

And even more big projects are in the works, he said.

The latest is plans for a 22,000-square-foot shopping plaza presented to the Planning Board Tuesday night.

The project, proposed for 389-396 Main. St. and 5 Hampstead Road, calls for construction of a 13,000-square-foot CVS pharmacy, Moldoff said.

The project also includes a bank and retail store in three separate buildings, he said. Representatives for the developer, Thur Ken, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

News of the proposed shopping plaza comes only a week after Liberty Utilities announced it will establish its headquarters at 11 Northeastern Blvd. after the utility finalized a \$285 million deal to buy National Grid's New Hampshire operation.

Liberty Utilities East president Victor Del Vecchio said the move will bring 50 jobs to Salem.

But the town's biggest catch is right next door.

Enterasys Networks announced earlier this year it would move from Andover, Mass., to 9 Northeastern Blvd., bringing 540 jobs and creating an additional 80 positions.

Chris Crowell, president and CEO of the computer networking firm, said the move to the former Cisco Systems property will take place in January.

Moldoff is elated.

"That's one of the success stories of the last few years," he said. "That's very exciting news."

Other projects approved this year include a 49,000-square-foot office building at 23 Keewaydin Drive.

They also include the expansion of Rockingham Toyota and Honda, a charter school, and a Dunkin' Donuts at the former Granite State Potato Chip factory on North Broadway.

Although Tuscan Kitchen is only a few years old, it's already expanding.

Owner Joseph Faro is putting in a larger parking lot and adding a 130-seat cafe and store at the Main Street restaurant, Moldoff said.

Another good sign for the local economy is that other businesses, approved by the Planning Board last year, recently opened or will do so soon.

Aldi, national food store chain, opened its first New Hampshire supermarket in March at 541 S. Broadway.

Two weeks later, Lord & Taylor's 122,000-square-foot clothing store became the newest anchor tenant at The Mall at Rockingham Park.

Lord & Taylor brought 136 full- and part-time jobs to Salem, according to a company spokeswoman.

Opening this summer are an ice cream shop, Jay Gee's, and a restaurant, Jake's Wayback Burgers. The two eateries are at the former Hooters restaurant site at 327 S. Broadway, Moldoff said.

Jay Gee's co-owner Richard Giuffrida and his three brothers have operated a popular ice cream center and recreational center in Methuen for 20 years. Giuffrida has said the family was looking forward to expanding their business to Salem.

Salem also is seeing an increase in residential projects, Moldoff said. They include the 32-unit Clough Farm apartment complex being built at Braemoor Woods.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

July 11, 2012

Salem selectmen move to crack down on sign rule violators

By Doug Ireland

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—

SALEM — Signs, signs everywhere a sign.

Illegal signs, that is.

The town has decided to crack down on violators of the town's sign ordinance.

The plan, approved unanimously by selectmen Monday, would eliminate the numerous placards placed in public right-of-ways, community development director William Scott said.

There are many businesses around town that post signs without the required permit, Scott said.

He did not say how many violators there are in town.

The issue of illegal signs was raised last year. Since then, the town's planning staff has been recording and photographing illegally placed signs, Scott said.

"We need to step up our enforcement," he said.

Illegal signs have been a longtime problem in Salem, especially during election season.

Signs placed in rights-of-way along heavily traveled roads, such as Route 28, are a distraction that can cause accidents, according to selectmen.

It's unfair to all business owners to not take action when a merchant posts an illegal sign, selectmen said.

Selectmen's Chairman Patrick Hargreaves said a series of illegally placed signs on Route 28 advertising cigarettes is especially a nuisance.

"It's like a circus driving on (Route) 28," he said.

Scott said town workers will automatically remove signs illegally placed in rights-of-way.

It's often difficult to find the signs' owners, he said. Businesses cited for violations will be fined \$100 — as stated in the ordinance.

Firms needing sign permits will only be charged \$10 instead of the previous \$40 fee.

Scott said the town would take businesses to court if necessary, drawing criticism from Selectman Everett McBride Jr.

McBride said the town couldn't afford the legal costs.

Salem has more pressing matters, including repairing roads and replacing bridges, he said.

"I hope we can do it without going to court," McBride said. "It's a waste of taxpayers' money.

Selectmen also agreed Monday to double tipping fees for commercial trash haulers.

The fee, which Town Manager Keith Hickey said has not been increased in 20 years, will rise from \$10 to \$20 per ton.

"The cost of business has increased in the last 20 years," Hickey said.

There are seven businesses that haul residents' trash, he said yesterday. The increase takes effect Oct. 1.

One of the businesses affected is Waste Management Inc.

Company spokesman James Nocella said yesterday he was not surprised to hear of the increase.

"Many municipalities are looking at ways to cut costs and to budget," he said.

