

To: Salem City Council From: William Dalton

February 25th, 2019 Council Agenda Item 4.a: Proposed Development- Candy Flower/Wiltsey SE Re.

Date: February 25, 2019

**Dear City Council:** 

I am writing with respect to the above noted item on tonight's Agenda.

.. First, I want to note that there appear to be a number of positive aspects to the proposal: adding multi-family housing, plans to include open/common space, provisions for children's play equipment.

.. That said, I am very concerned with regard to the apparent plans for elimination/removal of 320 of the 321 noted trees on the property (including 4-out-of-5 of the Heritage-eligible white oaks)!! {{ I visited the property this past weekend. There are stands of magnificent (70-100 year old??) conifers lining three sides of the property, including two lines of stately trees bordering both side of the dirt lane along the north boundary. There is a large, mostly open space in the middle of the property, which appears ready-made for the development being proposed. }}

Questions related to my concerns:

- 1) How many these magnificent conifers are proposed to be retained?
- 2) If 'm/any' are slated for removal, especially along the "borders" of the <u>development Why</u>?
- 3) In what ways have plat designs been considered that would enable saving the conifers and specifically the White Oaks?

## More broadly, I question the City's commitment to its own planning and development guidelines:

.. Many (most...) developments here in Salem proceed with literally NO regard for large trees. [Very recently, a literal mature forest was completely obliterated from the area just east of the new Battlecreek Elementary School. Now there are hundreds of new apartments and an under-construction senior retirement facility. And instead of stately trees providing shade and beauty - even just along the borders and in the few open spaces -- we have a number of scrawny 'plantings.' ]

.. There must be some reason that developers - abetted by the City's Planning Commission - so blatantly ignore the 'spirit' of City development codes and the possibilities of protecting and utilizing our City's natural resources (i.e., even when those resources include free landscaping for new properties...). .. There has to be some good excuse for ignoring Salem's status as a nationally-recognized "Tree City." .. There must be a solid rationale for destroying the mature vegetation cover that remains one of our last bastions for clean air and a threatened atmosphere.

But what if there aren't any substantive reasons, excuses, or rationales? What if it's just for convenience - for ease of construction - for a few extra dollars in profit or just because no one (including the City Staff...) thinks to provide (much less recognize, appreciate, and/or reward...) additional regard for what Nature has gifted Salem.

We are fortunate that each development decision gives us yet another opportunity to make decisions reflecting sensitivity to the needs and goals of ALL of those involved with the welfare of our residents developers, the Council, the City, taxpayers. Maybe we can begin to better utilize those opportunities.

Sincerely,

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