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MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS  
**TREE COMMISSION**  
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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR  
KIRT RIEDER, VICE CHAIR

***Touch the Future - Plant a Tree***

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION  
JULY 18, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on July 18, 2022 at 6:30 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

1. Chair Darleen Melis, Vice Chair Kirt Rieder; Members: Naomi Cottrell, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, and Susan Yochelson; Raymond Jodoin, Director of Operations, DPS and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey.
2. **Director of Operations, Department of Public Services Report – Ray Jodoin**

Monthly status report:

1. We are working through a transitional period from existing General Foreperson for the tree/cemetery division.
2. Working on digital work order system from paper to electronic.
3. No contractors have performed any tree care as of this date.
4. We added a third tree climber to DPS tree division to bring it to prior staffing levels.
5. Online tree permit process went live, with a few permits issued to date, this system is appearing to work out well.

Chairpersons' inquiries:

1. Washington Street median island how often watering and wants to plant rose bushes.
  - Watering happens two to three times a week.
  - Will review with director on funding and any future plans for this site.
  - Weeds sprayed and will be pulled shortly after chemicals take effect.
2. Tree pits - commission would like to know whether the tree pits for London plane trees in front of Rockafellas on Washington Street can be expanded since the crowns are dying back. (Note – too much mulch on the root flares.)
  - Need more information to see if this task is feasible financially due to any unforeseen site conditions.
3. Review of contract for tree planting for damaged trees and who is responsible.
  - Reviewing contract and will update shortly.

- Too much mulch at following locations: Washington Street islands and 289 Derby Street.
  - Palmer Cove: Some are improper planting and mounding of mulch, will review locations and update shortly.
  - 47 Congress Street trees in decline, will review trees and provide update shortly.
4. Rep. Tucker's \$200,000 funding - how many trees were planted with this money in spring 2022
    - There were 70 trees planted for this project
  5. What are the plans to spend the remaining \$27,000+ of Tucker funding?
    - As of 7-11-22 there is \$21,872.50 available pending any invoices to be paid.
    - Remaining funds should go to offset fall planting pricing increases.
  6. What projects were funded out of the Tree Replacement Fund and the Tree Donation Fund
    - Materials for tree labels
    - Installation and watering trees in 2020
    - Installation of 33 trees for 2021
    - No projects are funded out of the donation fund as of this date
  7. City tree budget for fall 2022 is \$250,000, back to the 2019 budget level
    - Emergency services 20%
    - Equipment maintenance and purchase 5%
    - Removal of hazard trees 35%
    - Tree planting and after care 40%

These are estimates of percentages to be spent with the FY23 budget from the general tree budget, final decision is made by the DPS director on expenditure of these funds.

### 3. **Greening the Gateway Cities**

- Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch – community outreach
- DCR Forester David Bresnahan

Mr. Bresnahan's team planted 132 trees from April 11th to July 1st. They planted 82 private trees and the rest were public trees. At Pioneer Terrace 22 trees were planted, 5 trees were planted at Salem State University and 23 public trees were planted in areas such as the Washington Street median strip for a total of 50 public trees. (Note – see the FY 2022 Tree Planting List on the TC webpage for species and locations.) More trees will be planted in the fall depending on if there is more space through the Housing Authority. The private trees will be watered/maintained by the homeowners. For the public trees, DPS has been doing tree health care checks, taking care of the root flare and watering new trees up to three times per week. They will also educate homeowners to do the same. For the school trees, the facility's team will be responsible for maintaining them.

Mr. Bresnahan emphasized the importance of watering the trees, especially with the record high temperatures and the severe drought conditions. The commission will work with Mr. Bresnahan to do some type of outreach program in The Point area.

**4. National Grid Project, Congress and Lynch Streets – George Combes, Leidos, John Castro and Daniel Combes, National Grid**

National Grid is looking for preliminary approval for P957 and of any concerns related to the tree trimming and removal possible in this area. There is an existing pole that has only a span guy from P956 that they would renumber and propose a taller structure.

Daniel Combes proposed a back-up supply to 2343 Feeder on Congress Street and asked for tree trimming permission. The pole replacements and installs would affect the area on Congress and Lynch Streets. P957, a new proposed location requiring civil construction of 2-5” ducts and a 45’ pole, would affect around 50 of the tree lines on the west side of Congress Street. Lynch Street and trees on the east side of Congress Street would require some maintenance trimming with taller structures being proposed.