There is no immediate plan to increase rates for residents as a result, Nocella said.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER • FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2012



The vacant Rockingham Woodcraft building and two storage buildings will be razed to make room for a new 25,000-square-foot Honda dealership as part of a plan to merge Rockingham Toyota/Scion and Rockingham Honda into a single location at 408 South Broadway.

COURTESY PHOTO

Rockingham Motors plans to merge into single location

◆ **New facility:** Toyota/Scion and Honda will move to 408 South Broadway.

By JULIE HANSON
Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — Rockingham Motors is making a major move into a new facility.

Rockingham Toyota/Scion and Rockingham Honda are merging into a single location at 408 South Broadway, just a few miles from their current dealerships at 354 Main St. The former Ultimate Electronics building will be gutted and redeveloped into a 34,000-square-foot showroom that will house the Toyota/Scion lines.

"This is a great project for the town," said Ross Moldoff, planning director for the Town of Salem.

Rockingham Honda will move from its current 360 North Broadway location to a new 25,000-square-foot dealership after the vacant Rockingham Woodcraft main building and two storage buildings are torn down. The plan includes room to display about 285 vehicles, according to the company website.

The dealership purchased the land in September 2011 for about \$8 million, according to Vision Appraisal's online database of lots in Salem. The project received conditional Planning Board approval at the end of April. Construction has yet to start and the business hasn't applied for any building permits. No opening date has been announced.

Rockingham Motors is a family-owned business that has been selling and servicing new and used vehicles in Salem since 1985. The company has grown from 30 employees to more than 100 at three locations.

Owner Emmett Horgan is an active member of the community. He was awarded the William A. Brown Distinguished Businessperson award by the Salem Chamber of Commerce in 1994 for his contributions to the local business environment.

The dealership has also worked on various auctions and fund-raisers for the Salem Boys & Girls Club. Horgan was awarded the club's prestigious Chief John P. Ganley Community Service Award in 1992 for taking a leadership role in the community.

juliehansonnewscast.com

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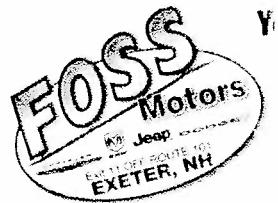


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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

June 11, 2012

Ground broken for workforce housing complex in Salem

By Doug Ireland

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SALEM, N.H. — Shovels pierced the ground Friday at the new Clough Farm apartment complex — the first project of its kind to be built under the town's new workforce housing ordinance.

State and local officials gathered at the construction site in Braemoor Woods where Steven Lewis Inc. of Atkinson and Trident Building Group of Salem will construct a \$4 million, 32-unit apartment complex.

The ground-breaking ceremony marked the beginning of a project expected to provide more affordable housing in a town where residents often complain about soaring taxes and housing costs.

The work will begin this summer at the 140-acre Braemoor Woods site off Veterans Memorial Parkway, according to developer Steven Lewis. The project's target completion date is in March, Lewis said.

The project is being built with the help of tax credits and financing through the New Hampshire Financing Authority. Rents are to be capped at below-market levels.

"It's a guarantee to Salem that it stays affordable," Lewis said.

Tenants must meet federal income limits for the one- and two-bedroom apartments. They are: \$37,620 for one person, \$42,960 for two people, \$48,360 for three and \$53,700 for four.

If the landlord pays all utilities, the maximum rent that could be charged is \$994 per month for one bedroom and \$1,192 for two bedrooms.

The project will be next to Glenridge Apartments, an affordable housing complex for senior citizens built by Lewis and partner Gino Baroni.

The new apartment complex includes the use of "green technology" and low-impact development methods to minimize the project's effect on the environment, Lewis said.

Those methods include rain gardens and bio-retention basins to save and replenish groundwater. There will be a community garden.

Salem planning director Ross Moldoff said Clough Farm will be the first project to be built in conjunction with the town's 2-year-old workforce housing ordinance. The ordinance allows for the construction of housing to serve low- and moderate-income residents.

Moldoff said the town has worked with Lewis over the last few years to ensure it would be the type of project to best serve the community's needs. It was approved by the Planning Board last fall.

Lewis, a builder for 43 years, has a reputation for constructing top-notch housing throughout Southern New Hampshire, Moldoff said.

"I think we are fortunate to have (Lewis) do this project in Salem because we know we are going to have a quality project," Moldoff said. "It will be a model for other projects coming into town."

Among those on hand for the ceremony Friday were Sen. Chuck Morse, R-Salem, New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority executive director Dean Christon, Salem Selectman Michael Lyons and Salem Planning Board member Ronald Belanger.

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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

May 31, 2012

Salem gardens produce more than vegetables

By Doug Ireland

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—

SALEM — The community garden is more than just rows of vegetables and flowers.

