



Dominick Pangallo
MAYOR

Trish O'Brien
Superintendent

CITY OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

JEAN A. LEVESQUE COMMUNITY LIFE CENTER
401 Bridge Street, Salem MA 01970
Tel. (978) 744-0180/(978) 744-0924
Fax (978) 219-1665

MINUTES OF THE SALEM PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION AUGUST 18, 2026

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was held on August 18, 2026, at 6:45 p.m. at 401 Bridge Street. Present were Chair James Shea; Members: Bob Callahan, Amy Everitt and Alex Sanchez; Trish O'Brien, Superintendent and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Deborah Amaral.

James Shea, Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

1. Approval of Park and Recreation Commission Minutes of July 21, 2026.

Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the Park and Recreation Commission Minutes of July 21, 2026. Ms. Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Visitors and Requests:

- a. Elizabeth Peterson, Director of Witch House - Request increase in ticket prices for the Witch House.

Trish spoke on behalf of Elizabeth. She stated that, as they do each year, they held several meetings to review and analyze admission fees. Following internal research and discussion, Elizabeth is proposing a \$5 increase in admission fees to the Witch House.

The proposed admission fees would be:

- Adults: \$17 (currently \$12)
- Seniors: \$15
- Children over the age of 6: \$13

Trish noted that the proposed fees would remain lower than other Salem sites. The House of Seven Gables and the Phillips House are the closest comparisons, although both facilities are considerably larger. Trish said that Elizabeth believes the proposed fees are fair and reasonable.

Mayor Pangallo appeared and explained why they wanted to request the \$5.00 surcharge on the Witch House tickets. He said it would be deposited into a special stabilization fund account to support municipal and school buildings.

There being no further questions or comments regarding this matter. Ms. Everett made a motion to approve the increase in ticket prices to \$5.00 to go towards the surcharge. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. Bill McHugh, Harbor Master, appeared and provided an update regarding the replacement of the existing steel piles, at Winter Island boat ramp which provided support for boats entering and exiting the water and rise and fall with the tide. The project is considered necessary and is intended to improve public fishing and access, with associated costs covered through public access funding.

The project is currently in the engineering phase, with a Notice of Intent anticipated within 30–45 days. Chapter 91 permitting will follow, with the project expected to go out to bid and begin in the spring. The Harbor Master does not anticipate that the area will need to be shut down during construction.

- c. Brandi Dion, Halloween Road Race, Salem Willows Field, October 17, 2026. Amplification from 8:00am-11:00pm.

Ashley Steeves appeared on behalf of Brandi Dion for approval to have the Devils Chase/Creepy Clown Road Race at Willows Field. It is a 6.66 and a 3.3 mile race and nothing has changed since last year. They are going to start the race together like last year. No changes.

Trish stated that her only concern was that both races were being submitted on one application. Because it is two races - Moving forward, they need to apply and pay for two race fees.

There being no further questions or comments regarding this matter. Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the use of the Salem Willows field. Ms. Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- d. Ashley Steeves appeared for approval to have the Salem/Marblehead Annual Half Marathon at Salem Willows Field on September 20, 2026. Amplification from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. She said there are no changes, same as last year.

There being no further questions or comments regarding this matter. Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the use of the Salem Willows Field. Ms. Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- e. Mike McAuliffe appeared for approval to have their Wedding Ceremony at Salem Common on June 12, 2027 with amplification from 2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. He has been speaking with Chelsea regarding the details. Trish told him the Gazebo is going under construction and thinks it should start in November. She does not think there will be any issue but will let them know if things change.

There being no further questions or comments regarding this matter. Ms. Everett made a motion to approve the use of the Salem Common. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

f. Jeff Swartz appeared on behalf of Salem Chamber of Commerce, Following events:

- Haunted Happenings Grande Parade, Parade to end at Salem Common, October 1, 2026. Amplification from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The event will be a repeat of last year, with the same start and end times. Same DJ.

He spoke with Chief Miller regarding the placement of the gray barriers. The barriers will now be placed farther into the Common, allowing vehicles to travel around the Common. The theme is “Old School Halloween.” Digital applications are now available, and all information is posted on the Chamber’s website.

There being no further questions or comments regarding this matter. Mr. Callahan made a motion to approve the use of the Salem Common for the Haunted Happenings Parade. Ms. Everett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- Biz Baz Craft Vendor Market, Salem Common, October 3-4, 2026. Amplification from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The event will be almost identical to last year, with no changes. A DJ will be hired, and the organizers are aware of the decibel limits. There were no issues last year. Setup will begin at 7:00 a.m., with staff onsite at 6:30 a.m. to direct parking.

There being no further questions or comments regarding this matter. Mr. Sanchez made a motion to approve the use of the Salem Common for the Biz Baz Craft Market. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Old Business: N/A

4. **New Business:** Trish said there was an announcement at Winter Island for a State Coastal Resiliency grant for 1.7 Million Dollars. Salem Sound Coastal Watch has been a partner in studying the issue, and the City has received significant state funding to address it. Neil Duffy, the City’s Resiliency Director, will manage the project, with Salem Sound Coastal Watch serving as an advisor and partner. The project will focus on restoring and relocating damaged pathways near the lighthouse and fort to improve safety.
5. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Salem Park and Recreation Commission this evening. Mr. Callahan moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Ms. Everett. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 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**