



CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS  
DOMINICK PANGALLO  
MAYOR

APPROVED MINUTES

Salem Beautification Committee:

Chair: Henry Gulergun

Vice Chair: Ariana Lema-Driscoll

Secretary: Kim Parkinson

City Liaison: Janelle Rolke

9/12/23 – Hybrid Meeting

**Present:** Kim Parkinson, Zachary Schaad, Ariana Lema-Driscoll, Henry Gulergun, Brooke Nagle, Janelle Rolke (City Liaison), Jason Lang, Sam Fiore, Charlene Bailey

**Absent:** Mary Ellen Halliwell, Jeremy Baker

**Guests:** Laurie Biel, Flora Tonthat (Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Council), Andy Varela (City Councilor)

**Agenda:**

1. Call to Order 7PM
2. Mission Statement
3. Approval of June 2023 Minutes
4. Old Business:
  - Window Box Competition Recap (Zach)
5. Sub-Committee Reports:
  - Lady of Salem (Mary Ellen/Brooke)
  - Traffic Island (Charlene)
  - Monthly Litter Clean Ups (Kim and Zach)
6. New Business:
  - Welcome Laurie Biel!
  - Flora Tonthat Bridge Street Neck Commercial Corridor Beautification/Branding Project
  - Start MOU Changes Project
  - Traders Way Litter Signage Project
  - Outreach Ideas
7. Adjournment

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Salem Beautification Committee is to assist the City in developing and pursuing initiatives that promote the beautification of the City. The goal of the Committee is to create civic pride and to motivate the City's diverse population to participate in the beautification process. The Committee will identify areas in need of improvement, will create programs, recruit volunteers and will secure the funding resources to achieve its goals.

- **Minutes Approved from June Meeting unanimously**

**Old business:**

- Window Box Competition Recap (Zach)
  - The window box competition was back on August 10th!
  - Very positive with the businesses and the locals - businesses did help with some donations which was amazing (Home Depot, Maitland, Native Nursery, Oak+Moss)
  - Over 20 participants - only 3-4 businesses but generated a lot of great buzz & conversation. Learned a lot for next year
  - Garden club looking forward to future partnerships!
  - Highlighted on city councilor/Mayor's social media and other areas

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

Lady of Salem (Brooke)

Participating in Trails & Sails Sept. 15, 16, 17 (10am-4pm) through a self-guided stroll down Essex Street to see the Ladies. . Participants learn about Salem's maritime history while viewing the figureheads and locate clues in an accompanying Scavenger Hunt. Brochures and Scavenger Hunt materials are available at Destination Salem/Derby St.

- Sam scheduled DPW "Lady" takedown with Katie for Wednesday September 27 at 7:30 am. The PEM will once again be providing a safe harbor in the basement of 179 Essex St. where they will reside until May 2024.
- There are 2 new sponsors for 2024.....Stardust Salem and Witch City Tour (brings us to 30 ladies!)
- Trying to get more visibility into places like Salem on your own app, Salem Walking Tours
- Want to add QR codes that are zip tied - Brooke can help design them, will need help printing and laminating and will drive people to the website which can help with volunteering opportunities and generating awareness
  - Need to figure out the best way to affix the QR code - piece of wood underneath, on the lady, needs to be low enough that people can scan it
- Traffic Island (Charlene) - Full report in addendum
  - We need to find a way to keep the plants downtown and without more volunteers, we won't be able to do it
  - Only 13 new people this summer, 3-4 loyal people that are consistently there
  - Need to figure out how to handle replacing dead plants - shouldn't be on the businesses that are already paying so much as a sponsor
  - Need to figure out the new MOUs (see below for more on this)
  - Cleaned up David Beattie Park as a side project - looks amazing!
  - For next meeting - Need to come up with a list of people to reach out to (Salem State, city councilors, Essex Tech, etc.) and pair everyone up - should wait until after November elections
    - Kim to create a google doc for potential stakeholders and share with the group
  - Need to see about adding to City of Salem website to get donations

- Could we ask about creating stipends for those that help do work with the BComm
- o Will be a waiver in 2024 that Janelle has for volunteers
- o Can we do some kind of social media post through Lisa Peterson, Chief of staff?
- o Andy has a videographer he works with and would be happy to help with a video to send to the Mayor and can share on TikTok. Should think about including kids so they know they can help too. Should do something in the next few weeks.
  - 30-45 seconds on what the BComm is and how to get people to volunteer
  - Should set up time with those interested in helping to plan it
- Monthly Litter Clean Ups (Kim and Zach)
  - o Last cleanup was very successful - 120+ lbs of trash and recyclables even though we were just in that spot a few months ago
  - o Next cleanup is Sept 17th at 10AM in honor of Kevin Cornacchio at the Willows - 50 people currently signed up
    - Weather isn't looking great on Saturday, Janelle to reach out to SSCW to see if they want to join us if their event is canceled on Saturday as we will be in the same area on Sunday
    - The family has asked for us to partner with them and they will be making a donation to the BComm
- Next cleanup to be planned for early October in Gallows Hill - October 1st 10-12.

#### **New Business:**

Welcome Laurie Biel who will be joining the Beautification Committee shortly!