It's a central gathering place for the more than three dozen gardeners — both young and old — who brave the summer heat to tend to their plants.

It's a community all its own, according to Frank Martino, 56.

"Everybody knows everybody and everybody helps everybody," he said.

Like some Salem residents, Martino doesn't have room for a garden at his Millville Street home. That's why the lifelong plant lover packs up his tools and heads to this 24-plot garden tucked away in a field off Town Farm Road.

For the last four years, the community garden has continued to grow in popularity, according to Conservation Commission member Joan Blondin.

For no charge, Salem residents can grow vegetables and flowers in their own 18-by-28-foot plot on the town-owned property, Blondin said.

Each day, gardeners stop off and tend to their plots, sharing stories and advice as they weed and water their plants.

But sometimes, they get so caught up in conversation, they forget why they're really there — to garden.

"Everybody ends up doing more chatting than gardening," said Frank Rawa, 70.

Rawa, who is retired, enjoys spending a nice summer day taking care of his vegetables. He grows everything from tomatoes and peppers to corn and radishes.

"It's a lot of work, but we enjoy it," Rawa said. "It's something to keep me out of trouble."

Blondin agreed the community garden is a social mecca of sorts.

"When you go here and meet people, it's like one great big, massive neighborhood," she said. "Everybody is learning something new."

Blondin, who oversees the garden, said one of her goals is to get more children involved.

That's why she is often accompanied by two young family friends, 12-year-old Eddie Graziano and his sister, Martina, 6.

They take care of their own plot with help from Blondin, affectionately called "Auntie Joan."

Blondin likes to bring the children with her so they can learn the importance of hard work and growing fresh, healthy produce, Blondin said.

"I show them how to do it, but I make them do all the work themselves," she said. "I would like to get more children involved."

Gardening can help save money, too,

Last year, Blondin said, she saved \$800 on her grocery bill. Martino helps feed the hungry by donating some of his vegetables to a shelter.

There are strict rules all gardeners must follow to keep everybody happy, according to Blondin. For instance, everyone must maintain their own portion of the pathway that extends through the garden.

Also, no littering, smoking or dogs, she said. Some plants, such as squash, can only be grown in certain areas because their vines could infringe on other gardeners' plots.

Community gardens are becoming popular in other local towns, including Derry, Blondin said.

While the plants in the Salem garden are still small at this point, the rain this week has helped them grow, Blondin said.

Just wait a few weeks, she said.

"Then, all of a sudden, it will be like, 'Whoa!'" she said.

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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

May 23, 2012

Salem residents reject Hindu temple plan

By Doug Ireland

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—

SALEM — Some think a proposed Hindu temple could be a thing of beauty — as long as it's not built on Lowell Road.

Several residents told the Planning Board last night the three-story temple would overwhelm their neighborhood with traffic and noise.

The 17,000-square-foot structure, proposed by pediatrician Dr. Deepak Sharma, is planned for 33 Lowell Road — adjacent to several small businesses and Coles Mobile Home Park.

Park resident Lisa Gillis was among five people who told the board the temple didn't belong there.

"I just feel like it's being shoved down my throat," Gillis said. "I just feel this property should be somewhere else where it's not so overbearing."

Gillis, other residents and planning officials said they were worried about potential traffic and parking problems.

"I'm concerned about the cars parked against my fence and the fumes," Gillis said.

The temple would be built on a 1.8-acre parcel after an existing home, garage and outbuildings are demolished, project representative David Jordan said.

The building would offer a function hall, prayer hall and 160-seat auditorium for the area's growing number of Hindu worshippers, Jordan said.

Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world after Christianity and Islam, with about 1 billion followers worldwide, Jordan said.

There are 822 Hindus in Southern New Hampshire, Methuen and Haverhill, he said. It is the main religion of India.

Zoning regulations that only allow for 59 parking spaces at the temple means Sharma would have to provide an additional 230 spaces on property he owns at 25 Pelham Road, Jordan said.

That's a mile and a quarter away, so guests would have to be bused in for large events, he said.

Board members and planning director Ross Moldoff were concerned about the off-site parking plan, including Chairman Robert Campbell.

"I see this as not making it without a conditional use permit for parking," Campbell said.

Consultants for both Sharma and the town provided the board with traffic data to show the project's potential impact on roadways.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment has already granted a variance for the project, allowing the building to be 45 feet high — 10 feet higher than zoning allows. Five tall spires would be installed on the roof, but within legal limits.

The variance is being challenged by abutters and their attorney, Bob Lavoie. They think the zoning board should reconsider its decision, Lavoie said.

"We are concerned about that height variance," he said. "This is a pretty imposing structure."

Lavoie said it could be a beautiful, ornate building. It just doesn't belong on Lowell Road, he said.

