

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 via zoom on April 27th at 6:00 P.M. for the purpose of discussing the matters(s) for the purpose of meet with Friends of the Common to discuss plans and fundraising for maintenance and repair of interior, and Petition from Steve Kapantais to address the City's compliance to ADA Law. Notice of this meeting was posted on April 22nd at 11:03 AM

(This meeting is being recorded)

**ATTENDANCE**

**ABSENT WERE:** None

**Also in Attendance:** C Hapworth, C Madore, C McCarthy

Friends of Salem Common: Susan Moulton, Liz Aberg (Treasurer), Maryann Curtin (Clerk) and Leslie Harrington (Director)

Salem Common Neighborhood Association: Dennis Maroney; City of Salem: Jenna Ide, Ray Joidon, Alyssa Doherty; Deb Lobsitz, Chair, Commission on Disabilities

**SUBJECT(S)**

**#172 – To meet with the Friends of the Salem Common to discuss plans and fundraising efforts for the maintenance and repair of the Salem Common Interior. Further ordered that the following invited: Planning Board Chair or designees, Jenna Ide, City Planner or Lev McCarthy and Parks & Recreation Director and a representative from the Salem Common Neighborhood Association**

Susan Moulton from the Friends of Salem Common presented an overview of the "INVENTORY AND CONDITIONS" Study of the Salem Common, that was commissioned by the Friends of the Salem Common (FOSC) in 2020. The work was done by Halvorson/Tighe & Bond (Boston) and provides a comprehensive review of work suggested to be done in the Salem Common. S Moulton requested guidance on priorities as they can focus fundraising efforts.

R Jodoin, City of Salem, Discussed on-going and planned projects for the Salem Common: Cub-cuts along the common; bench installs; working with Aggregate on re-doing the stone dust paths. Working together with D Maroney and the SCNA on the Common Arch: restoring the pad underneath (planting, brickwork, cobbles, etc)

S Moulton asked if the bench issue needs to go in front of the Historical Commission. R Jodoin confirmed it does.

J Ide reviewed past funding; 1.1Mil over the past 6-7 years has been allocated to the Common, most going to the Common Fence. Some is Grant funded, the majority is Capital Funds. Phase 5 of the Fence project is starting. 95 sections out of 253 will be completed after phase 5. 158 sections remaining (various levels of work needed. Avg cost 13K per section). Total cost approx 2 Mil. Cost could escalate if spread over time, as costs go up, etc.

For other items; 1.5 Mil has been allocated from the Signature Parks fund. The majority has been allocated towards bandstand work and path work. There is some funding remaining from that, but it would not cover everything noted in the report. Some items should be put into the operational budget, but items such as lightning, bandstand should be capital budget.

Capital Projects are currently focused on finishing Bertram Field and Forest River Park, and Willons / Pioneer Village. The goal would be to have the Common work completed by the 2025 to coincide with the 2026 quad-centennial

C Dibble thanked the Friends for stepping forward. He noted work he completed in the 80s related to the Common.

C Prosniewski asked J Ide: How much of the 1.5 Mil from the Signature parks will be allocated to the band stand?

J Ide stated the last estimate was 800K, but that needs to be re-visited as it is a few years old

C Prosniewski asked what the total is needed to do the work recommended in this report. S Moulton stated the total in the report about 3 Mil. This does not include the Bandstand, Fence or Arch work (approx another 3 Mil). This total includes some items that are maintenance, and is forward thinking (over the course of years). The Friends is working on possible state funding, as well as fundraising efforts. S Moulton asked about the special fund for the common and what the balance available is. C Riccardi noted that Trish O'Brien from Parks and Rec was unable to attend this meeting (she would be the best to answer this question)

C McCarthy discussed the Common Fence and the damage that is easily done to it, and the expensive cost of fixing it. He feels it should be a different, less expensive and easier to maintain material

J Ide suggested we take a pause after this phase to discuss other ideas for the fence. There also needs to be a maintenance plan for the fence so it lasts longer. We also need to think of security for the fence; both see where the damage is from, and possible adding physical barriers to locations that may be damaged by plows for example.

C McCarthy noted the damage easily done by plows to both the pathways, their edging and the fence. There needs to be a better maintenance plan

C Dibble requested clarification on Phase 5 of the fence. J Ide stated phase 5 is 187K. C Dibble stated we need to complete Phase 5 right.

C Morsillo asked what the Friends would like to prioritize. S Moulton stated she would like to focus on the front entrance of the Common, perhaps create better signage. She also stated better lightning, especially for safety. But overall, they would like to have more of these conversations to find out what others would prioritize.

