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**TREE COMMISSION**  
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ROBERT LEBLANC, TREE WARDEN

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

**MINUTES OF THE SALEM TREE COMMISSION  
MAY 17, 2021**

A meeting of the Salem Tree Commission was held on May 17, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

Chair Darleen Melis, Vice Chair Kirt Rieder, Members: Naomi Cottrell, Curtis Dragon, Paul L'Heureux, Rachel McCarter, David Rowand and Susan Yochelson; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Guests: Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch and DCR Forester David Bresnahan. Absent was Joshua Arenstam.

**1. Tree Warden's Report**

- The DCR Challenge Grant: I have received everyone's survey sheets and I thank all for their time and efforts on this grant project. I sent the whole package to Mr. MacArthur last week for him to roll it all up and send it back. I hope that this is where I will draw the tree planting locations for the fall season.
- I am working on the second round of DCR /EEA Grant to support the Greening of the Gateway Cities planting projects. The grant will reimburse the City for creating tree pits, stump grinding, asphalt and concrete removal disposal of materials and some maintenance and watering costs. This is due next Thursday.
- The Salem Tree Department is still severely shorthanded. It may be six to eight weeks before the crew can get back to maintenance tree work throughout the City. I will be working with a couple of local contractors to cover on the high priority work and if we have a significant weather event with tree damage, for ON-Call operations.
- An Arbor Day event at the Bates Elementary School was held on the last Friday of April. Thank you to those who showed up. We planted a tree with the third graders, talked about tree benefits, had pictures taken and the students received a seedling to take home. The total was about 140 students.
- The spring planting program will begin on Tuesday. Of the original list, (2) tree locations came back with positive gas leak detection, (4) trees were rejected by the residents when they received the letter from the Mayor's Office informing them that a tree would be planted in front of their house. These changes bring the total to about (45) trees for the spring planting. Hopefully, the FY 2022 budget will sustain more trees to plant next year.

- There is a Public Shade Tree Hearing this week for the Essex Street Project and another in three weeks for the Lighthouse Project.
- I anticipate at least two or three more Public Shade Tree Hearings and one or two requests for Protected Tree Removal Permits.
- A certified letter to the owner of Captain Dusty’s Ice Cream regarding the removal, without a permit, of a Protected Tree from the 20-setback zone on a commercial property is being reviewed by Beth Rennard.

## **2. Greening of the Gateway Cities**

Barbara Warren, Salem Sound Coastwatch and DCR Forester David Bresnahan were on the call. Ms. Warren spoke on May 10, 2021, on the League of Women Voters TV talk show advising folks to go to: <https://www.maubancanopy.org/town/salem/> to learn whether their property is within the Planting Zone and is eligible for a free tree(s), which the foresters will plant for them. She will send the commission a link to the recording. They have ordered tree/lawn signs (25) single-sided and (25) double-sided in Spanish and English. Also ordered is a double-sided banner for the Farmers Market that has the QR code on it that will lead people to the above link. She has ordered 3,500 direct mail postcards that will be addressed to “Resident” in order to minimize returned mail. She has also ordered 500 tree brochures that Mr. Bresnahan says the foresters want to use. She has sent an announcement letter to the City Councillors, contacted the Collins Middle School Science teacher, and is hoping to complete a video on GGC by the June 30 end of contract.

Mr. Bresnahan and his crew have planted 83 private trees and one public tree and will be planting 120 more trees by the end of June and then onto the fall season with a 400-tree planting target.

## **3. NSCD Lighthouse Project/ Removal of Public and Private Trees**

Steven Ventresca, PE at Nitsch Engineering, Inc. was on the call. He submitted a request for tree permits for the Lighthouse Project sites located at 34 Peabody Street, 47 Leavitt Street and 38 Palmer Street. The Lighthouse Project will remove seven (7) Public Trees on the City streets, and two (2) Protected Trees located within the 20-foot setback area that is defined by the Tree Ordinance as requiring a permit for removal for locations such as this multi-unit development. He showed a tree plan together with a narrative and permit application that indicated impacts that would affect trees at the three sites.

The commission had a discussion and said that any tree that could not be saved, must be replaced. Mr. LeBlanc will be available to monitor the progress and to give advice regarding replacement of trees. This project will be one of the expected Tree Hearings.

## **4. SIFI Networks, City-Wide Fiber Optic Installation Project**

Several team members of the SIFI Optics project were on the Zoom call. They included Bill McGovern, Mears – GC, Linda Calnan, Project Manager, SIFI Networks Brad Themiscott and Scott Strokes, Jacobs Engineering. Their goal is to provide all residents with the ability to connect to the new Fiber Optic Network System. They would be

installing 25 above-ground cabinets and each cabinet would support 1,000 subscribers with room for further growth up to 1,800 per cabinet.

Mr. LeBlanc will visit each proposed cabinet location and only issue permits for micro-trenching once the first phase has been reviewed.

**5. Posting Tree Hearings to the Tree Commission webpage**

The commission decided not to post Tree Hearings on the Tree Commission website since the Tree Warden notifies the Chair of the Tree Commission when hearings would be held, therefore, she could notify the commissioners.

**6. Approve Tree Commission Minutes of April 20, 2021**

Mr. Rieder made a motion to approve the Tree Commission Minutes of April 20, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Dragon. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**7. Remarks from the Public - None**

8. Next Meeting Dates: Monday, **June 21, 2021** and Monday, **July 19, 2021** at 6:00 p.m.

**9. Adjournment**

Mr. Dragon made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Cottrell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 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**