**Beautification Committee Meeting** MINUTES September 13th, 2022 7PM

**Present**: Mary Ellen Halliwell, Sandi Power, Sam Fiore, Brooke Nagle, Ariana Lema-Driscoll, Janelle Rolke

**Guests**: Andy Varela, Alice Merkl, Janis Manning, Nancy Neville, Sam Fiore, Henry Gulergun

**Absent:** Lucy Sprague, Jeremy Baker

**June minutes approved**

**Agenda:**

Mission Statement

New Member Update

Traffic Island Updates

Window Box Competition Update

Lady of Salem Update

**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.

**New Member Update**: Janelle confirmed there are 3 new applicants that have applied and were nominated to become members of the committee. The City Council will review their applications and nominations on the 15th and they will be voted/accepted at the City Council meeting on September 22nd.

* Sandi sent over the traffic island updates, a full overview was sent in an email to the committee
* Highlights from the update include
  + 6 Volunteers (not Washington St Median)
  + Only 10 Islands have paid for sponsorship.
  + $75 Watering/$75 Maintenance
  + Abandoned islands often get cared for as well, beyond what was paid for
  + Irrigation updates are needed for some plots, and new irrigation is needed in others
  + Volunteers carried water by hand to nurse plots back to life
  + 2 areas need sponsorship
* Traffic Island Volunteers are upset that their hard work was undone by broken irrigation.
  + Need proactive solutions
  + Need to have the city more in tune with the work that needs protecting
  + Katie at the city is taking this as an action item to investigate
  + Communication from the city is needed when utilities are disrupted
  + Replacement plantings are being considered for next year
  + Irrigation for Washington St median was also broken by food delivery trucks at Barton Square
* Counselor Varela suggests adding new organic matter to combat climate issues with extreme temperatures
  + Evaporation takes place 12-24 inches down, drying soil.
  + Mitigating soil 12+ inches can give more of a buffer to reduce the need for irrigation
  + Katie and Ray are spread too thin to hope for consistent watering
  + Mulch does not qualify while coconut choir, peat, compost, and biochar more helpful.
  + Established perennials have been drying out around Salem
  + Let’s look into CPA funds to see if that can help with amendments. $3-7K potentially
  + Mack park food farm could be considered for volunteers for the big project
* Donation button recommended on town site
* Alice Merkl has brought up the issue of abandoned newspaper boxes with the city as a trash and safety issue.
  + Responsibilities of publications but they are defunct
* The city council agenda on Thursday, September 15th will cover trash pickup.
  + New trash barrels needed
  + street sweeping on the agenda
  + Upcoming government services meeting will be of interest to the city
* Window box competition proposed to return
  + In conjunction with Salem Garden Club
  + Looking to bringing it back in 2023, SGC had low personnel making it difficult to plan for 2022
* Lady of Salem Updates
  + 26 Embellished figureheads that primarily line the pedestrian mall.
  + Put up in June, through October
    - Tentative DPW takedown October 12, 9a
    - Hopefully stored by PEM @ 179 Essex Street
  + Recipient of $1000 grant, used for graphic design services of brochure and rack cards, scavenger game, coloring book, online polls, etc
  + 200 tour booklets, 400 rack cards placed at Salem Ferry, Town Hall, Hawthorn Hotels, tour guides, and various businesses.
  + Held a table during heritage days
    - giving out guides
    - had a cutout for photo opportunities
  + New requests have come in from sponsors and artists to create mastheads and bring the total to 30 pieces

Action Items:

* Identify/locate/photograph Existing islands that are sponsored
* Investigate CPA funds (Community preservation act)
* See if current funds are sufficient for future projects
* Discuss how to mitigate traffic at Barton Square to eliminate parking spots at the intersection, and add a granite blocker (by Curly Girl Candy Shop)
* Alice Merkl to follow up with the city to get someone to track down owners of newspaper boxes to remove as needed
* Ariana to draft a letter to city officials on behalf of BComm to ask for cleanup support
* Alice to send the government meeting schedule to BCOMM for members to attend
* Brooke to prep zoom video component for next meeting

Upcoming Agenda Items:

* The recording process for getting sponsorships
* Recruitment of sponsors
* Volunteer appreciation event
* Discuss ways to solicit funds and collect money
* Barton Square parking issue making it hard to turn around median
* Trash pickup in the downtown area
  + Cigarette butt containers
  + Old newspaper boxes
* Ladies of Salem October Update
* Traffic Island October Update