"Put in the right location, this could be a stunning piece," Lavoie said.

Another Coles resident, Jeff Keenan, said he was concerned about potential noise, especially if there were weddings at the temple.

"Am I going to hear things at night louder than normal, louder than street traffic?" he asked.

Traffic would exit onto busy Lowell Road, also known as Route 38, Keenan said.

The board wrapped up the two-hour hearing by asking Jordan to address various issues. That included providing a more comprehensive off-site parking plan.

If approved, Sharma has said the temple would cost several million dollars and take about nine months to build.

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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

April 25, 2012

Car dealer gets OK for Salem site

Dealership will revitalize long-vacant properties

By Cara Hogan

chogan@eagletribune.com

SALEM - Rockingham Toyota and Honda is coming to Route 28, filling two long-vacant storefronts.

The Planning Board unanimously approved the site plan for the new car dealership complex last night, which will be located at 402 and 412 South Broadway.

"It's an old site and we're thrilled to have it developed," planning director Ross Moldoff said. "The space has been vacant for years."

The development will combine the two vacant properties into one large complex. The former Ultimate Electronics and Circuit City building will be renovated and become a 35,400-square-foot Toyota dealership. The developer will also tear down the old Rockingham Woodcraft building to build a new 23,800-square-foot Honda dealership.

Dealership owner Emmett Horgan bought the two properties last September for \$8.1 million, according to town records. He is moving the Toyota dealership from Route 97 at 354 Main Street and the Honda dealership from Route 28 at 360 North Broadway.

Horgan spoke at the meeting last night, urging the board to accept the plan with few changes. After it was approved, he said he was eager to get to work.

"We're really excited and looking forward to starting the project," Horgan said. "We made some concessions, but I think they were more than fair."

The plan was approved with some conditions, including approval from the Department of Transportation on the drainage system for the building.

"Changes to the plan are relatively minor," Moldoff said. "They are closing some curb cuts. Traffic access is from an existing traffic light. Car dealerships generate a lot less traffic than a retail store. Anytime we can get less traffic on 28 is great."

The complex will have display spaces for 285 cars, according to Moldoff. There will also be few trees and landscaping at the site, so the cars will be more visible.

"They want the products to be seen," Moldoff said.

Besides the site plan, the owner also asked for more lighting and more signs than the town usually allows, which caused some dissension during the meeting.

"My concern is the precedence," chairman Robert Campbell said. "I'm concerned when the guy down the road with the Ford place will now need an equal number of signs and as big."

But the board compromised with the developer, voting 6 to 1 in favor of conditional use for three large free-standing signs, one more than the regulations allow. They also voted unanimously in favor of allowing more lighting in the dealership parking lot.

Moldoff said the real benefit of the project to the Town of Salem is getting more businesses moving onto Route 28, with more tax revenue coming in.

"This goes along with our master plan, to redevelop under-utilized commercial sites," he said.

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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

April 24, 2012

Salem pediatrician wants to build Hindu temple

By John Toole

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SALEM — A local doctor is proposing to build a Hindu temple on Route 38.

The three-story, 17,000-square-foot Krishna Hindu Temple is planned for 33 Lowell Road, less than five minutes by car from the Mall at Rockingham Park and between Interstate 93 Exits 1 and 2.

Neighbors include a stone products business and a trailer park.

"This will be an unusual building. I've never seen anything like this," town planning director Ross Moldoff said.

The project is scheduled for review before the Planning Board May 8.

Dr. Deepak Sharma submitted the plans. He is a Salem pediatrician.

"I wanted to do something charitable for the community," Sharma said yesterday.

If the project is approved by the Planning Board, Sharma hopes construction can start this year.

"It would probably take nine months," he said.

He anticipates the project would cost a few million dollars. He has not started fund-raising.

"I'm sure we will need money," Sharma said.

Moldoff has asked Sharma to provide more information about activities, such as services and events, the temple would host.

"This will be excellent if it materializes," Dartmouth College professor Prasad Jayanti said.

He is the faculty adviser for the Hindu student group and temple at Dartmouth College, a room inside the Rollins Chapel on campus.

Jayanti said he was unsure of the Hindu population of New Hampshire, but estimated it at several hundred in the Upper Valley region that borders Vermont and includes Hanover and Lebanon.

He was unaware of any established Hindu temples in New Hampshire, other than the small presence on campus.

A website promotes the Hindu Temple of New Hampshire in Nashua. Its vision statement lists as a mission establishing a permanent temple in New Hampshire. A call to the temple was not returned.

"I think this will hold a tremendous amount of interest," Jayanti said of the Salem proposal.

A Hindu temple is more than a spiritual place, he said. Other temples are places where people learn languages and the practices of yoga and meditation, as well as enjoy music and ethnic dances, he said.

