



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

TREE COMMISSION

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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR
KIRT RIEDER, VICE CHAIR

ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION APRIL 23, 2020

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on April 23, 2020 at 5:00 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, Curt Dragon, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter and David Rowand; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Joanne Roomey, Commission Clerk. Charlotte Enfield has resigned from the Commission.

1. Tree Warden's Report

- Staff Update:

Presently, due to the global pandemic of the Covid-19 virus, all City of Salem staff are in a stay-at-home schedule work. The Tree Department is not exempt, and the crew has been split in half with two (2) employees working one week and only one (1) on the alternate week. The flow and continuity of work has changed, and the crew is doing their best to keep up. Mr. LeBlanc foresees this impacting the full spring season work and possibly the summer season as well.

- Grant Updates:

The MVP Action Grant is about to begin within the next two weeks. The project includes (33) existing tree pit locations in the area of Essex St. walkway, Derby Sq., Central St. and Front St. The project includes excavation of the existing planting location and the surrounding brick and concrete to accommodate a much larger planting zone. The final treatment of the planting project will include a flexible, porous pavement to reduce root compaction and yet allow rainwater to infiltrate the new tree pits.

The CBDG Grant project FY2019, tree planting list has been approved through the Planning Department. The planting project will include (31) tree planting locations, mostly in Wards 1, 2, 4 and 5. All tree planting locations have been tested for gas leak and (1) came up positive. These are the designated areas that the Grant has identified as low-moderate income neighborhoods. This project will follow the MVP Action Grant project installations.

A grant has been submitted by the Tree Department, through the DPS and the Salem Planning Board, for FY2020 to request \$50,000 for CBDG monies for the planting of trees.

The In-House tree planting project will account for approximately (34) trees. The locations in the City are based on the See Click Fix requests for tree plantings. This is the initial list and it still needs to be vetted through City Hall to determine if the resident still wants the tree or they decline. All the tree locations have been viewed for suitable planting sites and tree species selections, based on this analysis. This project will take place after the completion of the CBDG planting project.

The City has been given (15) trees, as a donation from the Institution for Savings, Newburyport that has a branch in Salem. The donation is part of the bank's 200th anniversary celebration. The planting locations for these trees are still being considered and this will be done with in-house staff simultaneously with the other three planting projects.

No updates or additional information from the DCR on the Urban Challenge Grant for this year. I had a meeting with the Urban Forestry Coordinator in March and then the DCR was sent home, based on orders from the Governor. I anticipate news on any Grants for FY2021 and updates on Tree City USA soon.

- Planning Board

The developers of the project at #602 Loring Avenue, a review that was part of the February meeting, have reached out to the Tree Warden with updates on the project. They are still in the Planning and design review stage and are hopeful there will be a favorable outcome. They will be looking to have a Public Shade Tree hearing in June. I met with the developers of the Highland Ave project, that has frontage on Barnes Rd. They are working on the installation of a sidewalk and widening the Barnes road at the approach to Highland Ave. They are working with Bartlett Tree Co. and are conducting a tree inventory of all potential trees impacted, both in the R.O.W. and in the protected zone.

- Tree Removals/Stump Work

In the past month a total of (24) stumps were ground out in preparation of future planting locations and there is another list of (18) that will be going out to the contractor this week.

- Purchasing Contracts for CY2020

Two contracts have just recently been approved through the Finance Department. The first, is for emergency tree removals and pruning and the second is for tree planting services. This took some time to get through but is now moving forward. These contracts are in great need right now due to the shortage in manpower due to the stay at home order.

- **N-Grid Update:**

To this point there is no agreed upon Plan for tree trimming in Salem. I have repeatedly reached out to the N-Grid rep., asking for an update and have not received any response. The Utility company and the City Tree Warden must come to an agreement on a Plan before the Utility can begin work. I have sent the Utility company some of the modifications that I would like to see and so far, no response.

2. Presentation of the Annual Report of the Tree Replacement and Tree Donation Funds by Robert LeBlanc

Mr. LeBlanc presented a report regarding the Tree Donation Fund in the amount of \$2,120.00 and the Tree Replacement Fund for \$3,000.00, a total of \$5,120.00 raised. Mr. LeBlanc clarified for Ms. Melis that the \$1,000 donation by the H&C Service Corp., which is the Hawthorne Hotel, was made to the Tree Fund rather than the Tree Replacement Fund. Thus, the totals are \$3,120 in the Tree Fund and \$2,000 in the Tree Replacement Fund for the same total of \$5,120. Both funds are available to support the Century Tree project and other tree planting and maintenance efforts.

- 3. Remarks from the Public:** Susan Yochelson, with years of experience as Outreach Coordinator at Salem Sound Coastwatch, was recognized. She offered to fill the vacancy on the Tree Commission. Ms. Melis asked her to forward her resume to Dominick Pangallo, the mayor's chief of staff for consideration.

- 4. Approve Minutes:** Mr. Rieder moved to approve the **February 24, 2020** Tree Commission Minutes and the **February 27, 2020** Tree Manual Minutes. Mr. Dragon seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Tree Manual – Review and vote of adoption

Ms. Melis reviewed the Tree Manual with the board and explained how to navigate the manual with all the special links embedded in it. Mr. Rieder moved to adopt the Tree Manual. Mr. Arenstam seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. LeBlanc will post the Tree Manual on the city's Tree Commission website.

6. Century Tree Program – Institution for Savings donation of 15 trees

Mr. LeBlanc announced that the City received a delivery of 15 trees from the Newburyport bank and will let the board know where they will be planted. He will consider planting locations taken from the Century Tree suggestion list as possible sites.

7. New Business:

Mr. LeBlanc expressed concern for trees located in the business district that are being removed due to zero-foot setback and would like clarification.

Kirt Rieder mentioned that there may be an opportunity for the Tree Commission and the Conservation Commission to work together to protect trees.

8. **Next Meeting Dates:** Monday, May 18, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. via ZOOM and Monday, June 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. via ZOOM
9. **Adjournment:** Mr. Arenstam made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Rowand. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 5:55 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**