



CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
ROBERT K. MCCARTHY
ACTING MAYOR

Salem Beautification Committee:

Chair: Henry Gulergun

Vice Chair: Ariana Lima

Secretary: Kim Parkinson

City Liaison: Janelle Rolke

Present: Sandi Power, Mary Ellen Halliwell, Sam Fiore, Zachary Schaad, Ariana Lema-Driscoll, Henry Gulergun, Kim Parkinson, Brooke Nagle, Janelle Rolke (City Liaison)

Guests: Megan Stott (City Councilor), Katie Nieman (DPW), Charlene Bailey, Janis Manning, Lydia Gulergun, Brooke Coleman, Andrea Fernandez, Joanne Kowalski

Agenda:

- Mission Statement
- Approval of January 2023 Minutes
- Guest Speaker: Katie Nieman, General Foreperson at Salem DPS
- Bottle Bill
- Bridge Street
- Great Salem Clean Up
- Traffic Island Mapping
- Lady of Salem Updates: Mary Ellen
- Traffic Island Updates: Sandi Power
- New Business

Mission Statement: The mission of the Salem Beautification Committee is to assist the City in developing and pursuing initiatives that promote the beautification of the City. The goal of the Committee is to create civic pride and to motivate the City's diverse population to participate in the beautification process. The Committee will identify areas in need of improvement, will create programs, recruit volunteers and will secure the funding resources to achieve its goals.

Minutes Approved from January Meeting unanimously

Guest Speaker: Katie Nieman, DPS Foreperson Parks and Open Spaces

- First DPW crew member, now the general foreperson – been here a year and a half
- Needs to best serve the city and all the associated groups
 - Fall – Haunted Happenings breakdown takes the whole month, half the staff takes care of it, the other half takes care of parks/open space fall cleanup

- When the snow starts to fall, can't manage much more typically. Thanks to the minimal snow, her team has been able to catch up on some things like the traffic islands and bump outs.
- Created GIS mapping system for internal use of traffic islands, bump outs, parks, open spaces– 95-99% complete, happy to help with the Committee's island mapping to ensure her team knows what they're responsible for vs. not
 - Project started because of mulch - need to know how many yards we go through, the cost, how many people are needed, etc. to ensure we don't over or under water.
- Work has already been started with the island and bump out cleanup – Mulch is usually delivered, spread, cleaned up, leaves cleaned up, etc. Trying to figure out how DPS & BComm can work together
- What Katie plans on doing – in winter and spring – cleanup and maintenance to clean the mulch away instead of continuing to add, and in the spring the mulch will be blown in to ensure an even layer of mulch so BComm doesn't have to go out and manhandle it. Could potentially be done in 3 days.
- Her team can't facilitate the weeding because it takes too much time so that may be where we can help more.
- A BIG THANK YOU to this group for all of the hard work
- 5 small traffic cones are at 5 Jefferson in DPW office that were purchased for BComm
- Has annual scheduled maintenance workflow for entire crew now. City keeps growing in greenspace so we need to stay smart to maintain it. Her crew manages the city events too and ballfields.
- Several big projects – Lower Hawthorne Boulevard is one of them and getting the irrigation system operational because it has been turned off for a number of years after failing a contamination test. Not worth putting people's water at risk. Will operate that system and once they do the groundbreaking, they'll have a better sense of costs, timeline, etc.
- Lady of Salem install date – Katie to contact Mary Ellen to get in the calendar.
- Her team manages the Greenfields - Parks, open spaces, playing fields, etc. Have people going around the city 4x a week cleaning up trash but it is becoming a big problem. Downtown is being swept once a month in season (DPW)

Old business:

