

Salem Beautification Committee Minutes October 8, 2019

Attendees: Sam Fiore, Sandi Power, Mary Ellen Halliwell, Barb Sirois, Micaela Gugliemi, Lisa Lyons

Absent: Ty Hapworth, Stephanie Hagyard

Guest: Leslie Harrington

Leslie Harrington was a guest at the meeting – she's lived in Salem for a year or so and would like to contribute to the beautification efforts and better maintenance for the City's areas.

Micaela Gugliemi presented financial information for the Beautification Committee, noting that a \$1390 profit was made at the Plant Sale. Other financial information will require further explanation at the November 12th meeting.

Mary Ellen Halliwell spoke about using funds for strategic light on statues in the City, specifically the statues at Boston Street and Essex Street and on Lafayette Street.

It was commented that the Darlene's Flowers will not be supplying flowers and annuals for future plant sales. A possible solution would be to use Gibneys (Peter Gibney/liaison). He has a great selection of plants and vegetables. We could send him our 2019 plant list soon/early 2020 to get pricing.

Sam Fiore talked about transitioning the urns on the RCG/Washington Street traffic strip to mums and fall decorations for the Halloween season. She mentioned getting a big boulder (or something) to put at the intersection of Derby St and Washington St because people keep running up over the curb, damaging plants. It's also a hazard to work on that part of the strip.

Sandi and her crew have been raking up the beds and areas; The park at Derby and Hawthorne is looking quite lovely. Hostas and Loose Strife have consumed the Riley Plaza. Sandi and her team have taken out about ¾ of hosta plants. An effort to secure new sponsors in 2020 will be needed. The traffic island on Summer Street is too dangerous to manage and plant; suggest cobble or river stones in 2020. Sandi suggests hardscape a Loring Square Intersection. Details of Sandi's report below:

- We have lost a few sponsors. Riley Plaza is empty (although Salem State has expressed an interest in it for next year). BCom's liaison, also Main Streets, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, should be active in recruiting sponsors.

- Sponsors lost: The Rotary (paid \$500 to sponsor) and Salem Auto Wash (sold) at Riley Plaza; Verizon Communications (sold, new buyer has not responded to email or visits); SSU (because of uncompleted sidewalk gardens in front of St. Jean's) Solution - A City liaison to be active in helping to recruit sponsors. Also Main Streets, the Chamber, and Rotary to take some responsibility for recruitment of sponsors

- Engineering wiped out three sponsored islands at Lafayette/Loring last spring and failed to install the promised two gardens in front of St. Jean's. We've had no response from Engineering to repeated requests for a time line for completion. SSU, who had paid \$300, could not sponsor them. We are holding their \$300 to reserve a traffic island in 2020.

- The City has also created traffic islands, landscaped and not, at the Broadway/Canal intersection, with no maintenance, weedy and run through. The same situation is happening at the new Loring Square expansion - large new gardens unmaintained. Are they under the mistaken belief that BCom's T.I. Program includes volunteer maintenance of ALL city gardens? Solution: Public gardens not installed anywhere without maintenance planning and maintenance \$'s. - and maintenance manpower.

- We are also recommending that the large rectangular garden at Riley Plaza, across from Dunkin' Donuts, be shrunk back to its original size of many years ago (probably about 60 square feet before it was quadrupled in size by an enthusiastic gardener sponsor.) It is now overcome with very invasive weeds and black-eyed Susan and we, therefore, are this year reduced to attempting to keep the edges clear and marginally presentable. We will not continue to maintain it in 2020.

Litter and cigarette butts are a huge problem. Volunteers continue to pick up trash and sweep areas around islands. More City/DPW support is needed so volunteers can focus efforts on planting and beautifying.

A suggestion about bringing back the scarecrow witches that used to hang on the light posts was made. The witches had signs on them that said 'Help Keep Salem Clean.'

It was suggested that businesses and the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club step up their efforts and contribute to cleaning and maintaining areas in the downtown area. The group spoke briefly about the request from Central Street businesses to spruce up that area. It was mentioned that we could supply Mums if they wanted them.

It was commented that the Beautification Committee will need more support in 2020. Micaela will send out requests for volunteers to various outlets. It was suggested that we could possibly coordinate with Salem High School students as part of a community service project (*Beautification Bees*).

Mary Ellen Halliwell talked about the Lady of Salem project and working with the DPW to take down the ladies for the winter. She is seeking a new winter home for them; possibly Naumkeag Camp. The YMCA cannot accommodate them this winter. Some of the Ladies were borrowed for the **Hubie Halloween** movie that was filmed in Marblehead. The Beautification Committee received \$500 stipend.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Lyons
Salem Beautification Committee Chairperson/Secretary