"They are a great center of culture," Jayanti said.

Sharma said he expects the temple would have classes for yoga and languages. Staff would include priests, instructors, even a groundskeeper, he said.

There are temples in Massachusetts, but only the small one in Nashua that Sharma is aware of.

"I think there is a need for the community of New Hampshire," he said. "We need something for them to go and think of God."

People from New Hampshire now travel as far as Ashland, Mass., to attend a temple.

Hinduism is the world's third largest religion after Christianity and Islam, with an estimated 950 million followers. It is the main religion of India.

The Salem temple would be open to Hindus and Sikhs, Sharma said.

Central beliefs include reincarnation and karma, that good actions lead to good results and bad ones to bad consequences.

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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

March 2, 2012

Aldi opens first N.H. store in Salem

By Doug Ireland

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—

SALEM — Not even snow, sleet and icy roads stopped them.

When the doors finally opened at 9 a.m., a large crowd poured into the new Aldi supermarket at 541 South Broadway yesterday.

At least a couple of dozen people had waited in the snow and cold. Within minutes, close to 100 people were scouring the aisles, looking for bargains.

"I have been excited for it to open," said Janine Atwater, 55, of Salem. "They have great prices."

Atwater said it was easier to find what she wanted in the 17,000-square-foot store than in much larger supermarkets.

"Sometimes, you don't want to go into a big supermarket," she said.

The smaller size, low prices and environmentally friendly building make Aldi unique, according to store officials.

"The customer can save up to 50 percent — I think that's what sets us apart from other stores," operations director Katja Kuegel said. "It's high quality at a low price."

Since the store has much less overhead than traditional supermarkets, it can focus on efficiency and pass the savings along to the customer, she said.

Customers said they were astounded by how low Aldi's prices were compared to those at other supermarkets.

Paul Waites, 76, of Salem liked Aldi so much, he decided to stock up on canned vegetables.

"The prices are good, so I'm buying everything by the case," he said.

Aldi stores, found around the world and in 32 states, are known for their innovative features.

The Salem store — the first in New Hampshire — was built using recycled materials and features energy-saving refrigeration and lighting.

Aldi saves on labor costs by having only 10 to 15 employees, asking customers to bag their own groceries and renting shopping carts for a quarter, Kuegel said.

Customers get their money back when they return the cart, she said. That means a store employee doesn't have to spend time rounding up carts in the parking lot, she said.

Margeit Lambert, 67, of Haverhill said she didn't mind bagging her groceries — it was worth it.

Lambert said there are Aldi stores in her native Germany.

"It's a good store," she said. "I'm glad they came here."

Some customers said they wished the store offered more variety.

Aldi mostly offers just its own brands, Kuegel said.

But that didn't bother Crystal Habib, 40, of Haverhill.

"I love it," she said. "When I heard last week it was going to open today, I couldn't wait. I had to come."

The store celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, gift certificate raffle and free samples.

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Enterasys is welcomed back to NH



NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Development Commissioner George Bald, center, speaks to employees of Enterasys who will be working in this building at 9 Northeastern Drive in Salem on Tuesday. Thomas Roy/Union Leader

State and local officials welcomed Enterasys and its more than 500 employees back to the Granite State Tuesday at its planned new headquarters at 9 Northeastern Drive in Salem.

By DENIS PAISTE

New Hampshire Union Leader

SALEM — State and local officials welcomed Enterasys and its more than 500 employees back to the Granite State Tuesday at its planned new headquarters at 9 Northeastern Drive.

Combined with other new tenants — Comcast, CCS and Nora Flooring Systems — there are 1,100 new jobs, all attracted from Massachusetts, coming to the building that formerly housed Cisco Systems.

“This is exciting news because it’s bringing some vitality back to an old building,” Salem Selectman Chairwoman Beth Roth said.

Enterasys, which traces its roots to the old Cabletron Systems business in Rochester, will bring many high-tech engineers to the plant, with offices, research and development and testing labs.

Enterasys, which was a spinoff from Cabletron, was based in Portsmouth in the 1990s before moving to Andover, Mass.

Enterasys President Chris Crowell said, “We signed the lease. Now there’s a lot of work.

“It will be a beautiful facility once we get here, I know that,” Crowell added.

George Bald, commissioner of the state Department of Resources and Economic Development, said, “I’m just delighted you’re coming back to New Hampshire.”

Enterasys Chief Information Officer Dan Petlon said the company now has 517 employees but will have 545 to 550 by the time employees start to move from Andover during the fourth quarter. The first group will move between Christmas and New Year’s, with the transition continuing into 2013.

The growing computer networking business has 120 employees more than it did a year ago, Crowell said.