- Bottle Bill:
 - Reached out to Manny Cruz's office to see the status of the bottle bill (Adding a bottle return to nips and increasing the return amount to what is already providing a return) – the bills have been re-filed and he is a supporter of it so more to come
 - City of Salem is a member of NERC – Janelle will be joining the board and can report back updates related to the bill.
- Bridge Street Update:
 - Councilor Stott (Ward 6) – from Boston St to the train station – the river side
 - Phase 1 is basically complete. Phase 2 is to add sidewalks, etc. Grass was not growing, not a good area for anything to grow so the trees are in the middle of the sidewalk. Saved them because they are trees that actually grew while others were more challenging to grow
 - A few residents along Boston St came up with some ideas of what to grow but they are open to other ideas. New seed was put down in the fall, seeing how it fares over the winter and what grows

- Very few options owned by the city of Salem – state owns some of it and R&R owns the others.
- What needs to still be addressed is the part that hasn't been touched – maintenance will be taken care of.
- Boston Street Project – something similar to Bridge, presentation just happened. Essex to Boston. Will be a big project.
- If there are suggestions, please share. Need to consider budget.
- Any plans for the point? Road reconstruction for the Ward street projects. Palmer Cove Park too. Ward Councilor Jeff Cohen or Acting Mayor may know more.
- Beautification Committee Website
 - Henry is creating a website that has a signup form that we can use when interacting with new people, capturing volunteers and a newsletter list
- Beautification Committee Facebook Page
 - Lisa Lion – former chair of the committee still appears to own the Facebook page. Mary Ellen to share Henry's info with Lisa.

Great Salem Cleanup

- It will be held by Keep Salem Beautiful on Sun April 23rd. Last year BComm had a team that helped participate.
- If BComm wants to help plan it in partnership, we can. Consensus was that we would like to help and it would be a great opportunity for us to partner.
 - Janelle already has supplies covered through Keep Salem Beautiful
 - Kim to manage the sub-committee, if you are interested in being a part of the sub-committee, let Henry, Janelle, and Kim know.
- Last year over 11 groups – 250 volunteers over 2 hours with Janelle fully planning it asking her network. BComm had a group led by Michaela.
- Ideas:
 - Could we put up a banner for it to draw attention? By Rockafellers? Could put a bar code on directing people to a place to sign up.
 - Make it more of a formal event to draw in a crowd
 - Can we get the ward councilors to advertise it multiple times leading up to the day?
 - Could we potentially sponsor it?
 - Can couple it with the buzz around Earth Day

Traffic Island Mapping –

- Brooke has been working with Sandi and Charlene to create a digitized proof of concept. Here you can see all of the sponsored traffic islands, pictures of them, etc.
- Could use this for Ladies of Salem too
- Feedback was very positive, should continue to build it out.

Ladies of Salem Update –

- New Sponsor – Salem Rainbow Stroll at the Halloween Museum – Tim Maquire is the owner. Their artist is in-house – Lemaris Bell (they/them). They paid for their lady (\$650) which will be delivered this week.
- 3 new ladies for 2023, 28 total Ladies will be on display from June-October.
- No other updates since the last meeting – backboards for the new figureheads should be ready soon for artists Cynthia and Kenneth.

Traffic Island Updates

- Contacted DPW on their recent cleanup of the city which seemed quite thorough.
- As discussed earlier, Brooke has been working with Sandi and Charlene to create a map to capture where all of the traffic islands are.
- Team will be meeting with Nancy Morgan (Salem piano teacher and butterfly garden connoisseur) on Friday 2/24 to find ways to encourage more native plants into our gardens in Salem. She will bring a supply of seeds to help get set up.
 - David Beatty and Lafayette Parks would be a great place to do more of this
- Committee concerns were raised with DPW about weed control, many being addressed earlier in the meeting tonight.
- Need more volunteers and interested in doing a newsletter – Henry's website should help with this.
- More sponsors are needed but we're not sure how many yet. Janelle is going to send a letter to all 2022 sponsors in March and then we'll see how many additional sponsors we'll need to procure.
- The City and the BComm will jointly work to place and remove any of the sponsorship signs.
- Desecration of Temperance Park (Hawthorne and Derby) with porta potties– this is very harmful to the grass and the trees.
 - Brooke talked to Acting Mayor McCarthy because it is his ward and he is ready to discuss it more.
 - There are also water challenges; the trees are elderly and lack water even though the sponsors had been erroneously charged for the water. Katie talked about this earlier in the evening and how it will be addressed but will be a large project.