The commission suggested putting poles where there are no trees. Mr. Combes said it is in the design phase now and the next steps are:

- a. Adjust all the drawings
- b. Use software for capital cost and find funds
- c. Design process – height of the poles and do a civil survey

This may take up to six months to get everything accomplished and move forward. Mr. Rieder said the commission’s main concern is to have the least disruption to the trees. They are not concerned about getting this done as fast as possible. The less disruption, the better.

**5. American Rescue Plan – Update – (What to do with the balance of \$27,000+)**

Mr. Jodoin said there is approximately \$21,000 remaining in the fund and is waiting to hear back from the state to see if this money can be carried over. As of today, he has not heard back. Ms. Melis asked how tree planting proceeds without a tree warden to match the planting sites to the tree species? Mr. Jodoin said it does not have to be a tree warden who makes recommendations, we can still move forward. Mr. Jodoin is “acting” tree warden until someone gets hired.

**6. Salem Common – Landscape architect – next steps**

Bids for the tree planting at the Salem Common came back higher than anticipated due to some stipulations in the contract document. Due to the lateness in the season, the LA recommends that the purchase of the new trees be put off to spring 2023 when the choice of specimens will be better.

**7. Salem Tree Donation Fund – Using the two tree funds**

Mr. Jodoin said there is \$10,000 in tree donation fund with no expenditures to date. Ms. Melis identified those funds as the donations for the Salem Common plantings. Replacement Fund has \$5,000 and the Donation Fund has \$5,000. Ms. Melis asked the commission to think about what they should do with the funds that have not been encumbered.

**8. DCR Municipal Grant – (\$20,000) Enlarge tree pits at Rockafella's, Washington St. and along Front Street?**

Mr. LeBlanc filed for the DCR Municipal Grant, and the city is still waiting for an answer from DCR. The commission needs ideas on where to spend the grant. Mr. Jodoin suggested if we get the grant, we might want to use it to expand the London plane tree pits along Washington Street or put the money towards the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Bresnahan clarified that the DCR municipal grant is specifically worded to prepare sites for the new trees to be planted by the Greening the Gateway Cities Program. The entire downtown is eligible for trees under this program. Ms. Melis suggested that the YMCA parking lot could use better planted trees. For instance, a tree planted below the very large window of the third-floor conference room in City Hall Annex would eventually help screen out the heat gain from the sun. Mr. Bresnahan said he would love to help if the city gets the grant.

**9. Distribution of Tree Manual, change of mulching practices in Salem – correct Washington St. too heavy mulching in traffic island?**

Ms. Melis discussed an American elm that was planted this spring next to the crosswalk at 47 Congress Street. She said there was no visible root flare, mulch was touching the bark and already the roots are visible on the surface, which denotes distress. The members discussed that a good practice for any contracted tree planting would include an inspection from the company's certified arborist who would be held accountable for any problems. Salem needs to be pro-active to get the best results from our investment in trees.

**10. Planting Illustrations in Spanish and English – how to distribute**

The Tree Commission is concerned that any tree planting operation follow the directions that explain the *investigative process* for ascertaining the proper planting depth for each individual tree. They have created **Planting Illustrations (Spanish and English)** on the home page of the Tree Commissions' website: <https://www.salemma.gov/tree-commission>.

**11. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of June 21, 2022**

Mr. Rieder made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2022. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

12. **Openings on the Tree Commission (3 slots. Possible candidates Cady Goldfield & Maria Connell)**

Two candidates, Cady Goldfield and Maria Connell have submitted applications to the city clerk. City Council President Patricia Morsillo explained that she is trying to clarify the appointment process for the two commissions for the city council makes selections. She will contact the two candidates and guide them through the Government Services subcommittee review at its first meeting in September.

The third opening is reserved for a certified arborist or a landscape architect. The city clerk said applications are due by September 1<sup>st</sup>.

13. **New Business:** None

14. **Next Meeting Dates: Monday, August 15, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. and Monday, September 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.**

Mr. Rieder made a motion to cancel August's meeting. Seconded by Ms. Yochelson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

15. **Adjournment:** 8:00 p.m. Mr. Rieder made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Yochelson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

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**