“If we continue to grow the way we’ve been growing, we will fill this quickly,” he said of the former Cisco site. “We’re also consolidating spaces, and it provides a great opportunity for more investment, just given the economic benefits.

“We’re all very happy to be here,” Crowell said.

Enterasys, now a Siemens Enterprise Communications company, will occupy approximately 190,000 square feet.

Brent Maugel, of Maugel Architects, in Harvard, Mass., said the wide space and high ceilings mean the opportunity to create a very dramatic indoor and outdoor working space for Enterasys.

"There are three different ceiling heights," Maugel said. "Floating clouds we call them, some at 14 feet high, some at 12 feet high, some at 10."

There will be 15 new skylights, a glassed-in courtyard, and a floor-to-ceiling glass entry way, along with a small conference center.

Equity Industrial Partners principal Bruce Levine said there are still 140,000 square feet available in the building. Equity previously bought the building from Compaq in 2001 and sold it to Cisco for \$46 million. Equity bought it back 2010 for \$12.2 million, with CCS as a partner.

The 650,000-square-foot building was attractive for state development officials' recruiting efforts.

"I can attract tenants from 20,000 to 300,000 square feet," said Michael Bergeron, business development manager for the state Department of Resources and Economic Development.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

January 18, 2012

Salem officials' arrests prompt call for change

By Doug Ireland

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SALEM — The arrests of two town board members has sparked a petition drive to have some officials appointed instead of elected.

That would be a return to the way things were before voters approved changing the posts from appointments to elections in 2006.

There are two articles on the March warrant, calling for a return to having Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment members appointed by selectmen.

The warrant articles were proposed by former Selectman Richard Gregory.

He said yesterday the election of former Planning Board member Jeffrey Gray and former ZBA Chairman Ronald "Tony" Giordano are proof the current system does not work.

Gray was charged with sexually assaulting a woman and holding her against her will at his home last spring.

Giordano, 53, resigned from the ZBA earlier this month after his arrest on felony drug charges. More than 100 Oxycodone pills were seized by police from his Lois Lane home.

Giordano served two stints in Massachusetts prisons in the early 1980s for forging checks and stealing a pair of handcuffs. He changed his name, moved to New Hampshire and was elected to the House of Representatives.

There, Giordano was sued by a Statehouse secretary for sexual harassment. He was found liable; the victim was awarded \$175,000 in damages and \$12,666 in lost wages.

Although the warrant articles had been in the works for months, "Ron "Tony" was the icing on the cake," Gregory said.

Ironically, it was Giordano who led the charge to have ZBA and Planning Board members elected, not appointed, six years ago.

"He put in the elected petition because he couldn't get appointed," Gregory said.

Past boards determined that neither Gray nor Giordano were qualified to be appointed, he said.

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

January 12, 2012

Move means Salem gets 600-plus new jobs

By Doug Ireland

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SALEM — The addition of more than 600 jobs had local officials grinning yesterday.

After months of negotiations, an Andover, Mass., computer company announced it would be moving across the state border to the former Cisco Systems building at 9 Northeastern Blvd.

Enterasys Networks, a firm with New Hampshire roots, will bring 540 jobs and add about 80 more, a company official said. The move will take place in January 2013, according to president and CEO Chris Crowell of Hampstead.

The computer networking company outgrew its 150,000-square-foot headquarters on Minuteman Road in Andover and needed a larger location, Crowell said.

"This space simply couldn't support us any further," he said yesterday. "The (site) in New Hampshire was the best opportunity."

Crowell said Enterasys considered locations in both states and weighed the options, including New Hampshire's lower tax burden.

Salem officials are thrilled with the company's decision, including Town Manager Keith Hickey.

"With over 500 jobs, it is a fabulous new opportunity for jobs — for not only Salem, but for the region," he said. "It's good news."

Town planner Ross Moldoff agreed.

"Enterasys is very exciting news for the town," he said. "There are multiple economic benefits."

Enterasys will bring much-needed jobs and boost the town's economic base, he said. The building, which also was once home to Digital Equipment Corp., was recently refurbished by its owner, Equity Industrial Partners.

"The property owner has done a great job with the building," Moldoff said.

Bruce Levine of Equity could not be reached for comment yesterday. Crowell would not comment on the lease agreement with Equity.

Most of the 650,000-square-foot building has been leased. Enterasys will occupy 190,000 square feet.

Other tenants include Comcast, Nora Flooring Systems and the CCS Companies, a call center.

Donna Morris, executive director of the Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce, said her organization will reach out to Enterasys.

"I think that is fantastic to bring the jobs to Salem," she said. "Hopefully, that is the start of good things for Salem. ... If there is anything we can do, we would be glad to help."

Michael Bergeron, a business development manager for the state Division of Economic Development, said he has been working since last summer to bring Enterasys to New Hampshire.

