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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR
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Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
MAY 15, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on May 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Present on call were:

1. Chair Darleen Melis; Members: Cady Goldfield, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, Jane Rumrill and Susan Yochelson; Raymond Jodoin, Director of Operations, DPS; and Conor Morgan, General Foreperson, Cemetery/Tree Division, DPS. Absent were Kirt Rieder and Naomi Cottrell.
2. **Tree Hearing – Removal of a Public Tree, 143 Derby Street** (formerly Captain Dusty's)

Mr. Morgan stated in accordance with the City of Salem Code of Ordinances, Chapter 43, sec. 30, that he is in receipt of an application for the removal of one public street tree. The applicant is Mr. Peter Lutts; the project is construction of housing located at 143 Derby Street. The request is for the removal of one (1) 14" DBH Acer spp. (Maple) in order to provide opening for the project's driveway. The applicant is prepared to replace the removed tree with eight trees, species to be recommended by Conor Morgan. Several members of the public spoke in opposition to the removal of this well-established tree. The developer expressed concern because the plans, including tree removal, were approved by the Planning Commission. Mr. Morgan will issue his findings.

After the Tree Hearing, roll call was taken and the Tree Commission meeting was convened.

3. **Conor Morgan, DPS Report –**

Mr. Morgan reported that in the month of April 40 tree issues were reported and 42 tree issues were resolved. A large number of the issues were required "tree health inspections." The vast majority of these trees were sound and were retained; some required crown cleaning; a significant proportion required no intervention. Another issue was tree roots that were "interfering with sewer pipes and or paving." There were some calls regarding downed branches due to a high wind event, which as always, were given priority.

Deferred maintenance is down to a minimum which means that "tree health inspections" are usually attended to within 24 hours. Removal or crown cleanings are attended to within a week.

The health of trees at Greenlawn Cemetery has been vastly improved with the removal of deadwood in the trees that are to be retained. One large standing dead tree, *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine) # 156 (circular tag), will require the services of an outside contractor. The tree is part of a survey that I am not familiar with. I have been in touch with Dr. Lisa Delissio and I have requested all surveys.

There are quite a few sick *Fraxinus* (ash trees) in the city. Some that I have examined are in advanced stages of decline but do not exhibit the “D” profile holes of Emerald Ash Borer which leads me to believe that they are suffering from “Ash Yellows” a phytoplasma disease of the phloem vessels transmitted by leaf hoppers. A large *Fraxinus* located at 25 Charles Street may need to be removed by an outside contractor.

May 15, 2023, marks the start of the spring planting of 49 trees partially funded by the CBDG funds. Cassidy Landscaping will be planting the trees. The trees appear to be of excellent quality, just been lifted from the fields and will not contain any girdling roots. Mr. Cassidy has been advised of city planting procedures, that plantings will be inspected, and any poorly planted trees will be rejected. I have also reiterated what is already stated in his contract, that all trees are to be planted in accordance with ANSI standards. Mr. Cassidy and his crew have been very accepting of the expected standards.

As many as possible of the 2021 and 2022 plantings have been examined and corrected. Four dead trees were identified and one, a *Betula* (birch) located in Leslie’s Retreat Park, is alive but unacceptable. Mr. Cassidy has agreed to replace these trees or issue a credit to the city.

4. **Greening the Gateway Cities Program**

Ms. Melis read into the minutes the following statement from David Bresnahan:

So far this season, DCR has planted:

- 70 trees on private property in the planting zone.
- 21 trees on public property including five at Collins Middle School / Broad St Playground in conjunction with Arbor Day.
- 11 trees at Riley Plaza, plus a few street trees at the request of abutting residents who will be responsible for watering.

Exact species and locations will be made available to the Tree Commission for the public tree inventory following the spring planting season. DCR will be planting at Church Street and Gonyea Park next week. Any new requests will likely be backlogged for the fall planting season.

DCR is reminding all tree recipients to water newly planted trees weekly. Although we are not in drought status, the ground is dry and there is little precipitation in the forecast. Ms. Melis said some people think because they are city trees that they are not allowed to water them, in fact, the commission encourages it. Mr. Connor said the use of biochar is highly recommended.

5. Salem Common Tree Planting

Ms. Melis said that the Park and Recreation Commission will be voting on accepting additional trees to be planted at the Salem Common at the meeting tomorrow night. Signature Parks Project Manager Mike Crounse along with Landscape Architect Naomi Cottrell (Tree Commission member) will talk about an updated Tree Planting Plan.

6. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of April 10, 2023

Ms. Rumrill made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Meeting Minutes of April 10, 2023. Seconded by Mr. L'Heureux. A roll call vote was taken, Ms. Yochelson abstained, and the motion was carried unanimously.

7. New Business:

Mr. L'Heureux suggested that the Tree Warden should be notified immediately when a building permit is requested that requires removal of any tree covered under City of Salem Code of Ordinances, Chapter 43. Mr. Morgan agreed with Mr. L'Heureux's suggestion and added that the Tree Warden should identify the trees in question prior to issuing any building permits. Mr. L'Heureux will contact Thomas St. Pierre to ask him to bring it to the developers' attention.

8. Next Meeting Dates: Monday, June 12, 2023 and Monday, July 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

9. Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the Tree Commission this evening, Ms. Rumrill moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Yochelson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **8:15 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**