

# R Y A N      A S S O C I A T E S

L A N D S C A P E   A R C H I T E C T U R E   A N D   P L A N N I N G

June 15, 2017

Town of Milton Planning Board  
525 Canton Avenue  
Milton, MA 02186

Building 4  
144 Moody Street  
Waltham, MA 02453  
P H : 7 8 1 - 3 1 4 - 0 4 0 1  
F X : 7 8 1 - 3 1 4 - 0 4 0 1

Re: Woodmere at Brush Hill Tree Preservation and Buffer Plan:  
Project Status and Update.

Dear Mr. Chair and Planning Board Members:

Jack Dawley has asked me to provide the Board with an update on **Buffer Area Planting** and **Tree Preservation Efforts** at Woodmere at Brush Hill. The Board will recall that tree and buffer area preservation was the focus of much discussion during the permitting process along with the character of proposed plantings. The planning vision, as it was formulated in these discussions, was to create a neighborhood that would feel as though it was part of an "evolved estate," glimpsed through the trees along Brush Hill Road. When site clearing began in 2015 this vision must certainly have seemed to the Board's eyes as far from reality as it did to ours. Now, however, we are pleased to see our work together beginning to come to fruition as the neighborhood take shape as individual buildings and new plantings are completed. We hope the Board finds this review of progress to-date helpful.

## **PROCESS:**

Before any site work began in 2015, the limits of clearing as depicted in the permit drawings and all individual trees identified for preservation were located by survey, staked and flagged by the project engineer. Northland's Director of Construction and I then reviewed each tree, the limit of clearing, and surrounding vegetation. We identified additional areas where trees and vegetation should be saved as building layout allowed and where additional buffer area would serve to protect vegetation beyond the limit of clearing. Protective fencing was then installed. This fencing has remained in place until the conclusion of heavy construction.

All in all, landscape and tree work has kept pace with site and building construction. As anticipated during the permitting process, site clearing has been phased with construction and is now largely complete. The final clearing should occur for Building #8 and #9 in mid-to-late 2017. Northland has engaged PS Tree Service, Inc, of Holbrook, MA, for all its tree work and Greenscape Inc, of Raynham, MA for all its landscape and maintenance work. Unit landscaping and perimeter buffer planting is more or less complete around Buildings #1-4 along the Dana Avenue neighborhood. Planting is also largely complete across the street from these homes in the open space near the mailbox station. A decorative lattice will be added to the mail station on the wall facing Brush Hill Road. As will be addressed below, planting along the Brush Hill Road Buffer has been a work in progress, as the Board has no doubt observed. This work began with the removal of debris, vines, and dead/diseased/ dying

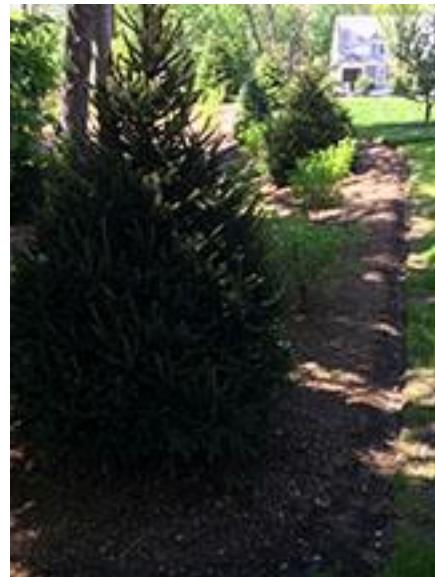
vegetation and to facilitate the preservation of the stone wall along Brush Hill Road. New planting followed in 2016 and final planting within the Brush Hill Road setback zone will be completed along with Building #11 landscaping this month.

#### **THE FOUR BUFFERS:**

##### Brush Hill Road Buffer:

Admittedly, the existing vegetation within the Brush Hill Road buffer area provides considerably less screening than was anticipated during the permitting process. The initial estimation of the screening value of the existing vegetation is reflected in the Permit Drawings which call for minimal new planting relative what was called for in the other buffers (See attached: Sheet14: "Street Tree & Buffer Planting Plan" (May 13, 2015)). When it became evident that additional planting was needed, Northland completed several rounds of supplemental plantings. Unfortunately, the 2016 drought and delays completing the water main installation caused the failure of much of this planting.

In response, Northland and I determined in Fall-2016 to jump ahead to the construction of Building 11, a year or more ahead of the originally projected schedule, so that the entirety of the Brush Hill Road Buffer could be landscaped, properly maintained, and supported. Northland, through its landscape contractor, secured substantial planting stock which is being planted this month. Additional planting will follow as Northland seeks to replace individual trees identified for preservation that have died or were lost to storm damage and/or drought. Several of these trees are in the Brush Hill Buffer and will be replaced as detailed below in the **Tree Preservation and Protection Plan** update.



In Progress: Brush Hill Buffer

##### Dana Road, Fairmont Neighborhood, and Cushing Road Buffers:

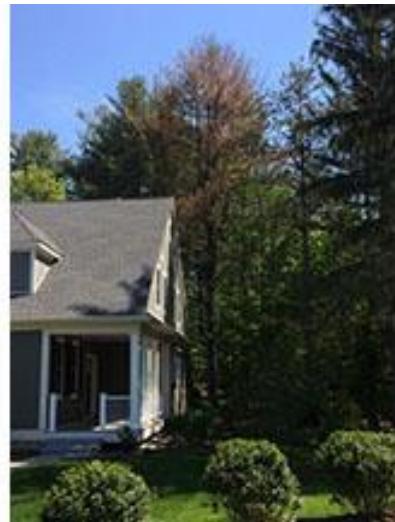
The three neighborhood buffers areas along the Dana Road, Fairmont, and Cushing Road neighborhood boundaries are being planted as building construction and associated site work is completed. These buffers have benefited from the expanded preservation area Northland was able to protect and remain quite robust. Debris and vines have been removed, new planting is in progress, and the presence of dead/diseased/dying vegetation has been found to be less than anticipated.

