



ROBERT MCCARTHY  
ACTING MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS  
**TREE COMMISSION**  
57 ORNE STREET  
SALEM, MA 01970  
TEL. 978-745-0195 FAX 978-741-7041

DARLEEN MELIS, CHAIR  
KIRT RIEDER, VICE CHAIR

***Touch the Future - Plant a Tree***

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION  
APRIL 10, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on April 10, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Present on call were:

1. Chair Darleen Melis, Vice Chair Kirt Rieder; Members: Naomi Cottrell, Cady Goldfield, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, and Jane Rumrill; Raymond Jodoin, Director of Operations, DPS and Conor Morgan, General Foreperson, Cemetery/Tree Division, DPS. Absent was Susan Yochelson.
2. **Conor Morgan and Ray Jodoin, DPS Report**

To date there are 32 new SeeClickFix requests and 42 items were closed out. Several requests for Tree Health Inspections were critical but some need to be re-assessed after bud break to determine whether removal is appropriate. Because it was a quiet month, deferred maintenance at Greenlawn Cemetery and eye sores on Whalers Lane were tackled. The in-house crew at the cemetery addressed serious large dead wood issues and outside crews removed 16 large trees that needed to be taken down. A couple of tree issues will be considered later for outside contractors including a large pine tree near Harris Circle that carries an arboretum tag. Mr. Morgan is happy to start his job with the backlog resolved. He will start physical examinations of the prior tree plantings of fall 2021 and spring 2022 and correcting any issues with the planting of those trees. Going forward, tree selection and plantings will be watched more closely and held to the ANSI standards.

DCR Planting Update: Mr. Jodoin spoke with Dave Bresnahan regarding expanding 16 tree pits on Church and Federal Streets. Federal Street will require removing concrete squares for structural soil to accommodate root growth and on Church Street five tree pits will require expanding the pits for new or existing trees. DPS is working on raising a planter bed along the Salem Green walkway next to the Church Street parking lot where Yasi & Yasi is located. Still to be installed is close to 200' of curb for the new tree bed. Twenty-six trees in total will be installed.

At Riley Plaza, 5-7 trees will be installed back of sidewalk near Starbucks and about 16 trees in the parking lot. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bresnahan have conferred on the species selection for all the project areas.

Gonyea Park project is ready for DCR as DPS has removed trees and stumps and is ready for DCR to plant 15 trees. DPS will provide three rain barrels to the site and fill them once every week.

### 3. **Greening the Gateway Cities Program**

Ms. Melis read into the minutes the following statement from David Bresnahan:

After having not planted for 9 months due to the summer drought, DCR will start planting trees on private property next week. There are 200 plus trees on the private tree backlog - additionally we will be working with Public Services to plant up to 26 shade trees at the Church St. lot and 5 at Collins Middle School / Broad St. Playground for Arbor Day.

Salem Sound Coast Watch has developed outreach postcards and will be mailing them out in the weeks to come to eligible residents inside the GGCP planting zone.

Dave is working with the Salem Housing Authority on a plan to plant 12 shade trees at the plaza formed by the Philip L. Morency Manor at 45 St. Peter Street and the James A. Dalton Residence at 205 Bridge Street. This project is expected to take place in May. The Gonyea Park planting is on track to start in May as well.

DCR is looking for additional applicants for planting crew laborers. Interested candidates can apply through MassCareers website:

[Job Description - Seasonal Forestry Assistant- Greening the Gateway Cities \(Salem\) \(230002XT\) \(taleo.net\)](#)

[Job Description - Seasonal Laborer II - Greening the Gateway Cities \(Salem\) \(230002DW\) \(taleo.net\)](#)

### 4. **Annual review of tree species recommendations – p. 22 – 24 Salem Tree Manual**

Ms. Melis wants to review the section of the Tree Manual from pages 22 to 24 regarding the tree species deemed suitable for city street trees. The commission will focus on it more at the next meeting when everyone has a chance to review it. If anyone has input on any of the selections, please let her know. The commission wants to make sure that we are current with changes in conditions.

