



# FYI SALEM

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

MARCH 6, 2017

## CONTACT THE MAYOR'S OFFICE:

**Phone:**  
(978) 619-5600

**Fax:**  
(978) 744-9327

**Email:**  
mayor@salem.com

**Web:**  
salem.com/mayor

**Facebook:**  
Kim Driscoll

**Twitter:**  
@MayorDriscoll



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Salem Residents Survey	2
Canal St./Forest River Park Meeting	2
Museum Place Garage Stairwells	3
Current Board Vacancies	3
Horace Mann Lab School Update	4

## From the Mayor's Desk



As always, there is a lot going on in Salem!

Check out this issue of FYI Salem for information about our annual residents' survey and an upcoming meeting about improvements to Forest River Park and the next phase of the Canal Street flood control project. There are also important updates about the stairwells in the Museum Place garage and news about planning for the relocation of the Horace Mann Lab School to SSU's South Campus. Finally, there's a list of current openings on our City boards. This list is posted at [www.salem.com/mayors-office](http://www.salem.com/mayors-office) every week and I hope you will consider sending in an application for an appointment to one of our boards or committees!

I'm also excited to share

some good news about our City finances. The City has recently received \$1.1 million in debt savings thanks to a recent bond refinancing. Roughly half of these savings are on general fund debt and the remainder in water and sewer debt.

These savings will be directly applied to the FY2018 debt payment amounts that will appear in the forthcoming FY2018 budget, saving Salem taxpayers a considerable amount in the upcoming year.

Three years ago, Salem's bond rating was upgraded by Standard & Poor's to AA, our highest rating ever. We have maintained that rating since then. This rating affirmation reflects our dedication to policies that foster positive economic growth, stable financial management practices, and sustainable and transparent budgeting. Since 2006 we have implemented professional financial management and I am proud that in that time the amount of debt service in our budget dropped by 19% and the share of our budget that is our debt payment was cut in half. We were able to accomplish this by leveraging outside funds, such as grants, and by being responsible,

thoughtful, and prudent with tax dollars.

Not only do our sound fiscal practices ensure public funds are being managed to the highest standards and with complete transparency, they also allow us to realize financial gains. In this case, a recent refinancing of our existing infrastructure debt, at the lower interest rates accessible to us through our excellent bond rating, has realized us \$1.1 million in newly available funds that we can apply to reduce our debt overall.

This is not the first time we have realized proceeds from a bond refinancing, however given the substantial amount of savings and the positive impact they will have on our FY2018 budget-setting process, I am very pleased to be able to share this good news.

Thanks again for checking in with FYI Salem and, as always, please feel free to forward or share this with friends and neighbors!

Sincerely,

Kim Driscoll  
Mayor  
City of Salem

# Salem Residents Survey

The eighth annual Salem Residents Survey is now online at [www.salem.com/mayors-office](http://www.salem.com/mayors-office). A Spanish language of the survey is also available at [www.salem.com/mayors-office](http://www.salem.com/mayors-office). The 2017 residents' survey will be online until Friday, April 14. All Salem residents are encouraged to visit the online survey and share their opinions on a range of issues facing the City of Salem and their view of City services.



"The 2017 survey marks the eighth year this data has been collected," said Mayor Driscoll. "Hearing directly from residents allows us to improve service delivery and focus our public resources on those issues that are of most concern to the people of Salem. Having a number of years' worth of data now also enables us to take a closer look at trends and changes that are taking place in our community."

The final data is compiled and included in the Mayor's annual budget, issued in May. The information provides feedback into resident priorities and goals, as well as important performance and outcome measures. These have, in the past, contributed to the City of Salem being one of a handful of Massachusetts communities to be awarded both a Certificate of Excellence and a Distinguished Budget Award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

## Canal St./Forest River Park Meeting

There will be a public meeting on March 15, 7:00 p.m., in the Sullivan conference room at SSU's Enterprise Center, 121 Loring Avenue, to discuss two related projects to make improvements to Forest River Park and the nearby neighborhood.

**Canal Street Flood Control Project Phase 2.** This project will start construction later this Spring and involves three parts:

1. Utility (water, sewer, and drainage) improvements along Forest Avenue and Clifton Street
2. Complete street upgrades to Forest Avenue & Clifton Street.
3. Improvements to Forest River Park, including ballfields & basketball court, the pond, drainage system, and a new bio-retention system for storm water.

The focus of the meeting will be on the Forest River Park improvements and the work along Forest Avenue and Clifton Street.

**Forest River Park and Pool Concept Study.** The City of Salem has hired Weston & Sampson to conduct a study of Forest River Park, including the pool and the other areas of the park not affected by the flood mitigation project. This study has just started and we would like to hear from stakeholders about what ideas you have for the park and the pool facility.



