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ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
MARCH 21, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on March 21, 2022 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, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, David Rowand and Susan Yochelson; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Curtis Dragon.

1. Tree Warden's Report

The Salem Tree Department has been working on the list of See Click Fix requests that are in the system. Presently there are (33) for tree pruning and there are (13) requests for tree planting. This list is worked on as frequently as Mr. LeBlanc can put a crew out to do tree work. The work is prioritized after it has been inspected and put into the workflow.

Trench Permits are starting to be submitted on almost a weekly basis. The permits are mostly for gas line installation and water main replacement. The permits are issued as quickly as Mr. LeBlanc can visit the site and determine what type of permit is needed and then written up and uploaded to the permitting system at Engineering.

In accordance with the annual requirements of the Tree City USA designation, Mayor Driscoll has signed the Arbor Day Proclamation. This has been posted on the Tree Commission's website. National Arbor Day is celebrated on the last Friday in April so April 29th will be Salem's 2022 Arbor Day.

On March 8, 2022, Mr. LeBlanc received an email that the property at 43 Derby Street was up for sale. This is the site of Captain Dusty's Ice Cream where a 12" DBH Protected Tree was cut down without permit before April 15, 2021. A certified letter was pending but was deferred until the owners of the property could meet with the Tree Commission on September 20, 2021 to discuss replacement plantings to offset the removed tree. The ordinance gives the property owner a timeline of (18) months to replace the tree(s) that had been removed or prior to the transfer of the property. Mr. LeBlanc spoke to Mr. Bartlett who confirmed that a potential buyer was interested in the property. Mr. LeBlanc reminded the owner that there was still an outstanding issue with the city. On March 10, 2022, the certified letter was sent with the request to complete this matter in the event the proposed sale goes through. The letter referenced both the fine for removing a Protected Tree plus

the replacement cost for the tree. To date, there has not been a response to the certified letter.

(Tree Ordinance: Sec. 43-58. - Penalties.

(b) Removal without a permit. Each instance in which a protected tree is removed without a permit shall constitute a violation of this ordinance and shall be subject to a fine in the amount of \$200.00 per DBH inch as determined by the tree warden for each tree removed;

(c) Failure to make payment to replace trees. Each failure to make a payment into the tree replacement fund beyond the timeframe of the tree permit shall constitute a separate violation of this ordinance and shall be subject to a fine in the amount of \$300.00. Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense;)

Tree pruning will begin shortly on the entrance corridors to the city. Three contractors have been secured to do this work that will involve the canopy cleaning of all trees, both sides of the streets on Lafayette, Essex and Winter Streets and as needed on North and Bridge Streets. Pruning will be funded by a portion of the American Rescue Plan money that was earmarked for Salem. This much-needed pruning operation on mostly mature trees will improve their appearance and reduce the likelihood of branch failure during high wind events. Trees that are found to be beyond a pruning operation, will be further evaluated for potential removals and then become sites for new plantings in 2022.

The Salem Common will have more tree work done to complete its three-year pruning cycle. In 2020, several hazardous trees were removed for safety purposes. In 2021, all trees that lined the inside stone dust paths were canopy cleaned, with one removal. This year all trees on the outside edges of the Common will be evaluated and pruned. This should complete the tree work for the next two years. At that point, the cycle will begin again with the inspection of the trees for any new pruning requirements. Plantings will also take place to fill in some of the trees that may need to be removed.

On Friday last week, Mr. LeBlanc encountered a tree company working on a public tree on Chestnut Street. The worker was asked to stop until he had applied for a permit for the job. This disregard for M.G.L. chapter 87 is an ongoing concern in Salem. Mr. LeBlanc caught this company only due to the fact that he was in the area and saw the ropes in the tree. As of today, Mr. LeBlanc has not received a request for tree work from the company.

Right now, Mr. LeBlanc has a list of (25) locations for stump grinding. Some of these are old locations of tree removals. Some removals were due to winter storm damage and once the stumps are ground out, the site will be evaluated for its potential as a replacement tree location. In accordance with the Salem Tree Manual section 6F, these sites are considered a priority: #1. Prior Tree Removal Locations; #2. Streets or Public Spaces with significant tree loss; #3. Requests for New Trees from See Click Fix or other request emails; and #4. New Development Projects that are noticeably under-planted.

Mr. LeBlanc ordered tree seedlings from the Mass. Tree Wardens and Foresters Association to be handed out at the Arbor Day celebration on April 29th at Carlton School.

The Conflict-of-Interest Training must be complete. Mr. LeBlanc reminded the commission members to please complete the program and turn in the certification to him. Materials must be submitted to the City Clerk's office.

2. Arbor Day Proclamation

Mr. LeBlanc read the proclamation from Mayor Driscoll who proclaimed April 29, 2022 as Arbor Day. White Spruce seedlings will be handed out to the children on Arbor Day to take home.

3. Greening of the Gateway Cities

Ms. Warren spoke about the progress of the Greening of the Gateway Cities program and read notes from Dave Bresnahan. DCR has planted 403 trees toward their goal of 2,400 and now has a backlog of 52 trees for the spring 2022 planting season. The majority of these trees are on private property with an additional 12 street trees requested by residents.

