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DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR
KIRT RIEDER, VICE CHAIR
ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
APRIL 19, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on April 19, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

Chair Darleen Melis; Members: Naomi Cottrell, Curtis Dragon, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter and David Rowand; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent were Vice Chair Kirt Rieder, Joshua Arenstam and Susan Yochelson.

1. Tree Warden's Report

- The Salem Tree Department is working on finalizing the spring planting locations.
- Salem will celebrate Earth Day on Friday the April 22, 2022. The Acting Commissioner of the DCR, Stephanie Cooper, will be in Salem to plant a tree with the DRC foresters at the Saltonstall School.
- The Tree Planting Bids have been received in response to an Invitation for Bid (IFB) published by the Purchasing Department. The only contractor that responded was the prior year's contractor and it is anticipated that a new two-year contract will be signed.
- Tree canopy pruning has been on going at the Salem Common. The scope of the work is strictly a canopy cleaning, which includes the removal of any deadwood in the trees.
- The trees on Lafayette Street were also pruned earlier in the month of April. The work started at the Marblehead line and went as far as Dow Street on both sides.
- The application for the 2023 Greening the Gateway Cites Program grant for municipal support is out. That will be completed and submitted for next year.
- The Arbor Day event will be at the Carlton School on Friday April 29, 2022. They will be handing out 300 seedlings to all the students that participate.
- The Washington Street project for the re-planting of the traffic island will begin in May. Several dead trees will be removed, and a couple of trees will be transplanted to new locations.

2. **Greening the Gateway Cities**

Ms. Warren spoke about the progress of the Greening the Gateway Cities Program. She met with Mr. Bresnahan last week and they have already started planting trees. DCR is hiring two long-term seasonal employees for April through November and short-term seasonal staff. SSCW is working on a video of a tree planting that took place at a home in Salem. When the DCR approves the press release, it will be sent to Mayor Driscoll and City Councillors for social media posts.

Ms. Warren gave Ms. Melis handouts for the *Blue Trees Installation* painting at PEM. Three trees will be planted at the Carlton Innovation School on Arbor Day and 300 seedlings will be passed out to the children. Ms. Warren will be sending more postcards out in Spanish and in English.

3. **Tree trunks and root flares – TC website: “Healing A Sick Tree with Tyson Woods” A recorded lecture.** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-hYi8a71D4>

Ms. Melis spoke about how the health and longevity of a tree can be compromised if the tree is either planted too deeply or extra soil or mulch buries the tree’s root flare. Considering how many trees on Salem streets are struggling under these conditions and how remediation would result in a better urban canopy, she suggested posting two videos on the Tree Commission website:

1. **Is The Root Flare Buried? “Healing A Sick Tree – In Search of Root Flare” Tyson Woods** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-hYi8a71D4>
2. **Find the root flare before digging the planting hole,**
“Trade Secrets from the Tree Doctor – How to Plant a Tree to Grow Twice as Fast!” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtXkt61KR3Q>

Mr. Rowand made a motion to put both videos on the Tree Commission website. Seconded by Ms. McCarter. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. **Boston Street, Transportation Infrastructure Project (TIP) – discussion**

Ms. Cottrell asked what the next step is. Mr. LeBlanc said the project is at the 25% design phase now. There will be several more public meetings looking for feedback, and construction is still six years out. Mr. LeBlanc said some trees on Boston Street may not last the six years. Mr. LeBlanc will hold off planting but will do canopy and pruning as needed. Ms. McCarter wanted to know if we could transplant a tree that would survive with a good percentage. She wants trees to be viable until the day they are going to be removed.

5. **American Rescue Plan – Update on Rep. Tucker’s \$200,000 to “plant trees and improve Salem’s tree canopy” – project process**

Mr. LeBlanc stated there are several companies on the state bid list that can help improve the trees in conservation areas. He will put together a scope of work and confer with the Conservation Agent and Commission about the project. There are 75 city-owned parcels that are conservation deeded, open space. Mr. LeBlanc will examine the parcels and see how they can be improved and the canopies encouraged.

6. Salem Common – Landscape architect – first steps

Ms. Cottrell has a meeting Friday with Trish O'Brien, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, to go over the first round of recommendations. Ms. Cottrell will reach out to stakeholders and folks to discuss options for the project.

7. *The Blue Trees Installation* at PEM - Tree Commission information table Essex Mall

Ms. Melis and Mr. L'Heureux will be at the PEM tomorrow and Friday at 10:00 a.m. On Thursday, Mr. Rowand will be there with Ms. Melis. They will be at a table to answer any questions from viewers regarding opportunities to plant trees in Salem and the importance of planting at the proper depth.

8. Salem Tree Donation Fund – Using the two tree funds requests to plant in parks, planting in the Mayor Salvo Multi Use Path

Mr. LeBlanc needs to write a letter to the Parks and Recreation Department asking for permission to plant donated trees in the parks. Ms. Melis hopes to reach out to a funeral home regarding the recommendation of donations to tree plantings located in Salem.

Ms. Melis presented a cut sheet from a tree nursery, named Select Trees Inc. Their brochure describes how they prune their tree roots and then their canopy to improve the growing success of the trees. Ms. Melis suggested that this type of silviculture would be helpful for the difficult growing conditions on the Mayor Salvo Multi Use Path.

Mr. LeBlanc said he was not familiar with the company Select Trees and had concerns whether or not the trees were field grown. Ms. Cottrell suggested using container grown trees. Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Dragon suggested purchasing local trees and to stay away from additional shipping costs.

Mr. Knowlton has been in contact with landscape architect, hired by the MBTA for the design and plantings on the Mayor Anthony Salvo Path to confirm that more plantings would be acceptable, to include a section behind 142 Canal Street?

9. Tree Manual – Review previous revisions and new section, “Promotion of Community Tree Planting”

The Tree Commission reviewed and made revisions to **Section VII. Planting Guidelines** to the Salem Tree Manual.

10. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of February 22, 2022 and March 21, 2022

Mr. Dragon made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Minutes of February 22, 2022. Seconded by Mr. Rowand. Mr. L'Heureux made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Minutes of March 21, 2022. Seconded by Ms. McCarter. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

11. New Business - None

12. Next Meeting Dates: Monday, May 16, 2022 and Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

13. Adjournment

Ms. McCarter made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Dragon. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk

**Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033**