
MEMORANDUM – Everett Park Site Improvements

To: Township of Verona
Attn: Kevin O’Sullivan, Township Manager

From: Anthony Kurus, PE, PP, CME
Mateo Luzuriaga, PE

Date: April 11, 2025

NEA File #: VEROMUN24.010

The following memorandum has been prepared to provide responses to the comments that were provided by the Verona Environmental Commission and the Verona Shade Tree Commissions. Neglia has provided the following responses in **Bold**:

Verona Environmental Commission:

1. *Tree Removals and Replacement: The Tree Removal and Replacement plan is incomplete:*

- a. *There should be a comprehensive map and corresponding table listing each tree, species, DPM, tree condition, and location that is proposed for removal. The mapping of trees marked with “X” does not properly correspond to the undetailed list of tree removals. Additionally, many trees that will be removed are not marked.*

Size and location of each existing tree that will be removed have been identified. Each tree marked as being removed on the plans are necessary to construct the proposed improvements. Any additional tree removals will be evaluated by the contractor’s certified arborist and Township’s arborist to determine if the tree can be saved or will need to be removed.

- b. *Do not stockpile construction materials within the dripline of existing trees (Sheet 1.01, note B26).*

Stockpile of construction materials will not be within dripline of existing trees.

- c. *Trees proposed for removal are grouped into size categories that are not consistent with Verona’s Tree Ordinance, Chapter 493. Neglia groups trees as follows:*

i. Trees 1 inch to 6 inches: 6-inch trees require replacements.

ii. Trees 7 to 18 inches: the scale of replacements changes at 16 inches.

iii. Trees 19 to 24 inches: 4 replacements are due at the 24-inch benchmark.

iv. Trees 25 to 36 inches: 36-inch trees inch DPM or greater are termed “extraordinary”.

List of the trees being removed has been revised to match the Township’s Tree Ordinance, Chapter 493.

- d. *Whereas, Verona’s tree ordinance calls for replacements as follows: or each deciduous tree to be removed, that is:*

LYNDHURST

34 Park Avenue
PO Box 426
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
p. 201.939.8805 f. 201.939.0846

MOUNTAINSIDE

200 Central Avenue
Suite 102
Mountainside, NJ 07092
p. 201.939.8805 f. 732.943.7249

16 inches DPM but less than 16 inches, replacement shall be by a single replacement tree.

16 inches DPM but less than 24 inches, replacement shall be by two replacement trees;

24 inches DPM or greater, replacement shall be by four replacement trees.

A tree Removal summary indicating the number of tree replacements needed has been added to sheet 2.00.

- e. *Trees with 6-inch DPMs are subject to Chapter 493 and replacements.*

See response for comment c.

- f. *The plans list a possible 43 “additional tree removals” without any markings for their existing site locations, without due reasoning, and without appropriate supplemental replacement values or site locations of the proposed replacements.*

The plans have been revised to indicate that there will be 25 additional tree removals. These tree removals may be needed in order to construct the proposed retaining wall and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the contractor’s and township’s arborist prior to construction. An allowance for replacement trees in accordance with the Township’s Replacement Ordinance has been added to the plans in case the additional 25 trees are removed.

- g. *Trees located within steep slopes had been a matter of discussion. Removal of those trees is prohibited by ordinance and replacement of those trees would likely cause disruption of remaining trees’ root systems simply by digging for replacement tree plantings. Additionally, erosion of the slopes and around the trees in those areas will likely worsen.*

See response to comment f

- h. *Trees in and around the playground location have been left unmarked for removal, but replacement trees are slated for those same areas (Demolition Sheet 2.00 and Landscape Plan Sheet 7.00). This applies to other areas of the site as well. It appears that tree removals are understated.s*

See response for comment f.

- i. *Elm Trees, listed on the replacement planting list, are not on Verona’s Recommended Planting List due to their susceptibility to disease and pest infestation. These trees should be removed from the landscape plans and replaced with more hearty species from the list.*

Landscaping plan has been revised to replace Elm trees with trees from the Verona’s Recommended Planting List.

