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TREE COMMISSION
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ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
MAY 16, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on May 16, 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, Rachel McCarter, David Rowand and Susan Yochelson; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent were Curtis Dragon and Paul L'Heureux.

1. Tree Warden's Report

- The Salem in-house tree planting program for the spring will start this Wednesday. Presently, Mr. LeBlanc is carrying a list of 75 trees to be planted across the city. The list has already had several revisions due to underground utilities, positive gas testing and resident refusals.
- The Washington Street median strip tree planting project will also be starting this Wednesday Mr. LeBlanc has secured a contractor who will be doing the excavation of the surface soils on the site. The in-house crews will work on trucking materials, transplanting four trees from the site and the removal of all the dead trees that are there. Mr. LeBlanc will coordinate with Dave Bresnahan, (DCR Forester), on the tree planting species, locations and the spacing. Additional smaller shrubs will augment the space and those will be planted in-house. The area will be a mulched bed and gator bags will be used for the watering operations.
- The circuit pruning has been on-going since the middle of April. So far, the following streets have been completed: Lafayette St., Salem Common trees next to the fence, Winter St., Hawthorne Blvd., Congress St., Harbor St., and Salem St. from Chase St. to Harbor St. The remaining work will begin during the first weeks of June, and they will include Essex St. from Jackson St. to North, and North St. from Mason St. to the Peabody town line.
- A new tree was installed on the Essex St. Pedestrian Mall in front of the Salem Five Bank. The crabapple tree that was there had failed to leaf out and has been in a state of decline for some time. An eight-foot Hinoki Cypress was planted in its place. Mr. LeBlanc's in-house staff performed all this work.

- Tree gator bags are being deployed around the city. The list includes all trees that have been planted since fall 2019. The total list is close to 295 trees. The list for the watering contractor will be approximately 200 and the remaining trees will be taken care of by in-house staff. The new watering contract will be at a rate of \$125.00 per tree per month. This will be 100 gallons, or 25 gallons per week. Watering will begin on the first of June and run through the end of August. The cost will be substantial, but this is a commitment to the trees that have been planted and the dedication to getting them established. Newly planted trees are watered for the first 30 days as part of the installation cost.
- The See Click Fix requests for tree work is down to 20 outstanding work orders. This is a respectable number and is trending in the right direction. The summer months will see staff vacations, and this will be managed accordingly.
- The House of Seven Gables called for an extension to the tree permit that was issued last fall. They are beginning the removal of the Norway maples, 'Crimson King' and are planning some plantings this season.
- There will be a tree hearing at the end of the month. Two trees at #37 Forster St. will be on the hearing for removal due to the excessive damage that has occurred to the sidewalk in front of the house. The lifting has gotten to the point in some section to almost 8" above the grade. The prospect of root cutting is not an option. The buttresses of the two trees have lifted to a point where the ADA accessibility will not be attainable mounding paving materials over the tree roots. There are also a couple of English yews in the planting strip and the crowding has exacerbated the conditions. Trees will need to be removed, stumps and roots ground out and new level sidewalks and entrance pathways will get new concrete.
- Two tree violations have occurred in the past week. Both locations have tree permits. The first is the North Shore Community Development site on Leavitt St., where Mr. LeBlanc caught two contractors with Sawzall's actively cutting branches on the London planetree. The second is a National Grid project on Appleton St., where they needed to install an underground vault and removed a tree that was planted on the side of the road in the fall. Mr. LeBlanc will have to do research on the violations and get those out to each of the contractors for costs to be paid to the Tree Replacement Fund.
- The Grant for FY2023 will be submitted to the DCR this week for the Greening the Gateway Cities Program tree planting preparation costs. Mr. LeBlanc will be using a list provided by Professional Environmental Services to identify 69 tree planting locations, within the GGCP zone. The grant will cover gas testing, stump grinding, pavement saw cutting and soil excavation and amendments.
- A chain saw safety class took place on May 5, 2022 at Winter Island Park. This training class was hosted by the City of Salem and is part of the Mass. Tree Warden's Professional Development Series. Five members for the staff attended, including the Salem Chief of Police. Safety techniques were taught and demonstrated for a group of (25) and many neighboring towns and cities sent DPW employees for the training.

