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CONOR MORGAN
ACTING TREE WARDEN

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION FEBRUARY 15, 2024

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on February 15, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

1. PUBLIC TREE HEARING

Applicant: Crowley Wind Energy regarding Removal of Public Trees at Derby Street, DPST-23-6.

In attendance: Joseph St. Pierre, Project Manager for Crowley Wind Services presented the application with his team: Lorayne Black, Landscape Architect from AECOM; Timothy Armstrong, Consulting Arborist with Bartlett Tree Experts; Jared Kemp, Project Manager with Crowley Engineering; and John Berry, Director of Terminal Operations with Crowley Engineering.

The project is redevelopment of a site located between Fort Ave, Derby St., and the Salem Harbor Power Station, which will be used to facilitate assembly of offshore wind power generating equipment. The request is for the removal of various tree species with DBH range 2.5"-10". The applicant is prepared to replace the removed trees with either trees planted in the R.O.W, in the immediate area, or through a donation to the Salem Tree Replacement Fund.

There are numerous mature honey locust trees and a long hedge of arborvitae screening the site from the residential area on the opposite side of Derby St and Fort Ave. Trees with the potential to be retained and the potential impacts to each tree are listed in the Tree Inventory.

The proposed goal is to improve tree screening along Derby St, improved plantings along Blaney St. and along a proposed public access to the waterfront near the Blaney St. Ferry Terminal.

Four hundred and nineteen existing trees were assessed by Bartlett Tree Associates. All the honey locusts along Derby St. are in good shape and will be maintained; trees along Blaney Street will be removed and replaced with more robust plantings. India St. arborvitae will be removed, all trees will be maintained on Fort Ave, as only a few are in poor health. The swale at the entrance to the power plant will be repositioned. No trees will be disturbed but there may be damage to roots. A maintenance plan has been created.

Tree Removal Permit

- Tree protection plan to ASNI A300 standard
- Consulting Arborist and Tree Warden Consultation

Total Number of Existing Trees Surveyed*	Existing Trees to be Removed	Existing Trees to be Protected	Proposed Project Trees	Proposed Project Shrubs
419*	104*	315*	166	914
126 Trees 293 Arborvitaes	Includes Trees along Blaney Street, (abandoned) India Street & Derby/Blaney walkway connection	54 Honeylocust 27 Other Trees 234 Arborvitaes	135 Evergreen Trees 31 Shade Trees	
190 trees designated 'poor' or 'dead'*				

*As per Salem Wind Port Tree Preservation Report, prepared by Bartlett Tree Experts, January 26, 2024

The following questions were raised by Tree Commission members:

1. Why are only 104 trees being replaced if 190 trees are designated poor or dead? Mr. Morgan explained that the development does not demand their removal.
2. Is there a caliper count of trees slated for removal and will trees be replaced inch for inch? Tim Armstrong replied that they did not calculate diameter of trees being removed, but it is available in the data. More trees are being planted than existing trees are being removed.
3. Why are mostly evergreens proposed and not more shade trees? Answer: Shade is not needed by residents as much as robust screening; in some places planting height is restricted by overhead wires.
4. Has each cultivar been reviewed for flood tolerance per the Hurricane Sandy Flood Study since this area has been designated a FEMA Flood Zone?
5. Is a plant list and planting plan available? Is there a budget for maintaining planting, especially on the edge? Conor Morgan replied that a soil berm and irrigation will be added to guarantee survival.
6. Will planting be affected by the amount of impervious surface created by this project? Answer: The Conservation Commission and Planning Board have both been working on this, and drainage has improved significantly.

Public Comment: Five comments were submitted in support of the proposal and there was one question about whether honey locust could withstand disease infestation. Cady Goldfield responded that honey locusts are not susceptible to disease at this time.

The permit was approved with the following conditions:

1. The lost caliper inches must be calculated, and if they are not replaced the applicant must replace the removed trees with either trees planted in the R.O.W, in the immediate area, or through a donation to the Salem Tree Replacement Fund.
2. Plantings must be evaluated for flood tolerance per the Hurricane Sandy Flood Study.
3. Evaluate if more deciduous trees can be added, especially on the west side.

2. TREE COMMISSION MEETING:

Present on the call were: Chair Darleen Melis; Members: Naomi Cottrell, Cady Goldfield, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, Jane Rumrill, and Susan Yochelson; Conor Morgan, General Foreperson, Cemetery/Tree Division, DPS and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Vice Chair Kirt Rieder.

3. Report – Conor Morgan, General Foreperson Cemetery/Tree Division of Department of Public Services

During the last period SeeClickFix received a much-reduced stream of requests due to several factors. These factors range from the time of year and lack of leaf canopy to previous storms and a robust program of mitigation pruning works which have been ongoing since Halloween. The previous storm I am referring to happened on 12/18/23 and resulted in the shaking loose of many dead branches. The lack of canopy does seem to reduce the amount tree/resident conflicts. The vast majority of requests were either related to tree health inspections or fallen limbs. Currently the tree crew is comprised of 1 operative Kevin Torres, and he is using a 25-year-old back up brush chipper. The first-string brush chipper was very badly damaged by non-cemetery and tree division operatives during the storm of December 18th. The clutch is destroyed and may need to be sent as far as Connecticut for repair. Currently to be able to tackle any in-house tree work we are constantly borrowing another member of staff either from the cemetery or from parks. In the cemetery there are only 2 full-time members of staff. This means Mike Albert if he is not occupied with burials. The tree crew is hence diminished to picking up fallen branches on some days when another operative can be borrowed.