C Riccardi asked who has been included in this conversation and shown this report. S Moulton stated that SCNA, Parks and Rec commission have been briefed. It is a city wide space and they are eager to get feedback from the city as a whole.

### **Public Testimony**

S Kapantis, 23 Wisteria St; Thanked the Friends of the Common, especially for providing a focus on Accessibility. He also noted that the Common is our oldest park in the city with a lot of history. State and Federal money should be a focus.

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C Dominguez moved for this matter to be received and filed with no further action, seconded by C Morsillo.

The PHSE Committee voted 5-0 on the motion to receive and file the presentation from the Friends of Salem Common.

### **#20 - ADA Resident Petition; Meet with ADA coordinator to review ADA transition plan tracking**

C. Riccardi introduced J Ide, Alyssa Doherty (IHCD) and Deb Lobsitz. Stated that they will be demo'ing the new "Smart Sheets" tracker that has been presented to the Commission on Disabilities and the City Departments. This tracker is used to report of ADA improvement items needed within the city.

J Ide provided an overview of the "Salem ADA / MAAB Tracking". This provides a breakdown of the projects needed for ADA compliance; by Status (completed, etc) by Department (Library, etc) and size, among other items. A link will be provided for the public shortly, and will be added to the Commission on Disabilities section on Salem.com

A Doherty ran through the work completed thus far to help get departments up to speed and come into Compliance. She has been focusing on working with the Building Department, and will move on to other departments. She is working on scheduling a presentation to teachers to help solve the smaller classroom issues that do not require budget, but knowledge. Schools & Park and Rec have the bulk of the tasks.

C McCarthy asked how up to date the list for the schools is? Have items likely changed due to Social Distancing and Kids not being in school? J Ide noted that the majority of the items with the school are egress or signage items. A lot will be solved with the presentation for the teachers.

C Dominguez asked what the total is to bring our issues to correct. And is there any aide from the state or federal. J Ide stated the small projects total about 1.2 MIL. The larger projects are harder to estimate as they contain many pieces (for example playground issues, there are a lot of variances there). J Ide noted the funding we have attempted to receive. She has noted that grant money received does always require an accessibility requirement

D Lobsitz wanted to clarify that the state funding Mass Office on Disabilities provides grant money to the city. They provided the grant money that funded the transition plan study for example. and they have provided money annually to the city. (The transition plan was completed as it is required in order to qualify for grant money). Our State Representatives (Sen Joan Lovely and Rep Paul Tucker) have also been advocates for funding. The local commission also receives all of the money from the parking fines issues from accessible parking spot violations. The CoD has a sub committee to disperse these funds received.

#### **Public Testimony**

S Kapantis, 23 Wisteria St; Noted we need to make sure we are not completed projects without accessibility, and then correcting after the fact. He Thanks J Ide and the CoD for their work and he sees the work that is happening. He is excited to see the work moving forward.

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C Dibble wanted to know what recourse we could do for projects that were not completed correctly. J Ide stated tracking is not going to solve that - more of an educational thing. It is difficult to get to the root sometimes during the project.

C Dibble repeated what D Lobsitz stated earlier about the funds with the CoD from accessible parking violations and that money should be better used. D Lobsitz stated the fine is as high as it can go and listed some items that were funded with this money, (Past items funded include: Accessible benches, curb cuts and beach access, audible alerts for crossing) but noted it is not an enormous amount of money. She also noted there are legal limits on what can be fined for someone who may have made an error in their job related to accessibility

C Dibble moved that we report back a favorable update on the progress we have made so far and for the matter to remain in committee.

C Riccardi questioned the need to keep this in committee as the ADA project, as noted earlier in the meeting, will take years to complete. Also the CoD has this as a standing agenda item, as well as a sub-committee. The petitioner also noted a favorable response to where this stood. Was not sure what else the committee will need to do, and if needed an Order could be submitted yet again.

Roll Call to keep in committee:

C Dibble: Yes

C Dominguez: Yes

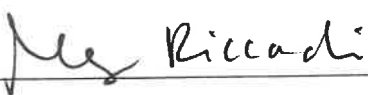
C Morsillo: No

C Prosniewski: Yes

C Riccardi: No

The PHSE Committee voted 3-0 on the motion to provide a favorable status update to the council and to keep the matter in Committee.

On the motion of C. Dibble, seconded by C Dominguez the meeting adjourned at 8:04 P.M.

  
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(Chairperson)