- Mr. LeBlanc is also working on a site plan review for a proposed development project at Cedar View Rd. at Cedarcrest Drive. The site may have some public shade trees on the right-of-way that may require a tree hearing by the applicant. Mr. LeBlanc will get more details once the site is properly staked for property lines by a surveyor.
- With the new Salem tree planting contract, the new costs for replacement trees, due to cutting down live trees will now be adjusted to \$266.00 per caliper inch.

2. **Greening the Gateway Cities**

Ms. Warren Salem Sound Coastwatch sent an email to Ms. Melis with the progress of the Greening the Gateway Cities Program which she read to the commission:

- SSCW has been spreading the word about Greening the Gateways with postcards in Spanish being handed out in the Point at the Resilient Together The Point events.
- Two press releases were sent out with quotes from Mayor Driscoll and photos.
- Ms. Warren presented at the NAIC monthly meeting on May 11, 2022 and provided a PDF of the presentation that Dominick Pangallo shared with all members.
- Mr. Pangallo shared out a thank you on Instagram.
- Ms. Warren attended the Earth Day tree planting at Saltonstall School.
- Ms. Warren coordinated the Arbor Day tree planting at Carlton Innovation School with the help of the principal and PTO president.
- Ms. Warren is finishing up the tree planting video (at Susan Yochelson's house).
- Creating short PSA to give to SATV.
- KeepSalemBeautiful shared out the program this weekend and got 22 likes
- Ms. Warren shared GGCP with Tara Gallagher that SSU's campus was eligible for free trees in the area between Canal St. and Loring Ave. going from (and including) the bike path, the Stanley Building, and the next-door buildings such as Rose Insurance, and then to the O'Keefe Complex / Gassett Fitness Center and the big parking lot. She contacted Mr. Bresnahan and has developed a phased approach with up to 18 possible trees.
- A pin oak and bald cypress will be planted at 12 Federal Street (SSCW's office) on May 17, 2022.

DCR has planted 45 trees on private property and eight on public property to date this year. The same crew has planted a similar number of trees in Downtown Lynn and West Lynn. Three of the public trees in Salem were at schools, and the other five were Public Street Trees. They have 135 trees in the backlog in Salem.

Mr. Bresnahan's crew will be planting 30 trees at Pioneer Terrace starting Thursday of this week. In the weeks to come, DCR will be working with the city to plant a mix of elm cultivars, Kentucky coffeetree, hackberry, and narrow oaks at the median island on Washington Street. (See list below.) They have received a lot of requests for trees through the online system on MAurbancanopy.org.

Mr. Bresnahan's crew still has an open position for an additional Forester Assistant and long-term laborer Title: Planting Laborer II. The position runs from now until November 19, 2022. Holidays and weekends off, health insurance and other benefits are offered. These position postings can be found at the states hiring website Masscareers.gov.

3. Proposed Brick Sidewalk Ordinance - Tree Manual reference to sidewalk substructure

A DPS project this spring has been holding down repair costs for historic brick sidewalks by re-using the bricks and laying them back down on a leveled sand base. The commission discussed whether the brick sidewalks being discussed in the proposed ordinance would be healthier for trees, particularly if sand were used under brick sidewalks in the historic district. Ms. Cottrell said we need to understand that the current design for brick sidewalks utilizes the same asphalt or concrete underlayment with bricks stuck on with adhesive. As a result, the digging must be deeper to meet the new standards. The new sidewalk would not be porous and thus there would be no benefit for trees by replacing a concrete sidewalk with brick.

The Tree Commission decided that they cannot come out and say brick sidewalks are better for trees, but that they can stand behind the recommendation found in the Salem Tree Manual to use sand based structural soils under sidewalks to increase soil volumes. (See Section VII. Planning Before Planting – 7.H.5. Sidewalk Planting.)

