

*Below is a letter from Arthur J. Vrecenak, Ph.D., Former Assistant Research Professor in Horticulture*

As a 30 year resident of this area, I implore you to not move forward with the development of the Oakwell tract. I have a PhD in Forestry and the widespread deforestation of this area by developers is a local environmental catastrophe, having a dramatic impact, not only on the flora and fauna that live in those woods, but on the people that enjoy those flora and fauna. When the perpetrators are government and quasi-governmental agencies, who are supposed to protect us from harm, the population needs to stand up and be heard. The clear cutting of older forests takes the carbon sequestered there and releases it, adding to our climate crisis. We enjoy relief from the “urban heat island” due to the vegetation that exists here in our suburban oasis. The more that disappears, the less relief we’ll experience. Turf grass does not adequately replace forests as a moderator of heat island effects and carbon sequestration. This does not even take into account the ecological impact of turfgrass maintenance practices on local water quality.

When governmental and quasi-governmental agencies seek to do environmental harm like this, however well-intentioned, it behooves us as residents of the area to speak in defense of our unique natural resources. If anyone would like an expert opinion to add to the discourse, please feel free to contact me.

Regards,

Arthur J. Vrecenak, PhD