



**STAFF REPORT - TOWN OF NORTH CASTLE PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

May 26, 2022

APPLICATION NUMBER - NAME  
#2022-026 – Whippoorwill Ridge  
Tree Removal Permit Approval

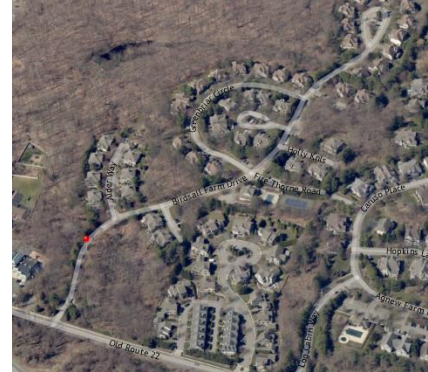
SBL  
107.16-3-62

MEETING DATE  
June 13, 2022

PROPERTY ADDRESS/LOCATION  
2 Birdsall Farm Dr.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

Removal of 126 trees that were originally planted for screening and ornamental purposes as part of the Whippoorwill Ridge multi-family development. As mitigation, the Applicant is proposing to plant shrubs, including forsythia, rhododendrons, viburnum and euonymus.



PENDING ACTION:             Plan Review             Town Board Referral             Preliminary Discussion

EXISTING ZONING	EXISTING LAND USE	SURROUNDING ZONING & LAND USE	SITE IMPROVEMENTS	SIZE OF PROPERTY
R-MF	Existing Multi-Family Development	Residential & Commercial	Tree Removal	22.5 acres

**PROPERTY HISTORY**

Existing Multi-Family Development

**COMPATIBILITY with the COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

- Continue to take neighborhood context into account in approving new single-family homes.
- Continue to protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas such as rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, flood plains, aquifers, wildlife habitats, steep slopes and forested areas, significant trees, and woodlands, among others, from unnecessary and avoidable impacts.
- Continue strong protection of tree cover through the tree removal permitting process.
- Preserve the current overall development pattern of North Castle and its neighborhoods. Be sure new development responds to environmental constraints, particularly for preservation of the New York City watershed.
- Maintain the quality-of-life created by physical and natural attributes, by structuring development that promotes sound conservation measures.
- The Town should encourage residential development that is compatible in scale, density, and character with its neighborhood and natural environment.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. It is recommended that the Applicant be directed to address the items identified in this report.

Procedural Comments

1. The Proposed Action would be classified as a Type II Action pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).
2. A neighbor notification meeting will need to be scheduled.
3. The Planning Board should schedule a site visit.

General Comments

1. The Applicant has noted that the existing trees no longer serve their original purpose of screening and beautification and have grown too large. The Planning Board should schedule a site visit to better understand existing conditions.
2. The Applicant should provide additional details with respect to the proposed mitigation/planting plan. Specifically, a plan depicting the proposed plantings along with a planting schedule that indicates species name, quantify and size of proposed plants.
3. It is recommended that the proposed mitigation planting only utilize native plants. For example, Forsythia viridissima, should be replaced with a native plant. The Applicant should confirm using a native rhododendron, viburnum (no burning bush) and euonymus. Native plants should be selected from the [New York Flora Atlas](#).

Citation: <https://www.westchestergov.com/278-planting-westchester/native-plants>

Staff Notes

Native plants are critically important because they are far better than non-native plants at supporting local ecosystems. Most importantly, they support local food webs, providing insects, birds, and other wildlife with what they depend on for survival. Insects native to our region co-evolved over thousands of years with native plants. They cannot eat non-native plants (and some, such as the larvae of certain species of butterflies, for example, can eat only particular species of native plants). In recent years, as gardeners have favored non-native plants, insects have struggled to find food. Our native birds depend almost entirely on insects to feed their young. Loss of insect populations due to fewer native plants is contributing to the loss of songbird populations. Increasing the number of native plants in our gardens increases food sources for insects, enables songbirds to better feed their young, and supports the diversity of native species of insects such as butterflies and other native pollinators.

In addition, because they evolved in the local environment, native plants usually need less care (such as fertilizers and pesticides that may harm the environment) than many exotic plants. They usually require less water, too (except for those adapted to growing near water bodies).

No matter how small the space, when you choose a native species of plant instead of an exotic one, that individual action is a step towards supporting healthy local ecosystems and biodiversity. Better yet, when multiple people in a neighborhood or community make those choices, they can combine into thriving "conservation corridors" that support a diversity of vibrant life.