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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR
KIRT RIEDER, VICE CHAIR

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
MARCH 20, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on March 20, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Act of 2022.

Present on call were:

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

Introduction of Conor Morgan, General Foreperson Cemetery/Tree Division of Department of Public Services

- Conor Morgan introduced himself as the newly hired General Foreperson for the Cemetery and Tree Division of the Department of Public Services. He is a Massachusetts Certified Arborist and for the last 12 years he owned a landscape company in Dublin, Ireland. His experience includes tree consultancies in Europe where tree protection plans and standards are more in depth. He hopes to improve the stock of street trees in the city and cemeteries, as well as improving public education and awareness of trees. This is his first time working in the municipal and public sector. Mr. Morgan is a General Foreperson right now but is expected to be appointed by the City Council to the Tree Warden position in due course.
- DPS has two open work orders and 11 SeeClickFix reports, 26 of them were reported this month. DPS has completed 51 SeeClickFix work orders for the month of February.
- The city is still awaiting answers for Greening the Gateway Cities Program Municipal Grant for \$30,000 as well as for Greening the Gateway Cities Implementation Grant.
- In celebration of Arbor Day April 28th, the DCR will plant five trees at the Jackson Street parking lot of the Collins Middle School. The site will be prepped by city crews prior to the installation date. This was approved at the last Park and Recreation Commission meeting. DPS is slated to dig test pits shortly and is in the process of ordering saplings for this event.

- Planting at the Church Street parking lot by DCR: the city is looking to install 26 trees around the parking lot area, with city crews prepping the site before April 14th. The project is on schedule. City crews are removing the hedge, prepping row tree pits and remediating the soil. Gas testing is needed prior to DCR planting.
- The city is planning on planting approximately 20 trees around Riley Plaza. DCR will install the trees, but the city crews will prep the sites. Shrubs were removed last week at this location; stumps were ground out and the site is available for planting. Gas testing is needed before DCR moves forward. A planting plan is still needed for Starbucks side of Riley Plaza.
- Gonyea Park planting was approved by the Park and Recreation Commission. Planting will be ready for the spring.

3. **Greening the Gateway Cities Program**

- Anna Sheridan, Salem Sound Coastwatch (SSCW) Program and Greenscapes Coordinator

SSCW is updating the mailing list for postcards for people in the planting zone and hopes to send them out by mid-April. They are exploring an outreach event with the East Regiment Beer Company which is next to the Church Street planting zone. SSCW is working with DCR, the Collins Middle School and the Tree Commission on the Arbor Day planting event. Nathan Ives, priest at St. Peters Church, is interested in planting four new trees at the church. She will coordinate with Dave Bresnahan from DCR.

- DCR Forester David Bresnahan

Mr. Bresnahan said there are open positions for the Salem planting crew. The postings are for planting laborers and Forestry assistant. The forestry assistant position pays more and is a more technical job. All of the positions are good entry level jobs into urban forestry.

- [Job Description - Seasonal Forestry Assistant- Greening the Gateway Cities \(Salem\) \(230002XT\) \(taleo.net\)](#)
- [Job Description - Seasonal Laborer II - Greening the Gateway Cities \(Salem\) \(230002DW\) \(taleo.net\)](#)

4. **Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden, Northampton, MA – planting and mulching practices Video: <https://youtu.be/RurMiCGVlyI>**

Mr. Parasiliti is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist and the Tree Warden/Urban Forestry Commission Chairperson for the City of Northampton. With 33 years of experience in both planting trees and correcting trees that were either inaccurately planted too deeply or that were over-mulched into mounded sculptures, Mr. Parasiliti shared realistic techniques for dealing with the tree stock that comes into Salem properties. He talked about how Northampton got where they are today, the success that he had and the failures. He focused mostly on:

- Northampton Tree Planting Initiative (preserve, protect and promote city shade trees), under which over 2,000 trees have been planted since 2015.

- Collaboration with Tree Northampton (non-profit group)
- Volunteers in the Community (they do the pruning, watering and aftercare)
- Communications with landscaping and arborist professionals to try to plant appropriate trees and avoid volcano mulch
- Community Education
- Review construction landscaping plans

He also spoke about the Northampton City Solicitor in whose legal opinion, under M.G.L. Chapter 87, section 7, set-back trees planted by the city *must* be public shade trees to be maintained by the city for the life of the tree. This year, Mr. Parasiliti filed 65 set-back tree agreements at the Registry of Deeds to memorialize the city's responsibility for the trees despite being on private property. This alternative approach merits consideration in Salem since the Century Tree Program has only secured six set-back locations.

Mr. Parasiliti said he is happy to share his knowledge and expertise to help other Tree Commissions and cities. He told Mr. Jodoin, Mr. Conor and the commission that if they had any questions, to feel free to reach out by email.

5. Salem Common Tree Planting – Darleen Melis

Ms. Melis said the bid came in our favor for planting at the Salem Tree Common. The project is fully funded at \$60,000 so we are getting all 28 trees as per the design. Additionally, other funding may plant six to eight more trees.

6. Tree Commission member discussion – interests and concerns – Earth Day, April 22

- Forest River Park, Emerald Ash Borer Beetle walk & talk – Cady Goldfield

On Sunday, March 19, 2023, Ms. Goldfield and Ms. Melis met up with Chris Burke, who is cofounder of Salem Native Nursery, a non-profit tree farm, to discuss an Emerald Ash Borer Beetle walk & talk at Forest River Park. After discussion, they decided to focus on public education about native species, the historical prospective on how trees have been cultivated in Salem as well as the impact and redress of EAB damage on private property.

7. Arbor Day April 28 – “Don’t Mulch Your Trees to Death This Spring!” poster

Ms. Yochelson, Ms. Rumrill and Ms. Melis have been working on an educational poster with graphics showing what a tree looks like with too much mulch compared to the correct amount of mulch. It will include a QR code so people can easily link to tree care information on the Tree Commission webpage.

8. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of February 13, 2023

Mr. Rieder made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Goldfield. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. **New Business:** Mr. Rieder informed the commission that an extension of remote meetings depends on passage of the state budget. Once the process is complete, the commission will be informed of how the meetings will convene.
10. Next Meeting Dates: **Monday, April 10, 2023** at 7:00 p.m. and **Monday, May 15, 2023** at 7:00 p.m.
11. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Tree Commission this evening, Mr. Rieder moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Goldfield. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **8:20 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**