In December all of the then current work orders were tabulated and contracted out to Mayer Tree and Iron Tree. There can be a large lag time between when this work is given out for quotation and when the work is finally completed. I believe the contractors treat it as infill work and will only address it when they become slow in other work. As of now Mayer Tree Service has completed their 30 work orders. This work has now been cleared from SeeClickFix. Currently Iron Tree Service are carrying out their 30 work orders in the city and should be completed tomorrow.

With the greater part of the SeeClickFix tree work requests tackled I have turned my attention to the requests for spring tree planting. I have visited all locations of tree planting requests and vetted them for suitability. A dozen or so locations could not accommodate a public tree anywhere on the street. A list of these locations was compiled and given to the Tree Commission to see if those residents would accept a century tree planted on their

private property. The remaining list comprises locations which could accommodate approximately 45 trees.

With the reduced staffing situation, it seems that all of our spring tree planting will be carried out by contractors. The list of 105 tree planting locations will be carried out by contractors after another outside contractor optimizes the tree pits and soil conditions therein. The director of the DPW through procurement is currently seeking tenders for on-call tree planting contractors who can then be relied upon to carry out any and all tree planting for which we can find funding.

The Christmas tree at Lappin park was successfully dismantled with extensive crown and traffic control measures with a police detail. The Christmas wreaths were collected.

Mayer Tree has carried out a difficult contract to remove dead trees from Howard St Cemetery. Access is very difficult there with headstones and vaults.

Tenders have been sought for the tree pit improvements at the 105 “Greening of the Gateway City’s Grant” locations.

I have done extensive work with Crowley wind energy to safeguard the trees on Derby St and Fort Ave. If plans continue as they are we will be able to protect all of the healthy honey locust trees here which make up this beautiful linear park. The line of arborvitaes along derby will be preserved and improved. We are currently working on producing a line of screen tree plantings to the south to further soften the impact of the development on the adjacent neighborhood. The developer has a team of very competent professionals who together have produced a tree protection plan which if implemented correctly will ensure the protection of the vast majority of the quality trees in this area.

During the last period a large proportion of our efforts have been diverted to snow management.

4. Greening the Gateway Cities Program - David Bresnahan, DCR Forester

Ms. Melis read David Bresnahan’s notes:

Numbers: To date, DCR has planted 948 trees, from 45 different genera, in Salem through GGCP. The top 5 genus represented are Quercus (75), Ginkgo (55), Liquidambar (51), Betula (49), and Tilia (49).

The majority of trees (733) were planted on private property. The remaining 215 have been planted in the public right of way. These include Housing Authority Parcels, street trees, city schools and also trees planted on Salem State campus.

Staffing: One forestry assistant will be returning. DCR will post up to 7 positions including Forestry assistant, long term seasonal laborer and short-term seasonal laborer (< 90 days). Positions will be posted on Mass careers: [Find Your Career at the Commonwealth | Mass.gov](#)

Grants: Dave will work with Conor to plant 50 trees within the GGCP planting zone starting in April. Work in tandem will include saw cutting to remove blacktop and

concrete and soil remediation. Locations will include Bridge St neighborhood, Boston / Essex streets, Lafayette place and Congress St.

Mr. Morgan is working with Mr. Jodoin and DPS on 105 locations outlined in the FY 24 implementation act. The FY 25 Implementation Grant will merge the two grants into one so only one application will be necessary.

UMASS 45th annual community tree conference is happening Tuesday, Feb 27th. The theme is “ Managing Tree Systems in a Changing Climate” [UMass Community Tree Conference 2024 - Managing Tree Systems in a Changing Climate | Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment](#)

5. Updated Tree Planting list 2023

Ms. Melis said the Tree Commission will be posting within the month an updated list of trees and a chart on how we have been planting.

6. Mayor’s Letter to New Tree Owners

Ms. Melis and Ms. Yochelson drafted a letter from the mayor’s office to send to property owners regarding planting new public trees on the streets throughout our community. Also included in the letter are instructions on the Do’s and Don’ts of caring for a new tree.

7. Community Block Development Grant – downtown or area revitalization

It was discovered that in 2020 the city had arranged a Community Block Development Grant. Mr. Morgan said he has discussed this with Mr. Jodoin, and we could apply for the grant for as much money as we needed.

8. Review of Tree Replacement and Tree Donation Funds

Ms. Melis said there is \$17,000 in the Tree Replacement Funds, \$12,000 of which can be used for tree planting and \$5,000 for the Century Trees. She wanted to make sure that we take advantage of this money.

9. Arbor Day 2024 – usually Friday, April 26, 2024

In preparation for Arbor Day, DCR is hoping to plant at least four trees at Witchcraft Heights Elementary School, which is the only school in the planting zone where no trees have been planted. Mr. Morgan, Mr. L’Heureux and Mr. Bresnahan will check out the site to determine where there’s enough soil and effective use of trees at the school.

To ensure that we are ready for Earth Day, we are exploring planting three trees at the Bently School to shade the Early Childhood Center playground which abuts the baseball diamond. We are waiting for permission to plant there.

10. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of January 8, 2024

Ms. Rumrill made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2024. Seconded by Ms. Goldfield. A roll call vote was taken, Ms. Yochelson abstained, and the motion was carried unanimously.

11. **New Business:** Ms. Melis discussed the addition of new screens to the online GIS information which includes FEMA flood areas. Ms. McCarter is reviewing the 105 planting sites in the FY '24 GGCP Implementation grant to determine flood zones and to ensure that plantings are flood tolerant.
<https://salemma.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/interactivelegend/index.html?appid=a48c0972540143feb75faadccaafdcabc>
12. **Next Meeting Dates:** Monday, March 18, 2024 and Monday, April 8, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.
13. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Tree Commission this evening, Ms. Rumrill 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 8:35 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**