- j. *The VEC recommends that native trees/shrubs, and not native tree/shrub cultivars should be planted at Everett Park We cite the Purple European beech ‘riversii’, the ‘Bonnie and Mike’ Swamp White Oak, the Cornus sericea ‘Farrow’.*

The landscaping plan has been revised to utilize plantings from Verona’s Recommended Planting List.

- k. *Pennisetum alopecuroides* is an considered an invasive species by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. It escapes cultivation and has become a serious weed. We recommend native plantings that will both beautify and support the environment in a park that is one of Verona's Green Acre properties. Please see JerseyYards.org for a selection of native grass species.

The landscaping plan has been revised to utilize plantings from Verona's Recommended Planting List

- l. *It appears that replacement trees are grouped together into like tree species sections. We recommend a more natural planting scheme.*

The landscaping plan has been revised to provide a natural planting scheme.

- m. *The area along Westview Road may benefit from evergreen trees to provide a buffer for light and noise to the residential homes on the east side of Westview Road. The applies to the Elmwood Road properties on the west side of the street and along the north side of the park's border adjacent to homes on both Elmwood and Westview roads. Neglia has not listed any evergreen trees which could benefit the area with additional privacy, light and noise screening.*

The landscaping plan has been revised to include trees along Westview Road and Elmwood Road.

- n. *There are no replacement trees proposed anywhere besides the south side of the park, along Bloomfield Avenue, and at the most southern ends of Westview and Elmwood Roads. Trees will be removed from the many other areas, according to the Demolition plans. The VEC feels that additional areas should be planted for a number of reasons, not limited to providing a visual and sound buffer for the park and providing shade inside of the park to promote better experience for all residents.*

The landscaping plan has been revised to include replacement trees along Bloomfield Avenue, Westview Road, and Elmwood Avenue.

- o. *There are Extraordinary Trees, or those trees with DPMs of 36 inches or greater per Verona's Tree Ordinance, that are slated for removal. The VEC objects to the removal of the 42-inch DPM specimen tree on the corner of Westview and Bloomfield Avenue. Additionally, any other Extraordinary Trees proposed for removal must be approved by the Verona Town Council. Those trees should be properly identified and discussed in open session, with the benefit of a forester review by Richview Consulting.*

The plans have been revised to preserve the 42" tree located at the corner of Westview and Bloomfield Avenue. The 36" tree along Bloomfield Avenue is currently marked for removal to accommodate sidewalk reconstruction; however, its preservation will be assessed during construction.

2. *There were no subsurface exploration results (either test borings or test pits) included in these updated plans, nor any sort of understanding of planned stormwater mitigation. Without the benefit of subsurface explorations, it is unknown as to the feasibility of the pervious pavement system. The Small Scale Subsurface Infiltration Basin with Extended Detention Detail (G.I.) on Sheet 9.07 indicates that the seasonal high ground water table must be at least 2 feet below the lowest extent of the basin bottom. However, Neglia has not identified the seasonal high water table (SHWT) for the stormwater BMP designed nor provided results of*

infiltration testing, nor aptly provided the proposed depth of the pervious pavement system and underdrains. Observations for the SHWT should occur between January and April.

Construction details for porous pavement and small scale subsurface basin have been updated to include the elevations of the each system and the seasonal high water table elevations that was obtained during January and April in accordance with Chapter 12 of the NJDEP Best Management Practices Manual.

3. *Pervious pavement systems are typically not installed in drive aisles due to the negative impact of turning vehicles longevity on the pavement system. Typically, pervious pavement systems are designed for parking stall areas.*

Pervious pavement has been designed to withstand heavy traffic loads in accordance with NJDEP BMP Chapter 9.6 and NJDOT standards.

