

City of Salem, Massachusetts



**"Know Your Rights Under the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A ss. 18-25 and
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033."**

The City Council Committee on Public Health, Safety and Environment co-posted with the Committee of the Whole
met remotely on June 28, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

for the purpose of discussing the matters(s) listed below. Notice of this meeting was posted on
June 9, 2022 at 8:23 A.M.

(This meeting is being recorded)

ATTENDANCE

PHSE: C. Prosniewski(chair), M. Riccardi, J. Cohen, A. Merkl, A. Varela

From the City: David Knowlton, Ray Jodoin, David Kucharsky, Katherine Kennedy

SUBJECT(S)

#220 - Usage of road salts during winter months, its effects on the environment, and possible alternatives.

D. Knowlton – gave an overview/introduction to the use of road salts. Salem usage is in the area of 5,700 tons yearly. Covid brought unexpected challenges such as lack of employees and equipment. Salem is trying to minimize use of salt by re-calibrating equipment, looking to use liquid brine which will require special application rate is even throughout the city.

A. Varela – questioned using alternatives such as chloride or potassium.

D. Knowlton – stated Salem is more interested in brine and expressed the need for a special vehicle to apply.

M. Riccardi – stated Salem usage appears to have increased, it's impact on the environment, the cost of alternatives and which sidewalks in Salem are salted by DPS.

D. Knowlton – Salem salts sidewalks downtown, in the area around the schools and shared paths. Also to decrease usage he is aggressively pursuing funding for brine application equipment.

A. Merkl – questioned the brine difference.

D. Knowlton – Stated it is a liquid mixture not as salty and more friendly to the environment because much less salt covers more area.

K. Kennedy – asked where/how the salt is purchased.

D. Knowlton – many communities purchased salt at Eastern Salt in Chelsea where it arrives by ship from other parts of the world.

PUBLIC COMMENT

S. Kapantis, Wisteria St. – wanted to know the cost of salt vs. cost of brine.

M. Riccardi – asked for a timeline/goal.

D. Knowlton – stated he is in the process of seeking the funding for the change but has yet to have data on how much the city would save.

L. McClain – would like to see more information on infrastructure and ecological impacts.

M. Riccardi – motioned to keep the matter in committee and to hear from a representative from the Conservation Commission.

J. Cohen – 2nd

Motion passed 5/0

#277 - Enforcement and penalties relative to snow and ice removal.

D. Knowlton – explained the DPS clears the sidewalks in the B5 (downtown) district along with public lots. Also supervises the clearing of public scholls and adjacent footpaths/sidewalks. Salem has some specialized sidewalk clearing equipment as “bobcats” and “skidsteers” and uses private contractors for other city properties.

A. Merkl – asked the process of enforcing the clearance of sidewalks for homeowners and businesses.

J. Cohen – explained the Building Inspectors office administers most of the fines and it is a difficult process to address all complaints.

D. Knowlton – added the fines are \$25/\$75/\$100.

L. McClain – stated that many businesses are not clearing their sidewalks, believes the fines are too low and should be re-examined. Also, large piles accumulated in intersections should be removed.

D. Kucharsky – informed the committee that this same issue was addressed in a 2020 meeting and would send a link to the minutes.

M. Riccardi – asked if any actions were taken after that meeting, D. Kuchrasky said none.

C. Watson-Felt – suggested there should be separate fines for commercial properties.

A. Merkl – asked how we fine chain businesses.

L. McClain – also commented of the red tape involved in tracking who to cite in a large corporation.

PUBLIC COMMENT

S. Kapantis, Wisteria St. – thanked DPS for its efforts keeping the Salvo Walkway clear and supports the increase in fines

A. Merkl – suggested more outreach to Salem’s business community.

P. Morsillo – suggested we contact the solicitor’s office to legally separate commercial property fines from homeowners, and more education for the public on this issue.

L. McClain – would like to hear form Public Health and the hazards in walking.

P. Morsillo – would also like to have input from the Building Inspector and City Solicitor.

M. Riccardi – motioned to keep the matter in committee.