



FYI SALEM

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From the Mayor's Desk



Thanks for reading the latest issue of FYI Salem. Be sure to sign up for updates and news from the City of Salem by subscribing at www.salem.com/subscribe.

On the latest episode of the FYI Salem podcast I chat with Ward 6 City Councillor Beth Gerard, who is serving as the City Council President for 2018. You can find the podcast at <http://www.salem.com/mayors-office/pages/fyi-salem-podcast> or search for it on iTunes or your preferred podcast app.

In this issue you'll find out more about a \$1.22

million grant the City received earlier this month from the state in order to rebuild the old and failing seawall at Forest River Park. This work is a vital component of the ongoing Canal Street Flood Mitigation Project that will provide additional flood control and protection for a large portion of South Salem. The seawall will also provide additional resiliency for the park and surrounding properties from coastal storm surge.

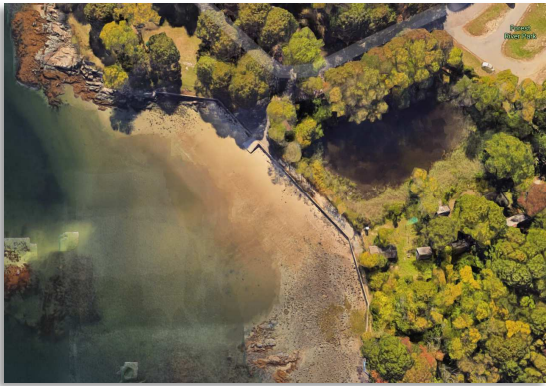
We have information about recent changes made to the inspection schedule for residential rental properties in Salem. Whether you own a conventional rental property or a short term rental like an Airbnb, you'll want to familiarize yourself with the new requirements and registration process in order to avoid costly fines. Check www.salem.com/rentals for even more details and information about these changes.

Finally, there's information about the recently announced proposed changes to the Nathaniel Bowditch School and the Horace Mann Laboratory School. We're excited about the opportunity these changes present to help provide a better opportunity to the children at both of these schools, but recognize that there are concerns and questions that many parents, teachers, and community members may have about them. I hope the information here will provide answers, but invite you to send additional questions to me at mayor@salem.com so we can address them promptly and accurately.

As always, thank you for reading FYI Salem and please share this newsletter with your Salem friends, family, and neighbors to help keep everyone informed about what's going on in our great city!

Kim Driscoll
Mayor, City of Salem

\$1.2M Seawall Grant



The City of Salem has received a \$1,220,000 grant from the Commonwealth's Dam & Seawall Program to repair and upgrade the six decade old seawall at Forest River Park, a key component of the on-going Canal Street Flood Mitigation Project and work that is in alignment with the recommendations in the City's 2014 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment & Action Plan.

The award supports the design and permitting for the repair/replacement of an approximately 60-year old deteriorating, concrete seawall located at the eastern boundary of Forest River Park in Salem. The existing seawall is part of the City of Salem's Canal Street Flood Mitigation Project. The Canal Street Flood Mitigation Project is a \$20 million project that has received funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with a goal of reducing flooding for up to the 1-percent annual chance event (100-year event), in the Canal Street and Salem State University O'Keefe Parking Lot.

Additional benefits will be realized at Forest River Park, where flood issues at the ball field will be corrected, more frequent pond flushing will be possible, and improvements will prevent the existing seawall from overtopping from flooding on the landward side.

Salem's So Sweet

Salem Main Streets, the Salem Chamber of Commerce, Destination Salem, and local retailers, restaurants, and businesses invite you to the 16th annual *Salem's So Sweet* Chocolate & Ice Sculpture Festival. A decadent tradition of delectable chocolate, sparkling ice sculptures, and Valentine's Day shopping, it's Salem's sweetest event of the year!



Chocolate & Wine Tasting Kick-off Event – Feb. 9, 6:30 pm, Colonial Hall at Rockafellas. This luscious tasting event features wine and chocolate samplings from premier Salem restaurants, stores, and sweet shops. The event is hosted by Colonial Hall at Rockafellas at 227 Essex Street. Tickets \$30 per person at <http://salemmainstreets.org/festivals/salem-so-sweet/>.

Ice Sculptures around Town – Starting Feb. 10. Last year, 25 beautiful ice sculptures graced downtown Salem. Details about this year's sculptures will be posted at the website above. Be sure to make plans for a special evening stroll on Saturday, Feb. 10, when the sculptures will be illuminated between by Retonica!

Golden Ticket and Additional Events – Feb. 10-11. Many downtown businesses will offer chocolate samplings and sweet discounts around downtown Salem all weekend in celebration of Valentine's Day. Check to see who is participating in the "Golden Ticket" – make a full-price purchase at one participating downtown business and get 10% off your purchase at the next participating business! Offer is good Feb. 10-11 only, some restrictions may apply. In addition, many of Salem's finest restaurants and retailers will be offering their own luscious chocolate and love-inspired specials and events.

