

Memo

To: Planning Board Chairperson Pearson and Secretary Kester
Verona Planning Board

From: Plan Review Committee of the Verona Environmental Commission

c: Verona Environmental Commission Chair

Date: February 5, 2025

Re: **Case # 2025-02**
1 Wedgewood Drive [Block 1712, Lot 1]
Verona, New Jersey

Zone: A-1 (Low Rise Multi Family)

The Plan Review Committee of the Verona Environmental Commission (VEC) reviewed the application for 1 Wedgewood Drive in Verona submitted by Armen Tagmizyan, which we received on January 14, 2025. We understand that the Applicant is seeking remove more than two (2) healthy, mature trees in one calendar year, which, according to [§493-24](#) requires a review by and approval from the Planning Board. The comments below are provided for the Board's consideration:

- 1) A properly registered and licensed LTE or LTCO should be engaged to prepare the Tree Replacement Plan with their license number documented on the Planning Board Application. We note that Mr. Michael Falciola, the individual who conducted the tree inventory and tree health assessment for the Applicant, is not listed as a Licensed Tree Expert (LTE) or an Licensed Tree Care Operator (LTCO) by the Official site of New Jersey's Board of Tree Experts, as required in [§493-26B](#). We recommend that this issue be resolved before the Applicant goes before the Planning Board.
- 2) We note that the tree protection, removal, and replacement article of §493 [amended in its entirety on February 6, 2023 by Ordinance No. 2023-06] does not excuse Applicants from replacements of trees deemed to be in "poor" condition. Likewise, the Ordinance does not give Applicants discretion to alter the number of tree replacements as set forth in [§493-28A](#). That section clearly states:

For each deciduous tree to be removed, that is:

- 1) 6 inches DPM but less than 16 inches, replacement shall be by a single replacement tree;*
- 2) 16 inches DPM but less than 24 inches, replacement shall be by two replacement trees;*
- 3) 24 inches DPM or greater, replacement shall be by four replacement trees.*

For each coniferous tree to be removed, that is:

- 1) between 10 feet and under 25 feet in height, replacement shall be by a single replacement tree;*
- 2) 25 feet and over in height, replacement shall be by two replacement trees.*

- 3) Accordingly, replacement values as listed on Sheet L-1 shows multiple trees in “poor” condition with no replacements registered and shows multiple trees in “fair” and “good” condition with non-compliant replacement values. We also note that some trees in poor condition (#35, #36, and #37) were assigned replacement values by the Applicant while others categorized as being in poor condition were not.
- 4) Labels #1, #16, #19, #22, #23, #31, #32, #33, and #38 are all listed as having a DPM of 24 inches or greater and therefore require four (4) replacement trees each.
- 5) In regard to #46 “Norway Maple” on Sheet L-1; this tree is on the NJ Strike Team’s Do Not Plant List due to its invasive qualities, but is not listed on any Verona Ordinance as an invasive species. The Tree of Heaven is the only Tree species listed in Verona’s Invasive Species Ordinance and is recommended for removal throughout the municipality.

Label #	Scientific Name	Common Name	Tree Health Assessment by Applicant	DPM	Replacements marked	Replacements due
1	Catalpa	Catalpa	poor	26	0	4
2	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
3	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
4	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
5	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
6	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	fair	18	2	2
7	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
8	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
9	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
10	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
11	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
12	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
13	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
14	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2
15	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	fair	20	2	2
16	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	fair	24	2	4
17	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2
18	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2
19	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	24	2	4
20	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2
21	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2
22	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	24	2	4
23	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	24	2	4
24	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	14	1	1

Label #	Scientific Name	Common Name	Tree Health Assessment by Applicant	DPM	Replacements marked	Replacements due	
25	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2	
26	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2	
27	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2	
28	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	16	2	2	
29	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	14	1	1	
30	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	20	2	2	
31	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	24	2	4	
32	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	24	2	4	
33	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	good	24	2	4	
34	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	0	2	
35	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	2	2	
36	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	2	2	
37	Gladitsia Traicanthos	Honey locust	poor	17	2	2	
38	Platanus x acerfolia	London Planetree	poor	26	2	4	buffer
46	Acer platanoides	Maple (Norway)	poor	10	2	1	buffer
47	Juglans nigra	Black Walnut	poor	14	2	1	buffer
48	Querus rubra	Red Oak	dead trunk	28	2	4	buffer
49	Fraxinus americana	White Ash	dead trunk	28	2	4	buffer
50	Querus rubra	Red Oak	dead trunk	15	2	1	buffer
TOTAL TREES TO BE REPLACED					56	103	

6) We note that the Applicant is proposing to remove 43 trees of varying species. According to the Applicant’s Tree Removals table on Sheet L-1 the Applicant lists 56 required replacement trees. Whereas, Sheet L-2 shows that the Applicant intends to plant only 40 trees: 27 Armstrong Red Maples and 13 Swamp White Oaks.

7) We estimate that the Applicant should be replanting no less than 103 replacement trees on the site. Furthermore, we feel that the Applicant should attempt to diversify the trees chosen to be planted along the streetscapes and within the buffer zones. The Applicant is planning on only planting Armstrong Red Maples and Swamp White Oaks, which are fine trees. However, these trees can all fail from the same stressors, may not provide an ample tree canopy for Wedgewood residents, and the lack of variety does not benefit local wildlife.

8) We view this document as listing only three trees that are dead and are therefore non-functional. Labels #48, #49, and #50 are listed as “dead trunk” but exist in the buffer area bordering Cumberland (R-50 Zone and R50B Zone) and the Wedgewood Drive property. According to §150-11.1A:

All commercial, industrial, office, apartment, health care, institutional, or a public use adjoining or abutting a residential zone, shall provide a buffer zone in accordance with the standards set forth below subject to other more restrictive regulations herein.

- 9) We recommend that the Applicant plant a buffer that complies with better screening and include a healthy mixture of shade and evergreen trees to provide essential screening between the properties, especially in the area where multiple trees are to be removed. We note that the Applicant has not provided any planting details for the buffer zone where trees #38 and #46 through #50 are listed for removal. We recommend that the Applicant prepare a tree planting plan for this buffer area with the list of planned plantings and be prepared to give testimony regarding the buffer area.
- 10) Additionally, we question why trees #39 through #45 are missing from the mapping provided by the Applicant.
- 11) The Verona Zoning Code provides a list of [recommended plantings](#). We recommend further species that may be found on this list.

[JP/STD/WS]

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