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ACTING TREE WARDEN

Touch the Future - Plant a Tree

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 20, 2023**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on November 20, 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, Members: Naomi Cottrell, Cady Goldfield, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, Jane Rumrill; Conor Morgan, General Foreperson, Cemetery/Tree Division, DPS; and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Vice Chair Kirt Rieder and Susan Yochelson.

2. PUBLIC TREE HEARINGS

- Removal of one (1) Public Tree, 29 Hancock Street

DPST-23-29

The applicant is Mr. Sean Brennan, Brennan Construction, Inc. The project is construction of housing located at 29 Hancock St. The request is for the removal of one (1) 12" DBH *Fraxinus* spp. / ash. The applicant is prepared to replace the removed tree with either trees planted in the R.O.W, in the immediate area, or through a donation to the Salem Tree Replacement Fund.

Mr. Morgan gave a background of the ash tree that is suffering at 29 Hancock Street and discussed different species to replace it. Ms. Cottrell asked Mr. Morgan whether he considered a birch tree to be the best replacement. Ms. Goldfield said birch trees live 40 to 60 years and they are easy to replace but are very messy with twigs constantly falling. Mr. Morgan said he is open to other suggestions on trees species and where they should be placed.

Another suggestion was improvement of the permitting process. Ms. Melis will contact Councillor Jeff Cohen regarding curb cuts that open driveway parking but in the process remove public parking in the street. The commission discussed having a standard procedure for future tree hearings. They want the applicant to make a presentation during the hearing and submit pictures they can view before and during the hearing.

Mr. L'Heureux made a motion to table this discussion until they get more information. Seconded by Ms. Goldfield. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

- Removal of two (2) Public Trees, 25 - 37 Ward Street **DPST-23-30**

The applicant is Ms. Ilene Vogel of North Shore CDC. This project is construction of housing located at 25-37 Ward St. The request is for the removal of two (2) 10.5" DBH *Fraxinus* spp. / ash. 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.

Ms. Vogel came before the Tree Commission to get permission to remove the ash trees. She has been working with Mr. Morgan and a certified arborist to identify tree replacement locations. She is trying to coordinate everything, but it may take a little longer. She will need someone to plant and take care of the new trees. Ms. Vogel plans to plant three (3) trees in the side yard of #6 Prince Street Place and three (3) trees in the side yard of #107 Congress Street that will replace the two trees to be removed from Ward St. The landscape plan identified the same trees at both sites: *Quercus alba* / white oak, *Quercus Macrocarpa* / bur oak and *Nyssa sylvatica* / black tupelo. If availability is a problem in the spring, the species may be adjusted in order to allow for timely planting.

In addition, the CDC owes 4 trees from prior tree removal projects at 38 Palmer St. and 34 Peabody St. Discussion of the Tree Commission members swung in the direction of planting in the broad tree lawn of Congress St. rather than at Salem Willows Park.

Mr. Morgan explained this permit is time sensitive. The NS CDC agreed to pay a performance bond to the city so that tenants may move into the new housing units. He also suggested holding off until the spring for planting.

- Removal of fourteen (14) Public Trees, 16 - 20 Franklin Street **DPST-23-17**

The applicant is Mr. Marc Tranos. This project is construction of 30+ housing units located at 16-20 Franklin St. The request is for the removal of fourteen (14) misc. species with a total caliper measurement of 179". 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. The discussion revolved around four areas of concern that need to be addressed in the final Protected Tree Permit:

- Fence protection of the abutting Furlong Park trees
- Removal of a debris pile that sits over a future tree planting area
- Expansion of the Franklin St. planting area into a tree lawn for shade trees such as elms rather than ornamental hawthorn trees.
- Site six (6) trees required by the parking plan in locations that will cast shade on the asphalt.

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

During the last period, SeeClickFix requests accumulated:

A large quantity of Tree Health Inspections that were received were examined immediately and work orders created as needed. The remainder of SeeClickFix requests were mostly made up of downed branches and complaints of branches in conflict with houses.

The major news from this period is that both outside contractors Mayer and Iron Tree began their large contracts to clear 92 work orders from the backlog. They both declined to work during October and so they both began immediately after on the same day. Mayer tree split the contract into phases meaning that no parking orders could be streamlined. Iron Tree simply stated that they need 46 locations posted over a 10-day period. This caused complaints from residents. As of now, Iron Tree has completed their 46 work orders and Mayer tree has completed about two thirds of their 46 work orders. Again, this is a great relief to complete before the winter weather.

Most of the reports of downed branches were taken care of by Mike Albert and Richard Martineau. It must be noted that Michael Albert is an absolute stalwart worker who rises to any challenge without a complaint.

