



TOWNSHIP OF VERONA
COUNTY OF ESSEX, NEW JERSEY

SHADE TREE COMMISSION



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Verona Shade Tree Commission
Carol Thomas-chair
February 11, 2025

Verona Planning Board
Wedgewood Gardens Condominium Association
Case PB-2025-02 – 1 Wedgewood Drive - Block 1712, Lot 1
Planning Board Application- Tree Removal and Replacement Plan

Dear Board Members:

We have received copies of the plan for Wedgewood Gardens. These include the tree removal application and the five page Tree Replacement Plan prepared by the Falcon Group.

Based on these plans, the following are concerns the Verona Shade Tree Commission has regarding the plans for tree removal and replacement at Wedgewood Gardens.
At this time, the Shade Tree Commission will recommend the application before the planning board be denied until changes have been made to the removal and replacement plan.

Comments and Concerns regarding the Plan:

There are many inconsistencies in the various plans. The Planning Board Application, the Tree Removal Application and the Tree Removal Charts indicate differing numbers of trees to be removed.

The number of trees to be removed differs as does the number of replacements.
One example of this is the Falcon Group list on page L-1 of plans calls for 56 trees to be replaced. The replacement plans on L-2 show only 40 trees to be planted.

The Verona code 493-28, regarding replacement trees states the replacement of 24 dbh trees requires 4 new trees. The plans call for 2 trees to be replaced for several 24 inch tree removals.
The required number of replacement trees is substantially higher than noted in any of the plans.

Mr. Falciola from The Bartlett Tree Experts, the person who completed the report on the condition of the trees, is not licensed with the NJ Board of Tree Experts. We request an assessment with the Verona LTE of record, Richard Wolowicz.

Use of only two species for this project is insufficient for the needs of the ecosystem in the complex. The STC recommends a variety of at least 5 species. The replacement numbers should be substantially higher than reported, thus multiple species can and should be utilized. The Verona Zoning code provides alternative species. Armstrong maples, one of the two suggested species, are extremely narrow, columnar trees. These will provide little shade to the roads, cars or buildings.

The 5 Eastern white pines (*Pinus strobus*) on site appear to be stressed and declining as do the 14" apple (*Malus*) and other trees. The STC recommends Verona's Arborist assess all the trees on site and require Wedgewood Gardens create a maintenance/replacement plan for these trees not mentioned in any of the project plans.

At least six trees (#38, #46-50) have been removed to date. New curbs have been installed. Was this all done prior to planning board approval?