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KIRT RIEDER, VICE CHAIR

ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 20, 2021**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on September 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

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

1. Tree Warden's Report

- The Salem Tree Department continues to work their way through the See Click Fix requests. Mr. LeBlanc will have to do some sub-contracting to catch up on the pruning list and a couple of the High-Risk tree take downs.
- The tree watering program by the city contractor will conclude at the end of September. If the month of October begins to have several dry days, the tree department will go out and water newly planted trees as needed. The trees that will be planted this season will be watered for the first (30) days, per contract.
- The first draft of the fall planting list was sent out by the mayor's office at the end of August. So far, there have been three (3) refusals, from prior See Click Fix requests or locations where trees had been removed and stumps ground. The list was also given to Gas Safety, Inc. Bob Ackley and he has tested all sixty-five (65) locations, three (3) of which came back as positive. Mr. Ackley reports these locations to National Grid.
- Based on discussions had by this Commission in August, a tree removal permit was issued to The House of the Seven Gables.
- Mr. LeBlanc has been out to the construction site at the corner of Congress and Leavitt Streets in the past couple of weeks to go over that operation. At first, the tree contractors that the site developer had contacted felt that the London plane tree on Congress Street would need to be removed. Mr. LeBlanc worked with the project manager doing the site work and told him he needed to find a company that would perform protection and preservation operations to do whatever it took to reduce the impact on that tree. Sav-A-tree was brought in, and they did a nice job of air spading in the root zone and root pruning of two visible roots to help preserve the tree.
- One trench permit is in the works for a large tree at #46 Broad Street. The city water connection to the house needs to be replaced and it runs directly under a 36" DBH tree. Mr. LeBlanc is working with the contractor to dig on either side of the tree drip line and then pull the new water connection under the tree. The contractor has agreed to

this method and the work will be monitored. (See [Salem Tree Manual, Figure 12, Tunneling Under Root Zone.](#))

- The fall planting program will tentatively start on the 12th of October and continue during the weeks following the long weekend.

2. **Greening of the Gateway Cities**

- Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch – community outreach and DCR Forester David Bresnahan were on the call. Ms. Warren expects this year’s DCR community outreach contract to be signed by the state soon. The [30,000th GGC Program Tree Planting Ceremony](#) in Westfield, MA was the occasion of the announcement of the additional grants to Salem. A Municipal Grant for Public Tree Planting Support for \$20,000 for “Preparing street tree belt sites for new plantings by removing pavement and stumps, adding soil and mulch; watering recently planted trees” and an Outreach, Tree Education and Care Grant of \$15,000 to Salem Sound Coastwatch to “Conduct outreach and distribute GGC materials to residents in the planting zone; conduct tree education and care programs with residents, train tree stewards and ambassadors.”
- Ms. Warren and Mr. Bresnahan will contact the four schools to focus on planting trees. They may ask the PTO for some help. Ms. Warren will get in touch with neighborhood association presidents, Flora Tonthat of Bridge Street and Lucy Corchado of The Point to promote the program. Ms. Melis recommended she also make a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce and explain to them how the program works.
- At this point, Mr. Rieder asked Mr. LeBlanc about the private trees that are failing along First Street. They were planted as a requirement of the Planning Board approval process. However, it appears that they were planted in crushed aggregate fill with planting soils on top. Mr. LeBlanc stated, “unfortunately, because the trees are on private property, the Tree Warden has no jurisdiction in the planting of the trees. However, if the owners of the property in the future wish to remove those planted in the 20’ setback, because they fail to thrive, then the Protected Tree Ordinance will come into play”.
- Post meeting note: The health of the trees in the development at Whaler’s Lane and First Street will be overseen by the Planning Board under the following board decision:
Amended Decision: January 23, 2020

Landscaping

- a. The applicant shall make every attempt to keep the originally approved 465 caliper inches of shade trees on site. If site conditions necessitate the removal of caliper inches, up to the loss of 75 caliper inches as proposed in the newly approved plan set, the applicant shall conform with the following condition:
 - i. Prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the applicant shall make a donation in kind to the City of Salem tree fund for the value of the net negative loss of caliper inches compared to the originally approved 465 caliper inches of shade trees. Each caliper inch of shade tree lost shall be valued at \$150/inch.
- Mr. Bresnahan updated the GGC spring planting information:

