

August 25, 2014

Dear members of the Zervas School Building Committee and Design Review Committee:

On behalf of the Newton Urban Tree Commission, I'm writing to express the Commission's strong interest in plans for the property surrounding the new Zervas School and to present its recommendation that preserving and protecting trees should be one of the goals guiding the project planning. This site, including the adjoining lots on Beacon Street, is tree-filled, with diverse species such as red oak, white oak, cottonwood, willow, hickory, linden, red maple, and others. Many of these trees are large (and "protected" under the city's ordinance definition), and several of them are truly stately and spectacular. The red oaks and hickory have clearly received the recognition and benefit of protection in the past, as the expanded parking lot was paved around them.

Removal of these large trees would be a devastating environmental and aesthetic loss, which would not be significantly offset by planting of new small trees. Large trees conserve energy, offset heat islands, cool parking lots, reduce stormwater runoff, and improve air quality, at far higher rates than small trees ever will do in our lifetimes.

We do hope that preservation of these beautiful specimen trees, as well as the many large healthy younger trees that will continue to populate this "urban forest" and provide a green view from the school and from Beacon Street, can be incorporated into the various options that your working group will be considering. We would be most happy to assist and work with you on that goal.

I can be reached at 617-527-1796 or howard_katherine@hotmail.com, or feel free to contact other Commission members.

Thank you,



Katherine Howard, Chair
Newton Urban Tree Commission

Cc: Tree Commission members (including pending): Barbara Darnell, Lauren DiGeronimo, Rena Getz, Julia Malakie, Francesca Piper Koss, Amy Sangiolo, Barbara Smiley, Chris Steele, Beth Wilkinson, Marc Welch (ex officio)