

Talking Points for
Village Board Meeting 2/29/12
RE Trees and Construction

(1) **Construction & Tree Removal Moratorium --**

- There are numerous ongoing building-related problems in the Village of East Hills with **tree removals**, inappropriate **house designs**, **over-sized** houses, excessive construction **duration** etc. that **cannot wait** for correction.
- **No more building permits**, variances, or tree removals should be allowed in the village, for a period of **at least 60 days**, until the Village Board **and** members of other building-related boards can listen to residents' concerns in a **special forum** and come up with **actual and procedural changes** that meet the approval of residents.

(2) **Public Comment Periods --**

- Residents need **Advance Notice** before the **Architectural Review Board** deliberates on **house demolitions**, **new designs** for houses, and **tree removals**.
- Residents need a **Public Speaking Period** to speak on individual proposals before the Architectural Review Board votes on Demolitions, New House designs, and Tree Removals.

(3) **House Size --**

- The Architectural Review Board seems **incapable** of maintaining “**the prevailing aesthetic character**” of neighborhoods, as the law stipulates (*East Hills Village Code, Section 271-186 “Legislative Intent”*).
- The Architectural Review Board needs **independent professional** architectural counsel, **formal feedback** from neighbors, and a concrete **publicly formulated** set of neighborhood **design-analyses** to properly do its job.
- Village rules and procedures need to be tightened to protect our neighborhoods from over-size development. There needs to be a **reduction** in the maximum permissible **size** and **height** of new homes.

Many newly designed homes in Norgate are boxy, artificial and too high. They clash with and impose on the graceful New England and Tudor England style , or the California ranch design that have been standard here. Renovations have been allowed that have jarring design features which stand out “like a sore thumb” on their block.

(4) **Tree Removal --**

- Tree protection laws are supposed to save old trees, not provide endless loopholes to remove them. We must stop removing healthy mature trees. And we must begin planting a future generation village-wide.

- Architectural and civil engineering **solutions** should be found to preserve old trees that are healthy and desirable to neighbors.
- **Elective** home expansions or underground installations that have **technically feasible alternatives** should not be used as justification for tree removal permits.
- **All tree removals** should come before a public board and be subject to input from **neighbors**, who should receive **Advance Notice** of the proceedings.

The Architectural Review Board is granting massive tree removals with no public input – all EIGHT trees at 140 Walnut Drive, FIVE trees at 80 Fairfield Lane, FIVE trees at 90 Revere Road, and possibly FIVE trees at 37 Laurel Lane, unless it is halted (TWO are already approved).

Houses should generally be fit to the existing building footprint, instead of cutting trees to make more room. Old cesspools should be excavated and the soil rehabilitated, even if it is costly, to protect the trees from being removed to create fresh soil for the systems. Builders are cashing in on property values, so they should pay what it costs to rehabilitate the soil for septic systems.

(5) Construction --

- Construction is permitted to **drag on too long** for both new construction and renovation. Time limits should be imposed for job completion and re-landscaping, and graduating fines imposed for every day of lateness.
- **Hours of construction** (and Landscaping) should begin at **9 AM** not 8 AM, and workers and vehicles should not be permitted on-site until 30 minutes before work hours begin.

Many people now work at home, are retired, convalescing, parenting or enjoying other breaks from the typical work-day. Noisy construction work with bulldozers, jackhammers, chainsaws, nail-guns and the like beginning at 8 AM disturbs the peace of the morning for many residents. Furthermore, workers often begin unloading equipment and machinery well before the start of the workday. The issue is compounded by the volume of construction being initiated in our community. Landscapers creates the same problems with the current mechanized techniques.

See www.planet-in-peril.org for updates (click on East Hills tab).

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Post on Facebook “East Hills Environment”.

Thank you.