Rental Inspections



In 2017, the City Council approved an amendment to the City's Code of Ordinances changing the frequency with which sanitary code inspections are conducted of rental properties in Salem. Under the old code, the property owner of any rental unit was required to have an inspection done in order to receive a Certificate of Fitness any time there was a change in tenant. This requirement remains unchanged. Under the new code, inspections will also be conducted on a scheduled basis, once every three years for all rental units, with some exceptions. Check www.salem.com/rentals for details about exempt units.

Units in any building where (1) the police have been called at least four times in the preceding 12 months for any arrestable offenses or (2) the building or health departments have received at least four sustained complaints in the preceding 12 months are classified as a problem property and may be inspected annually at the discretion of the building inspector or health agent.

There is no change in the fee for a Certificate of Fitness inspection, which continues to be \$50 per inspection. If your unit fails to pass inspection, you will be given a copy of the report specifying why. After correcting the violation, you may notify the health department and receive one free re-inspection. If third or subsequent inspections are required, however, the \$50 per inspection fee will be charged each time. Please be aware that the fine for renting a unit without a Certificate of Fitness has been increased from \$20 per day to \$50 per day.

To assist with complying with the new code, property owners who rent property are now required to keep a register of the names and dates of tenancy for rental units for the previous five years. This includes short term rentals such as Airbnb, VRBO, and similar operators. The register is not a public record and is to be privately kept by the property owner, but made available to city inspectors upon request for inspection only.

If you rent your property or any portion thereof on a short-term basis (for periods of 14 days or less) (for example, through Airbnb, VRBO, or similar operators), you are required to notify the health department, register the property (at no cost), and have a Certificate of Fitness inspection completed. Short-term rentals are inspected annually (not every three years) or upon a change of owner of the property. They are not required to be inspected upon a change of tenant, nor are they exempt if they are in a two- or three-family owner-occupied building. Failure to register and have the Certificate of Fitness inspection completed will result in a \$50 per day fine until the unit is brought into compliance with the code. Registration forms and more information is available at www.salem.com/rentals.

Rigid Plastics Recycling

Caraustar Corp. at 53 Jefferson Avenue in Salem (formerly North Shore Recycled Fibers) has notified the City of Salem that it has suspended its bulky, rigid plastic drop-off program due to market conditions. Rigid plastics are hard plastic items that cannot go in the standard curbside recycling cart or bin. Rigid plastics include such products as milk crates, old barrels and recycle bins, children's ride-on toys, deck chairs, large flower pots, etc. Caraustar hopes to resume this program sometime in the future if market conditions improve.



Bowditch/HMLS Changes



Salem Public Schools Superintendent Margarita Ruiz announced yesterday that she will present a plan to the School Committee that promotes equity and access for all students, recommending the integration of current Nathaniel Bowditch School students to other schools in the district and relocating the Horace Mann Laboratory School to the Willson Street building currently housing the Bowditch.

Superintendent Ruiz recommended the transfer of all students to better integrate schools and raise student achievement levels. Ruiz also noted that the Bowditch School was once a model for dual language instruction, but over the years the school has experienced challenges with staff and leadership

turnover and has become segregated. She further noted that research makes it very clear that segregation has a negative influence on student achievement.

In 2013, in hopes of better serving the district's K-8 students in Sheltered Immersion programs, the prior administration transferred all of the children in these programs to the Bowditch. The plan then was to provide additional resources to the English Language Learners who needed the highest levels of support. Unfortunately, due to leadership turnover, changes in the school model, and the district's own implementation of student assignments, the district's execution of this plan fell short of the original vision. The 2017 MCAS results reveal that the district is not serving the Bowditch students to the standard of excellence the district strives to achieve.

"The School Committee believes that every student in Salem deserve an equal chance at success," said Mayor Kim Driscoll, who chairs the Salem School Committee. "At present, despite best efforts, we are not serving the kids at NBS as well as we are those in other schools in the district. In addition, students at the Horace Mann Lab School have a building that is substandard in comparison to other school buildings in the district. Everyone is working with the goal of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for all students in Salem, and I believe that is at the heart of the Superintendent's recommendation."

Currently the Bowditch serves 358 students in K-8, who would be integrated into new schools for the next school year. The Collins Middle School would welcome rising students in grades 5, 6, and 7. For students in grades K-4, the district would take advantage of under-enrolled grades at other schools to open the doors to Bowditch students. The Superintendent noted that new classrooms and teachers would be added at the Witchcraft Heights, Horace Mann, Bates Elementary Schools and at the Collins Middle School. Class sizes at all schools would remain within the Salem Teachers' Union contractual limit.

"Through our strategic planning process, we made a promise to ourselves, our community and most importantly our students, to provide equity and access to all," said Superintendent Ruiz. "We have an obligation to eliminate any and all barriers to educational achievement and promote policies and practices that are fair and just and make learning opportunities fully accessible to all."

The district intends to reuse the building for the Horace Mann Laboratory School, currently located on SSU's North Campus, to the Willson Street building. Built in 2001 to house 640 students, the Willson Street building is part of the Salem High School campus. The 99,500 square foot building includes a cafeteria, gymnasium, science labs, library, bandroom, 31 classrooms and parking for 79 cars. By relocating the Horace Mann to Willson Street, the district will be able to provide a cohesive, single site building program, that will improve the physical working environment for teachers, and provide safer transition areas for walkers, bus riders and parent drop-off and pick up.

