

Beautification Committee Meeting
MINUTES October 11, 2022 7PM
[Held as a hybrid meeting, both in person and virtually]

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

Guests: Janis Manning, Charlene Bailey

Agenda:

Mission Statement

Minutes Approval from Last Meeting

New Member Update and Introduction

Traffic Island Updates

Window Box Competition Update

Lady of Salem Updates

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 September Meeting

- Mary Ellen abstained needing more time to read the updates

New Member Update and Introduction

- 3 new members have been confirmed since the September meeting. Kim, Zach, Henry.
- Diverse backgrounds of members
- New to Salem within the past few years
- Brooke Nagle has started an email thread with members and volunteers to share numbers and availability for upcoming projects.

City Committee Schedule

- Room not available for in person meetings every month at second Tuesday of the month
- Need to reach out to community life center if we want to use a consistent room
 - Has parking which is a plus
- Janelle to send out a survey of availability for timing and days for members to decide on moving time, moving space, or a combination.

Lady of Salem Updates (Led by Mary Ellen)

- Mary Ellen's background information to new members:
 - New members have viewed the LOS Mastheads during the time between meetings.
 - Coordinate artists to interpret figureheads as they relate to the history of the area
 - Began 12 years ago
 - 10 years pushed in earnest, so we celebrate 10 years anniversary
 - Now there is a public art commission, which did not exist in Salem at the project's time of inception
- Migrating the LOS project to the Public Art Commission is being proposed

- The budget would need to be addressed as some funds pushed into the beautification committee were slated specifically for the Ladies.
- Proposed migration of January 2023
- Met with Julie Barry, head of the Public Art Commission
- This would transfer the responsibility of coordination and expansion to the PAC
- Transferring projects can help align artist relationships with the city in terms of payment and contracts etc.
- Mary Ellen would remain chairwoman, working with Sam Fiori to manage the project
- Opportunity to expand venues if done in partnership with PAC
- We have decided to put out feelers for a future decision on spin-off
- Opinions are mixed on moving the project since our team is more than “just plants”
- Ladies being taken down for the season from the lamp posts
 - Wednesday, October 12, 2023
 - Working with the Department of Public Works
 - Storage in a Peabody Essex Museum property
- Two new artists are interested in creating new Ladies
 - Will cost the committee \$500 for the molds
 - This would increase the total from 26 to 28
 - BUDGET APPROVED in a unanimous vote from committee members
- Grant was given to the committee for \$1000
 - Creation of coloring book and scavenger activities among other assets for in-person promotion for families

Traffic Island Updates (Led by Sandi Power)

- Sandi has sent over notes from the past 5 weeks
- 6 Islands have been attended to during this time
- Trees on Hawthorne Blvd (about 10) have been “volcanoed” when mulching
 - Increases rot speed
 - Tempts rodents
 - Stops the continued growth of trees
 - This issue has been flagged for the tree commission
- Lots of cleanup efforts have been made beyond planting; rubbish removal included
- Lafayette Park
 - Grass has been sending out roots in Lafayette Island, and took over.
 - Every new tree in Lafayette Park was also “volcanoed”
 - Sandi worked with the tree commission to get dirt away from trunks
 - The area surrounding the park is not being cared for with the same attention as the gardens and park area.
 - Lots of weeds and grass makes entering the areas less beautiful
- Proposal to recruit neighborhoods to help clean up the parks
 - This can be akin to “Friends of the Salem Common” for these areas
 - Maybe adjunct committee
 - Could use some of the 300 Keep Salem Beautiful volunteers (non-profit)
 - The focus is typically on trash
 - Would need the weeds/grass addressed as well
 - Street sweepers could improve their service to these areas
 - Instead of the one-off cleanups, we’ll need something more regular
- Signs for islands have been picked up throughout the city and returned to the DPW
 - Graphic art could make the building more attractive
 - Litter and trash removal from steps

- These suggestions have been run by Ray
- Could be a fun competition for kids, seen from the street

Discussion of Open Roles: Chairperson and Secretary

- Sandi reminded members to fill the roles instead of the city liaison
 - Chairperson is the one to represent the committee in letters and discussions with the city
 - Members are asked to think about volunteering for the roles
 - These are time-bound roles for 1-2 years
 - Chairperson traditionally sets the agenda, the secretary takes and shares the minutes
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Upcoming Agenda Items

