

July 24, 2024

Town of Concord  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
c/o Elizabeth Hughes, Town Planner  
22 Monument Square  
Concord, MA 01742  
[ehughes@concordma.gov](mailto:ehughes@concordma.gov)

Re: Comments regarding the proposed landscaping plan – The Residences at Thoreau

I am writing in response to the developer's landscaping plan for the proposed project. The landscaping plan calls for the large-scale removal of up to 1,000 mature and healthy trees, many of which exceed 100 feet in height. This plan is in stark contrast with the town's Climate Action and Resilience Plan. Trees play a crucial role in mitigating greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. As the Town of Concord advances towards its climate objectives, the significance of trees often remains undervalued. The town's mature and healthy trees have stored considerable amounts of carbon throughout their lifespans and will continue to sequester substantial carbon in the future—provided they are preserved. Beyond carbon sequestration, trees enhance biodiversity, improve air quality, and contribute to stormwater management. The large-scale removal of trees from both public and private lands undermines the town's climate goals.

The impact on the town's climate objectives is substantial. Experts estimate that to replicate the carbon-removal benefits of a single 40-foot-tall northern red oak, over 150 small oaks would need to be planted, requiring up to 16 years of growth to match the 40-foot oak's size. Having walked along the Powder Mill Woods Trail many times, there are many northern red oak trees that exceed this 40-foot height. Efforts to protect and enhance large trees should be prioritized within broader climate action strategies. The landscaping plan needs to address this climate issue and make a serious effort to mitigate the damage. Planting a few small trees and adding EV charging stations will not mitigate the damage.

Sincerely,

Ronald Whitfield  
67 Whit's End Road  
Concord, MA 01742

Cc:

Kerry Lafleur, Town of Concord, Town Manager  
Wendy Rovelli, Select Board  
Mark Howell, Select Board  
Eric Simms, Sustainability Director, Town of Concord