Early spring 2022 planting:

- 32 trees at Pioneer Terrace
- 14 trees on the Washington Street median strip between Norman and Mill Streets (across from Riley Plaza). The trees there now are in poor condition with compacted soil
- Municipal grant to remediate the soil and physical barrier/protection for trees
- Three trees - Arbor Day at Carlton Innovation School: ginkgo, redbud, and sweetgum.

DCR is hiring two long-term seasonal employees for April through November and short-term seasonal staff. A new postcard mailer was sent out this week to 3,500 addresses that is a lot more colorful and has a QR code link to GGC. When the DCR approves the press release, it will be sent to Mayor Driscoll and City Councillors for social media posts. SSCW is working on a video of a tree planting that took place at a home in Salem. SSCW is on the agenda for the May 11, 2022, NIAC meeting.

4. SiFi Optics – Q & A on newspaper article

This agenda item was made available for commission members who might have comments or questions about the newspaper article in which SiFi Optics mentioned their contact with the Tree Commission. No discussion ensued.

5. Transportation Infrastructure Project (TIP) - Boston Street- Dave Knowlton and VHB

Amanda Roy and Trish Domigan from VHB, designers of the project, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Boston Street Transportation Improvement Project, which received DOT funding in winter 2021. Construction advertisement is anticipated in 2026. The city's goals are to improve traffic signals and general safety, increase mobility via biking/walking paths, and to be ADA compliant at high crash intersections.

The project overview included:

- Project area
- Project history and goals

- Multimodal standards
- Existing conditions
- Proposed improvements

VHB is in the design phase now and they expect to hold a 25% completion hearing sometime in May. The project will extend on Boston Street from the Essex Street area to Main Street, Peabody.

There are 17,000 to 22,000 vehicles using this corridor throughout day and night in part due to the emergency traffic to and from Salem Hospital and the Highland Avenue Fire Station. Speed on the roads in the area cannot be controlled by narrowing the road due to the importance of this urgent traffic so other means will be used to calm traffic such as broadening the sidewalks to five feet, adding bike lanes, using human-scaled streetlights, and increasing the tree cover. There are currently 123 trees on Boston Street but the vast majority, including the few very tall trees, do not align with the new sidewalk layout. When the project is complete, there will be 137 three-inch caliper trees.

Mr. Rieder pointed out that the granite curb in front of the River Rock Residences, 70 Boston Street, is too low and vehicles jump it to plow up a muddy trench next to the sidewalk. Mr. Knowlton agreed with the observation and said that it will be corrected.

The discussion about the proposed relocation of the Joseph Hodges Choate Monument (see attachment) from its original location at the juncture of three highways – Highland Avenue, Essex Street and Boston Street engendered much discussion. The commission members expressed some dismay at the proposal. The new design would reposition the monument to a large, shaded traffic island defined by Essex Street, Dalton Parkway and Warren Court opposite the Auto Parts Store. The seated statue would be placed in a new circular setting with intersecting paths. Ms. Cottrell suggested that the project landscape architect simplify the pattern of the paths.

6. **American Rescue Plan – Update on Rep. Tucker’s \$200,000 to “plant trees and improve Salem’s tree canopy” – project process**

The \$200,000 will go towards tree planting, pruning, maintenance, and equipment purchases: \$75,000 for pruning and maintenance, \$70,000 for new tree planting and \$55,000 towards the maintenance of Open Space wood lots. Request for Bids will go out this week on the central register to secure a responsible contractor. We should know within two weeks who has been awarded the contract.

7. **Salem Common – Landscape architect to oversee spring planting**

Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Trish O’Brien has selected the landscape architecture firm of Crowley Cottrell, LLC to design the spring tree planting project to make the entrances, open spaces, and views of Salem Common beautiful and functional. The funding for the tree planting, as well as the associated tree pruning, comes from a \$75,000 state line item earmarked by Representative Paul Tucker and Senator Joan Lovely following lobbying by The Friends of Salem Common. The funds were granted in July 2021 and must be spent by June 30, 2022.

Ms. Cottrell will work with Mr. LeBlanc and Ms. O'Brien to get a tree list together and to organize a meeting next week. Mr. Arenstam volunteered to attend the meetings on behalf of the Tree Commission and as a liaison with the Salem Common Neighborhood Association. Despite his kind offer, Ms. Melis is required to attend the meetings to represent the two private foundations that contributed funds to increase the number of trees to be planted. The presidents of the Salem Common Neighborhood Association and the Friends of Salem Common will probably choose their representatives.

8. *The Blue Trees Installation at PEM*

Ms. Melis spoke with Ellen Talkowsky about setting up an information table to accompany the exhibit for Wednesday through Friday, April 20 – 22 (Earth Day), for two hours before and two hours after the noon lunch time. Mr. Arenstam suggested that since he is working on *The Blue Tree installation*, he can also answer questions from viewers and send them over to the TC table. Materials for the information table have not been developed yet.

