



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
TREE COMMISSION

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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR
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ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
August 17, 2020

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on August 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

Chair Darleen Melis, Vice Chair Kirt Rieder, Members: Naomi Cottrell, Curtis Dragon, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, David Rowand and Susan Yochelson; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Joshua Arenstam.

1. Tree Warden's Report

- Grant Updates:
 - The MVP planting grant project is near completion. The final task is the porous paving and that bid was received, with only one company bidding on the project. The letter of acceptance and the notice to proceed will take a couple of weeks to complete, with signatures and then the trees in the Essex Street, Derby Square, Central Street and Front Street will be finished.
 - The Community Block Development Grant (CBDG) paperwork has been submitted, no word yet.
 - The Fall planting list has been submitted to the planting contractor and Mr. LeBlanc anticipates that will be towards the end of September and possibly early October. Several of the locations need to be prepped and that will take place over the next couple of weeks. This list will be flexible, pre-planting notifications, gas testing and site appropriateness will continue to evolve.
 - Since we last met there was a considerable windstorm (hurricane) that rolled through Salem on August 4, 2020. There were over (45) reports of tree damage, (5) trees were lost and there are still some evaluations to be made to finalize the total damage. Crews stayed late and outside help was called in to help with some of the damage.
 - A Public Shade Tree Hearing took place on August 5, 2020. Two trees had been requested to be removed by companies working on development projects in the City. 94 Washington Square East and 106 Bridge Street. WSE received (6) written objections for that tree and (14) objections were received for the Bridge Street site. For informational purposes, once there is (1) objection in writing, then the Tree Warden cannot issue a permit, it goes to the Mayor for final approval. This is where the decision

is finalized. Then, based on input from the Tree Warden and with all the documentation from the letters of objection and any input during the Hearing, the Mayor will decide. I have forwarded to the Mayor the input and my recommendations for the WSE project and have already had one meeting and another follow up is scheduled with the Bridge Street project and that should take place later this week. I will gather all the information that I can from the engineers and other outside consultants to get the best information that I can on the possibility of tree preservation for that site before I write a recommendation to the Mayor.

- The news has finally come from the State DCR and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs that Salem has been included in the Greening of the Gateway Cities Program. This is a (3) year project comprised of both public and private forces that aims to plant 2,400 trees in Salem. Along with this program comes annual opportunities for Grants that support the tree planting process. The Planning Department will take the lead on this and assist with the identification of locations within a designated heat island and within an Economic Justice zone. The split on this planting plan is for 80/20, with approximately 2,000 trees planted in private property, by planting crews, and another 400 on public locations. The estimate is a 1.5-million-dollar grant value. The area will encompass roughly 750 acres. This translates into 5 to 10 trees per acre and will represent 50 acres of new forest in carbon sequestration and storm water collection as well as energy efficiency improvements by planting trees. More information will come out about the program. Right now, the program is running in Lynn and there may be some activity in Salem this fall, but definitely next spring.

2. DCR Urban and Community Challenge Grant

The DCR Challenge Grant that was awarded to Salem is in the second round of signatures and Mr. LeBlanc expects completion once that has been filed. The end date on that Grant is December 31, 2021, so there is no rush and will be nicely set-up for future planting that will take place.

3. Remarks from the Public: None

- 4. Approve Minutes:** Mr. L'Heureux moved to approve the July 20, 2020 Tree Commission Minutes. Mr. Rieder seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Salem Tree Fund – Update on Century Tree sites for September 2020 plantings

The Commission has roughly \$5,000.00 in the Salem Tree Fund. They have estimated \$700 per tree and would like to plant approximately 10 trees per year which may go up or down depending on the donations. Different areas around the city were discussed where these funds might be used to plant thriving Century Trees. Some of the sites that were discussed in last month's meeting were found to be unsuitable because of overhead wiring and soil issues. The following sites were suggested by the Commission and the Tree Warden:

- 18 Broad Street on the Pickering House tree lawn
- 3 Dalton Parkway setback on the lawn
- Post Office, setback on the north and south lawns (two trees)

- 249 Lafayette Street
- 241 Lafayette Street at the corner of Leach Street
- Jefferson Avenue meets Loring Avenue
- Leach at Green Street

Mr. Dragon moved to approve the locations for planting Century Trees for further investigation by Mr. LeBlanc. Mr. Rieder seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. LeBlanc had investigated three locations and found them to be suitable for the needs of tall trees so they were brought forward for acceptance as designated Century Trees:

- 18 Broad Street on the Pickering House tree lawn. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.
- 3 Dalton Parkway setback on the lawn. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously with the exception of Mr. Dragon who recused himself.
- Post Office, north and south sides (two trees). A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously with the exception of Ms. Melis who recused herself.

The Postmaster has signed the consent form for the two trees. Mr. LeBlanc will get the consent forms signed for the other two properties.

NOTE: Mr. LeBlanc will continue investigating any proposed sites for suitability.

6. Tags for Century Trees

Ms. Yochelson presented several options for “mock” tree tags and discussed the following:

- Using 5”x3” tags or 6”x4” tree tags
- Shorten the verbiage on the tags
- Having tags maintain the landscape orientation with holes in the middle of the top and bottom. The plastic-coated copper wire can thread through the holes.

Ms. Yochelson will create more “mock” tree tags to incorporate the suggestions of the Commission for distribution and will follow-up with the representative from Larkin Label. The tags will list the tree species first in Latin, in italics, and then the common name in regular font.

7. Consent Form for Century Tree Program

Ms. Melis asked Solicitor Beth Rennard to look at the Century Tree Consent Form. Solicitor Rennard has written many consent forms for the city to permit similar entry onto the property of other entities so she has no difficulty with the Century Tree Program. She did offer an alteration on page 2 of the form that allows the Tree Warden not to perform the two-year care program for the Century Trees if funding or staffing become an issue.

Mr. Dragon moved to adopt and approve the alterations that Solicitor Rennard suggested on the Consent Form for Century Trees. Ms. Yochelson seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Tree Replacement Funds – update on locations for September plantings:

The Commission discussed the following locations to apply the Tree Replacement Funds:

- Lee Fort Terrace - The Salem Housing Authority has teamed up with Boston-based housing developer and landed a \$225,000 state grant to study the project at Lee Fort Terrace. The property is located near Bentley Academy Charter School and Irzyk Park and consists of eight buildings with 50 one-bedroom units and a cut-through road connecting Fort Avenue and Szetela Lane.
- Loring Ave. where it meets Jefferson Ave. has a large traffic island that can be investigated for a street tree.

Mr. LeBlanc will investigate alternate locations to use the Tree Replacement Funds and will follow-up with the Commission.

9. Discussion: coordination with Building Inspector for tree permits - lessons learned from Saunders Street Development Project

Ms. Melis suggested that there be coordination with the Building Inspector, Tree Warden and the public for tree permits and to allude the public to the Tree Ordinance, Sec. 43-23. – Permit and Sec. 43-53. – Permit application. – Protected Tree.

Mr. LeBlanc suggested using One Stop for the initial meetings. The Planning Department is involved with the tree permits as well and they have a process of implementing the permits.

10. New Business - None

11. Next Meeting Dates: Monday, September 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM and Monday, October 19 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM

12. Adjournment: Mr. Rieder made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Yochelson. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk

**Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033**