

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

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Memorandum

To: Michael Zehner, Planning Director
From: Brandon Schmitt, Natural Resources Commission Director
Date: 10/4/2018
RE: ZBA Comprehensive Permit Reviews for 135 Great Plain Ave, 16 Stearns, 148 Weston Rd, 680 Worcester ST, and Delanson Circle.

After review of the subject development plans, I have the following comments. While listed individually by address, several are common to all of the proposals.

16 Stearns Road

- 2 Public shade Trees (8 Inch red maple, 18 Inch red maple) are identified in the Town's tree census. No waiver to Mass General Law Chapter 87 was requested. A public shade tree hearing is required to remove trees within the right of way.
- The development should maximize use of native plant species.
- The development should maximize species diversity-using no more than 5% of any genus
- The project seems heavily planted. Ensure long term viability by proper spacing.

680 Worcester St

- No public shade trees are listed in the Town's tree census.
- The development should maximize use of native plant species.
- The development should maximize species diversity-using no more than 5% of any genus.
- Seems heavily planted. Ensure proper long term viability by proper spacing.

135 Great Plain Ave

- Numerous Trees are identified in the Town's tree census within the Right of Way. No waiver to Mass General Law Chapter 87 was requested. A public shade tree hearing is required to remove trees within the right of way.
- The development should maximize the use of native plant species.
- The development should maximize species diversity-using no more than 5% of any genus.
- Consider alternative groundcover to non-native invasive vinca minor using pollinator friendly native plants such as strawberries, pachysandra, sedge, etc.

Delanson Circle

- No public shade trees are listed in the Town's tree census.
- The applicant should identify specific plant species to be used, and maximize the use of native species.
- The development should maximize species diversity-using no more than 5% of any genus.

- The plan includes curbed stormwater planters. Long term viability of trees and plants within the planters is questionable.

148 Weston Rd.

- I concur with Mr. Zehner that “further consideration needs to be given to the constructability of the foundation and retaining walls given the proximity to property lines” particularly where the installation of those features will impact the root zones of abutting vegetation.
- No public shade trees are listed in the Town’s tree census.
- Consider the use of native groundcovers, such as sedge; or low mow or no mow seed in fire lane area vs. typical grass.
- The applicant should identify specific plant species to be used, and maximize the use of native species.
- The development should maximize species diversity-using no more than 5% of any genus.
- The application narrative proposes year-round planters with evergreens. It is unlikely that the plants would survive through the winter in those typical examples shown on landscape plans. A possible exception would be to use insulated planters, which should be specified.

I would hope that the permitting bodies consider the above suggestions for these and any subsequent proposals. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these recommendations.