"This is a significant opportunity for New Hampshire," he said. "They are really cutting edge."

Bergeron said many Massachusetts companies are looking to relocate here because of the lower tax burden and more favorable business climate.

Good news in Salem was bad news for Bay State officials.

"It is unfortunate they are moving," said Paul Materazzo, Andover's planning director. "I wish we had the opportunity, as the town, to see if there was any opportunity for them to stay and grow in the community."

Joe Bevilacqua, the president and CEO of the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce, said Enterasys' move to the Granite State represents a battle in Massachusetts to keep border businesses from moving out of state.

"It is not a positive thing to lose a business," Bevilacqua said. "Any job loss is obviously critical to both the state and the region."

Enterasys has been in Andover since 1999. The company is a spinoff of Cabletron Systems of Rochester, founded by former New Hampshire Gov. Craig Benson.

Crowell said many Enterasys employees live in New Hampshire.

The Salem location will provide easier access to Manchester Boston Regional Airport, he said.

Staff writer Jonathan Phelps contributed to this report.

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EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

January 12, 2012

Salem plaza sells for \$39.9M

By Doug Ireland

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SALEM — The sale of a South Broadway shopping plaza for \$39.9 million is a sign the local economy is improving, local officials said.

Village Shoppes of Salem — home of Best Buy, Sports Authority and four other stores — has been sold to Route 28 Salem LP, a Boston real estate firm announced yesterday.

CB Real Estate's Richard Ellis represents the seller, Clarion Partners of New York. Clarion also owns a shopping plaza in Portsmouth, according to CBRE executive vice president Jim Koury.

"It's a very desirable shopping center," Koury said.

Village Shoppes, which is 170,270 square feet, was built in 1999 and took more than six years to develop.

Two of the newest tenants, DSW and Sports Authority, opened there in 2010, at a time when few businesses were moving to the area, Koury said.

That is proof it's a valuable piece of property in the community, he said. It's also proof the local economy is starting to improve, he said.

Koury said he could not disclose any information about the new owner and no one from that firm could be reached yesterday. Major renovations are planned at Village Shoppes, Koury said.

The property was last sold in 2006 for \$39.7 million.

Community leaders had not heard of the sale, but said word of any major business transaction is a positive sign for the town.

"If it's been sold, hopefully, there will be a little more activity than there is now," Town Manager Keith Hickey said. "It's good news."

Announcement of the sale comes only a day after Enterasys, an Andover, Mass.-computer networking firm, announced it was moving to the former Cisco Systems building and bringing 600 jobs to Salem.

Salem town planner Ross Moldoff said the business transactions are a positive indication the economy is improving, especially the Enterasys move.

Moldoff said he just received plans for a Dunkin' Donuts that would move to the former Granite State Potato Chip Co. site on North Broadway. The business closed in 2007 after 102 years in business.

"We are getting calls from businesses that want to go into vacant areas," he said. "That's a positive sign."

EagleTribune.com, North Andover, MA

January 4, 2012

Salem zoning chairman resigns after arrest

By Doug Ireland

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SALEM — A town official who already has a criminal record in Massachusetts now faces felony drug charges here.

Zoning Board of Adjustment Chairman Ronald "Tony" Giordano resigned from his post yesterday morning, just three days after police charged him with selling Oxycodone.

His arrest stunned many who knew him.

"I was very surprised that this happened," zoning board vice chairman Robert Uttley said yesterday. "He was very forthright and honest in his dealings on the zoning board. He was an excellent board member."

Giordano, 53, was the subject of a monthlong investigation by Salem police, who found more than 100 Oxycodone pills at his home on Lois Lane when they searched it Friday evening.

When he was arrested Friday night, Giordano was charged with three counts of felony sale of Oxycodone and a felony charge of conspiracy to violate drug laws.

While it may have stunned some residents and town officials, it isn't Giordano's first brush with the law.

He served two stints in Massachusetts prisons in the early 1980s after he was convicted on five charges of forging checks and another charge of stealing a pair of handcuffs.

He later lost races for the Lowell City Council in 1983, 1991 and 1993, blaming the media for exposing his criminal past.

Giordano, then named Ronald Gordon, changed his name and moved to Salem in the mid-1990s.

Even here, he has not been without controversy.

He was elected to the New Hampshire House in 2000. After his election, word of his criminal past surfaced. But Giordano claimed the past was the past and issued a statement regarding his troubles years earlier. It said, in part, "This information is factually correct, but is, again, my past. I have spent the past sixteen years working toward being a productive, concerned citizen."

Then, in 2002, a Statehouse secretary sued him for sexual harassment. While Giordano proclaimed his innocence on the House floor, he was found guilty of sexually harassing Dorothy Pike.