New Business was not covered this week due to time constraints.

Traffic Island Committee Report – Full update from Sandi Powers

A thorough late-winter cleanup by the DPW of some of the public intersections in downtown Salem has been noticed, and photoed. The weedy, leaf-covered cobblestone island at the intersection of Boston and Essex is immaculate and the traffic island garden at Essex and Summer across from the Witch House raked out and clipped, the Washington St. median same, along with the Mazow island on the corner of the sidewalk at Front and Washington. There is likely more we didn't catch. Kudos to the DPW.

Brooke is working with Sandi and Charlene to develop a Google-style transactional map of the sponsored traffic islands to enable anyone interested to track them. It may be far enough along to reveal at this meeting. There are about three dozen sponsored traffic islands, for-profits (mostly in the downtown area) and non-profits comprising mostly neighborhood gardens. Of the downtown gardens, several are not currently sponsored. The number of non-sponsored gardens may increase as the MOU's are returned in May and June.

The Traffic Island Program members will be meeting with Nancy Morgan, a Salem piano teacher AND a butterfly garden connoisseur and promotor, at Sandi's house on Friday, February 24th, to discuss ways to introduce and encourage more native plants into our gardens in Salem. She will bring a supply of seeds to help get us started planting up pots to set outside until spring planting at our public gardens and even our own yards. We're excited to get started on this and to see where it will take us. She may invite Ward 7 Counselor Andy Varela to join us as he has seeds and some experience in that area and has stated he might be able to help us going forward.

Medium-sized traffic cones are needed to protect our volunteers out on the traffic islands and medians. The two reserved at the city garage are too large, cumbersome, and heavy to fit into our cars and to carry. Two also is not usually enough. Arrangements will be made to order some cheaply on Amazon.

Committee Concerns and Recommendations:

- Weedy curbs, medians, bricked or cobblestoned patios, and other areas, particularly in July and later, extending around and beyond the traffic islands downtown and along the corridors extending from the downtown to the outskirts of the city. These should not be the responsibility of this program; they need more attention from the Beautification Committee and the DPW, i.e., the City. And the broken bricks, wide cracks, need to be grouted in some fashion and the dirt and sand that supports weed seeds, cleaned out.
- More volunteers are needed in the Traffic Island Program to handle the increased workload as it now exists and will likely increase further. Increased numbers of volunteers needs to happen as soon as possible to better accommodate the upcoming season's cleanup and ongoing maintenance needs.

- Sponsors needed. Help needed to attract them. A permanent collaboration should be immediately established between the Beautification Committee and the City; i.e., Main Streets, Chamber of Commerce, and the Rotary, to reach out to, inform, and attract new traffic island sponsors. Several traffic island locations are currently unsponsored and more may become apparent when the sponsors' MOU's are returned in May.
- The placing and removal of Traffic Island sponsorship signs shall be handled jointly between the City and the Traffic Island Program. That is: Our volunteers will seasonally place and remove signs for the downtown for-profit sponsors whose gardens are mostly maintained by the Tree Committee; the City will do the same for the outlying sponsors, often the neighborhood non-profits or those who do not pay for maintenance.
- Desecration of Temperance Park with porta potties at Halloween - or at any time. The trampling of the grass and tree surrounds is harmful to its ecosystem and really, really unattractive. We consider this island at the corner of Hawthorne Blvd. and Derby precious, the survival of the trees precarious. Is there no other place or way to handle this obvious need for relief stations in the area?
- Ditto for the water needs at Temperance Park. The irrigation system has been allowed to fail some years ago and not yet repaired. During last season's drought, many of the plantings failed by August and the trees were showing early leaf browning and release. For all the reasons given above, repair is recommended asap. It can't be stressed more strongly - those large, beautiful trees make that park.