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Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 15, 2021**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on November 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

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

1. Tree Warden's Report

- The Salem Tree Department finished up the fall planting this past Saturday and the total for the fall season was 65 trees. This brings the yearly total for 2021 to 104. Mr. LeBlanc will document all the locations by wards. The total removals from the past year are approximately 54.
- The job posting from HR for an additional tree climber for the city tree crew was not filled in-house, so it has been posted externally and Mr. LeBlanc has seen at least one qualified applicant.
- Today, four (4) staff members went to bucket truck safety classes at Cranes 101 Safety Training Specialists in Bellingham. The course is a refresher on the basic safety concerns while using an aerial lift. According to recent OSHA Region 1, there have been 25 fatalities over the past five years in this industry. The tree crew has also received EHAP, Electrical Hazard Awareness Training, Phase 1 training within the past 12 months through the city insurance carrier, MIIA.
- On October 26 and 27th, the City of Salem experienced what is now being called a "bomb cyclone" or Nor'easter. The staff worked throughout the night with numerous locations across the city where trees or tree branches had taken down power lines. In total there were over 200 individual locations with tree damage. The work is still not complete as tree stumps, stacked wood and some locations with brush on the side of open space areas are still being worked on. Probably one of the most tumultuous windstorms that Mr. LeBlanc has ever been out in. Truly winds gust in the 50-65MPH range.
- The DCR Challenge Grant is getting the finishing touches before the paperwork is submitted to the state for reimbursement. Once that document is completed, Mr. LeBlanc will provide a copy to all commission members. With the study that was

done, the spring tree planting locations should be laid out well in advance and the focus will be on the identified heat island locations and parts of the city sectioned off as Environmental Justice areas.

- The holiday tree will be placed at Lappin Park on Monday, November 22, 2021. Mr. LeBlanc anticipates the decorating will tie up the tree crew for several days, along with the holiday wreaths being put out.
- The tree crew will work continuously through the winter months, as pruning is beneficial to some tree species during the dormant period.

2. **Greening of the Gateway Cities**

- Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch – community outreach
- DCR Forester David Bresnahan - trees for Mayor Anthony V. Salvo Multi-Use Path, Canal Street.

Barbara Warren spoke to the commission regarding Dave Bresnahan's notes:

“To date, DCR has planted 343 trees in Salem through our program. This fall, DCR has planted 153 trees over 55 private properties. We have so far this fall planted three public street trees. We have put out four additional yard signs: one each on Summer Street, Calabrese Street, Endicott Street and Geneva Street. We have a backlog of 50 private trees for the fall. Ten public street trees are also on the list, including shade trees on Broad Street, Winthrop Street and Geneva Street. Starting next week, we will be planting 20 trees at Rainbow Terrace, next to Salem State University. We will also be planting at Housing Authority properties in Lynn in the coming weeks.”

Fall planting season runs until Friday, November 19, 2021. Mr. Bresnahan will work on a genus/species breakdown by ward, available to the Tree Commission after the fall planting season is over. Any new requests after this week will likely be backlogged until spring 2022.

Ms. Warren stated that the SSCW received the signed state contract today so they can begin working on the project again. She gave Stacy Kilb of Salem's Sustainability Department Greening Gateway and the Greenscapes Guides for the Farmers Market last Thursday, October 14, 2021. The Bridge Street Neck Neighborhood Association meeting will be on November 16, 2021 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. along with Stacy Kilb of Salem's Sustainability Department. Mr. Bresnahan and Ms. Warren are going to work on getting the schools ready for trees next spring. The three schools they are focusing on are: Witchcraft Heights, Saltonstall, and Carlton schools.

Ms. Melis commented that the School Department took down the dead tree to the right of the Saltonstall auditorium entrance in anticipation that the Arbor Day tree could be planted near there. She also noted that the Bicycling Advisory Committee voted unanimously to support trees along the Multi Use Path. Discussion followed that those trees might come from the MBTA project along the bike path as well as from the GGC. Mr. LeBlanc noted that water would be needed for any new plantings in the area.

3. SIFI NETWORKS SALEM FIBERCITY Optic Installation Project – Deb Duhamel

Deborah Duhamel, P.E., Assist. City Engineer has no updates and was unable to attend the meeting. She sent the report that she is working on comments for the pilot and reviewing the schedule for the work, but as of now, no construction is scheduled on city right of way until next year.

4. F. Carroll Sargent Arboretum at Greenlawn Cemetery – Lisa Delissio

Dr. Lisa Delissio, a professor of botany and ecology at Salem State University, spoke to the commission and gave a quick historical overview of the Greenlawn Cemetery. She pointed out that the cemetery has had several periods of design. Established in 1807, the cemetery was expanded in 1846 when it was redesigned in the manner of the rural cemetery movement to provide a beautiful green space for the community. During 1934-1935, WPA crews carried out extensive landscaping improvements.* Over 1,200 different trees, shrubs and vines were planted. A large portion of the plant material came from cuttings originating at the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, MA. She is working on digitizing the first inventory of those plants from a list compiled in 1942 by the working arborist at Greenlawn Cemetery. In 2020, the collection was given a Level 1 Arboretum Status by Arb-Net, an affiliate of the Morton Arboretum in Illinois. The common belief is that there could be remnants still present at the Greenlawn Cemetery. Some of those species and varieties were experimental and could be one of a kind like the wild relatives of crop trees. Plant identification needs to be preformed by a botanist who specializes in genetics to confirm any matches with the 1942 list of plants and their origins. The SSU students will be working on that project as each class rotates through Dr. Delissio’s botany course over the next several semesters. Dr. Delissio felt that this information would encourage the Salem Tree Commission to bring further recognition to the F. Carroll Sargent Arboretum at Greenlawn Cemetery.

(*See: <https://www.preservingsalem.com/greenlawn-cemetery-master-plan>)

5. American Rescue Plan – proposal for funding of tree work – Darleen Melis

Ms. Melis explained that the next public forum would be held on Tuesday, November 25, 2021.

Following the meeting, Ms. Melis further researched the funds that have been or will be directed to either Salem Common or to the Salem tree canopy:

State Funding:

January 2021:

Bill 7008-1116 “provided further, that not less than \$50,000 shall be expended for repairs and maintenance of Salem common in the city of Salem.”

- Used for ADA benches and entrances to the Common

June 2021

Bill 7008-1116 “provided further, that not less than \$75,000 shall be expended for repairs and maintenance of Salem Common in the city of Salem”

- Will be used at the entrance near the hotel for a way-finding sign with history on the back, planters and fixing the paving.

Proposed ARPA Funding:

Joan Lovely - \$50,000 for “Salem Common improvements”

Paul Tucker - \$200,000 to “plant trees and improve Salem’s tree canopy”

6. MassWorks - Road and sidewalk projects, North Salem & The Point street upgrades* – Jay Carroll

Jay Carroll, P.E., Roadway Project Manager was unable to attend. This item will be on the agenda for the December 20, 2021 meeting.

7. Update First Street development plantings – Kirt Rieder

Mr. Rieder was unable to attend. This item will be on the agenda for the December 20, 2021 meeting.

8. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of October 18, 2021

Mr. Arenstam made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Minutes of October 18, 2021. Seconded by Mr. L’Heureux. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. New Business

Mr. LeBlanc notified the commission that the Open Meeting Law will be changing. All meetings will be via ZOOM until Dec. 31, 2021. The commission must decide about “hybrid” meetings up until March 31, 2022. By April 1, 2022, all meetings are scheduled to be back in person.

10. Next Meeting Dates: Monday, December 20, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

11. Adjournment

Mr. Arenstam made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 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**