

Present: Sandi Power, Mary Ellen Halliwell, Sam Fiore, Zachary Schaad, Jeremy Baker, Ariana Lema-Driscoll, Henry Gulergun, Kim Parkinson, Janelle Rolke (City Liaison), Jason Lang

Guests: Charlene Bailey, Janis Manning

Agenda:

- Mission Statement
- New Member Introduction, Jason Lang
- Approval of November 2022 Minutes
- Guest Speaker: Councilor Ty Hapworth
- Litter Signage Discussion
- Lady of Salem Updates: Mary Ellen
- Traffic Island Updates: Sandi Power
- New Business

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.

Welcome to Jason, approved in December!

Minutes Approved from November Meeting unanimously

Guest Speaker: Councilor Ty Hapworth, Former Beautification Committee Member – To discuss litter and signage.

- Speaking with David Knowlton and others to see what we're doing as a city. The order was carried forward to 2023, there is potential opportunity to partner with Beautification Committee.
- After the November meeting, litter signage came up as Janelle has seen this done in other areas in Massachusetts through Keep Massachusetts Beautiful. A big part of the traffic island work is constantly removing litter.
- Studies have said signage doesn't help raise awareness and could have the opposite effect like public trash cans.
- This has been on the councilor's agenda for some time, but no decisions have been made.
- A lot of opinions about the cause – downtown and in the neighborhoods, dumpsters are a problem. Anything over 6 units have private trash and recycling hauling and landlords aren't all great about taking care of them. Under the assumption that the volume of litter is not just a bunch of kids throwing out their trash because they don't care.
- Possible solutions to help with the challenges:
 - **Trash ordinances** – Can we standardize or better enforcement? Not always a landlord problem. Could be overfilling from neighbors. Can orange bags be offered in the smaller markets in the city? Janelle is already working on this.
 - **Are there fines or have they been considered?** There is a process through the Building Department and the Health Department. Signs aren't

going to enforce, would have to be enforce based on the police or one of the above listed departments.

- **How often are the larger dumpsters emptied?** It varies depending on each contract, could be once a week or 2-5 times a week. Construction dumpsters are owned by businesses which is also a part of the problem.
 - If you see them overflowing, reach out to your councilor or send an anonymous SeeClickFix
 - Contributing to the rat/mice problem as it's a public health issue. David Greenbaum will be making an announcement about the issue and new ways to combat the problem.
- **Has anyone talked at the council meetings about organizing larger groups of people to help with the challenge?** Spring Clean Sweeps was done by the Beautification Committee before the pandemic but each councilor does typically participate or lead a group. In 2022, Keep Salem Beautiful hosted the "Great Salem Clean up" and had 150 volunteers in 11 different locations throughout the City.
 - Could do campaigns around caring for your own neighborhood
- **What happens when we see the litter? Who takes care of that?** When it gets really bad or when the snow melts, they will do ad hoc street cleanings as needed but if not, report it.
- **Signage** – interested in what neighborhood groups are saying, Ty is not convinced, but suggested that we first partner with a neighborhood association to make sure they are involved in the process and approve or want this in their neighborhood.
 - Could reach out to the neighborhoods and see if it's something they'd want to do. Would need to know what kind of sign it would be.
 - Ariana took pictures of Gallows Hill Park and there were no littering signs anymore, should we consider using that as a test?
 - Would need to talk to Trish O'Brien in Parks & Rec to start and could also reach out to Councilor McClain.
- Former Mayor Driscoll was thinking about an ambassador program. Have had challenges finding a contractor that would take the bid but would be beneficial. Would need someone to handle specific areas and say the litter is picked up, the trash barrels are emptied, because DPW is very busy
 - **Does the city have summer jobs for people in college/high school to help with this?** Would potentially be ideal – probably a desire for a contractor to handle the whole thing so it isn't a lift from city hall
 - **Could those people be allowed to issue citations?** This may change behavior more but likely no
- If we could start downtown with a clean slate, it may help keep it cleaner for longer showing that it is valued
- **Should we be doing more street sweeping?** Would require more budget.
- **The nips are a real problem – has it been considered banning them?** Several cities in MA have banned the sale of them already.
 - The Bottle Bill proposed changes in 2021 included more beverage types and more beverage container types where they could get returned. The proposal would also increase the deposit from .5 to .10
 - Unfortunately, a lot of visitors are actually bringing them into town too but if someone could make money off of returning them, it may help with the litter.

- BeautComm could put together a proposal, Ty would be very supportive of it. But it may be better to support the Bottle Bill changes rather than fully banning the sale of them.
- One of the most common items that are found when cleanup efforts are done are the plastic caps to water bottles. Would love to see all new construction have refillable water stations and the local parks have them. We believe we're behind.
 - Charlotte Forten Park has one, would be great to have others
 - Green building ordinance was just passed, was not brought up – May be Councilor Riccardi
- Final thoughts – nothing will likely be proposed for the next few months (especially as this is a more common issue in the warmer seasons), an ambassador program may be helpful, need to learn more about the previous Ambassador Program proposal. Learn what the new Mayor's priorities are. Use SeeClickFix when you see overflows to help.

