

# South Orange Shade Tree Committee Memo #1

**Date:** 10/29/21

**To:** South Orange Planning Board

**From:** South Orange Shade Tree Committee

**Applicant:** The Peaks at South Orange Village, 270 & 299 Irvington Ave. Case #283

**Subject:** Initial Shade Tree Comments

The Shade Tree Committee (STC) is pleased to view a comprehensive and well considered landscape plan with added focus on native species. We appreciate the applicant's willingness to partner with the Shade Tree Committee. Below are our recommendations:

- The Shade Tree Committee asks for the applicant to explore the possibility of preserving some of the old growth native trees. Candidates might include 42" DBH Silver Maple or 20" & 34" DBH Oaks, as detailed on the site plan tree inventory.

- Current landscape plans show tree planting around the perimeter of the retention basin. The STC requests for the applicant to explore planting within the basin to aid in functionality. The STC can provide successful examples where this has been accomplished.

- The STC prefers to avoid the planting of monocultures especially as it pertains to street trees. Arranging species along one side of the street as A,B,A,B...would be an acceptable approach. The STC requests a detailed site plan showing planned placement of all shade trees. The STC prefers the avoidance of Red Maple (*Acer Rubrum*) due to an overabundance in the town's current canopy.

- The STC wishes to see an improved ratio of Native vs. Non-Native trees with a focus on Large Shade Trees to help mitigate the heat island effect of large developments with multiple tree removals:

- Requests applicant to reduce non-native 10 Natchez Crepe Myrtle & 5 Yoshino Cherries, consider replacing with native species and or shade trees

- Requests Shade Tree plantings to total at least 40, current proposal is 24

- Requests native option for Norway Spruce. Norway Spruce is considered invasive by the GSWA (Great Swamp Watershed Association). The STC has concerns regarding the urban heat tolerance of Spruce (*Picea* genus).

- The STC requests greater native variety in plantings:

- Substitute American Holly for the non-native Nellie Stevens Holly

- Consider adding more variety and visual interest to the solid Arborvitae walls with woody native shrubs: Inkberry, Native Spirea, Native Honeysuckle, Clethra, Itea, Smooth Hydrangea, Button Bush, Fragrant Sumac, Oakleaf Hydrangea

- Consider using native Bluestem, Muhley, Switchgrass varieties over non-native decorative grasses.

- The STC requests the applicant consider adding curb notches to the tree pits to allow them to function as bioswales