Flora Tonthat Bridge Street Neck Commercial Corridor Beautification/Branding Project

Bridge Street Neck area was developed and was always an area to be passed through and over the past 2 decades, a series of infrastructure changes have caused it to be more residential vs. commercial and most people are walking there to get to a few businesses

Don't feel safe crossing Bridge St but businesses want them to go to their stores

This came about because Juniper Point had given \$25,000 to the neighborhood association because they didn't keep up with the mixed use goal. Money was supposed to support the businesses on Bridge Street Neck which has great amenities, is surrounded by water, Collins Cove Park, but it is a heat island. We need to calm the traffic, get people to slow down, and take in all that there is to offer

Heat island = Concrete jungle, no tree to cool the space and it can help 2-10 degrees to the area without the shading

Working with Amanda, Salem Chamber, Alice Merkl, Hope Carpenter, had an idea to give it an identity with banners and planters. Want to sell to businesses to help with the maintenance budget. Planter idea turned into tree gardens because the city wants to plant more trees and is willing to help. Open to digging up some of the sidewalks to plant trees and flowers because it's a heat island. Need to contract landscapers and will have the budget to pay them.

Would not need any money from us or volunteers to do the work - they would hope to get everything paid for for the foreseeable future (landscapers, plants, watering) and then the city would help with the trees and some of the things like the concrete. Need someone to manage the admin vs. hard labor.

Only need the B-Comm to cut the checks, make the deposits, create the account (need a bank account that is under the city's control) - the neighborhood association will take care of the rest but they won't give the money to a group of citizens

Helps with climate change, slow down traffic, beautification, etc.

- o Would be good to see how this ties into the bike bus initiatives
- o BComm would like to see a budget breakdown and understand what the expected admin lift would be. This should also help us understand the future plans and what happens when the \$25k is spent.
  - Idea is that the businesses would hopefully sponsor and help pay for this in the future but there are concerns that this would take away from the existing BComm Traffic Island Program.
- o Hoping to install the banners by April
- o Brooke to be liaison between BComm and the neighborhood association and will join their next meeting.

#### Start MOU Changes Project

Janelle sent an email letting the committee know that this needs to be looked at with the current MOUs and challenges

A few of the major items are the lack of hands, costs and what the sponsors are expected to pay for and do, precedence around a certain % of native plants

Need to finalize this by the end of January so that they can be sent out to the existing and potential sponsors

Don't want to shake it up too much but some changes do need to be made

Need to make sure the businesses are reading everything and understand that their gardens are supposed to be planted by June 1st

There is no penalty which is an issue to be considered - we could explore things like taking away their sign, revoking their ability to renew the following year?

If they want to donate money but don't want to have to manage anything, maybe we could sell ad space on the website or something?

If they are going to do it themselves, give them info on where they can buy the plants.

Could Maitland and/or Salem Native Nursery give plants at wholesale costs? Both have offered.

Would be great to get more pollinator plants, 60% seems a bit high but we should make progress. 40%? Consider higher percentage of the ones that we manage vs. the ones they plant themselves

#### Traders Way Litter Signage Project

Move to next month, ran out of time

#### Outreach Ideas

See traffic island update above

#### New garden beds -

Girl Scouts will plant 4 new garden beds around the Salem Common playground on Washington Square - boxes will be going into the common next weekend and filled with soil. Will be planted right after the food truck festival

They'd love to have BComm guidance in the future and hope to work on more projects in the future

#### Committee bylaws - should get a group together to come up with a proposal

There are examples out there - should ask Beth the city solicitor to see what other committees have that we can agree to

Janelle to reach out to Beth

Maitland Farm will be taking over the newly-planted Washington Street median planted two years ago with new trees (across from the post office) slowly. There are separate funds designated for that specific island. Will start closer to Washington Square and work backwards. First raised native garden beds to show the city an example of doing beautification without irrigation and keeping it beautiful all year. Very limited maintenance. Hoping to have 25% planted by May/June. Trying to get the Hampton hotel to help as well.

**Thoughts and Concerns:**

**#1 and most important . . . as I reported in June, we do not have enough volunteers working the islands . . . including myself, we have 8 veteran volunteers . . . and they have commitments that drop that number, sometimes down to 1, 2, or 3 to do work on one large island.**

**How are we going to maintain the traffic islands for the future? . . . I think that is a huge challenge that Salem's Beautification Committee needs to resolve.**

1. Changes to MOU: Many of our daily movements on the Traffic Islands reflect or are bound by what the MOU states. What do we do when an island is not maintained by the sponsor . . . penalty? How much needs to be planted by sponsor to consider fit/balanced for island? Perhaps because of lack of volunteers, we should not have additional 'maintained' islands.
2. Financial Statement of the Beautification Committee . . . shared info can help determine if we have resources to alter the MOU as to purchasing plants for some islands in need/or help us transition into more native plants on all the islands.
3. List of New Volunteers: The summer involved trying out the call out to the list of new Volunteers during the summer of 2023. How do committee members feel that worked?
4. Irrigation list needed – listed and confirmed how and what days the Traffic Islands get water. This connects back the MOU agreement as to what the sponsor has agreed to and that we make certain that they are getting the water – if this is not happening than we should be refunding that part of the MOU money to the sponsor. Can this list be established and posted before water is to start May 31/June 1 so that we can check on it and confirm with DPW that it is happening as stated.

**BREAKDOWN OF WORK ON ISLANDS\***

**63 Days** -- Number of Days we called out to volunteers for opportunities to volunteer we did the work on the island in spite of the numbers reporting.

**13 people**: Since we started in April 2023 -September 11, we have met 13 new volunteers from the list – some of them worked more than once . . . total they reported 31 times.

\*These days do not reflect the number of days Sam worked alone on the Washington Strip.

\*And, the number of hours Sandi Power has worked out on islands alone.