- Defining our project scopes
 - Where do we stand in comparison to other committees
 - What is our focus
 - Which projects will we commit to for upcoming months/years in perpetuity
 - How to collaborate with
 - Public Art Commission
 - Parking and Traffic Committee
 - Keep Salem Beautiful
 - Police (littering citations)
 - DPW
 - Salem Main Streets & Chamber of Commerce for Sponsorships
 - Schools
 - SATV & Media
 - What does the city want Salem to look like? How many people would it take?
- Rubbish Barrels Signage reminding folks to keep our areas clean
 - We can refer to successful Keep MA Beautiful projects
 - Are signs effective?
 - Can more volunteers being visible be the answer to the issue?
- Standing agenda item: Things we see
 - Requests for DPW (recognizing they are understaffed)
- Solidifying members for Chairperson and Secretary
- Voting to skip December meeting
- Documenting forms and processes – need someone to volunteer

Action Items:

- **Janelle** to invite **Julie Barry** to the next meeting to talk about LOS migration and committee overlaps
- **Brooke** to lead addressing microphone setup for better sound from the in-person meeting room for those dialing in
- **Sandi** to take photos of the DPW area that needs cleanup and graphic updates
- **Brooke** to add October traffic island notes
- **Brooke** to find suitable meeting space for our hybrid November meeting
- **All Members** are to consider volunteering themselves for chair and secretary positions, to be voted on in the future meeting. Reach out to **Janelle** if interested.

Traffic Island Report for 10/11/22 (from Sandi Power)

September and October have been busy months cleaning up sponsored islands for the winter. The weather has finally become somewhat normal for fall and helped us to make up for our slack attendance in the frightfully dry and hot months of August and early September.

Riley Plaza's fall light up - Early in September we asked for and were provided a purchase order # allowing up to \$200 for fall plants to set out around the Plaza for fall color. These were purchased and planted at The Chimney Co., under the Rotary sign at the Plaza, at Bouchard Co. and at the entrance to Riley Plaza itself. with more to go in on Oct. 15 at the top of Lafayette Park facing up Lafayette St. Sam has also enhanced RCG's median strip at the Plaza with many yellow mums.

On Sept. 21 Temperance Park at the corner of Derby and Hawthorne Blvd. was intensively groomed and readied for overwintering. It's poor condition, due to an undisclosed failure of the irrigation system and the summer's heat and drought, has led to our rethinking the planting of this park to accommodate more native plants, with the possibility of including butterfly -friendly plantings. A meeting with a local woman who has successfully done this is planned.

On Sept. 28th we undertook all of Hawthorne Blvd. median strip; k i.e., the gardens of Shaw's Ins. and Fisher and Orfaly, as well as the many tree surrounds on the median strip overgrown with crabgrass. We finished off by removing all the curb grasses and weeds in the dirt rimming both sides of the median. This led to the following -

... While weeding the mulch around the trees, we noted that all the trees there had been "volcanoed," i.e., dirt and mulch piled up against the trees instead of spread outwards around them. This forces the trees to spend energy to grow roots from the trunks, delays the growth of the tree and encourages early failure. I reported the volcano-ing to the Tree Commission. This issue was also noted at Lafayette Park in August and was reported at that time. That contractor may be required to rectify it. In Massachusetts landscapers are not required to be licensed; until they are, this problem will continue to exist.

On Sept. 25 and 26 I spent a large amount of time clearing out the weeds and grass from the fairly new concrete aprons surrounding Lafayette Park on the Harbor St. side of the park. The park is neatly mowed but the debris and weeds surrounding it have become an eyesore. Based on the fact that there are walking paths and benches at the Harbor St. end, serving a lot of smokers and lunchers, also a bus stop, we have recommended to the DPW they install a bin there. The director is taking it under advisement. This led to a mini meeting of our volunteers to propose a plan going forward to recruit neighborhoods to adopt areas of parks and downtown public areas. For instance, *"Friends of Lafayette Park."*

On Oct. 4, the four Hosta Gardens on the Washington Street sidewalk were cleaned up. They have been severely affected by the heat and drought and will need to be extensively refurbished in the spring with added loam and new plants.

During the first week in October, Sandi and Charlene brought in the signs from almost all the sponsored islands (about 30, a few more to go) and stacked them outside against the DPW building, ready to be cleaned and sorted as to location, and stored in two carriages inside for the winter.

The evidence of unsightly trash and weeds around the DPW on Jefferson Ave. brings up another possibility of a project that the Beautification Committee might find interesting to address.

Sandi Power, Chair

Traffic Island Program

Program Volunteers: Charleen Bailey, Janis Manning, Jack Melin, Nancy Neville

Note: Former volunteer Lucy Sprague retired in August, Pam Shelton is on break, working full time for the foreseeable future.