9. Salem Tree Donation Fund – Using the two tree funds

There is \$21,269.12 left in the the combined Tree Donation and Tree Replacement Funds. Mr. Rieder showed photos of multiple locations where there are no overhead wires where trees could be planted on Norman, the upper end of Summer Streets and beyond the Broad Street Cemetery. All of that area is in the Planting Zone for Greening of the Gateway Cities program. We hope that Mr. Bresnahan will be able to persuade shop and homeowners to accept trees.

Mr. Rieder also showed photos of the Mayor Salvo Multi Path. The commission suggested donating trees in memory of loved ones. Ms. Melis asked if we have a COVID Memorial project and whether the Riley Plaza end of the Multi Path could be a starting point for an allée of trees which could be extended as funds arrive. This walkway to South Salem should have more trees planted. Mr. LeBlanc has a difficult time getting trees established on Canal Street so locations that are not so close to the road might have better success.

10. Tree Manual – Review previous revisions and new section, “Promotion of Community Tree Planting”

Tabled to next meeting.

11. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of February 22, 2022

Tabled to next meeting.

12. New Business

The solar power ordinance that is making its way to city council addresses how best to protect city and private trees from unnecessary removal to make way for solar power. Councillor Jeff Cohen is the lead activist for the ordinance. Mr. LeBlanc wrote a letter stating his reasons for not supporting the ordinance when it first came up. He will send a copy of his letter to the commission.

Additionally, Historic Salem, Inc. has a subcommittee promoting the use of brick sidewalks. It is not clear whether the proposed ordinance also supports the use of sand-

based structural soil to promote tree health. Ms. Melis will get information and send it to the commission members.

13. Next Meeting Dates: **Tuesday, April 19, 2022**, at 6:00 p.m. and **Monday, May 16, 2022** via Zoom

14. Adjournment

Josh made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Rieder. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 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**

Joseph Hodges Choate Monument – “Lawyer – Statesman – Patriot”

Oct. 20, 1923 Dedication oration for Choate Monument, Men and issues: Selection of Speeches and Articles by George Wharton Pepper, p. 240.



place in the world. Wise men, brave men, unselfish men have spent laborious days and sleepless nights in their determined effort to keep America upon the road that leads to prosperity and national honor and to avoid those turns to right or left which would surely involve us in disaster.

As for patriotism—we as individuals may be slow in manifesting its spirit in our own lives but we all feel the thrill of it when breeze and sunlight rival one another in homage to the Stars and Stripes. We all know perfectly well that the way of the patriot is the road along which every one of us should walk if he is to be a worthy son of the Republic.

Law, Statesmanship, Patriotism—these three are not unrelated roads but a system of highways that may be converged at a given point. If a man has traveled successfully along all three of them—if as he stands at the intersection we recognize him as lawyer, statesman, patriot, we feel at once that we are in the presence of greatness and that we owe him a tribute of respect.

Today you and I have met together at the intersection of three highways. The purpose of our meeting is to pay our tribute to a man who was great because he was at once lawyer, statesman, patriot.

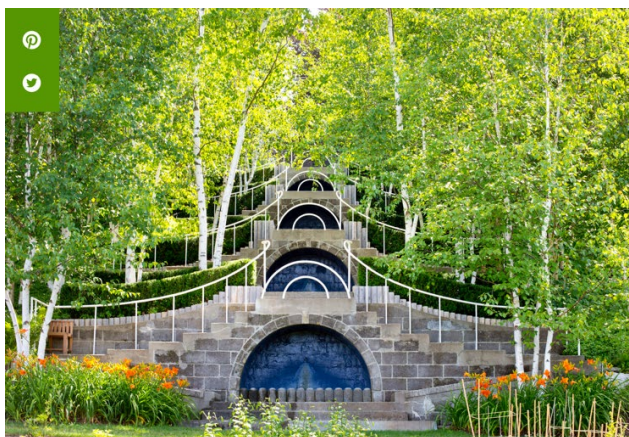
For Joseph Hodges Choate the journey of life began in Salem. He was one of that goodly company of worthy sons who have given lustre to your city. During the journey of life he reached great heights but

Choate Monument listed in:

*Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian American Art Museum:

<https://sirir-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?session=T4933IQ063653.9039&menu=search&aspect=power&npp=50&ipp=20&spp=20&profile=arial&ri=&index=.GW&term=IAS+87740263&oper=AND&aspect=power&index=.AW&term=&oper=AND&index=.TW&term=&oper=AND&index=.SW&term=>

Choate family home in Stockbridge, MA “Naumkeag”



History

Since the 1870s, Joseph and Caroline Choate had summered in Stockbridge with their young family. Like so many others, both then and now, they fell in love with the Berkshires and decided to build a summer retreat of their own. In 1884, Choate sought the advice of his friend, Charles McKim, of the architectural firm McKim, Mead & White. The result was Naumkeag – a gracious 44-room “cottage” with breathtaking views over the Housatonic River Valley.

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