Lady of Salem Updates – Mary Ellen:

- 2 figureheads were given to the artists/sponsors Kenneth Glover and Cynthia Mikula Smizek – each signed a contract and paid \$500 to the city of Salem. They'll get the backboard, clamps, and they know it's a city project so that work belongs to the city.
- We received pole clamps for installation in May and Mary Ellen ordered 2 21"x48" backboards with brackets from Concept Signs and the cost is ~\$50 each but awaiting an invoice.
- The ladies are still resting – Sam & Mary Ellen to take a peek to see what work has to be done in Feb and they do the updates.
- With the money that is left over, they want to light some of the statues downtown. Need help from electricians (potentially use solar power) – may help to go through the ward councilors, potentially Alice Merkl. Sam and Mary Ellen will continue to find the right POCs to move this forward. Could be a board or commission that is in charge of them.

Traffic Island Updates – Sandi:

- Had a meeting with the group a week ago to discuss other options for the BeautComm outside of the traffic island promotion and maintenance
- 4-5 islands are not sponsored currently, there are opportunities to get sponsors and we should enlist the cooperation of Salem Main Streets and the Chamber of Commerce
 - Highland and Bridge has an opportunity – half hidden by July along with many other intersections
 - The large tree on Canal St by Lifebridge is cowed by a field of weeds – Sandi to talk to Abe at Gorilla
 - DPW is ripe for a face lift and could potentially use a mural (HS art dept?)
- We need help from the city now to help with some of these challenges
 - Landscapers could use herbicides to treat them in May so that by the summer, they aren't overgrown with weeds.
 - Bollards can't be addressed with street cleaning and is a challenge for bikers
 - Need the city to get DPW to do this – just mowing the parks doesn't do it
- Need new members – almost at the limit (11) for the BeautComm but we need more volunteers in addition to that to manage everything.
- Sandi shared a paper version of a map listing all traffic islands that are a part of the program. She is working with Brooke to make an online version.

New Business:

- Need to review the entrances to the city
 - Essex Street Lighting
 - On Bridge Street by the Bait Shop is an area that we should address – who owns that space and who can enforce it?
 - Ariana to invite the 2 city councilors to our next meeting
- How can we understand the goals of more councilors to create our own goals and be ready for the new Mayor? More guest speakers will be helpful
- Need to road map what we plan to do for the year starting with what we need to get done during specific months and then work backwards
- Henry and Janelle working on Constant Contact – Volunteer sign up form on the city website to start building a volunteer list
 - Who is the admin on the Facebook page? Mary Ellen posts some Lady of Salem updates using her LoS FB page, but we can be doing more by utilizing the Beautification Committee FB page that already exists.
 - Longer term want to work towards sending out a newsletter letting them know what we're doing
 - Think about going through neighborhood associations to get more volunteers
- Creating awareness at the train station or on the train to get people to not litter
- Cleaning up tree branches, garden clippings and repurposing them into other things
 - Maia Mattson – 24 New Derby Street (maiamattson@gmail.com) is currently doing this, could we partner?

Traffic Island Committee Report – Update from Sandi Powers, not the committee's opinion's/feedback/etc.

The Committee held a meeting on January 6th to discuss different possibilities for Salem beautification outside of traffic island promotion and maintenance.

The year '22 ended with a few islands not sponsored, an obvious reminder that we need to push to get sponsors. The first topic became how to promote sponsorship, and it was agreed that Salem Main Streets, along with the Salem Chamber of Commerce, with their direct affiliation with businesses, were the obvious solution. We should enlist their cooperation to reach out to business for sponsorship.

We initially addressed some of the conditions as one enters downtown and the dingy surrounds of parks such as Lafayette Park, trash-ridden, weedy, main corridors with weeds and grasses growing up through cobblestones, along curbs, around trees and telephone poles.

Suggested spots to consider –

DPW is ripe for a face lift – dingy, trash strewn, weeds growing up the tel. pole in front, along the fence around the front and side of their parking lot. A large concrete wall on the side of the building perfect for a colorful mural. (High School Art. Dept.?)

Intersection patios, concrete aprons, bricked and cobbled median strips everywhere, overgrown with weeds and grass. Grouting and the discreet use of pre-germination herbicides work wonders. Examples: Jackson St./Jeff. Ave. intersection, Highland Ave./Boston St. intersection, concrete aprons and curbs all around Lafayette Park totally overgrown with weeds by July. The concrete apron above Temperance Park on Hawthorne Blvd. median.

The large tree-surround on Canal Street in front of Gorilla's and Lifebridge, just before you enter Reilly Plaza - the poor tree is cowed by a field of weeds; how about wild flowers? How about wildflowers in lots if of places around tel. poles near downtown?

The bollards everywhere, supposedly to protect bikers or prevent turns on one-way streets. How do you street sweep, prevent trash from piling up along that side of the street, or in corners? There seems to be no controls to get them to lie down out of the way for cleaning. White lines used to do the job. What's with bollards?

The business downtown dingee— weeds and grass on corners and curbs on Washington/Front Street. Our volunteers do heavy reaching out in the areas of their sponsored traffic islands, cleaning up litter, weeds, etc., far beyond the scope of the gardens, but there is a limit. The City has to try harder, take the initiative.

We urge our new Beautification Committee to dig in and find ways to encourage the City to take part. We can do a lot, but we can't do it all.

Lastly, there needs to be a reaching out, on our part and the City's, for new members, both for BComm, and the Traffic Island Committee. Membership in the Beautification Committee is limited to eleven (11) and we've never had close to that. Constant renewal is a must. Perhaps Newburyport should be our goal – clean, weed-free, and beautiful.