- The Dana Road Buffer is largely complete along with the landscaping around Buildings #1-4. As noted, debris and vines have been removed and the new plantings have been installed. The screening value of existing vegetation has proved to be strong and the new plantings are doing well.

We do wish, however, to appraise the Board of the unfortunate loss of three substantial trees in the buffer: a 24" white pine behind Building #1 and a 24" and a 30" oak behind Building #2—images provided below. These trees began to show signs of stress at the end of the 2016 drought and failed to leaf out this spring. All three trees were along the edge of the buffer zone and, although protected, disturbance nearby combined with the effects of the drought are the likely cause of their decline and death. None of these trees were called out individually on the "Tree Preservation Plan." Removal will be scheduled in June/July 2016.



Dana Ave Buffer: Planted



24" White Pine behind Bldg #1



24" and 30" Oaks behind Bldg #2

- The Fairmont Neighborhood Buffer (and Hockey Stick) planting is underway. Most of the privacy fence along the Fairmont Neighborhood was installed in 2016 with the final portion installed earlier this spring. Planting behind Buildings #4-6 will be completed this month along with planting in the Hockey Stick area. Planting behind Building #7 & 8 will coincide with construction those building in late 2017 or 2018.

Regarding the so-called **Hockey Stick area**, the Board will recall that the initial site plan proposal included a walking path connecting Woodmere Drive to Cushing Avenue. This path was eliminated as the approval process concluded. The originally submitted buffer planting plan for this area was designed to provide privacy to abutters to either side of the proposed path. Attached is a revised planting plan that Northland developed in conversation with the Cushing Road neighbors, focusing the planting along the Fairmont boundary and at Cushing Road (L1\_0 Hockeystick Planting Plan, April 4, 2017). The intent of the planting is to discourage access through this area and to allow it to re-forest in keeping with the intent of the special permit.

- The Cushing Road Buffer planting began this month in the area behind Building #10 & 11 along with the installation of the split rail fence that is part of this buffer. Buffer planting behind Buildings 8 & 9 will be some of the last buffer plantings to be completed, pending the construction sequence of Buildings #7, 8, and 9.

## TREE PRESERVATION

In addition to establishing the limit of clearing, "The Tree Preservation Plan" (Drawing "4d" of the permit set—see attached) identified a number of individual trees to be saved. These were categorized as

- 1) Character Trees to be Saved,
- 2) Other Significant Trees to be Saved, and
- 3) Specimen Trees at High Risk Due to Construction to be Saved if Possible.

Of the first category, Northland is pleased to report that none of these trees have been lost. In the second category four (4) trees have died or been removed, while in the third category seven (7) trees have been lost. Of these eleven (11) trees, three (3) were lost due to storm damage, four (4) were selected for removal due to construction conflicts, and three (4) have died due to some combination of construction and drought-related stress. In no case is contractor negligence at fault. The provision for redress, as the Board will recall, is replacement with 6" caliper trees (Category 1 trees) or 4" caliper trees (Category #2 & 3). The attached plan identifies the lost trees by location.

Three of the four Category #2 trees are located in the Brush Hill Road Buffer immediately to the left of the entrance. They include:

- a 12" Pine, an 18" Pine, and a 15" Pine; likely cause: disturbance nearby combined with the effects of the drought. Removal will be scheduled in June/July 2016.
- One additional Category #2 tree, the 24" oak, between Buildings #4&5 was lost due to disturbance nearby combined with the effects of the drought. It showed no signs of stress in 2016 and even appeared to be budding out this spring. However, it has failed to leaf out. Removal will be scheduled in June/July 2016.

The seven Category #3 trees include:

- Three trees lost due to storm damage:
  - the 18" oak between Building #12 and the Mail Station,
  - the 25" oak between Buildings #2 and #3, and
  - the 22" Pine between Buildings #12 and #13.
- Two trees removed to accommodate grading for site drainage:
  - two 20" pines located immediately behind the three Category 2 trees at the entrance.
- Two additional trees removed due to construction conflicts:
  - the 14" Oak between Buildings #12 and #13, was removed to make way for an electrical transformer. Lacking the form of a stand-alone specimen, it also suffered the loss of the 22" pine that would have been its partner had it not been lost to storm damage.
  - the 30" oak opposite Building #2 along the detention area. Road grading and utility work in this area allowed for no work-around. Its inclusion on the "Save if Possible" was admittedly optimistic.

Replacement schedule: The eleven Category #2 & #3 trees lost will be replaced by eleven 4" caliper trees to be located in the vicinity of the individual tree lost. Planting will coincide with

final landscaping of that area. The planting plan is here attached. Planting will occur first at the entrance in the Brush Hill Buffer.

Sincerely,



Alan Aukeman, RLA  
Ryan Associates Landscape Architecture and Planning

Encl:

Woodmere_14 Street Tree & Buffer Planting Plan	05/13/15
Woodmere 4d Tree Preservation STATUS Report	06/15/17
Woodmere 4d Tree Preservation REPLACEMENT Plan	06/15/17
Woodmere_L1_Hockey Stick Planting Plan	04/04/17