4. *It appears that with the use of planned underdrains, stormwater will be directed to the Bloomfield Avenue stormwater collection system. It is unknown whether that system will be capable of receiving that stormwater without overwhelming the system. Water pooling and flooding conditions continuously occur at the bottom of Westview Road. We recommend that consideration be given to possible bioretention swale/areas for the landscaped area between the parking lot and Bloomfield Avenue incorporated around the proposed trees to be planted as well as area between the baseball field and the parking lot (as indicated in attached annotated site plan). We acknowledge that most bioretention swale/areas require sunlight and that the proposed replacement trees will cast shadows on the bioretention swale/areas. However, there are a number of plant species that can thrive in partial shade and this area of the site receives southern sunlight exposure*

Under current conditions, the entire site directs all stormwater runoff towards Bloomfield Avenue with no on-site stormwater infrastructure. The proposed project has been designed to reduce the stormwater runoff leaving the site by 50% for the 2-year, 75% for the 10-year, and 80% for the 100-year storm event using current and future rainfall depth projections in accordance with the latest NJ Stormwater Management (NJAC 7.8) regulations.

5. *The proposed retaining wall systems continue to exceed Verona's height allowance within the Zoning Code. What sort of controls will be optioned to ensure the safety of children and keep them from exploring and climbing up on those 10 foot walls? Is there a concept plan that could have been developed whereby the existing block bleachers could be incorporated with the site design?*

The proposed retaining wall has been designed to minimize the amount of earthwork needed to construct the proposed improvements. The proposed retaining wall will be constructed to be completely vertical as well as having fall protection fencing along its entire length.

6. *The retaining wall systems are being designed as a gravity wall with a maximum footprint of about 9 feet from the wall face back into the slope. Does the limit of disturbance shown behind the proposed wall alignment account for the area and backsloping needed to construct the concrete leveling pad for the wall? Based on our review of the wall at its tallest, as currently depicted in Sheets 4.00, 8.00, and S2.00, it would be close to a one-horizontal-to-four-vertical slope (1H:4V or 76° from horizontal) required for construction to meet the limit of*

disturbance line shown on the drawings. In other words, to safely construct this retaining wall system the footprint of disturbance into the slope is likely greater than what is shown on the drawings, which may impact more trees upslope of the wall than previously communicated.

See response to comment f.

- 7. Could the proposed concession building be built into the slope to serve also as a retaining structure for the slope? Does the walkway near the concession building need to be between the proposed wall and building? Can the walkway be placed between the field fence and the concession building instead to minimize the distance that the project has to be constructed into the slope? This may mitigate slope disturbances and tree impacts.*

Relocating the building into the slope will still cause disturbance of the slope as well as introducing overland runoff being directed towards the building. The proposed walkway between the building and wall will help redirect runoff away from the building and allow for catch basins to be constructed.

- 8. There is no lighting plan provided in the drawing set that would demonstrate a limiting of spill light across property lines outside of the park and into surrounding residential properties.*

Lighting plan has been provided.

- 9. The VEC continues to object to a permanent sound system installation at the park.*

There currently is no permanent sound system being proposed on the plans.

Verona Shade Tree Commission:

- 1. Please clarify the discrepancies in the numbers from pages 1 and 2 of the plans.*

Tree removals have been revised to match the Township's Ordinance.

- 2. The absence of new trees or vegetation along Elmwood Road is a concern for the STC. We recommend small ornamental trees be planted behind the new bleachers and along Elmwood Rd.*

The landscaping plan has been updated to provide trees along Elmwood Road.

- 3. The Shade Tree Commission was looking forward to working with the contractor to remove invasive vines and dead trees from the outfield hill and behind the third base line. (East and north sides of the field).*

Noted.

- 4. Cassian Fountain Grass planned for western corner is an invasive, fast growing plant. Please replace it with a native grass. As for the cultivars used, such as Cornus sericea "farrow", please consider using the straight species, not the cultivar.*

Landscaping Plan has been revised to utilize plantings from Verona's Recommended Planting List

5. *We commend the contractor for choosing a variety of species of replacement tree. We are happy to see the legacy London plane tree on the corner of Bloomfield Avenue and Westview Rd is being preserved.*

Noted.

6. *The schematic gives the appearance that new trees will have the same shade coverage as the trees being removed. This will certainly not be the case.*

Noted.