# Museum Place Garage Stairwells



Last month the City of Salem closed three of the four stairwells as water intrusion and regular use over time had created a public safety hazard in those stairwells. A fourth stairwell, which was found to be safe for use by inspectors, remains open, but will be addressed and upgraded as part of this project regardless.

Over the past month, the City conducted an expedited procurement and two weeks ago opened the bids that were received and selected a contractor, who is able to begin work right away. In order for that work to begin, however, the City Council must approve an appropriation of funding for the project. That request will be before the City Council for their next meeting on March 9th.

During the work itself there will always be at least one stairwell open to the public, in addition to the elevators, which now run 24 hours a day. The contractor will be staging their work and, should the Council approve the appropriation request on March 9th, they expect to have the first two stairwells finished by the end of July, with the second two stairwells then finished by the end of September. In addition to new stairs and stairwells, we are also using this opportunity to repaint the stairwells, to make them more welcoming.

The City recognizes that not having all stairwells operational is an inconvenience and are hoping the City Council will approve the funding request at their March 9th meeting. This will enable us to make the necessary repairs as soon as possible.

The Museum Place Garage is heavily utilized by downtown residents, workers, visitors, and residents who come downtown to conduct business, shop, dine, or attend events. Mayor Kim Driscoll has committed to not allowing these stairwells to remain in their current condition and hopes to advance this work as expeditiously as possible.

## Current Board Vacancies

Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll is seeking interested applicants to fill vacancies on a number of City boards and commissions. Those interested in being considered for a seat should fill out the application form available at <http://www.salem.com/mayors-office/files/application-board-or-commission-appointment> and return it with an up-to-date resume to [mayor@salem.com](mailto:mayor@salem.com), by fax to 978-744-9327, or by mail to Office of the Mayor, Salem City Hall, 93 Washington Street, Salem MA 01970. Additional details about these and all City boards are available online at <http://www.salem.com/boards>. A listing of board openings is posted weekly at <http://www.salem.com/mayors-office>.

Board	Term	Meeting details
Board of Health	3 years	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7pm
Cultural Council	3 years	As needed
Disabilities Commission	3 years	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 4pm
Salem Redevelopment Authority	5 years	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 6pm



# Horace Mann Lab School Update

*The update below was sent this week by Mayor Kim Driscoll and Superintendent of Salem Public Schools Margarita Ruiz to Horace Mann Lab School parents and staff.*

For many years, the City of Salem and the Salem Public Schools have been working with Salem State University (SSU) to find a more suitable location for the Horace Mann Laboratory School (HMLS). The City completed a study of the Harrington Building to ascertain the modifications required to upgrade the building to accommodate the HMLS needs and bring the facility up to code for an elementary school. SSU is completing their study to determine how and where they can relocate the existing programs currently in the Harrington Building. That work is wrapping up and a final plan should be complete in March. In addition to that work, the City's Mass in Motion program will also shortly be conducting a Safe Routes to School audit of the Harrison Road area, to better plan for any necessary pedestrian and bicycle improvements that may be necessary for the future location and access points to the elementary school.

In order to fund the physical work that will be necessary on the Harrington Building, the City will need to apply for funding from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The City has initiated a dialogue with MSBA leadership to determine which of their funding programs is the best match for this project and what, if any, ownership or lease arrangement would be necessary for the property itself. In March, we anticipate filing a Statement of Interest (SOI) with the MSBA for the project. The SOI will need the approval of the School Committee and the City Council.

Once MSBA acceptance of the SOI is completed, the City expects to retain a project manager who specializes in school building projects to assist with the planning, renovation, and logistics of the relocation. There are many moving pieces to this project. In order for HMLS to move to Harrington, the Harrington programs must move out. In order for them to move, SSU may need to complete one or two capital projects of their own on North Campus. Using the two feasibility studies, the project manager will identify the timetable and milestones that both the City and SSU need to achieve to keep the process on track. They will also identify if any swing space will be necessary and, if so, where it may have to be located. As plans are formulated we will be in communications with parents and staff regarding likely scenarios and timelines.

We hope, later this Spring, to update you on the MSBA process and proposed next steps, including a more detailed timeline. The City, Salem State University, and the District are committed to this process and to finding a long-term solution for a new HMLS facility. Ensuring that the students at HMLS come to school in a modern facility that fully supports all of their academic programs is our number one priority.



*The Harrington Building at SSU's South Campus currently houses university classes and offices. SSU and the City are undertaking a project to relocate the Horace Mann Laboratory School to Harrington and move Harrington's program elsewhere on the university campus.*