Pike was awarded \$175,000 in damages and \$12,666 in lost wages. Giordano had to pay 45 percent of the award and the House had to pay the remaining 55 percent for not protecting Pike from Giordano.

In her lawsuit, Pike claimed Giordano forcibly kissed her and groped her at work. At the time, Giordano said he only made a sexually explicit phone call to Pike at home while he was drunk.

Giordano resigned his seat in August 2002, but not because of the harassment lawsuit. Four months earlier, he had taken a job with U.S. Sen. Bob Smith, but then realized you cannot be a federal employee and an elected official.

A longtime critic of selectmen and an outspoken proponent of working to make Salem a city, Giordano managed to earn the respect of some voters and local officials.

Sam Zannini, Salem's chief building official, said he received Giordano's letter of resignation by email when he went to work yesterday morning.

The zoning board accepted Giordano's resignation last night with no mention of his alleged crimes.

Zannini said Giordano called him Sunday night to say he was thinking of stepping down for personal reasons, but did not elaborate.

He said he no idea Giordano had been arrested on drug charges and had spent a couple of nights in the county jail. Giordano was released from jail Sunday on \$10,000 bail, a corrections official said.

"I was shocked," Zannini said. "He has done a good job as chairman."

The board will choose a new chairman and Giordano's seat will be up for election in March, Zannini said. Former Chairman Gary Azarian, who led last night's meeting, thanked Giordano for his service before the board accepted the resignation.

Fellow zoning board member Patrick McDougall said Giordano was a "loyal servant" to Salem.

"Obviously, I am shocked as anyone else and I wish him well going forward," he said.

Uttley and other town officials said they knew of Giordano's past history, but thought he was a changed man. He also has served on the Budget Committee and as a Planning Board alternate. Uttley and McDougall said Giordano had said he was planning to run for selectman in March. He ran unsuccessfully for a seat on that board in 2008.

But on Friday night, Giordano was charged with three counts of felony sale of Oxycodone and a felony charge of conspiracy to violate drug laws. Each charge is punishable by three and a half to seven years in prison. He is to be arraigned in 10th Circuit Court in Salem on Feb. 13.

He's not the first Salem official to run afoul of the law in recent months.

Former Planning Board member Jeffrey Gray was arrested last spring and remains incarcerated. He was charged with holding and assaulting a woman against her will at his rental home last spring.

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Salem official accused of selling drugs



Ron Giordano, 53, chairman of Salem's Zoning Board of Adjustment, was arrested Friday on three counts of sale of a controlled drug and a single count of conspiracy. COURTESY official last month before seeking an arrest warrant.

Salem's Zoning Board of Adjustment chairman, Ron Giordano, 53, was arrested on felony drug charges Friday after allegedly selling dozens of prescription pills to undercover police officers.

BY JAMES A. KIMBLE

Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM -- The Zoning Board of Adjustment chairman was arrested on felony drug charges Friday after allegedly selling dozens of prescription pills to undercover police officers.

Ron Giordano, 53, is facing three counts of sale of a controlled drug and conspiracy to sell a controlled drug, according to police.

The charges are all Class B felonies, each punishable by 3 1/2 to seven years in prison.

Giordano's arrest capped a month-and-a-half-long drug investigation.

A former state representative, Giordano was arrested at his home Friday about 6 p.m. Police said undercover officers made three purchases from the elected town

Giordano sold more than 100 pills, including Oxycodone, during the transactions, police said.

Detectives recorded a conversation in which Giordano offered to broker a future drug transaction with someone posing as a buyer, police said. That led to the conspiracy charge, police said.

It's the second time in the last year a Salem town official has been arrested on felony charges.

Jeffrey Gray, a Salem planning board member, was charged in March with kidnapping and aggravated felonious sexual assault after he allegedly held a New York City woman against her will.

Gray donned adult-sized diapers and "acted like a baby" while forcing the woman to have sex with him, according to a police affidavit.

That case is still pending in superior court.

Giordano was freed from the Rockingham County jail on \$10,000 cash bail sometime Sunday.

He did not return a message left at a phone number on the town's web site, which is listed as the contact number for the ZBA chairman.

Giordano has served on the budget committee and as an alternate on the planning board.

Giordano is a former state representative, whose last term in 2005 was mired in a sexual harassment lawsuit that ended with the House agreeing to pay an \$85,000 settlement to a former committee

secretary.

While a member of the House, Giordano also acknowledged a criminal past in Massachusetts that earned him two state prison stints, one in the early 1980s, and a second for a handcuff-stealing incident, according to published reports.

In recent years, Giordano appeared to shake off the controversy and focus on local politics.

He led a successful effort in 2006 to make the seats on Salem's planning and zoning boards elected positions, upending an appointed process the town had used for years.