Ward #	# of Acres Within Planting Zone	Trees Planted
1	41.5	0
2	177.2	91
3	159.7	36
4	141.4	21
5	225.1	43
6	19.2	0
7	20.2	0

- Mr. Bresnahan planted 70 trees on private property so far this fall. He has 150 private trees in the backlog and he is hoping to get to all of them this fall. They have 12 public trees that have been approved and gas tested and that are set to plant in October on Gardner, Endicott, Winthrop, Broad, Congress and Hawthorne Streets.
 - Signs advertising the GGC program have been placed on Hancock and Summit Streets.
 - Mike Griffin will work in Salem one day per week. While most of the tree requests have been connected to responses to last spring's postcards, Mike toured The Point and left flyers about the free trees.
3. Captain Dusty's Ice Cream, Derby Street – removal of Protected Tree without a permit – Mr. LeBlanc

John and Lisa Bartlett, owners of Captain Dusty's Ice Cream, were on the call and said they were not aware that the tree they planted in 2002 was a Protected Tree and regret taking it down. They will work with the commission to go by the rules and regulations regarding either donating to the Tree Replacement Fund or replacing the tree. They want to make it right and need help with a plan, a best course of action.

Mr. LeBlanc had sent a certified letter to them to explain the ramifications of the removal. The tree measured 12" DBH, which at current replacement rate of \$225 per inch equals \$2,700) paid into the Tree Replacement Fund or the planting of four (4) three-inch trees. He explained that Section 43-53. - Permit application, (f) Removal of a Protected Tree states that an applicant has the option to plant a tree on an abutter's property, with their permission. In answer to the Bartlett's question about when to plant the replacement trees, Mr. Arenstam expressed the commission's preference for a long-term plan for replacement and to "do it once and do it right" after any construction has been completed. Ms. Melis also pointed out Section 43-58 Penalties, (b) Removal without a permit that requires a fine of \$200.00 per DBH inch as determined by the Tree Warden for each tree removed. Mr. LeBlanc replied that the penalty will be enforced if the replacement trees are not planted or payment into the Tree Replacement Fund is not performed as described in his letter to the applicants.

Ms. Yochelson asked the Bartletts for suggestions about how to make the tree ordinance more widely known. They suggested a notation on the property tax bill with a check box, "I have read the tree ordinance." would have been helpful. As active members of the

Salem Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Melis asked them to mention their experience to get the word out regarding Protected Trees and the tree ordinance.

4. Tree Preservation Incentive Proposal – Liz Vago

In the absence of Ms. Vago, this topic was tabled for the next Tree Commission meeting.

5. Revised Century Tree pdf for TC webpage

The commission finalized Ms. Yochelson's one-page revision of the Century Tree Program flyer. It will be posted to the Tree Commission's website.

Mr. Rieder made a motion to modify the Century Tree Program as suggested. Seconded by Mr. Arenstam. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Mission Statement

Ms. Yochelson and Ms. McCarter drafted a Mission Statement for the Tree Commission's webpage. The commission made some word changes, edits and finalized it.

Mr. Arenstam made a motion to approve the edits in the Mission Statement and for it to be posted on the Tree Commission's website. Seconded by Mr. Rowand. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. American Rescue Plan – proposal for funding of tree work

Ms. Melis and Mr. Rieder reviewed with the commission members the letter that they had composed, previewed by Mr. LeBlanc, in response to the American Rescue Plan request for community ideas for some of the \$35 million funds that Salem will receive.

Comments from the discussion were incorporated into the attached letter that was sent to the Mayor and Nick Downing, Federal Funds Manager.

8. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of August 16, 2021

Mr. Arenstam made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Minutes of August 16, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Dragon. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Cottrell excused herself from the meeting at this point.

9. New Business: Ms. Melis reminded the members that the annual election of the chair and vice chair will be held at the October meeting. She also reminded the members that their appointments conclude in the spring and summer of 2022. They are eligible for reappointment but are requested to seek their replacements if they wish to retire.

10. Next Meeting Dates: Monday, **October 18, 2021** at 6:00 p.m. and Monday, **November 15, 2021** at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

11. **Adjournment**

Mr. Rieder made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Arenstam. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:40 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**