We have welcomed a new recruit to the Tree Department, Kevin Torres, who is a young guy with a very good attitude of cooperation and a good work ethic.

We have welcomed a new seasonal operative to the cemetery, Jaimie Stavros, who is a hard worker and fitting in well.

I have spent considerable time preparing for the three Tree Hearings scheduled for this meeting. I have endeavored to accommodate the applicants' needs while safeguarding the interest of the city and its trees.

Regarding the 105 GGCP planting locations, we have finalized the list of locations and species. We will now work toward opening, building and improving those planting pits for the best results in tree establishment.

Going forward we will be working toward immediately clearing more of the SeeClickFix backlog including a considerable amount of stump grinding in the tree lawns.

We will continue to work towards hiring further staff.

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

David Bresnahan, DCR Forester said they had a successful fall planting season, had a good crew and were able to get 231 trees planted. The majority of these, 186 trees, were planted on private property, 9 new trees were planted at Salem State University in the vicinity of the community bike path and Stanley building. These included 2 *Taxodium distichum* / bald cypress, 1 *Nyssa sylvatica* / tupelo, 1 *Ulmus americana*, 2 *Gleditsia triacanthos* /

honeylocust, 1 *Gymnocladus dioicus* / Kentucky coffeetree and 1 *Crataegus* / hawthorn ‘Winter King.’

Seventeen trees were planted in co-operation with Salem Housing Authority at Colonial Terrace (5 Nichols St.), two additional trees were planted in the plaza abutting Starbucks on Washington Street. Five more street trees were planted, with help from DPS at Church St lot, on the Church Street side – 2 *Ulmus americana* / ‘Princeton elms’, 2 *Celtis occidentalis* / hackberry and 1 *Crataegus* / ‘Winter King hawthorn.’

Only a few public street trees were planted at the request of abutting homeowners who have signed an agreement to take on the watering.

Thirty-five shade trees were planted at Salem Heights, a large low-income housing development managed by a private company called POAH (Preservation of Affordable Housing). He was to get a good mix of tuliptrees, lindens, spruces, hackberry, honeylocust and scarlet oaks planted up there. (*Liriodendron tulipifera*, *Tilia americana*, *Picea abies*, *Picea pungens*, *Celtis occidentalis*, *Gleditsia triacanthos*, *Quercus coccinea*.)

DCR has been trying out berm fencing around public trees in high pedestrian foot traffic areas. We put up some temporary, garden type metal fencing around trees at Church Street, Federal Street, St. Peter’s Street, Salem State and Riley Plaza in the hope that these fences will help to get the trees established.

Salem Sound Coastwatch has been working with the planting crew to canvass neighborhoods, or door knocking, which has proven to be successful.

Although our fall season is over, he wants to remind everyone that he will be available throughout the winter to plan for the spring planting season. He already has a small backlog and some site visits lined up. **The new GGCP total trees planted to date in Salem is 946.**

5. Update on The House of the Seven Gables Tree Permit

Mr. Conor and Ms. Melis visited the House of the Seven Gables on November 3, 2023 to meet with H7G Executive Director Dakota Russell and Director of Preservation Management Paul Wright to review the condition of the campus trees and to suggest planting locations for the additional trees they need to plant to meet the requirement of replacing 51” DBH of the maple trees that were removed along Hardy Street.

6. Root flare mitigation project at Community Life Center

On Saturday Nov. 4th and 11th, volunteers worked on removing the seriously deep mulch that was hampering the 47 trees at the CLC. Volunteers were Jacob St. Louis, Jacob Maynard, Cady Goldfield, Rachel McCarter, Darleen Melis, Susan Yochelson, Lynn Fletcher, Leah Ingraham, Alex Ingraham, Ray Jodoin and Conor Morgan. Forty (40) trees were air spaded through the generosity of Jacob Maynard who brought the air compressor from Bartlett Tree Experts. The remaining seven (7) trees along Bridge St. were not addressed. Over the two weekends, the root flares of eleven (11) were revealed and girdling roots were cut away. Follow-up by DPS should include the disposal off-property of the

poor-quality mulch or else the tree roots will solidify into the berm, creating a tripping hazard.

7. **Contact with large landowners regarding root flare mitigation** – Salem Hospital, PEM, House of the Seven Gables, Salem State University and Salem Five were all contacted about their mulching practices and a few of them sent representatives to the Saturday workday.

8. **Tree care instructions sent to new tree owners**

This matter requires follow-up.

9. **Approve Tree Commission Minutes of October 16, 2023**

Mr. L’Heureux made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

10. **New Business:** None

11. **Next Meeting Dates:** Monday, **December 18, 2023** and Monday, **January 8, 2024** at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

12. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Tree Commission this evening, Ms. Cottrell moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. L’Heureux. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at **9:18 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**