4. April Educational Activities – Earth Day, Arbor Day, and *The Blue Trees* Installation info table: Darleen Melis, Paul L’Heureux, David Rowand, and Josh Arenstam

Mr. Rowand set up an information table on Essex Street mall with Ms. Melis. They tried to engage walkers on the mall but found that, with some exceptions, it was very hard to capture their interest under the circumstances. Ms. Melis suggested once we get past the Tree Manual review, we should deal with trying to reach out to residents.

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

Mr. LeBlanc talked about tree pruning work that has been completed, so far. Mr. LeBlanc will be planting 75 trees. The window of time to plant trees in the spring is short and he will do his best to encumber all of the money.

6. Arbor Day Foundation, Phytoremediation

Next week Ms. Melis and Tom Devine will join Kristen Bousquet of the Arbor Day Foundation in a meeting with John Freeman, a scientist at Intrinsyx Environmental, to learn whether three parks in Salem might benefit from phytoremediation: Palmer Cove, Mansell Park, and the former Universal Steel lot.

7. Salem Common – Landscape architect – next steps

On May 17, Ms. Cottrell and her staff will present via ZOOM her recommendations for planting approximately 25 trees at Salem Common. Everyone is invited to tomorrow night’s meeting. Ms. Cottrell will reach out to stakeholders and folks to discuss options for the project.

8. Salem Tree Donation Fund – Using the two tree funds – requests to plant in parks, planting in the Salvo Multi Path

Ms. Melis released the trees that she had investigated with Select Trees, Georgia as the freight charges would be too high to consider for a project. Since the Salvo Multi Path is in the GGCP Planting Zone, we could open discussions with Mr. Bresnahan about planting trees along the path closer to the city center and not mentioned in Ms. Warren's report (above). The planting season will conclude by the third week in June so we would have to act fast. Ms. Melis wanted to know if a municipal grant could be used for additional soil remediation. Mr. Bresnahan would handle improving soil for FY23. We will not know until August or September and cannot begin work until approved by the state.

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

The Tree Commission concluded its review of sections of the Salem Tree Manual. Next step is to format the document for publication on the Tree Commission webpage, which was delegated to Ms. Melis and Ms. Yochelson.

10. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of April 19, 2022

Mr. Arenstam made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Minutes of April 19, 2022. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

11. New Business:

Donations of trees to parks – The commission had been asked what its position was regarding the donation of trees to parks with the honoree's name on a tag. After some discussion, the consensus was that experience has shown naming trees in honor of someone complicates matters. A simple donation to the Salem Tree Fund would accomplish a tree planting and is the recommendation of the Tree Commission.

Ms. Melis announced that Mr. Arenstam and Mr. Rowand conclude their appointments at the end of June. She extended the gratitude of the Tree Commission to them for fulfilling their service with good humor and good advice.

12. Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom. Mr. Arenstam motion skip July 18th meeting and Ms. Yochelson Susan 2nd.

13. Adjournment at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk

Greening the Gateway Cities Program plantings in Washington Street median strip, May 2022

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. <i>Quercus palustris</i> | fastigate pin oak |
| 2. <i>Ulmus americana</i> | American elm, 'Jefferson' |
| 3. <i>Ulmus americana</i> | American elm, 'Jefferson' |
| 4. <i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> | Kentucky coffeetree |
| 5. <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | hackberry |
| 6. <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | hackberry |
| 7. <i>Ulmus americana</i> | American elm, 'Jefferson' |
| 8. <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | hackberry |
| 9. <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | hackberry |
| 10. <i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i> | Kentucky coffeetree |
| 11. <i>Ulmus americana</i> | American elm, 'Jefferson' |
| 12. <i>Ulmus americana</i> | American elm, 'Jefferson' |
| 13. <i>Quercus palustris</i> | fastigate pin oak |

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