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CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

TREE COMMISSION

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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR
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ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION

October 21, 2019

On October 21, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. the Salem Tree Commission held a meeting at 98 Washington Street, Salem, MA.

1. Roll Call

In attendance were: Chair Darleen Melis, Members: Joshua Arenstam, Naomi Cottrell, Curt Dragon, Charlotte Enfield, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, David Rowand, Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Joanne Roomey, Commission Clerk. Absent was Vice Chair Kirt Rieder.

2. Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc's Report

a. Grant Updates

- **Community Block Development Grant (CBDG)** - Mr. LeBlanc informed the Commission that there is \$23,000 left in the account until the end of the fiscal year 2020.
- **The Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant (MVPG)** – Mr. LeBlanc is working with the Planning Department group and will follow up with the Board regarding any new updates. This Grant addresses environmental concerns like those presented below:
 - Rising storm waters
 - Environmental changes
 - Climate changes
- **Urban and Forestry Community Challenge Grant (DCR)**
 - Mr. LeBlanc applied for DCR Challenge Grant and explained that it is a competitive grant process between towns and cities in the state and he will follow-up with the Board.
 - Salem is being considered for Greening of the Gateway Cities program. Tree planting is a 75% and 25% split between State (DCR) and City.

- Mr. LeBlanc is working with Tom Devine, Senior Planner in the Planning Department on these grants. Mr. Devine and Mr. LeBlanc have previous experience in writing grants.

b. Sign nailed on Common tree

- Mr. Rieder notified Mr. LeBlanc that someone nailed yard sale signs on multiple trees at the Common. Mr. LeBlanc took the signs down and explained that this act is a violation of M.G.L. c. 87. Anyone who defaces a tree may be fined and is subject to paying these fines that would go into the Tree Replacement Fund.

c. Daniels Inn

- Daniels Inn has been recently purchased. There are several trees on the premises, one 35" DBH (diameter at breast height) red oak; one 36" DBH oak and one birch all inside the property's fence. One tree leans into the public right-of-way and is therefore a city owned public tree so the city will prune it. The owner of the property needs a new water main and was told not to destroy the roots of the trees. Mr. LeBlanc has estimated about \$19,000 to take down trees, at \$150 per caliper inch, if the owner had applied and was granted a permit to remove the trees.
- The city is responsible for pruning some of the trees that are hanging over the sidewalk. The owner is cooperating with Mr. LeBlanc.
- Chair Darleen Melis stated that if this becomes an inn again then it will be considered commercial property; therefore, the 20' set back rule for Protected Trees would apply to the two sides of the property that touch the sidewalks. If the property is a private single home, then Protected Tree status would not apply.

d. 30 Federal Street

- Project on the corner formed by Bridge, Washington and Federal Streets. Proposal is for apartments and retail on the first floor.
- The developer is in contact with the Planning Department and Mr. LeBlanc. Mr. LeBlanc gave the developer a copy of the Tree Ordinance, Ch. 43 and M.G.L. c. 87. He explained the process of working with the Tree Warden.
- Mr. LeBlanc will ask the developer to provide an inventory of species and condition of the trees, and any plans to locate replacement trees on the site. He stated that the developer must explain what the final property will look like and whether they are going to replicate on site or pay for trees elsewhere.

- According to Chair Melis, who attended the Salem Redevelopment Authority review meeting, the developer had withdrawn the project from consideration at that meeting.

e. **217-221 Essex Street Mall**

- Mr. LeBlanc explained that the property is located on the Essex Street Mall on the walk to Old Town Hall opposite Wicked Good Books. Mr. LeBlanc will follow-up to be included in the plans.
- Mr. LeBlanc must work with tree pits that exist, 4x4 pits and 5x5 pits in the Derby Square area but will oversee better pit soil. Ms. Cottrell said a lot of the trees are root bound.

f. **How Tree Warden learns about projects in order to interact with them – PB, DRB, SRA, DPW**

Mr. LeBlanc has extensive communication with Dave Knowlton, the City’s Engineer. He also interacts and works closely with Tom Devine, the Senior Planner and Jenna Ide from the Planning department regarding the Common and Willows projects.

g. **Tree Permits**

- Application for Tree Permit Form – **Protected Trees**
 - Chair Darleen Melis presented a draft application for a Tree Permit for Protected Trees. This Application is required to be filled out for tree removals and replacements of Protected Trees
 - Prior to filling out this application, Chair Darleen Melis suggested reviewing the City Ordinance c. 43 – TREES, ARTICLE IV. PROTECTED TREE PRESERVATION:
https://library.municode.com/ma/salem/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIC OOR_CH43TR
 - The Board suggested changing the language under Protected Tree Removal to clarify the definition of a Protected Tree. The Chair will edit and update the application
- Application for Tree Maintenance or Removal Permit – **Public Trees**
 - Chair Darleen Melis presented a draft application for Tree Maintenance or Removal Permit for Public Trees. This Application is required to be filled out for maintenance or removal of a sound Public Tree.
 - Prior to filling out this application, Chair Melis suggested reviewing the City Ordinance c. 43 – TREES, ARTICLE III. - PUBLIC TREE PRESERVATION
https://library.municode.com/ma/salem/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIC OOR_CH43TR

- The Board suggested adding another section to include the contractor's name and address. The Chair will edit and update the application

3. Remarks from the Public: None

4. Approve Minutes: None

5. Presentation by Curt Dragon on Compost Tea

Mr. Dragon presented a PowerPoint document on how to make your own Compost Tea Brew Kit. He has over 35 years' experience in creating sustainable landscape solutions with organic products. He explained the importance of simplifying the restoration and care of outdoor plants, trees and property. Mr. Dragon discussed promoting organic products that make compost.

6. Tree Manual – Section VI. Planning before planting pages 9-13

Chair Darleen Melis presented the comments and edits by Board members Ms. Enfield, Ms. Cottrell and Mr. Dragon regarding the rules and regulations of the draft Tree Manual for Section VI, pages 9-13. Chair Melis will update the Tree Manual to reflect the Boards' changes.

Mr. Arenstam moved to skip to new business and then to adjourn. Ms. Cottrell seconded. The motion carried.

7. Century Tree program proposal: The Board agreed to continue this discussion at the next meeting on November 18, 2019.

8. Discussion on the plan to educate public about Chapter 43: The Board agreed to continue this discussion at the next meeting on November 18, 2019.

9. New business: None

10. Next Meeting Dates: November 18, 2019 and December 16, 2019

11. Adjournment

Mr. Arenstam made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk