

Cranford Environmental Commission

Myrtle St

13-June-2023

Site Plan Review for Revised Plans

The comments were organized and drafted by Jason Stevens and submitted to the Township of Cranford by Jason M. Stevens on 13-Jun-2023 by email. All correspondence related to the Cranford Environmental Commission review of the application for 73–91 Myrtle Street should be addressed to cranfordec@gmail.com.

The addition of a second row of evergreens does little to mitigate the environmental impact of this development and doesn't address the fact that these trees are almost certainly going to die. By planting only a single species of tree in the rear of the property the entire rear section of the property is susceptible to the loss of the entire section of trees due to deer, disease or other. It would be preferable to have a diversity of species present to mitigate against uniform tree loss. Members of the Environmental Commission feel a more environmentally sustainable approach would be to plant a few species of hardwood shade trees within the rear row of arborvitae such as two swamp white oak and two tulip poplar trees. These trees would add some diversity, provide shade, and absorb some of the additional water generated by deforesting the property for development. The added shade will likely help keep the arborvitae from drying out and dying, which is a common problem with them.

In addition to mixing in shade trees within the rear row it is recommended that instead of the added second row of evergreens that a more naturalistic planting of native shrubs be pursued. Species may include inkberry holly, virginia sweetspire, northern bayberry and buttonbush. The reason is that these plants can provide sought after privacy while also being low maintenance and natural to the area. Thus, a diverse planting of these species would carry more longevity, less risk of privacy loss, and add environmental benefit. The arborvitae are almost certainly going to die and adding a second row of them isn't going to do anything to solve that problem.

Sincerely,

Jason M. Stevens Ph.D.

Chair – Cranford Environmental Commission