### 5. **Discussion of Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden, Northampton, MA presentation – the role of volunteers in Salem**

Ms. Melis led a discussion of last month's presentation by Richard Parasiliti, Tree Warden, Northampton, MA. He talked about tree care techniques and how his city managed to go from a city-based tree planting process in 2015 to an all-volunteer tree planting program for the last several years. It took the creation of a nonprofit organization, started by local certified arborists, to now manage the extensive volunteer work force that plants hundreds of trees each season. He discussed types of trees and how they were cultivated. He spoke about disassembling the ball and burlap trees down to a bare root condition to accurately assess the correct planting depth for each tree, which assures a 95% success rate. He also described how a tree could be raised to the correct height after a year or two at a too deep level.

As part of the tree stock discussion, Mr. Rieder sent a link to an above ground nursery program. The technique is to wrap the potting medium in a light-weight mat designed to guide growing roots out numerous apertures where the dehydrating air nips the root,

thereby encouraging extensive fibrous root branching inside the pot. This technique will probably become more extensively available with growing market demand: <https://air-pot.com/nusery/research/> Ms. Cady commented that back in the 1970s, field grown trees were root pruned 18 months before they were harvested with very good results. However, this is no longer extensively practiced, which helps explain the current disappointing results. Mr. Morgan said he can inspect the trees as a group and will make sure they are planted properly. As well, he offered to give a demonstration on how to correctly plant trees. *“Plant them high, never die. Plant too low, never grow.”*

#### **6. Salem Common Tree Planting – Darleen Melis**

Ms. Melis said besides the \$10,000 that was donated a year ago from two charitable foundations, a \$4,000 donation was raised by the Friends of Salem Common, as well as a promise for another single tree donation from the Twomey family in memory of Dave Twomey’s brother. Ms. Melis explained to Mr. Twomey that it would be a Century Tree with the usual tag. His brother, Jerome Twomey, was an attorney in Salem who also taught law for SSU students. Ms. Melis offered a gathering with his family when the tree is tagged so they could remember the event. The next step is for the donation to go through city council acceptance.

#### **7. Tree Commission member discussion – interests and concerns**

Ms. Goldfield said that last Thursday Ms. Melis accompanied her to Saltonstall School for an after-school program with the first grade Daisy Troop. There were seven, seven-year-old girls, full of energy and curiosity about trees. She spoke about the history of forestation, how to tell the difference between certain kinds of trees and the proper ways to repot trees. The girls were really intuitive and took the Girl Scout Tree Promise to become friends and advocates for trees in Salem. The Daisy Troop has a project to plant a new tree in Salem.

#### **Earth Day, April 22 at 11:00 a.m. at Forest River Park walk & talk – park history and Emerald Ash Borer Beetle information – Cady Goldfield**

Ms. Goldfield said Chris Burke, who is a local naturalist, will do a walk and talk on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:00 a.m. to educate folks about native species of trees. It will get folks acquainted with the Forest River Park tree population. They picked Forest River because that site was originally a tree nursery for the city in 1913. A number of ash trees were planted there and now suffer badly from the ravages of the borer beetles. Ms. Cady will make out posters and mount them on the bathhouse at Forest River Park, send around flyers for residents and have an announcement placed on the Tree Commission’s webpage.

#### **8. Arbor Day April 28 – “Don’t Mulch Your Trees to Death This Spring!” poster; upcoming School Committee vote to accept DCR trees at Broad Street Playground**

Ms. Melis showed the educational poster *Do not Mulch Your Trees to Death This Spring!* It has been completed and is posted around the city, including the garden center at Home Depot. Ms. Rumrill worked on the graphics part of the poster which includes a QR code. This poster has been placed on the Tree Commission webpage: <https://www.salemma.gov/tree-commission>.

**9. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of March 20, 2023**

Mr. Rieder made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2023. Seconded by Mr. L'Heureux. A roll call vote was taken, Ms. Cottrell abstained, and the motion was carried unanimously.

**10. New Business:** None

**11. Next Meeting Dates:** **Monday, May 15, 2023** and Monday, **June 12, 2023** at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

**12. Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Tree Commission this evening, Mr. Rieder moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **7:45 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**